



MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA
Ghana-Nigeria Link



SPECIAL ISSUE

DECEMBER 2016

THE 28TH GENERAL CHAPTER BROUGHT HOME:

Ghana-Nigeria Confreres Meet for the Post-Capitular Assembly in Tamale

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Editorial

A few months after a certain Chapter of a particular Congregation, the Capitulants were called to attend a recollection. At the end of the recollection they were all amazed and inspired by the preacher. They then asked the preacher: what was your inspiration for this wonderful recollection because we have never heard this before? He answered: "I was inspired by your recent Capitular Acts!"

The "Appreciative Discernment Method" is the backbone of the unfolding of the 28th General Chapter of our Society. This method was chosen to be used for the Pre-Capitular Assemblies, the General Chapter and the Post-Capitular Assemblies. We are still in journey with it for the coming six years: a challenge and encouragement to have a positive look, to appreciate one another than to be goggling for the speck in our confreres' eyes.

The Chapter took place in Rome from 13th May to 13th June 2016. It was brought home, in the Ghana-Nigeria Province, as confreres invited by the Provincial Superior met in Tamale from 10th to 15th October 2016 for the Post-Capitular Assembly.

This Special Issue of the *Ghana-Nigeria Link* is indeed the fruit of both the Assembly and the Method. We did not have to start lamenting or pointing fingers at each other because the *Link* had disappeared for a number of years. As a result, with a positive look and response, the Media Committee was formed among others. On behalf of the Media Team, we are happy to present this issue and thank all those who contributed to its apparition and those who will continue to support its future publications. We should not get tired to link up with one another and with the African world!

We now re-echo the positive affirmation which oriented the 28th General Chapter: *Filled with the joy of the Gospel and guided by the Spirit, we are an intercultural Missionary Society with a family spirit sent out to the African world and wherever our charism is needed, for a prophetic mission of encounter and of witness to the love of God.*

Together, let us take up the challenge of appreciating one another, our Missionary Society and indeed the whole creation. May Our Lady of Africa help us to discover and appreciate the riches lying in our actual mangers. In this way Christmas will be celebrated everyday in our new Bethlehem as we break and share unceasingly the Bread that comes down from Heaven.

Merry Christmas 2016 and Happy New Year 2017.

Serge Boroto Zihahirwa, M.Afr

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE FOLLOWING YORÙBÁ PROVERB?

Igi kan kò lè dá igbó ẹ.

(Literal translation: One tree cannot make a forest.)

Ghana-Nigeria Link is a newsletter of the Ghana – Nigeria Province of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa
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Think twice before you print me: save papers, save ink, save energy!

Provincial's Word

A General Chapter in the life of a Congregation (Society), is a very important moment. It permits the Society to evaluate itself and to see where the Spirit wants to bring it in the next six years and beyond. Our 2016 General Chapter was no exception, the method used, Appreciative Discernment was new though. This method allowed the Society to build on its strength, instead of evaluating and eventually lamenting on some failures.

The Chapter was preceded by a preparatory period, Pre-Capitular assemblies. Then came the Chapter itself. The Chapter was then brought home to each local entity (province etc), to be celebrated and adapted to their local situation. The Post Capitular Assembly of Ghana-Nigeria province was held in Tamale from 10th to 15th October. Instead of limiting it to only those foreseen for that, as stipulated in our Constitutions and laws, we decided to make it in the form of a Provincial Assembly. This enabled as many confreres as possible to actively participate in the Assembly.

It was a time of fraternal sharing and decision making. So many decisions were taken, including that of reviving and revamping one communication network. A "WhatsApp platform" was

immediately set and also the decision to get the Provincial LINK restarted was taken. Committees were set and they are all at work already. The apparition of this first LINK is a testimony of the revitalization of the life of the Province. A committee was also set to see to the establishment of the Statutes of the Province. A draft of which is already in circulation for the appraisal of confreres working in or from the Province. A group is also at work helping us to journey towards the celebration of our 150 years of foundation. Many other decisions were taken, and this, I refer you to our Post Capitular Assembly Acts.

What was very important for me was the spirit among us during this Assembly moderated by Luc Kola, Provincial of PAO. All felt at home, all generations represented. It gave me, and all a satisfactory spirit of belonging. We all look to the future with great hope. I take the opportunity to thank all and sundry for their active participation.

Our Superior General Stan Lubungo in his presentation of the Capitular Acts to the Society says "The time has come for us to make an effort to promote the good that we have received from God. For each one of us and for our Society, Appreciative



*Dominic Apee, M.Afr,
Provincial Superior*

Discernment is an encouragement to liberate in us the irrepressible and vital forces of the good grain instead of devoting our energy on something that contributes nothing to helping us become missionaries faithful to our identity and our charism." The province of Ghana/Nigeria has so much potential. May God help us to transform these positive energies to reality. May we be animated by the zeal of our Founder Card. Lavigerie.

May Mary the Mother of the Missions pray for us.

Dominic Apee, M.Afr
(Tamale, Ghana)

WHAT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME WAS THE SPIRIT AMONG US DURING THIS ASSEMBLY MODERATED BY LUC KOLA, PROVINCIAL OF PAO. ALL FELT AT HOME, ALL GENERATIONS REPRESENTED. IT GAVE ME, AND ALL A SATISFACTORY SPIRIT OF BELONGING. WE ALL LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH GREAT HOPE. I TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THANK ALL AND SUNDRY FOR THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION.



Participants of the 2016 Post-Capitular Assembly



Luc Kola, M.Afr—Moderator

Extracts from the Opening Reflection

Over the last few decades the world seems to have changed dramatically, we have seen the end of the evil apartheid system in South Africa. In 1989, I was behind the iron Curtain when the Berlin wall was torn down. In Northern Ireland, we saw a peace agreement after decades of hatred and violence. Nobody expected these events to have taken place. We have also seen great strides made in science and technology. Computers smartphones tablets seem to be part and parcel of the global culture. Communication has never been easier yet I often ask myself the question: have all these marvellous life changing events and technological advances really changed the world forever? In the last few years we are witnessing an ever growing radicalization and fundamentalism in religions. We think of the conflicts in Syria, in Africa, in Palestine. Conflicts are tearing people apart. People are suffering unbelievable hardships because of tribalism, corruption and leaders holding on to power at all cost. Religious extremism has reared its ugly head in Europe, in Africa and many other places; I think of the Attacks in France, in Belgium, Ouagadougou, Grand Bassam, and countless attacks in Kenya. In my own country Britain, after the Brexit vote, we have a country that is more divided, more isolated, weaker and all because some people thought we could do it alone.

The migrant crisis risks dividing Europe for ever. More refugees are dying in a desperate attempt to reach safe in Europe. And our political leaders apart from Angela Merkel turn their backs. This year alone more than three thousand migrants have drowned on the treacherous journey across the Mediterranean Sea - a sea that has become a graveyard. The bridges that seem to have been built between nations over decades are in fact tumbling. We seem to be building walls rather than bridges. Such a crisis

is also present in religion and in our own Catholic Church. It is in this world that we are called to live out our missionary vocation to become the salt and the light the Gospel calls us to be. It is in this world that we are to be the witnesses of a world that can be different; we are to witness to an alternative reality. Such a vocation is not new, for it goes back to the great prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. People like Amos, Jeremiah etc..., that dared stand in the truth and dared stand up against corrupt society and corrupt religion. Our own Society faces its own problems; an ever more frail and aging Society in Europe; a Society that is changing dramatically; mostly for the good in Africa. The African world needs more than ever our prophetic mission presence. This is where our charism is needed. This is the World that cries out for transformation and it is in this world that we are called to come to and indicate an alternative reality.

To this end, the Chapter was very much about enkindling the flame for all our members wherever we are. We are indeed one Society and there is only one mission that is ours. This came out very clearly in the initial Chapter statement which somehow allowed us to go deeper into our charism: "Filled with the joy of the Gospel... sent out to the African world and wherever our charism is needed for a prophetic mission of encounter and of witness to the love of God". From there we were able to look deeper at our spirituality, our community living and our mission. It proved to be a deepening of what we have cherished for so long but making it more explicit for today. Hence the insistence on our community living, our life of prayer, our sharing, but also on our being empowered to be more prophetic and radical in our following of the Gospel. In all our deliberations the influence of Pope Francis was very much felt and thus the words: 'margins', 'periphery', were very much



*Francis Barnes, M.Afr.
1st Assistant General*

part of our vocabulary. We have to be very much aware of the present reality of the world and we desire to be a transformative presence wherever we can. We shared about human trafficking, about the migrant issue both within and outside of Africa and our call to be more prophetic. We realized that without being rooted ourselves in the Gospel we will be mere clanging cymbals; without being rooted in a good community that shares both its frailty but also its joys we will never really give a witness to anything; without a more radical way of living a simple life style and without total transparency in our community finances we will be a counter witness. Without an earnest desire to live an authentic life in all its aspects especially in the area of our sexuality we will damage the very fabric of our Society. This was a clarion call to live a balanced life, an authentic life, a life more rooted in Christ, remembering that we do so in community. Our fraternal living must help us to see how very much we are able to live out mission in an ever growing concern for justice and peace. We are called too to reach out, to encounter the other, especially those of other faiths. At times we may well wonder how to go about such task yet already at Provincial levels we have set up coordinators in such areas and the call is to continually move forward.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

We also looked at the important role of the social media today. The young know better than ourselves the importance of Facebook, of twitter etc. It is for us to be better acquainted with just how useful such media can be in our desire to reach out to the young. Of course there are dangers and there we hope that we will be helped to make best use of such an important tool for our mission of sharing the Gospel. We are not alone in such an important endeavor and collaborative ministry is all important, with the MSOLA, the local Church and of course other congregations and lay people. We need to network—we cannot do it alone. In all of this we know more than ever that we are indeed sent to encounter those who

thirst for God, to be close to the needy, the young, to the Muslim world, to the margins in order to be part of a transformation that only the Kingdom can bring.

The Chapter was above all a call to live out our missionary charism ever more fully and to embrace the future with hope. Certainly we looked positively to the future and yet in some way there were issues that were not tackled. We did not really look at the issue of the functioning of the Mega provinces and we also failed to look at the whole question of personnel management. How do we manage the few resources we have? What commitments should we hand over, what others to take up? It is good to look positively at life but we must also not be afraid of important issues that

need urgent attention and discernment. We must allow our failings to be a learning curve and a springboard for ever greater commitment.

At a personal level the Chapter was a moving experience. It was certainly a Chapter full of young confreres, with most of the Capitulants coming from Africa, but also from Mexico and India. There was a great joy that resonated throughout the corridors of the Generalate, the fraternal atmosphere was very tangible and this was felt right until the end. We realized that we were indeed one missionary Society, one missionary family eager to radiate such joy and enthusiasm for a more prophetic and radical living out of the Gospel wherever we are.

Francis Barnes, M.Afr (Rome)

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he method used to guide the 2016 Chapter was that of the 'Appreciative Discernment Method', which is rooted in the school of Appreciative Inquiry. As it is the practice for any Chapter, this methodology will continue to guide us through the coming six years as we try to live out the 2016 Capitular Acts. The 'Appreciative Discernment process' can also be used in all our pastoral activities, community and personal living. It is a method that promotes conversations and revitalizes our energies.

Appreciative Inquiry has helped many organizations today on their road towards success. It is a method that human systems (organizations) make use of to uncovering the wonderful moments lived and thereby designing a path towards the brightest future for that particular system or organization.

Traditionally we often try to solve our problems by carrying out an analysis. In using the Appreciative Inquiry, we initiate a process of analysis which insists on looking at the positives

The 2016 Chapter Method

Storytelling Is Celebrating Life



R-L: Christopher Chileshe, M.Afr, celebrating life with Victor Shehu & Henk Bonke (M.Afr)

things that we already have or do. In focussing on what is positive, we alter or refine our perspectives on issues for the good of our organization or system. To put it in another way, imagine that the world was made up of two circles: one circle of 'positives' and the other circle of 'challenges', the 'Appreciative Inquiry' expands the circle of positives and in so doing reduces that of the challenges.

This process follows an expanding cycle which is made up of four phases call the **4-Ds**. They are the **Discovery** phase, the **Dream** phase, the **Design** phase and the **Destiny** or **Delivery**

phase. To begin with, a positive issue or statement is the target to be achieved. In the **DISCOVERY** phase all the members of the organization spend time to have an in-depth understanding of their system in order to discover or rediscover all that is positive. This is then followed by the **DREAM** phase where by the members spend time to discuss on 'miracle questions' that reflect on what the future will be. In the **DESIGN** phase, this dream leads to concrete proposals and principles that should make the dream come alive. Finally we have the **DESTINY** or **DELIVERY** phase where-

by we have to name and implement the steps by which the change must be realised. In other words, we come up with a plan of action, stating the what, who, when and how the project is to be achieved. This process is realised in the form of an ascending spiral and so the Destiny or Delivery phase leads necessarily to another Discovery and so life and changes go on and on!

The protocol followed by the Appreciative Inquiry throughout each phase is that of storytelling and the asking of positive questions. Storytelling is central to the Appreciative Inquiry method just as it is with African traditions. In telling the story, there is understanding and reinterpretation of the symbols of life. Telling a story is in fact celebrating life itself. Focussing on asking positive questions makes the discussions shorter and more interesting; also the narratives are positive and thought provoking for improvement. This usually gives rise to more inspiring stories. In the Discovery phase for instance, the questions asked are mostly about the good that was done already and the value in that good; such as "What do we look like when we give the best of ourselves?" The Dream phase is filled with straight forward questions that bring out the dreams from the members of the system i.e., "What would become a reality for us if we welcome all the gifts

that God gives us and if we use them to the full?" The art of asking positive questions is of prime importance in Appreciative Inquiry.

The Appreciative Inquiry (Discernment) is appropriate for discussions about our human organization, which is the Missionary of Africa, and also on the Province and communities. When we use the appreciative inquiry method in conversations and meetings we bring hope to one another.

The questions we asked during the open discussions were about the fruits of our mission and our lives; and also how we can move forward, and making more fruits in the coming days and years to come. That is how best we could grow in the realisation of our dream, which is doing the Will of God, bringing about the realisation of heaven on earth, and making the Kingdom of God a reality in the African world.



We celebrated with them: 25 years of Priestly Ordination of Dominic (right), and 25 years of Oath of Kenneth (left) and Malachy (middle) who remembered their comrade Clement (RIP).

Since we are all created in the image of God, each of us has positive aspects in us that can serve as a true guide to a fulfilled world. The Appreciative Discernment process or method helps us to bring out this goodness in us which was unconsciously suppressed at some point in our past.

As the Chapter continues to unfold let us then make our own this method of self-valuation. Let us embrace the good in us which the Gospels and our Provincial Charism Tree pointed out. These fruits reflect the values our Missionary Society has leaned on for many years. They are a glimpse of how rosy our mission will be in the future. The rosy and beautiful fruits to come will be the result of our individual efforts at living a positive mission today. We are the ones to build our tomorrow. As the Superior General put it; "The time has come for us to make an effort to promote the good that we have received from God." Let us then talk about our lovely issues through writing, WhatsApp, chatting, round table discussions, meetings, over a cup of tea or a calabash of *pito*! And in so doing, recreate our Missionary family into a lively beam of Christ's light onto the African world.



Christopher Chileshe, M.Afr
(Ejisu, Ghana)

"A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to redeem them from starving. They all have food in their own houses. When we gather together in the moonlight village ground, it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so. Let us find time to come together physically and enjoy the power of togetherness. Let's smile not because we don't have problems but because we are stronger than the problems."

CHIDNUA ACHEBE

Reply from the Founder after Receiving Report on the Ghana-Nigeria Post-Capitular Assembly

My dear Sons in Our Lord,

I have received with gratitude the report on your recent Post-Capitular Assembly and I have studied it with deep attention.

I join you to give thanks to God, recognizing the many blessings He is bestowing on your Province, revitalizing it and stimulating its growth in mission. May you be able to respond to this by a boundless dedication to the salvation of your brothers and sisters, and above all, recognize with humility that you are nothing, in spite of everything, but servants doing your duty. This is what I wrote to the first members of your Society when it was officially approved.

Permit me to underline some issues your Assembly treated which are dear to my heart.

I am especially grateful to God for your desire to be ever more deeply rooted in your charism. I see in this the working of the Spirit. Your charism gave birth to your Society. It is God's gift to you. It expresses who you are called to be, how God wants you to cooperate with Him in the service of the Kingdom. It gives direction and meaning to your life and all you do. It is the source of your missionary dynamism. May you be always inspired by the charism-tree and may it be the reality of your Province.

Secondly, may God in his goodness always preserve in you the spirit of joyful generosity. May he give you the strength to sacrifice all and yourselves for the salvation of those to whom He sends you. It is the law of the apostolate, as Paul writes in 2 Cor. 12:15, "*I will most gladly spend and be spent for you.*" Make these words a reality in your lives. Then you will know the joy the Apostle speaks of: the joy of taking part in the work of God, in the work of redemption, in the work of transforming the world as you would say today. The mission today needs missionaries who have the same spirit Christ expressed: on fire themselves, setting others on fire. "*I have come to bring fire to the earth.*" (Lk 12, 49). As I told the scholastics in the Second Cycle at Carthage, the missionary must be a man of fire. His vocation is to continue the work of Christ. May this spirit of generosity be an important criterion in your admission of candidates.

Thirdly, you will remember how in the very first Constitutions of your Society I stressed what you now term "Encounter and Dialogue." Visiting, making contact with others, gradually developing relationships of trust and friendship. In this context of mutual understanding and respect, the Good News can be shared. That is why I insisted on you being close to the people and learning the local language. In my instructions to your first missionary forebears in Kabylia, I even ordered them *sub gravi* to speak Kabyl and Arabic but never French. Likewise to avoid using interpreters even if they had to endure embarrassment in the beginning. So I am pleased to see your strong recommendation that within a few years, nobody would preach through an interpreter. However, in a post-Vatican II Church, I would not impose this *sub gravi*.

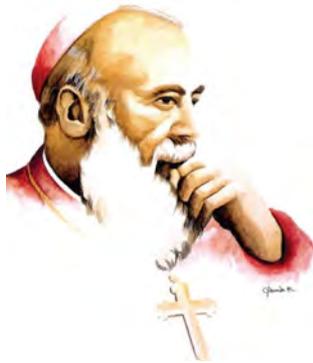
Now for that crucial issue of intercultural community living and mission. You are well aware, my dear Sons in Our Lord, how much I have insisted since the beginning, on community life and working together. It is an essential characteristic of your charism, one of the roots. That is why I wrote so forcibly in the first pastoral letter approving your Society that "in no case and under no pretext would the Society ever send you to be less than three missionaries together in one post. We will refuse the most advantageous, the most urgent offers, rather than abandon this fundamental point". I have been deeply pained at seeing over the years how this fundamental rule has been disregarded. I rejoice at seeing how this basic principle is being re-affirmed today.

Yet the fact of being three missionaries in a post does not in itself make it a community. It only provides the material for community to develop. In my letter promulgating the decisions of the first General Chapter, I made three recommendations. The final one, the most important of the three without which all the others would be futile, is simply: *love one another. Remain united in heart, in thought. Form a truly single family. Hold strongly to the esprit de corps. Let not discord ever penetrate you. In a word, be not only united but one.* This is the grace Our Lord asked the Father for his apostles, knowing that this grace would bring all others and in its wake, the conversion of the world. It is also the grace I ask for you, the fundamental law I give you.



Oneness that is a grace, yes, but a grace that calls for your cooperation; that requires growing self-knowledge, daily conversion of heart, on-going personal work, developing relationship skills and daily dying to self. Yet the longed-for fruit follows: *communities that are life-giving and dynamic*. In the words of your Assembly: *intercultural communities that witness to the Kingdom*. *Your first apostolic act is your community living*.

Finally, I note with satisfaction your concern for the spiritual life of the community and its members. To be men of prayer. That is how the first instructions to the missionaries of the Society said they should introduce themselves to people: as men of prayer. All your activities – pastoral ministries, JPIC, ED, migrants, whatever form your activities may take - will be hollow if you are not men of prayer. To be rooted in Christ (the tap root of your charism-tree) is to be a man of prayer, and vice versa. It is to live in a growing familiarity and friendship with Jesus Christ. It is to recognize that all your activity, your ministry, is Christ's activity and ministry in which you are called to share. In this way, your activity expresses your rootedness in Christ as does your prayer. To use an expression characteristic of the Ignatian Spirituality I chose as most suited for your Society, you are called to be "contemplatives in action." People need to recognize you as men of prayer, as prayerful communities. Then, like John the Baptist, you become pointers to God and to Christ, showing them where to seek and how to find.



Farewell, my dear Sons. I bless you and I pray that your Post-Capitular Assembly will renew your hope and your zeal for the mission. Keep in your hearts my words that I saw printed on the T-shirts some of you wore: "Be apostles and nothing but apostles." I am all yours in the love of the Lord.

Charles, Archbishop of Carthage

[Letter communicated through **Mike Targett, M.Afr** (Kumasi, Ghana) smiling here on the photo]

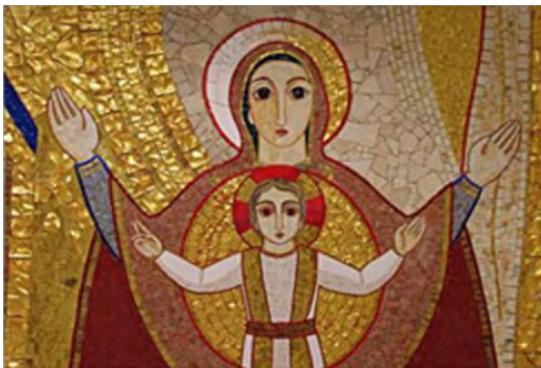


How Would God Recite the Our Father?

Have you ever asked yourself how God would pray the "Our Father"... or better still the "My dear child"?

Yes, my dear child who finds yourself on earth at times crushed and lonely, confused, wounded or grieved... when you are made of star-dust each single day.

You are my kingdom to come since you are the "kinship" sealed in the love I have for you and for all.



You are to have your daily nourishment if you do not keep this for yourself only but you share it in increase with the many.

I do forgive you when you forgive yourself and others because I do understand your failures of growth.

Truly one has to forgive one's self before being able to do so to neighbour.

Not an easy task to undo the inside "Gordian" knot that prevents freedom, your own freedom and that of others to burst forth.

Remember your forbearers in Paradise tasting the fruit of good and evil...

Say therefore "Deliver me from the good that seeks no new values... since from evil a new start can always be made".

This way in this "kinship" that draws people as much as galaxies together I do see you reflected over me in one firm embrace and hear you now like when "God does pray to God".

Manuel Bonet, M.Afr (Menorca, Spain)

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

The Provincial Council met immediately as we closed the Post-Capitular Assembly. Among other news from this meeting:

Emmanuel Mambwe, appointed to the province, had reported in Nigeria and he was preparing to go to a village to learn Yoruba. **John Aserbire** was announced to be coming for his home leave in November 2016.

STAGIAIRES 2016-2018 – FINAL APPOINTMENTS

The final appointment of stagiaires had been readjusted as follows:

NAME	FROM	COMMUNITY	COUNTRY
Ephraim Konkobo	(Burkina)	Savelugu	Ghana
Benjamin Mkandawire	(Zambia)	Left from the novitiate	
Emmanuel Nyirenda	(Malawi)	Wa	Ghana
Patrick Kalonji	(RDC)	Nyankpala	Ghana
Dominic Abiriga	(Uganda)	Osogbo	Nigeria
Felix Kiboba	(RDC)	Ibadan-Agbowo	Nigeria



The three stagiaires appointed to Ghana visiting a female chief in Tamale. R-L: Ephraim, Chief, Emmanuel and Patrick.

Munster Diocese: the seminarian from Munster diocese, Germany, did make a pastoral experience in Wa and he enjoyed it. There is another request from the same diocese for young people to come and work in the Province for some time. The organizers will come in February/March 2017 for a feasibility study tour.

JPIC Coordinator: Prosper Harelimana is the current JPIC Coordinator and also the bursar / formator at Ejisu. His performance in the two responsibilities was discussed and the Council finally decided that Prosper continues being the JPIC Coordinator of the Province; because he was doing well, he had the personal interest in the subject and since he was not on the teaching staff of SUC, he had enough time to combine the two tasks.

REPORTS FROM COMMUNITIES AND SECTORS:

TAMALE 'SECTION':

Savelugu: William (Bill) Curran has returned from medical treatment at home.

Nyankpala: The moving of Olivier Lecestre to the Provincial house left Nyankpala with two confreres.

The Provincial House hosted a session on accounting which was much appreciated by the participants.

Morin House: In June Roger Sinabisi started dialysis treatment in Accra and he continued this at the Tamale Teaching Hospital twice a week.

The Tamale monthly gathering of the confreres was renewed.

The **Ghana Catholic Bishops** were in Tamale for their plenary.

From Yendi: Malachy Oleru went on home leave and was back and fine.

NAVRONGO-BOLGATANGA 'SECTION':

Bolgatanga: After the departure of Jean Bosco Ntihebuwayo there are three confreres in the community. Kevin Rand is well and has taken over as Parish Priest of Soe. Erus Tirkey is the bursar of the community and is doing well. Pierre Boro is settling in well as he adjusts from Burkina.

Bunkpurugu: Serge Boroto has joined the community since May 2016. Maralf Jimenez was appointed to Bunkpurugu by recommendation of the General Council. He arrived in October 2016. Manuel Bonet (Manolo) made a positive visit to the parish and Bindi in particular. He stayed in Bunkpurugu for about three weeks with two other visitors. All Manolo's possessions were removed from Bindi. He went back a happy man and wrote to thank everybody.

WA COMMUNITY:

Patrick E Obai is the parish priest in Wa and working well. Damien Watine moved to live with the Bishop, at the latter's request.

Gerry Smulders expressed interest to visit Ghana and Nigeria. All our communities were ready to welcome him.

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

KUMASI 'SECTION':

Ejisu: Christopher Chileshe arrived in the Ejisu community at the beginning of the academic year. The province was grateful for his accepting to be part of the formation team. As Jacek Wroblewski, Christopher also applied for the immigration quota and was waiting for its release before they could apply for the resident permit and other documents.

Fifteen new candidates joined in the first year making thirty-six candidates at Ejisu this academic year – a packed house. The first semester had commenced well. The mood in the house was fine and good.

Due to heavy rains and poor workmanship a large portion of the wall fence unfortunately fell down. There is a probability that the rest of the wall may be vulnerable. The repairs had commenced; *eventually they have been completed successfully.*

The Spiritual Renewal Center (SRC) community remained the same except that Jesus Maria Velasco was tired and looked forward to his impending home leave. Mike Target was well and enjoyed his ministry. Sr. Mary-Ann the Directress of SRC wrote asking Dominic Apee for a confrere to join the team at Kumasi. The Council noted that the centre is very helpful to our Society as it provides serious spiritual services to our students in Ejisu and from Abidjan. Its continuity will benefit the local Church but also our own selves.

NIGERIA SECTOR:

The Nigeria sector has 11 confreres and four stagiaires.

In September 2016 they held an election for the **second councilor and Gilbert Rukundo** was elected and Vigilius Kawama coming out as the substitute.

St. Clement Pre First Phase: All was well in the formation house. The three members of staff (Andrew Anab, Piet de Bekker and Victor Shehu) were as also doing well. The building had recently been renovated.

Ten aspirants were received for the 2016 – 17 program and were introduced to the parishioners.

Lectures begun on 4th October 2016.

Stagiaires: All the four stagiaires in the sector were doing well. The two new ones were being prepared to go to Itasa for the language learning. The stage coordinator encouraged that new stagiaires would attend the orientation course offered in Osogbo.

St Thomas Ibadan: The confreres were doing well in the parish of St. Thomas. New public toilets were being fenced in to avoid misuse. The surrounding of the parish church was tarred. The stagiaires were very helpful in the parish activities such as visitation of the old and sick.

The quasi parish church of St Augustine was ready for roofing after the next harvest festival. A retreat was organized.

St. Martin de Porres church got its own land and a tent was erected for Mass gatherings.

St. Vincent de Paul – Ogo-Oluwa: Virgilius Kawama and Gilbert Rukundo are running the parish with two stagiaires, (Dominic Abiriga and Edmond Ouedraogo). The church building was redone and the people are happy with the work. The garden and fish projects are encouraging. Jonathan Bahago joined the community after his home leave. The oldest parishioner passed away at the age 105.

Kenneth Obinwa: Kenneth was found with cataract. He hosted the confreres for lunch on their way to Toby's ordination.

James Ngahy is the **Child Protection Officer** for the Nigeria Sector. He went to Nairobi for a seminar on child protection and was in the process of writing the highlights of the meeting for confreres to read.

Our late confrere **Englebert Beyer** was immortalized in the University of Ibadan by the chaplaincy by naming a hall in his honor. The confreres attended this celebration all dressed in their *Gandourahs!*

FINANCIAL COUNCIL:

A confrere cannot sit on both the Financial Council and the Provincial Council, except the Provincial Treasurer. The Ghana/Nigeria Financial Council would compose of: John Abobo (Provincial Treasurer) James Ngahy, Prosper Harelimana, Piet de Bekker and John Chomba Mubanga.

The **Provincial Financial Council Meeting was set for 25th to 28th October 2016.** A special Provincial Council meeting was planned for the first week of November to discuss the budget before forwarding it to Rome.

A meeting was announced for the training of bursars in the **Banana Program.** It was scheduled for January 2017 in Nairobi.

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

BRIEF REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONS

JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION:

Prosper Harelimana sent in a written report of the Ghana Nigeria – JPIC-ED Commission. They have been meeting regularly.

James Ngahy continues to work with the Justice, Development and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Ibadan, Nigeria.

There was relative peace in Bunkpurugu after the dispute between the *Jafouk* and *Jamong* gates of the *Louk* clan. Amani Bulambo and the JPIC-ED commission visited refugees who were hosted at Tandjouare refugee camp in Togo. The JPIC-ED commission will continue to monitor the peacebuilding process in Bunkpurugu.

Future Plans:

To organize a Provincial workshop on *Laudato si*.

To hold a recollection on 20th November 2016 for JPIC-ED groups in the Tamale section.

To assist the Bunkpurugu team in 'trust building programs'.

The youth of Bunkpurugu parish intend to assist victims of the violence with thatch grass this dry season.

To continue preaching the message of peace especially in the time that Ghana prepares for the 7th December 2016 General Elections.

VOCATION DIRECTORS:

GHANA:

Roger and Clement Tuureh form the vocation team of Ghana. They continue to promote vocations in schools, parishes and through visits to the candidate's families.

Twelve (12) aspirants attended a 'Come and See' session of 10th - 14th August 2016 at Morin House.

This was also the period that seven aspirants were prepared for starting the pre-first phase at Ibadan. Two failed the tests; and of the five, one absconded and four went on to Ibadan for the pre-formation program.

The Archdiocesan Vocation Team organized a week-long program of vocation animation at the Cathedral parish in Tamale; 15 – 25th September 2016. The team took part in this event.

Mission Sunday was due on 23rd October 2016 and the team planned to celebrate it in both Upper East and Upper West regions of Ghana.

The report ended with a detailed program of visitations to various schools in the months of October and November.

The Council was informed that by 1st January 2017 Clement Tuureh was expected to take over as Vocation Director from Roger Sinabisi.

NIGERIA:

In June and July 2016 visits were made to candidates' families.

Ten (10) Nigerian aspirants entered the pre-first phase house at Ibadan.

Nelson's mother died and the Vocation Director attended the funeral.

In August there was a reunion with Missionaries of Africa Ex-students. They met to name their group and to formulate the constitution. A report of the meeting was not yet out.

The ordination of our confrere Toby Ndiukwu was successful and great.

Future Plans:

There was a plan to do missionary animation in Lagos.

A 'Come and See' session was scheduled for December 2016.

There was a meeting planned for Vocation Directors in Jos.

Victor was to visit The 'De la Sale' brothers in view of consulting them on how to scout for brother vocations.

Victor was scheduled to visit the north of Nigeria for vocations.

Many requests and enquiries for vocations were received on a regular basis in Nigeria.

MISSA Family:

In Ghana the MISSA Family meets regularly with Clement Tuureh. **They are organizing a celebration at the Nativity of Our Lady Parish in Ko-Nandom, UWR on 8th January 2017 to mark their 10th anniversary.**

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

COMMUNITY ANIMATORS:

The following confreres in bold were appointed as community animators for their respective communities in Ghana:

WA:	Patrick E Obai , (John Mubanga)
NYANKPALA:	John Amona , (Gazena Haile)
SAVELUGU:	Gaspard Cirimwami , (Bill Curran, Pierre Songre)
EJISU:	Nicholas Aayire , (Jacek Wroblewski, Prosper Harelimana, Christopher Chileshe)
BOLGATANGA:	Pierre Boro , (Kevin Rand, Erus Tirkey)
BUNKPURUGU:	Serge Boroto , (Amani Bulambo, Stephen Ofonikot, Maralf Mendevil)
MORIN HOUSE:	Roger Sinabisi (till January when Clement Tuureh will take over.)
PROVINCIAL HOUSE:	John Abobo , (Olivier Lecestre, Trevor Robinson, Henk Bonke, Dominic Apee).

Role of the community animator: To bring the community together around a community project. To call meetings. There must be a distinction between the parish priest and the community animator.

DEATHS

Bernhard Hagen visited Ghana shortly before he died in Germany. The Provincial represented the Province at his burial. **Patrick Shanahan** also passed away in UK and Dominic Apee and Luc kola, on their way back from the ordination in Nigeria, were able to attend the funeral mass organized for him in Accra by those who worked with him in the Street Child projects. The Council was also informed of the passing on of **Fr. Michel Baratin** who died as a diocesan priest in France. As a Missionary of Africa, Baratin worked in Bongo, Walewale and Bunkpurugu parishes. He is greatly remembered in these places.

The next Provincial Council Meeting was set for Nigeria. Dates: 24th to 27th January 2017 (arrival and departure)

Requiescat In Pace



Michel Baratin. Born on 29th March 1926 and died on Tuesday the 31st May 2016 at Cerdon, France. 33 years of missionary life in Ghana from 1953 to 1986 (Walawale, Navrongo, Bolgatanga, Garu, Bunkpurugu, Sirigu, Bongo). Since 1993 he was incardinated in the diocese of Orleans, France.



Patrick Shanahan. Born on 30th August 1941 and died on Sunday the 7th August 2016 at Cambridge. 51 years of missionary life in Ghana (Tamale-Minor Seminary, Wa, Tamale-Cathedral, Tamale-Ed.Ridge, Accra) and in Great Britain.



Bernhard Hagen. Born on 17th March 1936 and died on Thursday the 25th of August 2016 at Bad Rothenfelde, Germany. 47 years of missionary life in Ghana (Tamale-Bole, Tamale-Tuna, Wa-Lassia-Tuolu) and in Germany.



Hugo Van den Haute Born on 25th July 1930 and died on Sunday the 12th of November 2016 in Genk, Belgium. 61 years of Missionary Life in Ghana (Tamale-Wiagha, Tongo, Bawku, Navrongo, Sirigu, Garu, Bolgatanga) and in Belgium.

- Also on Wednesday the 23rd November 2016 we were informed of the sudden death of **Majeed Apee**, younger brother of our Provincial Dominic Apee, in Bolgatanga, Ghana.

"Give them eternal rest, O Lord, and may your light shine on them for ever."

Language Learning

On the Advantage of Learning the Local Language (1)

Wherever stagiaires and young confreres are appointed, they are normally given a period of time to learn the local language. Presently in the Northern Region and particularly in the rural areas, many people do not speak English. Since, by vocation we are sent to all, whether they speak English or not, whether they are Christians or not, we should do the best we can to learn the language of the people if we want to have normal contacts with them, contacts in which we have something to bring and something to receive. In the long run we would lose a lot, and they too, if these contacts were habitually done through an interpreter. TICCS speaks of language learning as an experience of bonding. It is the best introduction to the people of the place, to their culture, and to friendship with many of them.

Many of them have gone to school and those of higher education (graduates, trained teachers, university students etc) may prefer to speak with us in English. But the others, who are the majority and whose education stopped at a lower level of education, often feel more at ease in their own language.

In the market of Tamale where many traders speak English, communication is much more pleasant when it is done in Dagbani. In villages, communication with people who do not speak English loses its flavour if it is done through an interpreter: compared to direct communication, it is like a beer that is flat or tepid... Stagiaires who are going to become priests must foresee that after their ordination they may come back to the parish of their stage and may have to hear confessions; this means that they must be able at that moment to hear and understand what people tell them in their language. Absolving a penitent without understanding a word of what he/she says means amputating the celebration of this sacrament of



Olivier Lecestre, M.Afr

something that is essential to it: meeting the redeeming Christ in a truly human encounter.

Homilies through an interpreter... Yes, if it cannot be done otherwise, and if the interpreter understands properly what he hears and can translate it well. (It happened at Holy Cross Parish that a deacon came from the Major Seminary to preach on a Sunday. I was in a village on that

day. But I was told when I came back that the deacon who did not know Dagbani asked someone to translate his homily sentence after sentence. At some point of his homily the preacher illustrated a point by referring to a

monastery where monks had been quarrelling a bit too much among themselves; and this, he said, had damaged seriously the community life in that monastery. English speaking parishioners in the congregation took their lesson from it, at least those among them who did not understand Dagbani; but those who followed the homily both in English and in Dagbani could not believe their ears when they heard the translator speak of a community of monkeys at loggerheads with one another...)

In my opinion, stagiaires should as soon as they can write a very short 'homily' for each Sunday and practice

"STAGIAIRES WHO ARE GOING TO BECOME PRIESTS MUST FORESEE THAT AFTER THEIR ORDINATION THEY MAY COME BACK TO THE PARISH OF THEIR STAGE ... ABSOLVING A PENITENT WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING A WORD OF WHAT HE/SHE SAYS MEANS AMPUTATING THE CELEBRATION OF THIS SACRAMENT OF SOMETHING THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO IT: MEETING THE REDEEMING CHRIST IN A TRULY HUMAN ENCOUNTER.

it many times with their helper before they read it on Sunday. Since the vocabulary used for homilies is always the same, this way of doing would help them to acquire some

basic expressions which, in the long run, would come spontaneously when they are needed.

Olivier Lecestre, M.Afr
(Tamale, Ghana)

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"At the same time as preparing the personnel for the mission, we also had to give them the means of connecting with the people they were to evangelise. Therefore, all the missionaries set themselves to learning Arabic and Berber. This was the first time it had happened. Therefore we had to plan to provide them with books of religious writings in the local languages, and which non-believers could use."

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Language Learning

TICCS Course Tamale

Greetings to you, afar and near, from Ghana, Tamale, Nyankpala, St Monica parish!!!

I wish to share with you my experience of a short Cross Cultural Course. We spent one month (4th September to 30th September) of a Cultural Introduction course at TICCS (Tamale Institute of Cross Cultural Studies).

The course was based on introducing its participants to the diversity of Ethnic-groups and languages in Ghana. The course was made of the following content: Do's and don'ts in Ghana, Chiefs and politics in Ghana, Ethno-linguistic Groups in Ghana. Cross cultural spirituality and cross cultural differences; Conflict resolution, Islam in Ghana today. Dynamics of African Traditional Religion, Kinship systems and Gender roles and social change in Ghana, Christianity in Northern Ghana today, as well as Witchcraft mentality, friendship, cross-cultural communication and language learning, to mention but a few.

The above mentioned topics aim at providing the basic capacity and understanding to the participants (Missionaries as well as lay people) for ministering or doing pastoral work in various Cultures in Ghana.

Many have asked me, how was your experience at TICCS? And what was beneficial in this one month course? Well, I had a "good" experience, I said. Some defines "good" as that which is attractive and pleasant. Now, that which was pleasant and attractive for me, I would say is, just by the value of my own awareness, active presence and full participation. Moreover, that hunger of feeding more and more on the dynamic aspect of cross-cultural values.

These were what made my experience to be already good. Nonetheless, one already benefits in such an adventure through one's presence. Now



Patrick Kalonji Kadima squatting

depending on your awareness of your presence, one benefits to a low or higher degree. I personally thought it wise to say, I think all these topics we spent time on are interrelated in such a way that if well understood as such they become instruments and tools to enhance our various goals in our mission places. And they become catalysts that facilitate one to work in harmony with the local people and enhance their lives.

Not only the local people's life; but through the lenses of cross-culture, one observes that there is an enhancement of relationship. This is to say, even the one ministering or doing pastoral work finds and discovers that he or she is enhancing her or his own life, hence he or she finds fulfillment.

Among the benefits of my time spent at TICCS, the course also provided us with the skills, drills and techniques to learn a new language. As one of my fellow compatriots, Benezet Bujo, once said, "Language is one of the capital elements that cannot be neglected." I subscribe to his opinion and will not neglect learning Dagbani. And as Frank Smith said: "the limits of my language are the limits of my world".

I also believe that without Dagbani my pastoral experience will be limited. Ludwig Wittgenstein also said: "A

different language is a different vision of life." I am open and ready to have that experience of a vision of life which is different from my own culture's vision of life.

In few days to come, I will be going for my language course in one of the villages. As I am preparing myself and feel equipped enough with my experience at TICCS, Dagbani will be my first African language that I will sit down and concentrate on learning as such. I wish to speak it like a native speaker. I know, it is not a Bantu language, but I am willing to put much effort into it. May the almighty God, who blew on the Apostles the Holy Spirit to speak in various languages, blow in me as He did with them.

I couldn't be writing these lines nor have the TICCS' experience if it was not because of certain Facts. For this, first and foremost I thank God for all the wonders He keeps on performing in my life. Countless thanks to the Province of Ghana-Nigeria, and to the Sector of Ghana for making it possible for me to undergo such course. Many thanks are due to Fr. Clement, the stagiaires' co-ordinator. I cannot forget the Director of TICCS, Fr. Joshua SVD, the staff members of TICCS, and my course mates. Lastly, my thanks would be incomplete if I fail to thank the members of my community at St Monica parish. Yes, we can!!!

United in Christ

Patrick Kalonji Kadima
(Stagiaire in Nyankpala, Ghana)



Among the participants : Thérèse Namakoma (MSOLA), Patrick Kalonji, Ephraïm Konkobô, Mario Nyirenda (stagiaires) & Serge Boroto (M.Afr).

Extracts from “Les Joies de ma Formation”

Je m'appelle Bernard DEO-ANGYI, Stagiaire en première année à Bandiagara au Mali. (...)

Je suis arrivé à Bandiagara, le 18 août 2016, après avoir passé quelques jours à Ouagadougou et au Ghana. A mon arrivée à Bandiagara, où je suis nommé pour le stage apostolique, je me suis retrouvé dans une communauté fraternelle et priante. Notre communauté se donne à la mission du Christ avec un grand souci pour la croissance spirituelle et humaine auprès des personnes auxquelles nous sommes envoyés. Nous donnons la priorité à la vie de prière (individuelle et communautaire), à la vie communautaire (internationale et interculturelle), à l'apostolat etc...

A présent, je me sens accueilli et intégré dans les activités communautaires et paroissiales. Concernant les expériences joyeuses et personnelles de mon stage apostolique que je viens de commencer à Bandiagara, j'aimerais partager ma vision sur le milieu en général et mon constat avec le peuple dogon en particulier.

La paroisse Marie Reine de Bandiagara, où se trouve ma communauté, est une des six paroisses qui se trouve dans le diocèse de Mopti. Mopti fait partie de six diocèses au Mali avec Sikasso, San, Bamako, Ségou et Kayes. Le Mali, mon pays de stage, est l'un des six pays qui composent la province de l'Afrique de l'ouest avec le Niger, la Mauritanie, le Burkina Faso, le Togo et la Côte d'Ivoire. Je suis dans un milieu communément appelé le pays Dogon, dont la capitale est Bandiagara. Ce milieu est divisé en deux parties : il y a les Dogon de la plaine et les Dogon de la falaise. Je dirai qu'il n'y a pas de grande différence entre le climat ici au pays dogon et celui de chez moi, au Ghana. Donc, en ce qui concerne la condition climatique, je n'ai pas encore eu un problème d'adaptation. Je dirai que je me suis trouvé au milieu d'un peuple

généreux, qui a un esprit de solidarité, de soutien mutuel, de respect. Une visite à une famille dogon est touchante et inoubliable, car elle donne toujours un accueil chaleureux. Leur riche culture et tradition attirait beaucoup de touristes dans le passé, mais maintenant les touristes ne viennent plus, à cause de l'insécurité au nord Mali. En tant que instrument de l'Evangile, notre communauté travaille pour qu'il y ait une charnière entre les valeurs traditionnelles et les valeurs chrétiennes à travers les divers sessions et formations. A cet effet, l'accent particulier est mis sur la catéchèse. Comme communauté de Pères Blancs, qui s'occupent de la paroisse, c'est notre souhait que le peuple dogon puisse vivre l'Evangile dans leur propre culture. Mon milieu de stage est celui de la première évangélisation. Il y a aussi un milieu où il y a beaucoup de musulmans mais aussi les croyants de la religion traditionnelle. Malgré tout, ils vivent ensemble en paix. Cela est pour moi un témoignage de respect, de foi et de rencontre.

A travers l'apprentissage de la langue, mes constats et mes échanges avec des individus (musulmans comme chrétiens), j'ai déjà remarqué que ce peuple a un attachement fort à leur culture et à leur tradition. Cela se manifeste dans la croyance aux esprits et aux interdits.

Les mariages et les funérailles auxquels j'ai participé, témoignent déjà que ce peuple s'identifie comme un, malgré les différences de religion (chrétienne, musulmane et traditionnelle). J'ai constaté également que deux choses sont très importantes pour les peuple dogon ; la terre et la

pluie. La falaise dogon est un milieu où le sol est très pauvre et caillouteux. Donc, ces gens prennent parfois la terre d'un endroit pour pouvoir couvrir les cailloux sur un autre endroit afin de les rendre praticable pour l'agriculture. La langue elle-même, a plusieurs dialectes, qui varient d'un village à l'autre. Cela me donne l'impression que la langue est difficile à maîtriser mais pas impossible à apprendre.

Etant donné que je fais l'apprentissage de langue en communauté et en sachant que la priorité pour le moment c'est la langue, j'ai accepté librement comme apostolat, la visite des prisonniers, la visite des malades, et l'accompagnement des enfants de chœur. Je m'occupe aussi de la sacristie. Ces apostolats me donnent déjà une grande joie de me trouver au milieu de ces gens qui ont besoin de l'amour, de la miséricorde et du pardon de Dieu comme moi-

même. C'est ainsi que je prends ces choses comme un appel aux services des autres. En cette année consacrée à la miséricorde de Dieu, je demande la grâce de rester joyeux dans la mission en posant des gestes d'amour du Christ aux autres. Le message de l'Evangile qui m'est très cher c'est celui des œuvres de miséricorde (Mt. 25, 35-36). Avec toutes ces expériences joyeuses et formatives, que je suis en train de vivre, je ne peux que dire cette conviction : « être missionnaire procure beaucoup de joies, même si ce n'est pas chose facile. » ; devenir missionnaire, c'est un appel, c'est l'œuvre du Saint-Esprit. J'espère que je profiterai au maximum cette étape de formation.

Bernard DEO-ANGYI
(Stagiaire in Bandiagara, Mali)



Bernard DEO-ANGYI

What I Think!

Community life is one of the key elements that are focused on by the Society of the Missionaries of Africa. It makes us to be different from other religious houses. The community reminds us that we are one as St. Augustine says, we are all driven by one force (God) which is above all of us, and this force makes us a community. This force brings us together for the service of the people. We simply do not move according to what we want or who to live with, but God (the force) brings us together. We become one and build a community. The members of the community make the community to be what it is. They can make it hell or a small paradise.

Most people like the Missionaries of Africa simply because of their community life style. When you ask the majority of aspirants why they want to join us, one of the reasons for joining the Society is always the 'community life'. This makes it therefore important especially for those already in the community to put in more efforts and contribute more on building up the community spirit. When the young ones are well initiated in community, they pass this on to the next generation. I remember one student shared with me saying that; our communities make us to be what we shall live in future, and if they make us 'sick', the 'sickness' will be transferring from one generation to the next, and treating this will become difficult. We must know that majority of the people give out what they have. If we plant hatred in our communities, we shall harvest that hatred throughout.

We cannot complain that we cannot build a community because we are only two, no! Remember Jesus used what was present to feed the people. He never waited to look for more fish and bread before doing it. When we can focus on what brought us together and always go back to visit those days we first knocked at the doors of Missionaries of Africa; when we forget about this and feel important, we run

away from our main objective, which should be service at all times. In one of his letters, Pope Francis warned the clergy about the issue of power and clericalism. We need at all times to be human, we need to land on the ground and face the realities that Jesus would face today. We sometimes focus too much on ourselves rather than on what brought us together. If at all times we could remind ourselves that we are stagiaires, each one knows that at the end all his stage the recommendation will be based on how he lived, this to me is not healthy, rather it should be based on what Jesus told his disciple, (the Joyful Return of the Disciples LK 10:17-20), 'do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you but rejoice because your names are written in heaven.'



James Rioba, second left, in Bunkpurugu

We stay in communities of three members or two, depending on the community where you are, and all have studied the Trinity and are able to preach well about Trinity. This Trinitarian communion is what the community ought to be. Not having studied much yet about the trinity, but from the little that I know about it, I would explain that it is about three persons living under one roof and yet they are one, in that, when you see one you have seen the other two. As Jesus said, when you see me you have seen the father. Having preached this way, I should not feel more important than the other confrere. All that we do or say should represent this reality, if not then our preaching is always like water to our Christians.

What were the reasons for starting community life according to the Cardinal? Cardinal Lavignerie being a prayerful person might have been inspired by this Trinitarian communion and thus wanted his sons to adapt it.

In African culture, we have a proverb that say: 'what an old man is able to see while he is seated, a young man will not be able to see while standing'. Let us reflect on this saying sometimes in our communities.

A Community should be a place where young men are well moulded for the next generation, whether they continue in the Society or they decide to leave. We need good men within our Society of Missionaries of Africa, as well as outside it. The whole world needs good people. We need to think positive about the world in which we live. We were given this world to till by God, to make good out of it. A community should not be a place where the voiceless are always accused of things they are not guilty of, where they are unheard, or lies are told about them, and they are blamed for everything that goes wrong, even when the truth can be found elsewhere, simply because it is the route all should pass through for the accomplishment of their dream.

A community should be a place where justice, peace and the integrity of creation are strongly practiced before taking them out to others. We preach what we know and have, let us say the truth at all times, let us trust one another and others. Lastly let everyone visit Johari's window. Personally, evaluation was something that I did not like at first and whenever I heard about it, I always had fears. However, I came to understand that evaluations make me to grow and know about dark areas so as to work on them to bring change with the others. When therefore, we hear negative points from others about us, it is not that they hate us, but that it is because they want to help us to grow. Thus, our communities should be made up of people who can help each other to grow spiritually, humanly and intellectually.

Let us all think and not only think but think big!

James Rioba

(Stagiaire in Bunkpurugu, Ghana)

20th August 2016: Fr. Toby Ndiukwu Ugochukwu, M.Afr – Priestly Ordination

It was a great day as the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Orlu, Imo State came alive once again on the 20th day of August, 2016 following the elevation of nineteen Ordinandi to the Sacred Priesthood by the Catholic Bishop of Orlu Diocese, His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Augustine Tochukwu Ukwuoma.

The sparkling celebration commenced with a Holy Mass officiated by Most Rev. Dr. Augustine Tochukwu Ukwuoma, flanked by other bishops and con-celebrated by all priests present. Also present at this ordination were friends from Kenya to witness the great occasion, the Provincial Superior of Ghana-Nigeria, Fr. Dominic Apee, the Provincial of PAO, Fr. Luc Kola, the Sector Superior of Nigeria, Fr. Shehu Victor, alongside other confreres and M.Afr Students.

Being the first Missionary of Africa from Orlu Diocese, after the ordination on the 20th, Rev. Fr. Toby Ugochukwu had his first Mass on the 21th of

August 2016 at his parish St. Michael Catholic Church Urualla, Imo state.

Despite the fact that Fr. Toby Ugochukwu had studied and worked in many countries, which gave him the opportunity to speak many African languages, to the surprise of everyone, he was still able to offer the holy Mass in his local dialect. This shows that he's really living his



Fr. Toby in green surrounded by confreres

passion. In conclusion, the ordination and first Mass were well attended and celebrated. It is our prayer that, the Lord who called Fr. Toby into his vineyard will grant him a successful mission in **Mali where he is appointed** to and other missions ahead.

Victor Shehu, M.Afr
(Ibadan, Nigeria)

20th August 2016: Fr. Maralf Jimenez Mendivil, M.Afr – Priestly Ordination

The Ordination of Maralf Jimenez Mendivil, M.Afr took place on the 20th of August 2016 in the Cathedral Santuario de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, by Most Rev José Leopoldo González González, first Bishop of Nogales Diocese, Sonora, Mexico. He celebrated his thanksgiving mass on the 21st of August in Sagrada Familia Parish, Nogales, a Town sharing border with the United State of America.

The ordination activities started with 8 days expositions and seminars on Africa, and the life and mission of the Missionaries of Africa. These expositions and seminars were jointly prepared by the sons and daughters of Cardinal Charles Lavigerie. It was a great experience of Missionary and vocation animation. The Bishop, Priests and lay faithful attended the events. They were all happy to have



Fr. Maralf standing at the right hand of the Bishop

learnt a lot about Africa and the charism and mission of the sons and daughters of Cardinal Charles Lavigerie.

The theme: *Passion for Africa and the peoples of Africa* was the center of attraction. People knew very little about Africa, and many never heard about Missionaries of Africa before. Hence the curiosity was high to come

and see us, and hear about our experiences and testimonies.

Once again, we, Missionaries of Africa in Mexico experienced great hospitality and a fraternal collaboration of the local Church. The Bishop, Priests and lay faithful participated all heartedly to all the events of the ordination: from expositions, to liturgy, and receptions.

I was confident enough to tell the Bishop and the family of Maralf that Ghana-Nigeria was a safe and lovely place to work as Missionary. Because it is the Province I know much and cherish much. We wish Maralf a happy and fruitful mission in **Ghana where he is appointed** to Bunkpurugu parish.

Cyriaque Mounkoro, M.Afr
(Queretaro, Mexico)

20th August 2016: Fr. Mathew Wedamdaga Banseh, M.Afr – Priestly Ordination

Neem trees were elegant around the road as we entered Sandema on Saturday 20th August 2016. This beauty could lead each person to sing silently or loudly or in personal words *Laudato si*. All eyes were turned towards Christ the King Parish, Sandema where our confrere Mathew was being ordained priest together with four other diocesan ordinands, all from the catholic diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga.

It was the Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, His Excellency Most Rev. Jean-Marie Speich, on apostolic visit in this diocese, who ordained the five deacons to the presbyteral order. The local ordinary, His Lordship Most Rev. Alfred Agyenta, was also present, surrounded with the clergy in the diocese. The Lavigerie family was well represented: not less than 15 Missionaries of Africa, among others two came from Burkina Faso and working in **Zambia, the country of Father Mathew's first missionary appointment**; three Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, a student from Abidjan, six stagiaires appointed in Ghana, and members of MISSA Family were present. Father Mathew had other visitors who came from Burkina Faso and D.R.Congo. A multitude of witnesses, including the paramount chief, attended the Eucharistic celebration which started at 10:00am and ended by 2:30pm. The pamphlet gave us the program of the liturgy and the biographies of the ordinands while the back cover explained the logo of this Year of Mercy. The participation and the joy of the whole community glittered on the faces of all not without the sweat from the heat of 'Sir Brother Sun'.



Laying on of hands by the Nuncio

In his homily, the Apostolic Nuncio revisited the celebration of the Jubilee of Mercy for priests which was celebrated on 3rd June 2016 saying: 'It was intentionally held on the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to remind Priests of the Heart of the Good Shepherd overflowing with mercy that every priest should aspire to imitate.' He then quoted Pope Francis: "This celebration of the Jubilee for Priests on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus invites us all to turn to the heart, the deepest root and foundation of every person, the focus of our affective life and, in a word his or her very core..." Most Rev. Jean-Marie Speich emphasized the aspect of service of the ministerial priesthood serving the common priesthood. He then quoted John 15:16: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." Thus he insisted saying that the ordination to the Priesthood 'is a gift of God's call and never a human right.' The representative of the Pope assured the ordinands of the continual presence of God in their ministry. He then echoed to their hearing the three Evangelical counsels and other promises attached to their ordination which required on their part honor and faithfulness. He then stressed: 'you are called to be a

man of prayer and a man of God whose heart is moulded into the heart of Christ.'

B e f o r e
concluding,

the homilist reminded the ordinands, and indeed all the priests of the diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, using the words of Pope Francis: "You are not masters of the doctrine." He underscored the Gospel reading (Mt 20:25-28) as a call 'to be a humble servant and Good Shepherd.' He then quoted Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict and Pope Francis respectively: "...the Eucharist is the center of your life as priests...", "Eucharist naturally leads to charity especially towards the least, the last and lowliest...", and pastors must "move beyond the safety and security of the sacristy, and to open their hearts and lives to the poor." He lastly emphasized: 'strive for holiness and spread love'.

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS ON ME... HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS..." (LUKE 4:18-19).

After the Eucharistic celebration people were invited to continue rejoicing as they shared in different allocated places the festal meal. In the evening the whole Lavigerie family was invited to dine with and at Fr. Mathew's family.

The following day, Sunday 21st August those who were still present continued the joyful event with the family and friends: our newly ordained priest led us to the altar of the Lord as he presided for the first time over the Eucharistic celebration. This took place at Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Minor Basilica, Navrongo. We could read on Fr. Mathew's souvenir card: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me... He has sent me to proclaim the Good News..." (Luke 4:18-19).

May He grant you, dear Mathew, a golden mouth and the deer's feet in His mission!

Serge Boroto Zihahirwa, M.Afr
(Bunkpurugu, Ghana)



Fourth from right is Fr Mathew surrounded by confreres

Universal Hospitality: A Call to be Merciful Like the Father

Our first call is to realise that we are inextricably interdependent and interconnected. Precisely because the only race is the human race, it is of utter significance that we recognise the divine/moral obligations that we owe one another. It is the task of this reflection to posit that mercy is in itself not just a virtue, but a gift which springs from the Father. Christ—the climax of the Father's revelation—showed us different faces of the Father: A merciful, loving, compassionate, faithful, caring and welcoming Father. These attributes of the Father enjoin us to have an attitude of universal hospitality, that is, the sense of duty towards the Other regardless of their ethnic, religious, and racial differentiations. This idea of universal hospitality neatly interacts with Kantian cosmopolitanism which considers the world as a shared global community, and all persons as citizens of that community.

However, we live in a world increasingly misguided by nepotism, discrimination, prejudice, mistrust; a world where walls are built instead of bridges, a world where our gates, borders, and doors are closed to strangers—migrants, refugees, and foreigners; a world where objects replace humans as entities to be dignified and adorned; in short, our world could be likened to the predominance of what Marx called “commodity fetishism”.

To begin with, what does mercy entail? Is mercy just about forgiveness? How can we be merciful like the Father? How can it be lived concretely? How can we go beyond our differences and glory in that which unites and binds us together? To these, Christ employs two important parables—the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), and that of the Merciful Father often referred to as the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32)—to better explicate the answers to questions ensuing from considerations about mercy.

To be merciful like the Father (Lk 6:36) implies recognising the Other as a person with dignity no matter his race, background, how less intelligent or less important he might be in social strata, dirty, wounded, insane and disordered. The merciful Father—seeing his son from afar without taking into consideration how dirty he was having spent his last days with the pigs—ran to him, kissed him and accepted him back. The Good Samaritan seeing the Other injured, half-dead and bruised, did not care about his destination, did not care about their differences, but rather stopped and answered his most important call, that is, the call to be responsible for the Other, to heal the Other, to build a bridge and to reach out to the Other.

The face of the Other should always be a reminder that the Other precedes the ego (self). The Other is an alter ego (another self); this is why Christ clearly recommends that love your neighbour as yourself (Lk 10:27). In other words, “my relationship with the Other as human gives meaning to my relationship with all the others. I am responsible for the Other.” Pope Francis stresses that we must reach out to people where they live, in their cities, and homes, and peripheries because ‘where there are people, the Church is called to reach out to them and bring the joy of the Gospel like Christ.’

Christ, inviting us to be merciful like the Father, establishes that we—created in his image and likeness—are capable of being merciful. We partake in the divinity of Christ since in Christ who is both human and divine we are all made Children of God (cf. Gal 3:26). The face of the Other should invite us to self-giving and instil in us the “responsibility of the Other in the self.”

What happened to the battered man in the parable? The Priests and the Levites—both Jews—who were expected to be models of mercy sees him but just passed him by. In the

words of the evangelist, Jesus emphasises that ‘...but a Samaritan’ an outcast, an enemy to the Jews, rather showed mercy to someone who is supposed to be his enemy. This tells us that we should not allow ethnic prejudices and differences prevent us from being merciful even to our worst enemies. Why must we close our hearts to the Other? Why must our borders be closed? No one is beyond redemption. Everyone needs an opportunity; we must give and provide the breeding ground to make the Other a better person. Thus the Samaritan, like the Merciful Father, showed us that mercy entails love and compassion which are the drivers of tolerance and solidarity.

Mercy does not entail forgiveness alone; it also has as its goal, reconciliation and unity. We live in a society where families are divided against one another; parents and children do not see each other; ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, international conflicts, chaos between two societies or cultures; and these are sometimes passed down from generation to generation. Like Jesus and the woman on Jacob's well we are called to go beyond our hatred, our hurts, and our tribal and ethnic differences and be like the Father who strives to unite rather than divide.

In a nutshell, compassion—the spirit of empathy—predisposes us towards mercy. To show mercy to strangers is to be hospitable to them with an open heart, thereby putting a smile on their faces. God's mercy—like his love—knows no boundary; it is universal and for everyone. Love is concrete: It is giving oneself to the Other; love knows no boundary, it is being hospitable to the Other. Thus, in God, we find the profoundest archetype of mercy. Thanks to our nature as children of God, we too are capable of becoming merciful like Him and healing the world from its global differences.

EKEH Nelson Chinedu
(Student in Theology—Jerusalem)

Fr. Dominic Apee's 25th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination: 'My Grace Is Sufficient for You' 2 Cor. 12:9

On Saturday the 19th November 2016 we celebrated a thanksgiving Mass to mark the 25th anniversary of the priestly ordination of Fr. Dominic Apee, provincial of the Ghana-Nigeria Province, Missionaries of Africa. With the permission of Most Reverend Alfred Agyenta, Bishop of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, the celebration took place in the Sacred Heart Cathedral, in the regional Capital of Bolgatanga, Upper East Region of Ghana. Present were his parents and relatives and friends.

The Mass started at 9:00 am and was presided over by Fr. Dominic Apee. The moderator (MC) for the occasion was Fr Samuel Atinga of the diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga. Fr. Atinga warmly welcomed all the priests and the guests that had assembled for the occasion. The mass was well organized and it exuded the joy of the occasion.

Very Reverend Gabriel Atidoo, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, and a close friend of Fr. Dominic preached a homily that was full of personal memories that went back to the beginnings of their friendship when they were both seminarians. Fr.

Gabriel's homily stressed the point that God chooses ordinary people, and enables them to do extraordinary things. Fr. Gabriel also added that vocation is a free call from God, and the why and the reason for Him calling one and not another is known only to Himself. Those who are called must have the strength to accept hardships, and difficulties; they must be people of hope and deep faith, people who are ready to make sacrifices: there can be no true life, whether it be a religious life or a marriage life, without sacrifice.

Fr. Dominic, by the request of Fr. Gabriel, concluded the homily by giving us a beautiful and meaningful story on the philosophy of UBUNTU. The story centered on a group of children who were asked by someone to enter a race. The winner of the race was told that he/she would be given sweets as a prize. To the surprise of the person who orchestrated the race the children held each others' hand, and ran as one. After the race the man asked the children why they had done this, and the children answered by saying that if one of the group had taken the prize the others would be sad; but if they all ran as one all would share in the prize: all would be happy. Rather than run as individual



Left is Tresor Lulenga and second from right is Fr. Dominic Apee

competitors they all ran as one and as one they all shared the sweet: no one lost, they all won: no one went away sad they all went away happy. If we stop competing with each other, and start sharing what we have with each other, our world will become a place of joy and happiness. "I am because we are". We need each other.

Thus many other "quality" sharings happened that our words are limited to describe them. we write only this so that you may believe that God is always at work in his servants, and may He bless us, keep us from all evil and lead us through Jesus-Christ into his Eternal Kingdom.

**FR DOMINIC APEE @ 25:
"IN GRATITUDE TO GOD
FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF
BEING HIS SERVANT."**

Tresor LULENGA
(Stagiaire in Bolgatanga, Ghana)

TOWARDS the 150th ANNIVERSARY OF OUR FOUNDATION:

1868/69—2018/19

The second preparatory year started from 9th December 2016 to 8th December 2017 under the theme:

LIVING
THE PRESENT
WITH PASSION.

Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year



**"ON A CERTAIN 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, A PARISH PRIEST ASKED A MAN:
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF YOU WERE IN JOSEPH'S SHOES?
THE MAN ANSWERED: I WILL TAKE THEM OFF."
[LOL MEANS LAUGH(ING) OUT LOUD, BUT ALSO LOTS OF LOVE].**



The Year of Mercy logo

"MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER" (LUKE 6: 36)

The almond shape

An important figure in ancient iconography, it represents the union of two circles, that is the two natures of Christ: divine and human.



The motto

The motto of the Year of Mercy is taken from the Gospel of Luke: "Be merciful like the Father"

The colors

Red: blood, life and divinity
White: the light of Christ.
Blue: represents man.
Golden: Adam (and each one of us) is in a process of becoming like God through Jesus Christ.



The gaze

Jesus and the man share one eye. This means that God communicates himself in such a way that man is able to see as He sees.

The concentric ovals

They suggest the movement of Christ who carries humanity out of the night of sin and death.



The Good Shepherd

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who carries Adam (and all of us) on His shoulders.

Photo: <https://churchpop.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/1-2.png>

"In every end, there is also a beginning."

The Logo of the 28th General Chapter



An interpretation by the artist (Sister Gys Dubé, MSOLA):

I have tried to suggest movement in the logo, joy, positive waves and attitudes, the flow of communication, a "momentum" to definitely "go forward" towards others, in a dynamic of dance... There is also, at the heart of this drawing, Africa, Christ, the "sunshine" of our lives, and our Mission too, symbolized by the movements towards the peripheries... And also the Festive Creation symbolised by the reddish foliage which moves up towards the Creator. Our hands extended towards Him in praise: "Laudato si" !

(<http://www.africamission-mafr.org/societe/Chapitre2016/reporting.htm>)