



5 rue Roger Verlomme-75003 Paris Tel 01 42 71 06 70 - [www.peresblancs.org](http://www.peresblancs.org) - [sma.pb.secretariat@wanadoo.fr](mailto:sma.pb.secretariat@wanadoo.fr)

***"It must be hard for you, after so many years of hyperactive life in Africa, to find yourself in a retirement home!"***



This comment, often heard from well-intentioned people, always makes me feel uneasy: we would still be special people with an adventurous and exciting past, and therefore worthy of pity, unlike the vast majority of people who would go to an old people's home and dance around like sheep.

After six years in an EHPAD (establishment for dependent elderly people), I can say that we are very lucky compared to the "lay" residents who share the same end of life as us. With them we have, in recent times, gone through many difficult situations ... but in such a different way! In the worst situations, I have always admired the extent to which, with all the confreres, we found incredible resources to cope with these situations with a surprising serenity, rarely fatalistic, because they were shared and lived in community, not to say in family.

Certainly each of us has a rich personal past, sometimes epic, always different from that of others ... but we all come together when it is a question of assuming our daily life where the immediate, which occupies our minds enormously, is shared and carried together. And then, faith is such a comfort! In fact, these years in EHPAD are lived as a logical continuation of the mission-

nary life in Africa, which has not always been easy either, with its exciting moments as well as its depressing ones. Missionaries to the last breath! Of course there are those who complain, who would like a different way of life, who even complain to their family or friends: of course there are those who only live in memories, but... isn't that finally the proof, in the end, that they are normal too? And then they always have the possibility, if they want, of seeking comfort, compassion, exchange and sharing from other confreres, and that... is priceless!



The lay residents, on the other hand, are going through the same difficult times, having to rely solely, or almost solely, on themselves. Alone, isolated, often completely cut off from their past - and even, alas, sometimes from their families - unable to organise a minimum of social life (they have no one to take care of them), they have no one to turn to or confide in! Of course, the staff do their utmost to support them; as for us, we do what we can to support them...; but how many tears are discreetly wiped away in the solitude of the rooms! How many long moments spent in front of the window without seeing anything, looking at nothing! To be cut off from family, friends and history is terrible! Yes, we are really lucky!

*P. Clément Forestier*

**Michel Ouedraogo, a White Father from Burkina Faso, who worked as a parish priest in Marseille, spent five years visiting prisoners in the Baumettes prison, among other things, "encounters with human suffering", before leaving to study. He found himself enormously transformed and enriched by this.**

I have had the grace to be welcomed and to collaborate joyfully with chaplains of other faiths - Muslim, Protestant, Orthodox and even Jehovah's Witnesses. As a young missionary, I could not have wished for anything better than to take my first steps in the footsteps of other people who welcome, initiate and encourage. Furthermore, my community was very supportive. A real dream!

By meeting these 'detained men' I was able to touch a dimension of human suffering that I did not know existed. Through the mainly individual encounters, I realised that, more often than not, I was dealing with people who had been wounded by life, who had wounded others. And as the encounters went on, I discovered a little more the complexity of the human heart, a heart where the best and the worst coexist. I also learned to listen with respect to angry cries, insults, threats, tears, as well as to gestures of incredible kindness. And all this taught me to believe in Man, in his capacity to grow as a human being, to strive for the best in them.



**Michel during a conference at the AAPB (WF Friends' Association) Friendship Days**

This experience has also made me personally grow in my own humanity. Even if the victims must have a place in my exchanges with the detainees - and this is crucial - I also learned to look at the other person beyond the act



that he or she committed: listening to the detainees with respect while hearing in the depths of my heart the suffering and misery of the victims, without judging or moralising, was a real daily challenge.

Finally, I learned to remain flexible in the face of the unexpected. While some detainees have given me practical lessons in availability, welcome and generosity, others have taught me that I am not indispensable in their lives when, for example, they refuse a visit by appointment following bad news that is not easy to digest. Yes, I have learned to live this ministry gratuitously. And the simplicity of some of them! I have always been struck by the happiness they can express only after receiving a simple postcard or a visit from a chaplain.

Thank you God for giving me this ministry which is so difficult, but so exciting to live.



*Fr. Michel Ouedraogo, M.Afr.*



**Fr Francis LEDUC had to return recently from Lebanon for health reasons. He is now a resident in our EHPAD of the White Fathers in Bry-sur-Marne. Together with Fr Jean-Louis LINGOT, they were only two in Beirut to keep the presence of the White Fathers in Lebanon, each in his own way. Left alone in Beirut, Jean-Louis gave us some recent news.**



Since April 1, 2021, I am the last Missionary of Africa in Lebanon, living in Beirut, in a neighbourhood where we have been living since 1967, since our departure from Rayak (Bekaa).

For two years, I have shared the commitment of the White Fathers in the formation of the Melkite clergy. Since then, that is to say more than forty years, the Latin Eucharistic community of Jounieh (20 km north of Beirut) occupies an important part of my time; but with the pandemic, as everywhere else, we are obliged to respect health security measures, hence the reduction of participants, the rearrangement of timetables and the suppression of several activities.



## **News from Burkina Faso and Mali**

Ten confreres have been declared ready for mission. After having been ordained priests in their native region, they are on their way to their respective places of appointment.

On 19 September 2020, the first stage of formation in Ouagadougou began at Lavigerie House. The 14 students were welcomed in the chapel by the formators and the students of the second and third year.

On Saturday 7 November 2020, in the chapel of the Spiritual Year in Bobo-Dioulasso, Luc Kola, Provincial, welcomed the 23 new novices to celebrate their official entry into the Society.

The 2nd Ordinary Plenary Assembly of the Burkina-Niger Bishops' Conference opened on Tuesday 9 February 2021 with the participation of all the bishops of Burkina and in the presence of the Archbishop of Niamey, who had been absent for the last two meetings due to the closure of borders and security problems.

Tragic disappearance of Abbé Rodrigue Sanon. His car was found empty on the road to Banfora, and his lifeless body two days later, on 21 January, in the forest 20 km from Banfora. The causes of this tragedy are still unknown.

There is still no news in Mali of Sister Gloria who was kidnapped four years ago. May she be released without delay.

**In the Academic Year 2020-2021,  
the Missionaries of Africa  
have 480 students  
and this year we will  
have 34 priestly ordinations.**



Moreover, as you know, Lebanon has been going through a catastrophic political, economic, social and financial crisis for the last two years, which has caused half the population to resort to begging. In the parish it is mainly the families of immigrant workers attracted by decent salaries in dollars that are affected. They are now paid in Lebanese pounds and their buying power has virtually disappeared: the price of foodstuffs has increased tenfold. Together with our bishop, we have organised a social service with monthly distribution of individualised food parcels plus a small envelope.

Our deacon and a small team are managing all this with great dedication. I am not talking about the general atmosphere; everyone is suffering from the double crisis, especially the Christians who despair of a political solution, and the young people can only see their salvation in the departure for Europe, America or Australia, where they already have family and where their culture allows them to adapt quickly. Fortunately, some make the conscious choice to stay, "ferment in the dough", comforting and supporting those who can but stay. This is also my choice as long as my health permits.



*Fr. Jean-Louis Lingot M.Afr.*

## Beatitudes

They sold their peanuts on the pavement, old mothers with their worn-out, life-torn loincloths. The day's small earnings hardly concealed the bottom of the tin box they used as a common cash box, but their laughter punctuated their natural solidarity: each evening, they shared the day's profits equally according to the number of children they had to support.

*Christ did not invent the Beatitudes: he merely revealed them.*

Since dawn they had been begging to appease their hungry bellies, but their rusty boxes in place of plates did not weigh much. When the naked, filthy local madman passed by, insulting them as he did every day at noon, they burst out laughing, dancing around him..., and shared their meagre food with him.

*Christ did not invent the Beatitudes: he merely revealed them.*

*Fr. Clément Forestier*



## 2 options possibles pour soutenir les Missionnaires d'Afrique - Pères Blancs

Je fais un don de :

☐ 30€ ☐ 50€ ☐ 100€ Autre : .....€

### 1. Soutien de projets d'ordre social :

☐ Je demande un reçu fiscal

Chèque à l'ordre de : « **SMA - Pères Blancs** »

Ou par virement bancaire en indiquant vos coordonnées

IBAN FR76 3000 3030 0000 0500 9316 540 — BIC SOGEFRPP

### 2. Soutien des Missionnaires d'Afrique pour aider à leur assurer des soins et une vieillesse heureuse :

☐ Je demande un reçu fiscal

Chèque à l'ordre de : « **Fondation Nationale pour le Clergé** »

☐ Je souhaite recevoir des informations sur les legs, donations et assurances vie.

Si vous êtes Imposable sur le revenu, vous bénéficiez d'une déduction fiscale de 66% du montant de votre don, dans la limite de 20% de vos revenus imposables.

**Vos coordonnées:** (obligatoires pour recevoir un reçu fiscal)

Nom, Prénom \_\_\_\_\_

Adresse \_\_\_\_\_

Code postal \_\_\_\_\_ Ville \_\_\_\_\_

Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Envoyez votre chèque à:

**Missionnaires d'Afrique - Pères Blancs**  
**5 Rue Roger Verlomme 75003 Paris**