

JANUARY 2020 PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY:

Rekindling Our Call to Service in the Ghana-Nigeria Province

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Editorial

After the Provincial Assembly the reconstituted Media Commission of the Province met to reflect on how best we can be of service to the Province. Besides other matters, the most important thing we tackled was the Ghana-Nigeria Link. It should have been published many months ago, but.....!!! I do not want to make an autopsy here or make an MRI scan. But the Media Commission sincerely apologises to you, for having disappointed you with this delay! Sorry! We do not wish to express our regrets only in words, but also to make amends for past failures by offering you this "special number of the Ghana-Nigeria Link". It is our firm resolution that from now onwards this magazine will be published twice a year: one at the end of May and the one towards the end of November. Promised!!

Some of the material that was earmarked for publication in the Link has now gone even well beyond its sell-by date. Again apologies for those who submitted an article. In this issue we wish all the same still to come back with some reflections on the closing celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Lavigerie Family. The booklet that has been published for that occasion will surely prove to be a very useful resource booklet for anyone interested in our past Mission.

But of course, we do not stop at the past, we must also look forward with courage and enthusiasm to the future. Maybe this is a good description of what we did during the January Provincial Assembly Meeting. Only a few confreres could not participate in these wonderful days because of very valid reasons. In fact, 33 confreres and 6 stagiaires took part. The Meeting took place at TICCS and 16 participants were accommodated there, while the others found a bed either at the Provincial House, Morin House or the Archdiocesan Guest House. We were very happy that the former Provincial, Dominic Apee, agreed to be the facilitator of the Meeting. Elsewhere in this special issue of the Link you will be offered a more detailed description of all that transpired during these wonderful three days.

There is of course much more in these pages, but I will allow you to discover these by yourselves. On behalf of the Media Team, I wish you a happy reading and we look forward to receive your reactions, contributions and observations. Please, do send these to us, so that we can indeed fulfil our pledge given above that the regular two numbers of the 2020 Ghana-Nigeria Links will reach you at the above-indicated time slots.

André Schaminée, M.Afr.

Housa Proverb

Da koyo a kan iya

(Literal meaning; it is through learning that we are able to know)

Provincial's Word

I start my word with these words from the Psalmist: *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!* I wish to welcome all of you to this General Assembly from your various communities in Nigeria and Ghana. It is indeed a good opportunity to come together, to get to know one another better and to look for ways to enhance our collaboration and support in carrying out the mission received from Christ in our Province of Ghana-Nigeria. I wish to welcome in a special way Dominic Apee, my predecessor, who agreed to come and animate our meeting. He has a lot on his hands in his busy Parish in Ouagadougou, but all the same he accepted to come and facilitate this meeting. Dominic, you are most welcome and thank you for your availability and acceptance.

The aim and essence of this Assembly is to bring all of us in the Province together so as to meet each other, to bond, to socialize, to reflect together, to encourage one



*John Aserbire, M.Afr.,
Provincial Superior*

another and strategise our future activities. We are all busy in our various ministries and it is not easy meeting some confreres, though we are in the same Province. Some have even never met at all yet! This Assembly gives us the opportunity to meet and get to know one another. The attendance is very good. Only eight out of fifty confreres and stagiaires were not able to come for various reasons. An attendance of 96%. Bravo for the good turn-up.

This Assembly is special for

us Missionaries of Africa, as we just concluded celebrating 150 years of our foundation. We recognise that “with Christ we remained faithful to our mission”, the mission Christ entrusted to us. It was a time to evaluate and count our blessings. A lot was done by our predecessors and continues to be carried out by us in our present apostolic activities. The predecessors were united despite the challenges of their time and they managed to do a lot, and do it very well, because they were united and had a common vision of Mission. I would like us to use this occasion to look for ways to improve our working relationships and community living. In our last post-Capitular Assembly strategic plans were put in place as a guide for all of us to follow. This is an opportunity to revisit them and see how much we have achieved as individuals, as communities and as a Province.

Thank you!

John Aserbire (GhN Provincial)

Ghana-Nigeria family



DAY 1 OF PROV. ASSEMBLY; 'MY LOOK AND THE LOOK OF OTHERS.'

MONDAY, 20TH JANUARY 2020, WAS THE ARRIVING DAY FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH WAS HELD IN TAMALE AT THE TAMALE INSTITUTE OF CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES. IN THE EVENING, ALL THE FORTY-ONE CONFRERES FROM THE GHANA AND NIGERIA SECTORS CAME TO THE LECTURE HALL FOR THE RECOLLECTION IN READINESS FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELIBERATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING DAY. THE RECOLLECTION WAS PREACHED BY OUR CONFRERE SERGE BOROTO AFTER THE OPENING PRAYER FROM YOSEF GIDAY. THE THEME OF THE RECOLLECTION WAS 'MY LOOK AND THE LOOK OF OTHERS.'

THE PREACHER BEGAN BY TELLING US ALL TO SHOUT TO THE MASTER OF THE MISSION WITH THE WORDS OF BARTIMAEUS, 'MY TEACHER LET ME SEE' (MK 10:47- 51). HE SAID, 'EACH ONE OF US NEEDS THE GRACE TO USE PROPERLY THE GIFT OF SIGHT TO LOOK AT OURSELVES NOT IN A NARCISSISTIC WAY THAT COULD RESULT IN A DISORDER TO DISREGARD OTHERS BUT IN A CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER' WHICH COULD MAKE US RECOGNISE OUR STRENGTH AND LIMITATIONS. SOME OF US WE MAY BE BLIND TO OUR LIMITATIONS. HOWEVER, OUR LIMITATIONS BECOME CLEAR WHEN WE LOOK AT OURSELVES IN THE

MIRROR, WE COME TO DISCOVER THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO LOOK AT OUR OWN FACES BUT OTHERS CAN LOOK AT THEM. HENCE THE NEED TO REALISE THAT THERE ARE SOME OF OUR SHORTCOMINGS THAT CAN BE NOTICED BY OTHERS OF WHICH WE OURSELVES MAY NOT BE AWARE. FOR THIS REASON, HE SAID, 'WE NEED TO LOOK AT OURSELVES AND OTHERS AND TO LET OURSELVES BEING LOOKED AT BY OTHERS.'

HOWEVER, THE PREACHER SAID, 'LOOKING AT OTHERS AND LETTING OTHERS LOOK AT US IN OUR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES IS NOT ENOUGH, WE NEED THE LOOK OF JESUS CHRIST TO BRING TRANSFORMATION IN OUR LIVES TO BECOME LIKE OUR FOUNDER CARDINAL LAVIGERIE WHO HAD IN HIS HEART THE PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL AND THE DESIRE THAT IT BE PROCLAIMED TO ALL PEOPLES, THEREFORE, MAKING HIMSELF "EVERYTHING TO ALL" (CF. 1 COR. 9:22). IT IS IN THIS MANNER, THE PREACHER SAID 'AS MISSIONARIES, WE WILL DO AWAY WITH ALL THE PREJUDICES WE BRING IN OUR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES THAT MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO APPRECIATE OTHER CULTURES AND EMBRACE ALL CULTURES.' IN ALL OUR APOSTOLIC AREAS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES WE WILL BE ABLE TO WITNESS TO

THE LOVE OF JESUS. FOR OUR LOOK WILL BE LIKE THE LOVING LOOK OF JESUS WHICH HE EXPRESSED IN THE TEXT OF THE RICH MAN IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK WHICH SAYS, 'JESUS LOOKED AT THE RICH MAN AND LOVED HIM JUST AS HE WAS' (MARK 10:17-27).

SERGE CONCLUDED THE PREACHING OF THE RECOLLECTION WITH AN INVITATION TO MEDITATE USING THE BIBLICAL TEXTS OF THE RICH MAN IN MARK 10:17-27 AND THAT OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN IN MARK 7:24-30 TO HELP US ENTER SILENTLY WITHIN OURSELVES, ALONE WITH JESUS, IN ORDER TO INTERIORISE HIS LOVING LOOK WHICH WOULD MAKE US PROMOTERS NOT HINDRANCES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN OUR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES.

BY CHRISTOPHER NKANDU



**DAY TWO OF THE
PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY:
REPORTS FROM
COMMISSIONS AND
REVIEW OF THE POST-
CAPITULAR ASSEMBLY
RESOLUTIONS**

Day two of the provincial assembly was mainly allocated to JPIC-ED, Media and Child Protection commissions, and also to review the resolutions taken in the post-Capitular Assembly of 2016. The commissions gave reports of the activities they carried out in 2019 and also unrolled their plans for 2020.

The most prolific message came from the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection



Commission, which was presented by Victor Shehu and Jacek Wroblewski. They gave definitions of the child, child abuse, forms of child abuse (physical, psychological) as well as a definition of who is a vulnerable adult (someone under your power e.g. workers in our parishes or communities). They warned confreres not to mess around with workers, and always to protect children in their working places. The following five principles are important for safe guarding a vulnerable adult: confidentiality, empowerment, prevention, proportionality and protection. How do the Missionaries of Africa handle cases of abuse?

To this Victor and Jacek explained that the Society has guidelines, which are followed whenever there is a case of child or vulnerable adult abuse. Moreover, the Society organizes workshops to train its members on how to handle child or vulnerable adult abuses.

The JPIC-ED report was presented by Gaspard Cirimwari, who is the Provincial Coordinator of the JPIC-ED Commission. In his address, he highlighted the activities which they executed in 2019 in both



Ghana and Nigeria. Among others he mentioned workshops on human trafficking and domestic violence which were organized in both Ghana and Nigeria. Also he gave a feedback on the illegal mining workshop, which he attended in Rome. He called upon confreres to empower communities to say "no" to exploitation of minerals in their areas, to know their rights and sensitize them on Garamuze (illegal mining) activities. For 2020, Gaspard revealed that the JPIC-ED team has organized a provincial workshop in Wa, on conflict resolution. The purpose of this workshop is to equip confreres and lay people belonging to JPIC-ED groups in our parishes with skills in preventing or handling conflicts whenever they occur.

Lastly, Gaspard ended his remarks by calling upon the Province to establish vocation skills training centres. He explained that this is the only way to tackle the issue of youth unemployment.

The last report of the commissions came from the Media team. Serge Boroto, the Provincial Coordinator of this team, started his remarks by explaining the origin of the Media Commission both at the level of the Province and at that of the Society. I will not say much about this, because elsewhere in this number of the Link there is full article on this topic. Nevertheless, the whole idea behind a media commission is evangelization. And the big question is: how can we use media in our ministries? On the achievements of the Media Commission of the Province since it was established in 2016, Serge mentioned the following: the creation of a website for the Province; a WhatsApp group page, through which we can share events taking place in the Province, such as ordinations, major celebrations and workshops; a Facebook page and also a YouTube page;. Regarding the website and Facebook pages, Serge called upon confreres to visit and use them for communication and sharing of activities going on in their areas through these media platforms, because we want to know what is going on in all these places, Serge insisted! At the end of his exposition, Serge rolled out the media team activities aligned for the New Year, which will take place in Ghana and Nigeria. He invited all confreres

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to take part in these organized events actively.

At the very end of Day Two, there was a review of the resolutions that were made during the post-Capitular Assembly of 2016. They were scrutinized one by one. All were happy with the progress made so far; a good number of these resolutions have been implemented after the Assembly. To mention but a few: a new project in Minna was started; the financial policy for the province was documented and distributed to confreres; establishing a support for means of transport to new confreres and many others. On the other hand, confreres had to swallow their pride, discovering that projects

like Dungu, establishing a house in Accra/ Kumasi, and the writing by confreres of their will, have not yet been implemented. All this invites us to make greater efforts to realise those projects. Also, confreres called upon the Provincial Council (PC) to do more regarding on-going formation by sending more confreres for studies in JPIC -ED, Media, etc. They also reminded the PC of the need of opening centres for our Province. We should not focus exclusively on parish work, and, if a need be, we should even close a parish in order to open a Centre! Lastly, confreres proposed fresh resolutions for the next three years, and set up the Strategic Plan

Committee with the task to work out the details of such Strategic Plan and submit it to the PC. It was a tiresome day, but worthwhile and very enriching.

By John William Nkhoma, MAfr



DAY THREE OF THE PROVINCIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY; WORKING TOWARDS FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

On 23rd January, 2020 the Provincial General Assembly was animated by Anthony Baaladong, the Treasurer General of our Society. In order to help us to a deeper understanding of 'working towards financial sustainability', he used the morning session for his presentation, followed by a discussion, on "Mission Support Office and Income Generating Projects", while the afternoon was on the topic "Building Projects and Pension Fund". We ended the day with the Holy Eucharistic Celebration and a fraternal supper.

Financial sustainability is all about answering these two questions: 'How do we ensure that our financial resources cover our needs for today and far into the future? How do we finance our apostolate and care for the confreres in the long term?'

In order to achieve financial sustainability we need *internal control*, *engage with professionals*

and *greater collaboration*. For *internal control*, the Treasurer General tells us, we need to apply the "four eyes principle", that is, all important transactions are to be seen and confirmed by at least two people, who must be aware of what is happening. For example, a cheque should always be signed by two people. We need also a



common accounting system package (Banana) and equip the financial committee with audit tools. All this will both protect ourselves and our money. We need also to engage with professionals: since we rely on our investments, we must learn and get advice from those well-equipped. And we need *greater collaboration*: it is a call to all treasurers at all levels to collaborate and work with a common policy on bereavement, for instance when a confrere loses

his parents and relatives. They are encouraged to have common policies on means of transport.

Hence, to reach financial sustainability, the General Chapter of 2016 encouraged "Mission Support and Income Generating Projects". (1) *Mission Support Office* is also known as *Development*

Office. The 2016 General Chapter gave us some of the objectives for it: mobilizing funds, promoting projects in our different provinces and training some confreres to know how to look for funds. This office makes contracts with Viatores Christi, and is linked with development committees; however, we are challenged to find a competent confrere to run this office. (2) *Income generating projects*: the 2010 General Chapter opened the door for them, and there was a lot of **Continued on page 7**

enthusiasm in the different provinces. Different projects were explored, for example regarding real estates. And the 2016 General Chapter “*encourages service-based income-generation projects in line with our charism*” (7.2.1.c), such as Youth Centres, Renewal Centres, etc. These are some of the places that started projects: PAO in Ougadougou; PAC in Bukavu; EAP in Kampala, etc. But we need to keep our eyes open about income generating projects: we must learn lessons from what happened in PAC and other places. We are all encouraged in our provinces to have a small manageable project that does not require too much capital. Therefore, for any income generating project, we must do a rigorous market study before starting; asking and finding out: what is this business? Have we made a market research? Who are our competitors? Where will we sell our product or who will be our clients? Who are the professionals involved in our projects? What is the experience of those involved in building? Where did they build before? Have we done a detailed study of our project to avoid modifications at the last minute? Have we thought carefully about the management phase of our project (How will we run our project?). Have we observed strictly the project management guidelines of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa?

The afternoon session was based on “*Building Projects and Pension Fund*”. In building projects, there are some elements to consider: (1) a careful and detailed analysis and elaboration of the functionality of the property. We must ask: What exactly do we want and need the property for? What purpose is it meant to serve? For how many people is it? (2) We must think in the long term: that is, we may need our property to serve our needs of today, but it is very important that we keep our eyes also on tomorrow, on the future. (3) for any project, we must consult our confreres, they are the stake holders. (4) We must involve professionals right from the beginning till the end, making sure that everything is done in a professional manner. (5) Before starting any project, we must consider and know our income. Do we have enough to begin and complete this project? The last presentation and discussion were on the *pension fund*. From 2008, the Society of the Missionaries of Africa has a saving fund for confreres from Africa, Mexico, Philippines and India. The age of retirement is 65 and the average lifespan is presently set at 80 years. The Treasury General pays the initial amount into the fund, to secure the old age. And the province of origin of each confrere pays an annual amount for all its confreres into that pension fund. Once a confrere is 65, his monthly pension goes to the Bursar of the Province, where he is appointed; it does not belong to the individual. Even if you leave the Society of the Missionaries of Africa, you will not get it. We ended the day with the Holy Eucharist and a fraternal supper, which both took place at the Provincial House. Fr John Aserbire, the Provincial of the Ghana-Nigeria Province presided the celebration of the most august sacrament, while the Vicar General of the Tamale Ecclesiastical Province, Fr Matthew Yitierih, concelebrated with him. After this we had our fraternal supper with joy and love. While rejoicing, the Vicar General, representing Most Reverend Philip Naameh, the Archbishop of Tamale, was given the opportunity to address us. He thanked God for the gift of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa, and for their memorable presence in the Northern part of Ghana. He said that without the arrival of the Missionaries of Africa, life would have been

meaningless in the North because of the slavery and abuses of the northerners by the Southern kingdoms. The Missionaries of Africa, when they arrived, cared not only for the soul but also for the body. They taught the Christian faith, introduced modern education, and empowered local people in developing their milieu. He ended by saying that what he is today and the fact that he speaks to us in English is all because of the grace of God through the Missionaries of Africa. He prayed for more vocations for our society and for the divine protection upon us in our various places of apostolate.



By Pierre Chanel Ulama, M.Afr.

2020 Provincial assembly of Ghana-Nigeria in pictures



**Animator, Fr Dominic Apee,
Former Prov. Of Ghana-Nigeria**



**Gilbert giving a report
from St Thomas Communi-
ty, Ibadan, Nigeria**



**COMMUNITY
MASS AT THE
PROVINCIAL
HOUSE, MAK-
ING THE END
OF THE PRO-
VINCIAL AS-
SEMBLY**

**Community meal at
the provincial House**



THE 2020 PROVINCIAL STAGIAIRES' MEETING IN ABUJA - A MOMENT OF RENEWAL AND DISCOVERY

Work without play / relaxation makes Tom a dull boy, is a saying that emphasizes the importance of relationship in whatever work / apostolate that we do. It was with this spirit that we entered into our 2020 Provincial Stagiaires' meeting from 27th January to 6th February 2020.

This Stagiaires' meeting came at a time when we were at the climax of a very busy schedule characterized by the advent season, the language course (for some of us), the Christmas season as well as the

provincial assembly which took place recently in Tamale. With this in mind, the facilitators did all they could to ensure that the meeting doesn't look exhausting and yet it still served the purpose for which it was intended. That is to come together as candidates at the same stage of formation, know each other, interact with each other and also enrich each other with our different stage experiences.

The second day of our meeting started with a recollection to usher us fully into the mood of the meeting and to help us reflect deeply on the meeting and its essence. The facilitator of the Recollection, Fr. Johan Miltenburg M.Afr, started by inviting us to take this time of our

pleasant when brothers live in unity! However, to live in a community can be challenging and it has never been an easy thing.

Nevertheless, we are joined together by our commitment to do the will of God as M.Afr in our communities. The first

instrument of our realization in our task of evangelization is to live in evangelizing communities despite our differences, talents and weaknesses. Why did our Founder Cardinal Lavigerie insist that we should live in a community? Each one should be working to answer this question every day in our lives as Missionaries ought to be.



meeting as a special moment, a moment of sharing, prayer and also to take it as a key moment of asking God for more graces to renew our zeal in our Missionary commitments. He invited us to look at our past and present with gratitude for all the Lord has done for us as individuals, as well as a community. We dwelled much on Psalm 132/133 for our reflection. The text reminded us to value the community life. How good and

The afternoon was dedicated to an input from Fr. Serge Boroto, on 'intercultural living, a way of witnessing to Christ'. Considering the attitude of Moses while approaching the burning bush in the desert, Fr. Serge showed us how. Moses was invited to take off his shoes in order to meet God. This is also the call for us as we approach other people and their cultures.

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He journeyed with us on what it takes to embark on the journey from mono-cultural living to intercultural living, which we are called to. This is also the Society's dream. In his facilitation, he explained the different types of cultures that exist, their differences and their contribution in an effort to attain interculturality.

These included: monoculture, bi-culture, cross-culture, multi-culture.

In conclusion, he gave us the characteristics of an intercultural community which will always serve as a guideline and also help us in our different communities where we are called to live this interculturality. These included intentionality (a common/ community project), individual commitment, mutual tolerance, a forum for articulating frustration, appropriate correction, attention to stress and burnout, and clarification of vision. He ended with a reminder to each one of us that the journey from mono-cultural living to intercultural living is one that requires efforts and commitment.

In the subsequent days, we embarked on individual sharing under the moderation of Fr. Virgilius Kawama M.Afr. Our sharing included our family backgrounds, our missionary journeys, our joys as well as our challenges of stage. We were so proud that the meeting was a success with huge bonuses. These bonuses include a great sense



Stagiares and members of Chawa outstation, Minna, Nigeria

of connection since it was the first time we met altogether as stagiaires in the Ghana-Nigeria Province. A family spirit, especially exhibited through recreation which we were having every evening during the days of meeting. The other big bonuses were a tour around Abuja town, a visit to Lagos and most importantly a visit to all the M.Afr communities in Nigeria.

We are grateful to God for guiding us through this enriching activity. We also thank to our

facilitators in the person of Fr. Serge, Fr. Virgilius and Fr. Johan our recollection preacher for animating and accepting to be used by the Spirit of our God.

We thank the different communities for their warm welcome and for accepting to have us in these communities. It was for us a moment to learn and we look forward to

implementing what we learnt in your communities. We pray that God will bless our brotherhood and keep us united.

United under Ghana-Nigeria Stagiares' Association, We thank the Provincial, his team, and the Province in general for this initiative and we are grateful for the support rendered to us in all forms during this meeting. We also thank our different communities for their support and cooperation in this matter.

God bless you all.

By John Atugonza

(On behalf of Balthazard Buhagarha Grace, Pierre Maniragarura, Jean-Paul Jakwong'a Unencan, Barthelemy Buredi wa Buredi, and François Bwana Nyembo.)



FROM FRONT LEFT; FRANCIOS, BARTHELEMY, SERGE, PIERRE, JOHN, VIRGILIUS, JEAN-PAUL & BALTHAZARD AT THE SMA HOUSE IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away (Rev. 21;4)

Dear Bruno, we miss you so much. You were only 25 years old, you didn't deserve to die now. You were taken away from us for think about you every our eyes begin to shed

You were a man full of with everybody. The ceased to explain to us and live together as your brother stagiare is ment and advice; you came to you seeking

We will never forget, know you are in heav- meet again. May our merciful Father grant you eternal peace.



zeal, compassion, joy. You were relating oldest and the youngest alike. You never how we should go beyond our boundaries brothers. Your concern was to know how living their mission; always giving encourage- were very understanding to the people who for help.

Bruno. We love you and miss you, but we en, in the bosom of the father. We shall

By Balthazard, Pierre & Barthelemy

We prayed for the labourers and God has remembered us!!!

“And he said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to do his harvesting” Luke 10; 2

They are not yet enough because of the great demand of confreres, but the arrival of the new confreres to the Province is certainly God's gift to his people. Towards the end of the year 2019, the Ghana/Nigeria Province received seven new confreres; these include four newly ordained priests: **Pierre Chanel Ulama**, working in Nigeria/Osogbo; **Venant Bukuru** working in Ghana/Bunkpurugu; **Gabriel Michel Tewelde** working in Ghana/Nyankpala; **Jean Claude Habimana** working in Ghana/Bolgatanga and **Yosef Giday** who has come back to the province after five years of service in his home province and then two stagiaires (**John Atugonza**, appointed to the Nyankpala community and **François Bwana Nyembo**, appointed to Osogbo). Another confrere, ordained early 2020, in the person of **Alain Sossou Kokou** is expected to join the Nigeria sector.

The arrival of these confreres is perceived by the host communities as a boost to the pastoral work. And they all cherish a helping hand. As it is often said, and I personally agree, that the first experience is very crucial and significant in the life of a missionary. The Provincial Council has asked all the communities to make sure that there is a conducive environment to receive the new confreres, which according to my colleagues and to my own personal experience was successfully done. Another aspect of hospitality towards the newly arrived confreres was to ask the vocation directors both in Ghana and Nigeria sectors to help them visit the sectors and know where other confreres are living and the type of apostolate in which they are involved. Here in the Ghana sector, this has started, as our first visit was to Wa community (St. Benedict Parish), in the Upper West Region of Ghana. It was a joyful moment to be welcomed by our confreres and to discover that area. To the other communities we can say, “we are on our way coming”. I suppose that in the Nigeria Sector, the same visits are taking place or being planned.

The general feeling is positive for all the newly arrived confreres. And this will definitely help us to meet the high expectations that the Province is placing in us. As this was emphasized once again by the Provincial Superior during the January 2020 Provincial Assembly. Energized as we are now, we look forward to a successful Mission, for the greater Glory of God and the salvation of his people. Alone we can't achieve much, but with God and the help of our confreres we can make great things happen.

By Jean Claude HABIMANA

Member of the Media team

New confreres; you are welcome!



Josef Giday, Bolgatanga



VENANT BUKURU ,
BONKPURUNGU



Tewelde,
Nyankpala



Jean-Claude, Bolgatanga



Pierre Channel, Osogbo

THE EXCURSION OF MISSION THROUGH THE MEDIA IN THE GHANA-NIGERIA PROVINCE

In its post-Capitular Assembly of October 2016, the Ghana-Nigeria Province embraced the vision of the 2016 General Chapter of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa to evangelize via media, and began to put it into practice.

To get started, the Post-Capitular Assembly appointed the members of the first team from the 2 Sectors of the Province under the leadership of Serge Boroto Zihahirwa. They were: Serge Boroto, Prosper Harelimana from the Ghana Sector and Gilbert Rukundo and Andrew Anab from the Nigeria Sector. The initial assignment consisted of:

Print: Organize and Publish Articles on a Revived GhaNig Link; Publish Non-Confidential Minutes; make available to Communities the printed materials of the Society.

Electronic: Develop a Provincial Website and/or blog, Whatsapp platform, Facebook page, Twitter;

Publish Provincial Media Documents.

Visual: Take photos, videos of provincial events such as ordinations, Jubilees, funerals and document through photos and

videos some of our Pastoral Activities.

Audio: Organize radio programs and liaise with media houses on provincial activities e.g. JPIC-ED; Culture.

Without delay, the team started working and created a Whatsapp

platform for the confreres originating from the Province and the confreres working in the Province. Ever since, the platform is daily fed with news, information, formative articles, jokes and distractions, etc. However, though

some confreres were very happy to post anything and everything, the excess of posts made others realize that some vital information

could be lost amidst these posts. This led to the creation of a new

Whatsapp platform exclusively reserved for information

from the Provincial Superior and the Media Team.

Another early achievement was the opening of the Provincial Facebook page entitled: "Ghana-Nigeria Province-Missionaries of Africa" which can be easily accessed via www.facebook.com/MAfrGhanaNigeria. As of February 9, 2020, 751 persons liked it and 794 persons followed it.

The media team embarked on reviving the written media by reviving the Ghana - Nigeria Link. So far, from 2016 to

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From top to bottom; Serge , Christopher, Gilbert , Nicholas, Andre , Pierre Chanel, Jean-Claude & John

2018, five publications were produced and disseminated both in hard and soft copies. The year 2019, however, was the most challenging for the team as it didn't witness any production of the Link. Other recent achievements consist of:

- A Provincial website: www.mafrghananigeria.org
- A YouTube channel,
- Some workshops in both sectors following the workshop on media held in Rome,
- Initiation of some confreres into the use of the Missionaries of Africa international website, especially in activating email addresses @mafr.org ,
- Acquisition of a Projector and a tripod screen for the Ghana Sector, etc.

From its creation till date, the Media Team's challenges have been multiple. The main challenge has to do with the personnel. Fr. Prosper Harelimana was sent for studies, but continued to collaborate throughout. On the other, Fr. Andrew Anab was appointed to another Province. New confreres were appointed to the team, but some showed low or no interest at all. Such instability of personnel affected the regularity of the production of the Link which led to its lethal stage of 2019. In addition, some of those who tried to contribute significantly assumed other heavy responsibilities and moreover have less or no training in handling

social media and media at large.

In view of facing the above challenges, the Provincial Council constantly appointed new members to the team. Within the period under review, Prosper Harelimana, Andrew Anab, Maralf Jiménez, Peter Nyirenda, Georges Kambembo, Jean-Claude Habimana, Nicholas Nzomo, Christopher Nkandu, Andre Schaminée, Pierre Chanel and John William Nkhoma have been members of the team. However, with the new strategy to attempt to do the coverage of the whole Province effectively and efficiently, the Provincial Council appointed the members from our apostolic areas: Jean-Claude Habimana for Navrongo-Bolgatanga, Nicholas Nzomo for Wa, Christopher Nkandu for Tamale, Prosper Harelimana for Kumasi, Pierre Chanel for Osogbo, John William Nkhoma for Minna, Gilbert Rukundo for Ibadan, Andre Schaminée Provincial Secretary, and Serge Boroto the team leader.

With regards to training, the Provincial Council mandated the media team to:

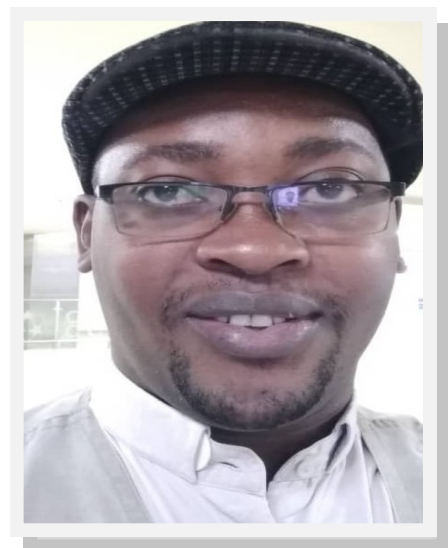
- Organize sessions/workshops for all confreres in the Province on Internet, WhatsApp, Blog, Facebook (their advantages and disadvantages) and how to protect ourselves from them.
- Give training to confreres in accounting, in Excel, Banana program, Power Point and

basic skills in computer and making booklets.

- Organize sessions, where need be, on how to be present on Radio for evangelization or sharing the Word of God.
- Get some confreres to do special studies on Social Media and Communication.

Though a lot is yet to be done, the Media Team is hopeful that with the appointment of the new members from the respective areas/communities it will be able to go further. With gratitude to the Provincial Council and confreres who have always been generous with their articles and other materials, we look forward to greater collaboration with all stake holders. More than ever, the social Media provide a tool for us to fulfil the recommendation of St. Paul: "I urge you to preach the word and insist on it in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4: 2). Together, let us strive to discover and use the social media to be "all to all" for our fellow social Media users.

By Fr. Gilbert Rukundo, M.Afr.



REJOICING AND CELEBRATING AS THE “SAINT PAULS” OF NORTHERN GHANA

We, the Ghana-Nigeria Province of the Missionaries of Africa, together with the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, came together for the climax of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of our foundation on Saturday 26 October 2019. This day of rejoicing started with the Eucharistic celebration at the Our Lady of Annunciation Cathedral, Tamale, at 9:30 am. Most Rev. Philip Naameh, Archbishop of Tamale and President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, presided over the Holy Mass, and our Provincial Superior, Father John Aserbire, gave the homily.

This celebration was not limited to our little family of confreres who came from Nigeria and those in Ghana; hence hired canopies were erected outside the cathedral in view

of sheltering the many guests who could not find a place inside the cathedral. In the preparations of this day, the Family and Friends of the Missionaries of Africa in Ghana, known as MISA Family, were very active to make sure that we had a beautiful and successful celebration. The lay faithful came in their numbers, especially the elderly ones with memories of the pioneer missionaries. They had bought and wore the cloth printed for this event. Others, members of various associations and societies, came in their uniforms. Many Religious men and women, seminarians and novices responded to our invitation. More than 40 Priests concelebrated, exceeding the number of chasubles designed for the climax. We produced also a brochure for this occasion, which retraced briefly our identity and history as sons and daughters of Charles Cardinal

Lavigerie, explained what we are doing as mission and the activities we undertook during this particular year of jubilee.

Before we could line up for the procession, one could notice the joy of this day on the faces of people combined with the simple but beautiful decor. Images of Our Lady of Africa, of our Founder Charles Cardinal Lavigerie and of Mother Salome were placed in front of the altar. The Cathedral Administrator, Fr. Carolus Gambogi, welcomed us to this celebration calling us, Missionaries of Africa, the “Saint Pauls” of the Tamale Ecclesiastical Province. He said: “Today we have cause to rejoice and to celebrate with our Saint Pauls. I say our Saint Pauls because they brought the faith to us.” As the liturgy unfolded, the Gospel procession added a colourful inculturation to the celebration: the



M.Afr. & MSOLA singing Santa Maria



MISA FAMILY BRINGING GIFTS TO THE ALTAR

Dagomba group praised the Lord for the gift of the Missionaries of Africa who brought the Good News to this part of the country while mentioning the names of some of the founding fathers.

The homilist, our Provincial Superior, on his part did not hide the lighted lamp under the bushel; he acclaimed the vision of our Founder saying: 'Our Founder Cardinal Lavignerie, Archbishop of Algiers shared the Vision of Jesus. From Algeria in northern Africa he saw the continent of Africa to be a vast field needing to receive the Word of God. (...) Lavignerie like the prophet Isaiah in the first reading heard the voice saying "Whom shall I send? Who will be my messenger? And he answered "Here I

am, send me". He availed himself to realize the vision of Jesus. He founded the two institutes: the Missionaries of Africa (M.AFR) and the Missionary Sisters of our Lady of Africa (MSOLA) and sent them out to realize this vision by carrying out the Mission Christ entrusted to him. He told them: "Be apostles and nothing but apostles". He furthermore praised the past and present missionaries while recognizing their weaknesses: 'the typical missionary (brother, sister or priest) in those days was a jack-of-all-trades: teaching, agriculture, building, administration, medical work, language learning, and cultural research, listening to people and preaching to them. (...) We too as we celebrate our 150th Anniversary of

our foundation we acknowledge that our senior brothers and sisters met challenges (in areas of language, culture, weather, diseases), indeed we made mistakes but at this moment we can say: thank you Jesus for the mission you gave to the Lavignerie family.

We did our best and there are good results. The Church in Africa where we served has grown and continues to grow. We can count many achievements in the areas of education, health and growth in the number of Christians, Priests, Sisters, Brothers, Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals and so on and so forth.' Fr. John Aserbire concluded the homily

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by encouraging us to 'fully depend on God as we appraise the giftedness of our communities and as we address the tasks ahead of us. We are facing a new challenge since some time: the issue of insecurity in our sub-region and other parts of Africa. Jesus is asking us to bring peace, to be people of peace. We ask God to enable us to build bridges, to enforce unity, and to extend this peace to our homes, to our communities and our sub-region and Africa at large. Let us ask him to bless us with his empowering Spirit so that we may share in God's work and experience our Lord's transforming grace through ministry and apostolic work.'

Goodwill messages were addressed to us for our celebration and it is worth quoting parts of them:

'I sincerely thank the Lord for this occasion when we celebrate his gift of the Missionaries of Africa and the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa in your 150th Jubilee Celebration. We bless and thank Him for what He has achieved for Ghana and Africa through the humble and zealous instrumentality of the Missionaries of Africa. From the onset of the cholera epidemic in 1867 which left a large number of Algerians orphaned, and the education and Christian instruction of these children on rocks, which occasioned the founding of your Society in Maison-Carrée (now El-Harrach) near Algiers, you have never slackened in your calling' (Most Rev. Gabriel Justice Anokye, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kumasi).

'The diocese of Yendi, is grateful to

the pioneering work of these gallant missionaries who have watered the seed in the past years till present. We pray that God may look kindly upon their good works and reward them exceedingly. For those who have passed on to eternity that he may give them a merciful judgment. May our Lady of Africa, whose bronze statue is still venerated in Algiers and through whom many have received miracles continue to intercede on behalf of the Missionaries of Africa and the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa' (Most Rev. Vincent Sowah Boi-Nai, SVD, Bishop of Yendi).

As you celebrate 150 years, we sincerely do so wholeheartedly with you. The Bishops, Priests, Religious Men and Women, the Laity of the Province, on this historic occasion, once again pledge our unconditional support to sustaining the Mission of Christ you brought to us' (Tamale Ecclesiastical Province).

'You sowed the seed of Evangelization and the propagation of the Gospel in the midst of daunting challenges when the first Missionaries arrived in Navrongo in 1906 in the then Northern Territories. Since then, you have not relented in ensuring that the GOSPEL reaches even the most remote communities of this Ecclesiastical Province and many parts of Africa. This has been by the Grace of God

through Christ, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the continuous intercession of our Holy Mother, Mary' (MISA Family).

The alleluia of the official hymn our 150th jubilee echoed outside the Cathedral at the end of the Eucharistic celebration. As the festive mood continued, a fraternal meal with tasty Ghanaian and continental dishes

was then served to our guests. The cutting of the cake, the popping of the champagne added to the jubilation of the day. In the evening, the sons and daughters of Lavigerie met at the Provincial House for a family supper. We remain grateful to God for the vision of our Founder: may our passion for the African World increase and go far and beyond the 150 years of our foundation for the greater glory of God.

By Boroto Zihahirwa Serge, M.Afr.



FIAN LAND; A PROPERTY OF THE MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

Fian is a village in the Upper West Region of Ghana. It is 39 kms from Wa town on the Wa - Tumu road. It is situated between the villages of Naro and Busie and it is the turnoff to Funsu and Welebele on the Fian - Navrongo Road (via Sandema). Fian is in the administrative district of Nadowli. Ecclesiastically, Fian belongs to the Daffiema Parish of the Wa Catholic Diocese. It is an outstation with a resident catechist.

Background

According to some of the early Christians of Fian such as the late Augustine Mwindigu and the late John Baptist Banoenoma (catechist), the Missionaries of Africa came to Fian in the 1930s. Their hope was to settle in Fian and propagate the Catholic faith to the people in Fian and the surrounding villages. The Chief of Fian, Naa Ballannoe and the local people did not allow the Missionaries to settle in their land and this made the Missionaries of Africa to move towards Daffiema where they setup their mission, given they had already established Jirapa parish. The Missionaries were not happy with the Chief and people of Fian and as such "invoked a curse on them" for not allowing the gospel to be propagated in their land.

Reconciliation

In the areas where the Missionaries of Africa settled, they established missions, schools and hospitals,

making those areas develop more rapidly compared to where they weren't. Seeing Fian missed that grace, this has led the current leaders at Fian to regret the earlier rejection of the missionaries and seek reconciliation with the Society of the Missionaries of Africa. This action of coming back on the rejection of the missionaries has been celebrated in several ways since 2014. The reconciliation ceremony took place on Saturday 28th June 2014, led by the then Provincial Superior of Ghana-Nigeria Province Fr. Dominic Apee, assisted by confreres from the Wa community (Lavigerie house), after which crosses were planted at several points in the village to mark this reconciliation.

To reinforce this bonding, the elders of Fian community decided to offer the Society of the Missionaries of Africa a piece of land in their village by signing an undertaking with them which read: "We, the undersigned elders of Fian agreed to release a plot of land situated at Tampie hill near the community to the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) for their missionary work and other development projects". This is an invitation to us from the people of Fian, which they hope will lead to a presence of the Missionaries in the village.

The piece of land gifted to the Missionaries of Africa is 50 hectares in size, well located along the Wa-Tumu road (tarred). It is well positioned on a raised granite rock on one side offering a panoramic view of the

village and its surroundings. The confreres in Wa (Lavigerie Community) have been working towards the acquisition of legal documents of the land, which they acquired in October 2019. This plot is now the property of the Missionaries of Africa.

Fian land comes to us at the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of our Society, 150 years of being faithful to the Gospel we have received. It comes to us as an event of reconciliation and collaboration with a particular population.

The 28th General Chapter (2016) encourages the Society to be prudent, to have foresight and flexibility concerning property. Here comes the task to the Ghana-Nigeria Province to see what the Fian land could hold in the near future, given we are sent out to the world and wherever our charism is needed, for a prophetic mission of encounter and witness to the love of God!

By Nicholas Mulinge





LORD LET OUR PROVINCE BLOSSOM LIKE
A SUNFLOWER

