

<b>Contents</b>	<b>page</b>
Editorial .....	3
<b>Western Sahara - a forgotten country!</b>	
By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F. ....	4
<b>The Almoravids and Almohads</b>	
By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F. ....	13
<b>Making Money Work</b>	
By Sr. Beverly Lacayo W.S. ....	18
<b>Home and Away</b> .....	22
<b>Obituary List</b> .....	30

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*Centre Spread: Morocco - working together at Beni-Mellal, in the Moyen Atlas Mountains.*

*Back Cover: Uganda - chatting before early Mass.*

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**EDITORIAL**

The first two articles of this issue of the magazine, 'Western Sahara - a forgotten country!' and 'The Almoravids and Almohads', tie in with the main article of the last issue which was on 'The Kingdom of Morocco'. The histories of Morocco and Western Sahara are closely connected and two common elements which they both have are the Almoravid and Almohad empires.

It is very difficult to get information about Western Sahara as it has been linked politically with Morocco for more than twenty years. As a result most sources and organisations put the two countries together. We apologise for this and the lack of photographs from Western Sahara, but we include some from Morocco. Despite this fact it is hoped that the articles will throw some light on this almost forgotten part of Africa and the plight of its people.

In White Sister's main article - 'Making Money Work' - Sr. Beverly tells us of the money making initiative which she found on a visit to the Copperbelt in Zambia. In a country with such a high inflation rate it is very difficult for people to survive financially, if at all, and to bring up a family. In this article we see how it can be done by working together and pooling the meagre funds available.

Once again 'Home and Away' takes us to various parts of Africa and also keeps us up to date with what White Fathers and White Sisters are doing all over the world.

Finally, it is the time of the annual novena to St. Anthony. During the days between the 13th. and the 21st. June, White Father communities will remember the intentions of all our friends and benefactors in their prayers and Masses. There is a little background information on St. Anthony and the Novena on page 23. In previous issues - no. 322, June-July, 1995, and no. 328, June-July, 1996 - there were other items on St. Anthony's life which may be of interest.

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# Western Sahara - a forgotten country!

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

## THE LAND

The Western Sahara borders with Morocco (north), Algeria (east) and Mauritania (south). It is the only country in Africa which has still not gained self-determination and full independence. Formerly known as the 'Spanish Sahara' it's sovereignty has been disputed for several decades.

Morocco has laid claim to the 'Southern Provinces' and controls much of present day Western Sahara. The two original provinces, 'Saguia el Hamra' in the north and 'Rio de Oro', the two-thirds in the south, cover the country's area of over 102,703 square miles (267,028 sq.kms.). For administrative and political purposes Morocco has divided Western Sahara into four provinces which have ten seats, filled by Saharawis (the people of Western Sahara) whose political views are favourable to the regime, in the Moroccan Parliament. The provinces of Laayoune, Smara, and Boujdour have taken part in elections since 1977 and Oued Ed Dahab province since 1983.

The Western Sahara can be divided into three topographical areas extending from the Atlantic coast in the west. There is the rocky desert of the Atlas mountains and the Zemmour hills (north east); the Oued Draa (north) and the Jat (west) river basins where the Saguia el Hamra (the Red Canal) flows and gives its name to the region; and finally there is the Rio de Oro which is the flat low lying plains and sand dunes of the Sahara desert in the south and east.

Overall the climate of Western Sahara is harsh with the extremes of cold dry winters and hot summers. There is some low irregular rainfall in the Jat and Draa valleys which is

held in the depressions and allows for a little cultivation of cereal, such as barley and corn, and cattle raising. Despite this the rainwater evaporates quickly. In the Rio de Oro the rainwater sinks below the surface and gathers in underground wells. The interior's temperatures can reach 120 to 140° F (50 to 60° C) in the summer and drop to freezing in the winter.

## THE PEOPLE

The Saharawi are a mixture of indigenous Berbers and Arab peoples from the area and also those who have passed through over the centuries. The direct ancestors of the present Saharawis were peoples who crossed North Africa from the Yemen in the 15th. century. There were clashes between local tribes and any newcomers but things had settled by the 18th. century.

The nature of the land nurtured the type of people who lived there. With very little rain they were forced to be nomadic and so moved around in search of pasture for their animals, only growing a few crops. They crossed the desert following regular routes according to the season and the places where water and pastures could be found.

In the Middle Ages the Saguia el Hamra became known as a centre of Islamic learning. The influence of Islam and Arabic culture has been a layer of unity amongst the different peoples. All this, together with the country's struggle for independence with Spain, Morocco and Mauritania, has made a perfect soil from which Saharawi nationalism has grown.

## THE HISTORY

It is difficult to give a detailed history of the Western Sahara. The main reason for this is



that it has always been sparsely populated by mainly nomadic people. Over the centuries there have been historical links between Morocco and Western Sahara. These connections were not in the strict sense of a state or political alliance but were more through religious, cultural and personal contacts. The presence of the trans-Saharan trade routes meant that the region was a place where different cultures and peoples met as they passed through, each leaving their mark. (please see the next article)

## THE 19TH. CENTURY

During the 19th. century Spain showed an interest in the coastal areas of Western Sahara and Morocco especially in connection with the Canary Islands. Spain first colonised the

'Spanish Sahara' in 1884 and proclaimed the area from Cape Blanc to Cape Bojador a protectorate. This was ratified by the European powers at the 'Berlin Conference' the following year and Spain was given jurisdiction over the territory.

At the time France was the major colonial power in much of North and West Africa and was always looking to expand. Between 1886 and 1900 there were discussions to define the borders between the French and Spanish territories. From these talks came several Franco-Spanish agreements, some involving Morocco, which were signed in 1900, in 1904 and 1912. These treaties defined Western Sahara's borders for the colonial powers, though there were to be further developments later.

The local population in the area resisted the changes as much as possible. The new borders also affected the surrounding countries of Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania. This brought local leaders, such as Ma Al-Aineen, into the fight. Al-Aineen was a chieftain from Mauritania and he moved into Western Sahara (Wadi Dahab and Saguia el Hamra) from where he led a coalition of Mauritanian tribes.

### THE 20TH. CENTURY

In 1905 Al-Aineen asked the Sultan of Morocco to support the resistance against the colonisers. The Sultan gave some help in the form of arms. He too was having trouble with France at the time and was in the process of coming to an agreement with them. The Saharawi people began to fight back in 1906. Al-Aineen and his army were eventually defeated by the French in 1910.

France intensified its military campaign in Mauritania and also made many incursions into Saguia el Hamra. The sporadic fighting continued and France even threatened to occupy Wadi Dahab and Saguia el Hamra because of the rebel activity. After several joint Franco-Spanish military operations Spain took full possession of the area as a colony in 1936.

In 1958 France, Spain and Morocco co-operated in the 'Ecouvillon Operation' against the Saharawi rebels. As a result of the help which Morocco had given to Spain, Morocco was allowed the province of Tarfaya south of which was under Spanish control.

Morocco's claims on 'Spanish Sahara' began at the time of the country's independence in 1956. King Hassan, of Morocco, had the idea of re-establishing the 'Greater Morocco' or 'Moroccan Sultanate'.

This concept, and the claim to sovereignty over the Western Sahara, is based on the idea that Saharan tribal leaders had a traditional

loyalty to the Moroccan Sultan as spiritual leader and ruler. As a result it is asserted that the 'Moroccan Sultanate' of old extended into the Sahara, into Algeria and south to the Senegal River, including present day Mauritania. There was no real proof of this but it gave Morocco some justification for claiming sovereignty over Western Sahara and the south-west of Algeria. The French had not clearly defined the Morocco-Algeria border which left the ownership of 600 miles of desert, between Bechar and Tindouf, in dispute. This added more to the confusion.

Until the 1960s the Saharawi people still retained their essentially nomadic life but they then began to settle more. During this decade Spain and Morocco began to exploit the vast natural resources of the territory. The 'wind of change' was sweeping across Africa with all neighbouring countries looking for independence. The Spanish Sahara was no exception and the question of its future was first brought to the United Nations General Assembly in 1965.

In 1967 the 'Movement for the Liberation of the Sahara' was created which intensified the political move towards independence and organised huge demonstrations. This was especially so in 1970 when demonstrations were harshly put down and the party banned, on 17th. June, but not before the seeds of Saharawi nationalism had been truly sown. Instead of quieting the situation this gave new impetus to the Saharawi cause and the fight for independence.

### THE POLISARIO FRONT AND THE SADR

In 1969, the 'Popular Front for the Liberation of the Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro' (Polisario Front) began to take shape in order to fight Spanish colonial rule in 'Spanish Sahara'. Members of the Polisario were drawn from the indigenous Arab-Berber population. They

claimed to represent the Saharawi people's wish for independence and they began to fight a guerrilla war to establish the 'Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic' (SADR). When the Spanish left they turned their arms against the Moroccans and Mauritians who occupied the territory.

Both Algeria and Libya supported the Polisario Front at different times and as a result have had strained relations with the Moroccan government. Algeria has also allowed Saharawi refugees to establish camps in the Tindouf area, in the west of the country. Algeria does not claim any part of Western Sahara for itself but, like many other countries, supports the idea that the population should have a referendum on self-determination in order to determine the territory's future status.

Those who have fought for the independence of Western Sahara believe that there are many reasons why the West does not wish this to come about. These may be summed up as follows: Western Sahara's mineral wealth (phosphates, uranium, iron, natural gas and oil), the fishing grounds and the US, French and Spanish have economic and strategic interests in the area.

### THE 'GREEN MARCH'

Morocco officially pressed its territorial claims to the Spanish Sahara in 1974 and, together with Mauritania, protested against Spain's plan to grant independence to the territory. A census, in the same year, was undertaken to find those who were eligible to vote in a

referendum on the issue of self-determination which was due to take place in December.

At this time the United Nations General Assembly asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to look into the dispute. On 16th. October, 1975, the ICJ delivered its opinion. It found that while there were historical ties between the inhabitants of the 'Western Sahara' and Morocco, they were not sufficient to give Morocco, nor Mauritania, sovereignty over the territory. At this time 'Western Sahara' became the UN's new name for the area.

In an almost instant response to the ICJ ruling over Western Sahara King Hassan ordered the start of the 'Green March'. This was the mobilisation of about 350,000 unarmed civilians. The aim of the march was to show Morocco's claim over the territory and to take control of it. On 31st. October Moroccan forces enter the north west of the territory



and they were followed by the 'Green March' which crossed the border on 6th. November. Three days later King Hassan asked the marchers to withdraw. The 'Green March' gave King Hassan popularity at home but it brought a strong reaction from the Polisario. They fought back against the Moroccan occupation and began an extended costly war which has effected northern Africa to the present day. 35,000 of Morocco's 70,000 military were involved in defending the territory.

At the same time King Hassan made diplomatic moves to take over Western Sahara. This was towards the end of the Franco era in Spain. Secret meetings were held in Madrid between Mauritania, Morocco and Spain to decide the fate of the territory. From this King Hassan got the Spanish government to agree to the tripartite 'Madrid Accord' on 14th. November, 1975. This gave control of the northern two thirds (Saguia el Hamra) of Western Sahara to Morocco, and the southern one third (Rio de Oro) to Mauritania.

The result was a shared administrative authority between the two countries but the question of sovereignty was not settled. Spain's role in the administration of the Western Sahara ceased altogether but an agreement with Morocco was made on the rights to exploit the phosphate deposits in the area.

#### THE REFUGEE CAMPS

In 1975 the Saharawi people were caught in a pincer movement by their two neighbouring countries. The Mauritanian armed forces entered Western Saharan from the south and Moroccan forces from the north. This meant that the local inhabitants found themselves faced with two choice: to remain under the rule of one of these countries or to leave.

By the end of 1975 many thousands had chosen the latter and fled to refugee camps in

the east of the region. Most of the men joined the rebel army while mainly women, children and old people made up the population of the new camps. Later these havens were attacked causing the inhabitants to flee into the desert of south west Algeria where new camps were established at wells around the town of Tindouf.

At first there were three refugee camps each named after towns in Western Sahara - Smara, Dhakla and El Aaiun - and later a fourth camp (Auserd) was formed. Despite the assistance given by the Algerian government thousands of people died of hunger and disease. Gradually, by 1980, the epidemics were stopped through health and hygiene programmes.

The camps are still there today and have taken on a town-like structure for their daily running with dispensaries, schools, administration, and a SADR elected council. Still they lack many of the necessary medical and other facilities to support a population of about 170,000. 80% of the camps' adult population are women.

#### THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

As had been agreed, Spain withdrew from the Western Sahara and ceded the territory to Morocco and to Mauritania on 27th. February, 1976. On the same day the Polisario Front proclaimed the SADR, at Bir Lahlou, with a government in exile, and they set about trying to gain international recognition. Within two months of Spain leaving, Morocco had occupied two-thirds of the land - about 70,000 square miles.

The Polisario's diplomatic efforts began to bear fruit in October, 1978, when the Centre Democratic Union (CDU), Spain's ruling party, signed an agreement recognising them as the only legitimate representatives of the Saharawi people. Spain said that the 'Madrid Accord' of November, 1975, was just a transfer of

### SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ON WESTERN SAHARA

#### THE COUNTRY

Land area: 102,703 sq. mls. (266,000 sq. kms.)

#### THE PEOPLE

Population: 217,211 (July, 1995 estimate), There are about 170,00 refugees in Algeria. The Polisario Front estimates the total population at one million. The people are mainly of Arab and Berber descent.

Religion: Islam.

Languages: Spanish (official), Hassaniya Arabic, Moroccan Arabic.

#### THE ECONOMY

Land use: meadows and pastures 19%; other 81%. Most of the land is arid so the main economic activity is the grazing of livestock and mining of phosphates.

Currency: 1 Moroccan dirham (DH) = 100 centimes

Exports: \$8 million (f.o.b., 1982 est.)  
commodities: phosphates 62%

Imports: \$30 million (c.i.f., 1982 est.)  
commodities: fuel for fishing fleet,  
foodstuffs

#### HEALTH

Infant mortality rate: 148.95 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:  
total population: 46.31 years  
male: 45.34 years  
female: 47.59 years (1995 est.)

#### POLITICS \*

Political Parties: The People's Liberation Front of Saguia al-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front) founded 10th. May, 1973. The military wing is the Saharan People's Liberation Army.

Unions: The Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro General Workers' Union (UGTSARIO).

Government: The President of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is Muhammad Abdelaziz. Mahfud Ali Beiba, is President of the Council of Ministers. The Superior Council of the Revolution is the main governmental body.

\* Morocco claims and administers Western Sahara, so much of the information and statistics are included in those of Moroccan.

administrative power, not sovereignty, and then began to support the call for a referendum of self-determination.

In July, 1979, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), at their Monrovia Summit, advocated a referendum on the Western Sahara's future. Support for this grew and by October of that year the SADR government was recognised by thirty four countries, twenty being African. By 1982 twenty six of the fifty OAU states recognised the SADR and it was admitted as a member.

Eventually, in 1979, a new Mauritanian government renounced its territorial claims on Western Sahara. It also recognised the rights of the Saharawi people and signed a peace agreement with them in Algiers. When Mauritania moved out Moroccan troops filled the vacuum and some tribal leaders pledged allegiance to King Hassan.

Morocco now ruled the whole of Western Sahara, proclaiming its annexation on 12th. August, 1979, and encouraged Moroccans to move in and settle. Until this point two countries had fought against the Polisario, but now Morocco had to bear the whole burden alone. Elections were held, both local and for Representatives to the National Assembly, and Western Sahara was reintegrated into Morocco.

A series of fortifications, known as 'the Wall', were subsequently built that control about three-quarters of Western Sahara. These were to protect the towns and mineral sources, including the phosphate mine at Bou Craa (Kra). Still Morocco had underestimated the Polisario force and the amount of support they would receive from neighbouring countries. At this time, according to the Polisario, they were on top and able to go where they wished and even fought in the town of Tan-Tan on the Moroccan side of the border.



As the end of the decade approached the Polisario increased their campaign as did the SADR government in exile. By June, 1981, the war was believed to be costing Morocco more than US\$1 million a day. Left-wing parties in Morocco refused to lend their support to the King and to pay for the war.

The Polisario opposition may not have been too strong at time but a Moroccan presence has always been needed to hold 'the Wall'. Much of the land which has been gained is uninhabited desert. Despite this by the mid-1980s Morocco occupied almost the whole territory as far south as Ad Dakhla (Villa Cisneros) and between fifty and a hundred kilometres in from the coast.

In June, 1981, at an OAU summit, King Hassan announced his willingness to hold a referendum in the Western Sahara. The OAU then followed this up and after further meetings proposed that there should be a cease-fire, a UN peace-keeping force, and an interim administration to help with an OAU-UN-supervised referendum to find out what the local population wished for the future.

At home the King's proposal brought criticism from Morocco's socialist party (USFP). This ended in the arrest and conviction of some USFP leaders for offenses against national security and public order. There was also little progress for either Morocco or the Polisario on the battlefield and signs of tension began to show in the Moroccan armed forces. This was brought to a head in 1983 with the mysterious death of General Ahmed Dlimi, the Moroccan supreme commander, who was said to have been involved in talks to end the war.

In 1984 Morocco received a blow when the SADR was recognised as a full member of the OAU. Morocco withdrew from the Organisation in protest in November, 1985, and has still not returned to the OAU.

## THE UN AND MINURSO

Things began to look a little brighter for both Morocco and Western Sahara in 1988. In May Morocco and Algeria re-established diplomatic relations. In August Moroccan and Polisario representatives met separately with UN officials and agreed on a peace plan. Both sides accepted the 'Settlement Plan' on 30th. August and it was approved by the UN Security Council on 27th. June, 1990 - in resolution 658 (1990). This agreement was to hold a referendum to enable the people of Western Sahara to choose between independence from or integration with Morocco.

A UN-brokered cease-fire and the plan for a referendum was put into action on 6th. September, 1991. Just before the settlement plan implementation Morocco violated the cease-fire. Morocco also denied the 'United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara' (MINURSO) free movement through parts of Western Sahara which it occupied. MINURSO is the UN peace-keeping force which monitors the cease-fire also, as part of it's mandate, has the task of organising the referendum. To this end MINURSO compiled a register of those who are eligible to vote in the referendum.

The purpose of the referendum was to find out if the territory would choose to be integrated into Morocco or to become independent. The referendum was originally scheduled for January, 1992, but it has yet to be held because of difficulties between the two parties on its implementation.

The whole process of preparing for the referendum has been fraught with difficulties and very little progress has been made over the years. There have been various problems which have slowed down the process. The Polisario Front wanted OAU observers to take part but Morocco did not as the

Organisation has already recognised Western Sahara, or the SADR, as an independent state.

There have also been disagreements concerning those who are eligible to vote. Both sides had accepted the 1974 Spanish census as a basis for the number of the territory's eligible voters - which should number about 75,000 - but Morocco insists on them being taken from the estimated 140,000 voters in the present population of the territory. At different times both sides have accused the other of bringing in extra people to register.

Morocco also submitted registrations on behalf of 120,000 of its citizens to take part in the referendum. At the same time the region was becoming increasingly integrated, economically and through migration, with Morocco. A further blow came on 8th. September, 1992, when King Hassan announced that it was a priority to make the territory a region of Morocco.

In the same month eight senior members of the Polisario defected to Morocco accusing the organisation of misusing food supplies to the refugees in the camps near Tindouf, Algeria. Brahim Hakim, a founder of Polisario and Minister of Foreign Affairs of SADR, had defected earlier. They all attended a press conference on the 15th. September, and the next day Hakim was appointed Morocco's 'Roving Ambassador'.

In February, 1995, the Polisario controlled four-fifths of the disputed area with an army

of about 80,000 men. Despite this, in September, 1995, there were reports from 'Human Rights Watch/Africa', based in New York, that the Moroccan security forces regularly prevented Saharawis from going to registration centres or complaining to UN officials. They also said that Morocco has submitted applications for more than 100,000 potential voters, which are questionable, while Polisario has submitted 40,000 names. Morocco also moved 40,000 people into the territory.

The referendum was to have taken place in 1992 but has been indefinitely postponed. There have been several UN resolutions concerning the situation and things began to come to a head in 1996. The UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, stepped in and ordered it to be postponed. On 31st. January, 1996, the Council supported the Secretary-General's intention to withdraw MINURSO from Western Sahara if there was no meaningful



progress to complete the 'Settlement Plan'. By 29th. May, in resolution 1056 (1996), the Council agreed to reduce the military side of the operation by 20%, from 288 to 239, in the territory. The identification process, that is the registration of those eligible to take part in the referendum, was also suspended until both parties would "show political will and flexibility" to let it continue. At this time 60,000 voters had been identified by the UN and there remained a further 175,000 to be evaluated. The present situation is that MINURSO's mandate has been extended until 31st. May, 1997.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

Over the years the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been successful in assisting in the repatriation of Moroccan prisoners-of-war (POWs). The ICRC reported that the Polisario held about 1,900 Moroccan POWs in 1996.

For many years the Moroccan authorities have imprisoned Saharawis for Polisario-related activity - in 1991 300 such prisoners were released. There were many 'disappearances' in the mid-1970's. Some Saharawis have been held incommunicado for up to sixteen years without charge or trial. The 'disappearances' have continued into the 1990s and the Polisario claim that the Government still holds several hundred Saharawi prisoners, but according to the ICRC Morocco holds 66 Saharawi combatants, and six civilians, as POWs.

Saharawis living in the Moroccan controlled areas "have difficulty obtaining Moroccan passports, that the Government monitors the political views of Saharawis more closely than those of Moroccan citizens, and that the police and paramilitary authorities react especially harshly against those suspected of supporting independence and the Polisario Front. Access to the territory is limited by

the Moroccan Government and international human rights organisations, and impartial journalists have sometimes experienced difficulty in securing admission." (US Country Report on 1996, 31/01/97).

### MOROCCAN FOREIGN RELATIONS

The main concern which has coloured much of Morocco's foreign relations is its claim of sovereignty over Western Sahara. This has meant a continual war with the Polisario Front up until the cease-fire of September, 1991. In 1984, Morocco signed a Treaty of Union with Libya. This only lasted until mid-1986 and was primarily aimed at ensuring a cessation of Libyan support for the Polisario.

The US, even as an old friend of Morocco since 1777, has supported negotiations to end the war and supports the proposed referendum to determine the will of the Saharawi people. America has always looked upon Morocco as a stabilising influence in North Africa and the Middle East - being a bulwark against 'Islamic Fundamentalism' and Communism.

The friendship of the two nations has been cemented by the numerous visits King Hassan has made to the United States and by military and financial bonds. The US navy make regular calls on Morocco's ports. The US forces have been given rights of transit through Moroccan airfields and the two countries often hold joint exercises. Since independence, more than \$1.5 billion in US grants and loans has been provided to Morocco - the total US economic and military assistance is an annual average of about \$100 million.

The future of Western Sahara is still uncertain. Let us hope that one day the long wished for referendum does take place and the Saharawi people can finally determine the direction they wish to take.

# The Almoravids and Almohads

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

## THE ALMORAVIDS (1030-1147)

The origins of the Almoravid empire goes back to early in the 11th. century when the Soninke of Ghana took control of Awdaghost and the surrounding area which was populated by the Lamtuna branch of the Sanhaja Berbers. Soon afterwards one of the Berber leaders visited Mecca. On his return in 1036 he stopped at Al Qayrawan, (Kairouan) an Islamic holy city in northern Tunisia, where he spoke with the scholars about how the quality of Islam had deteriorated in his home area. He returned with a northern Berber scholar called Abdallah Ibn Yasin.

Abdallah was shocked to find the level of illiteracy and ignorance of the Koran amongst the believers. They had also combined local traditions with Islam and Abdallah saw this as the reason for their disunity and having been overcome by the pagan Soninke. Abdallah's first attempts to reconvert the Juddala Sanhaja failed.

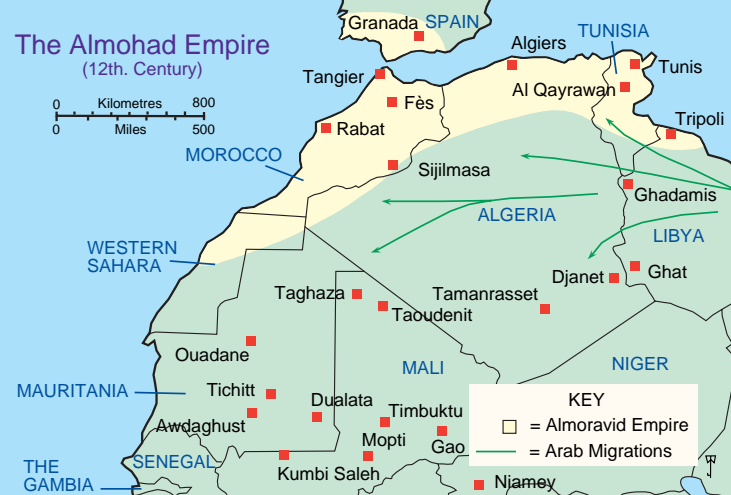
Abdallah then moved to a secret fortress or place of retreat, a 'ribat' in Arabic, which was probably on one of the Tidra Islands, off the Mauritanian coast. There he built up a group of Islamic followers who came to be known as the 'al-murabitun' ('men of the monastery') or the Almoravids - the name by which they are known to Western historians.

Other sources say that their name means 'people of persuasion' or 'the body of men committed to the fight of establishing true Islam' and also say that it is not certain if the 'ribat' actually physically existed.

The Almoravids preached a strict observance of Islamic law and the waging 'jihad' (Islamic holy war) against the infidel (unbeliever). The Lamtuna Sanhaja nomads, who were in conflict with the Soninke, joined the Almoravids in the early 1040s. Two of the outstanding Lamtuna were Yahya Ibn Umar and his brother Abu-Bakr who helped Abdallah conquer and convert the Sanhaja Berbers of the Western Sahara in the early 1050s. The Almoravid movement unified the rival Sanhaja



## The Almoravid Empire (12th. Century)



clans. This helped them to stand firm against both the Zenata Berbers of Sijilmasa and the Soninke of Ghana. Yahya and Abu-Bakr formed a strong enthusiastic army. They seized towns of Sijilmasa (1054) and Awdaghust (1055) which gave them control over the gold trade and the western trans-Saharan trade routes. They also made allies of the Tokolor, in middle Senegal, who had converted to Islam earlier.

After these successes the Almoravids turned north with a view of conquering Morocco. At this time the tide turned somewhat with the death of Yahya, in 1057, and Abdallah, 1059. Abu-Bakr tried to hold things together, but the territory had become too large for one man to control and so much of the former unity was lost. Abu-Bakr returned south to continue the battle against the 'Sudanese', leaving his cousin Yusuf Ibn Tashufin to control the north. Thus the Almoravid movement and territory was split in two.

The southern Almoravids, led by Abu-Bakr, are often said to have overcome the Sudanese state of Ghana by 1076 and brought Islam to this part of Africa. It is not clear if the Almoravid actually conquered the Soninke of the Ghana empire. The evidence suggests that there was a series of conflicts which pushed the Soninke back beyond Awdaghust and disrupted their

trade. By the end of the eleventh century the Soninke leaders converted to Islam and the Ghana empire became both Islamic and Independent. This was possibly brought about by a combination of the sword and politics in order that the empire could re-establish trade links with the Islamic Sanhaja.

Abu-Bakr died in 1087 and so began the collapse of the southern Almoravids. Many of the best soldiers had also returned north to join Yusuf in his conquests. These factors combined to weaken the southern Sanhaja's resolve and unity, and they were overrun again by the Soninke and later by the Malinke.

Yusuf took the northern Almoravids army through Morocco and as far as southern Spain. They invaded Morocco in 1055 and founded the city of Marrakesh (1062) as their capital and later they captured Fès (1069). They united Morocco under a single government. In a few years, by 1091, the Almoravid dominated all the Muslim states in Spain, except for Valencia which was conquered by 'El Cid' (Lord Rodrigo) who went to Spain to fight the Christian powers at the request of the Spanish Muslims.

Despite the gradual collapse of the southern part of the Almoravid empire it remained vast and very wealthy. It's fate was that of most great empires: the settled nomads became corrupted by their wealth and power. They also began to lose their Islamic fervour and piety, which provoked a reaction from neighbouring Muslim Berbers.

### THE ALMOHADS (1140-1268)

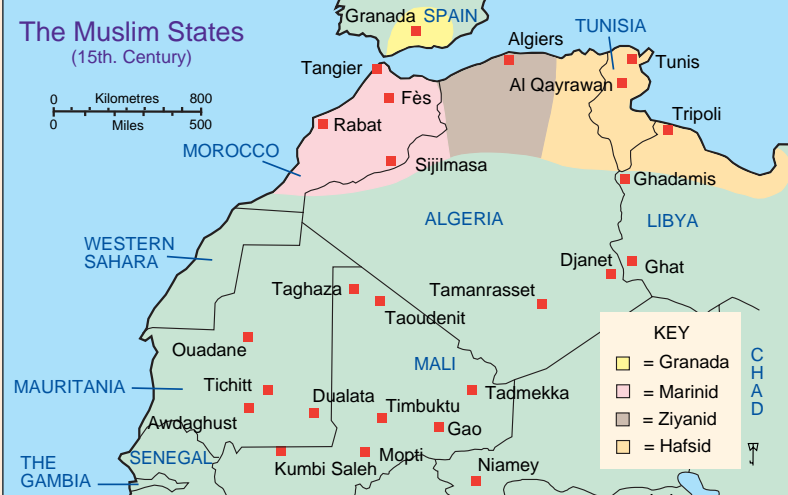
The Almohads, 'al-muwayyidun' meaning 'those who proclaim the unity of God', were Zenata and Masmouda Berbers of the Atlas mountains

and were arch-enemies of the Almoravids. Their origins can be traced to Muhammad ibn Tumart, an Arab reformer, who gathered a large following of both Arabs and Berbers. He was proclaimed Al Mahdi ('The Rightly Guided') in 1121. The founder of the dynasty was Abdel Moumen (Abd al-Mumin), who succeeded Ibn Tumart, was the first Almohad Caliph. He managed to unite the North African Berbers in the 'jihad'. The Almohad army was made up of Berbers from the Anti-Atlas mountains of Morocco. The empire had a professional civil service, recruited from the educated classes, but did not have mass appeal amongst the other peoples of the time.

The Almohads conquered Morocco between 1140 and 1147 and gradually they gained control over the northern part of the Almoravid empire. At the time this included Algeria, Tunisia, eastern Libya, part of southern Mauritania and to the Ebro River in Spain. Moumen's successor, Yacoub El Mansour, had crossed the Mediterranean in 1165 and beaten the disunited Almoravid Emirs.

One of the most famous Almohad rulers in Spain was Yakub al-Mansur, who ruled from 1184 until his death. He helped Sultan Saladin fight against the Crusaders and was responsible for the construction of numerous architectural monuments in Spain and North Africa.

The the united Kingdoms of Castile, Aragón, and Navarre fought back against the North African invaders in their campaign of the 'reconquista' ('war of reconquest'). In the



battle of Navas de Tolosa, 1212, the Almohads suffered their first major defeat and were gradually expelled from Spain by 1232.

While fighting on their European front the Almohad left their North African side open to attack from local groups which they had conquered and so they began to lose ground on both sides of the Mediterranean. This signalled the slow disintegration of the empire over the next thirty years. All that remained was roughly the coastal area across Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. This eventually broke up into the independent dynasties of Hafsidi (Tunisia from 1236), Ziyaniid (in Algeria from 1239) and Marinid (in Morocco from 1269) due to further advances by the Christian Kingdoms in Spain and the Berbers in central Magreb.

So ended a vast Berber empire and the unification of the Magreb. Both the Almoravids and the Almohads left a great cultural and religious legacy in their wake across North and West Africa. This has given the region distinct cultural characteristics upon which numerous kingdoms and dynasties built. Later, the subsequent North African states, continued to take part in the creation of the Muslim world's literature, science and mathematics, the benefit of which we all share today.

# Making Money Work

by Sr. Beverly Lacayo W.S.

*An experience among the urban poor in Zambia*

In order to understand the following experience, one must know something of the recent history of Zambia. The country was rich in copper and well off at the time of independence from Britain in 1964. However, unawares, the people paid a terrible price for this copper

boom. Tribes had been split up and artificial borders imposed. In order to get workers, a hut tax to be paid in currency was imposed on all villagers so that they would seek salaried work in the copper mines. A people who had always been self-sufficient in food production, became over a period of three or four generations, dependent on a single export commodity, copper, to buy their food from others. In the mining area (and a few other cities where Europeans lived) a modicum of British style order and sanitation was imposed by the Government and the mining companies. The African people, miners and others, were usually passive recipients of this foreign way of life. Missionaries, who were there before mining started, followed the trek from rural to urban areas to help the people to cope.

With this ambiguous heritage of wealth grafted on to their traditional communitarian spirit, the newly independent Zambian Government in 1964, decided to invest their surplus from copper in education and other social services, as well as promoting local industry. Primary and secondary schools were built all over the country and, as more and more teachers were trained, the Government offered its people free education and free medical care. The nationalisation of services and industry - a move which turned out to be a gross economic mistake - followed. That was almost 30 years ago - two generations by Zambian measure. Enormous increases in the price of oil, with the ensuing worldwide inflation; the lining of their own pockets by many leaders; the falling prices of copper, and periodic drought made of Zambia a debtor nation in the intervening years.

Mrs. Francesca Mumba

Though Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's President for 28 years, was a charismatic leader, by the late 1980's Zambia was in serious economic trouble, unable to repay even the interest on her external debts. Its people had gone from colonial paternalism to one-party socialist paternalism. In 1991 Zambia opted for a multi-party democracy. Free elections were held, monitored by local Zambian groups, including the churches, as well as by international observers, like former President Jimmy Carter.

The newly elected Government of Frederick Chiluba, having inherited a bankrupt socialist economy, accepted the Structural Adjustment Programme demanded by the International Monetary Fund in exchange for the rescheduling of debts and a new inflow of cash from the World Bank. [The cash is only another loan, so adding to the debt.]

This latest development may sound simple and hopeful to many of us in the West. An African country chooses democracy peacefully and on its own adopts a market economy, thus entering the 21st. century, helped by the World Bank. Neat.

But what does this mean when you are a Zambian citizen? The following story of middle class Zambian parents in the 30-something age bracket, mother and father both working to help their children finish secondary school, gives a better picture than any U.N. statistics.

One of the market stalls - St. Theresa's church is in the background

## MAKING MONEY WORK

Mr. and Mrs. Mumba approached Sister Fernando Roy, one of the three pastoral associates at St. Theresa Parish, Mufulira, asking for money to help pay their children's school fees. The Government was broke and had to charge parents for school tuition, books and uniforms. And with the devaluation of Zambian money, their income was less than half of what it had been two years earlier. The Mumba's were not alone. Before the start of the new school year about ten families had come with a similar story. The Sisters discovered that the former missionary pastor of the larger parish from which St. Theresa's was formed, had made funds available for parishioners who needed help with school fees.

The Sisters took up the question in their weekly pastoral team meeting. Handing out



money was not something they were prepared to do. The Zambian priest and parish council agreed that it was a destructive practice, long term. So, what could be done? The need was very real. The only hope for these teenagers and their parents lay in finishing their secondary education. They were bright and successful at school. Dropping out at this stage would leave them floundering. But in the present economic free fall, their parents were using 80% of their earnings on food alone! “We have to put it to the parents,” the parish council decided.

Fernande called a meeting of those parents interested in raising funds for keeping their children at secondary school. Five couples turned up. They met and discussed possible ways of raising money. It was hard to work together: different tribes, different outlooks,

different economic situations made for suspicion. Another thing that made it difficult was that it was next to impossible to save. One of the I.M.F. conditions for rescheduling a loan (to repay Zambia’s debt to the banks) was devaluation of the local currency. The resultant rampant inflation was responsible for the loss of any incentive to save. Nevertheless the parents arrived at a decision.

With ‘seed money’ given by a Canadian well-wisher (50 dollars) the parish would start an account in a local bank Zanaco. Zanaco along with the foreign banks in Zambia was offering 42% interest to offset inflation and encourage saving.\* Fifty dollars was worth thousands of Zambian Kwacha and something could be done with the interest before there was another devaluation.

*Mrs. Francesca Mumba and some members of the ‘School Fees Club’*



The idea caught on. They tossed it back and forth. The parents could borrow on the interest from the savings account to start a fund-raising project for paying school fees. But this would not be enough.

The 50 dollars was converted to 10,000 Kwacha, the local currency, and began to earn interest. Months went by. The parents continued meeting, exploring ways to raise funds and encouraging one another in the difficult art of saving from their meagre means. Finally they elaborated a plan. They could borrow from the interest provided they were able to bring K100 - K300 (Kwacha) of their own savings to add to what they borrowed and then return it once they had succeeded in their project. Then the interest would accumulate and provide a disbursement fund for other income-generating projects.

Sister Fernande went on leave. They continued. When she returned three of the women were still meeting. And saving. Mrs. Malisawa, who had four children at school and whose husband had taken a second wife, brought K300 and said she wanted to borrow K4,000 from the interest and invest in millet and maize meal to brew ‘katubi’, a light Zambian beer akin to cider. She returned to the group in a few weeks with K5,000: K4,000 for the kitty and K1,000 ready to reinvest! She went at it a second time. Mrs. Mumba and Mrs. Mwaba were helping her to collect firewood for the brewing and to market the drink.

It is now Mrs. Mumba’s turn. She has brought her savings and will borrow what she needs to make ‘katubi’, since this is the season to buy grain. The others will help her. Eventually Mrs. Mwaba will do the same. At this point

\* The rate of inflation is so high as the Zambian money is devalued that the Zambian banks have to adjust interest rates upward constantly in order to get investors interested at all. When Beverly left Zambia, five months after the Mufulira group started investing, banks were giving rates over 100%!

they are discussing other projects for when the ‘katubi’ season is over. In January at the start of the school year, they will be withdrawing their profits plus interest, to pay school fees, which run at about K2000 per child per term.

These women are working very hard every day, literally living from hand to mouth, to keep their children at school, but the continual devaluation of the Kwacha with respect to the dollar means that K100 saved last year is worth only K30 this year! Even the original ‘seed money’ of 50 dollars is now worth only 20. When the school fees go up, as they inevitably will after the latest devaluation, will their savings be enough to pay their children’s school fees?

It is easy for the women to get discouraged when they see their hard earned money disappear because of international decisions over which they have no control. The situation is multiplied all over the country as ordinary Zambians, unaware of macro-decision making and its so called long term benefits, begin to mistrust the whole political and social environment and have less and less incentive to work or save or invest.

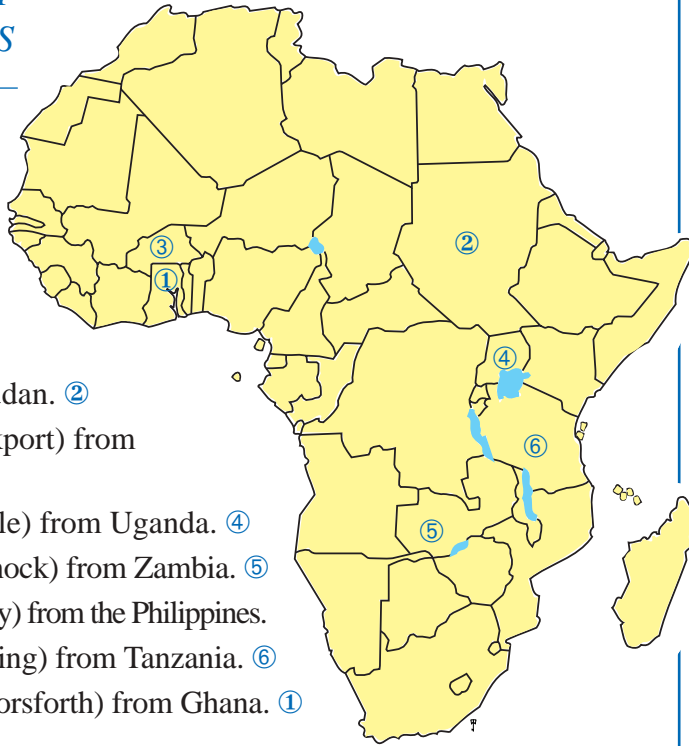
Meanwhile in Mufulira some men, seeing the success of the women’s small projects, have approached Sr. Fernande to help them get started so that they can cover their teenagers’ school fees. Together with other parents, both men and women, they will start a second group. Once again saving is the first step. Fernande makes this a prerequisite. “For people in their economic circumstances”, she says, “the habit of saving is an essential first step, or they will never be able to invest.”



# MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

## ARRIVALS

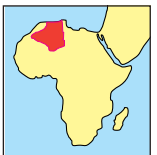
- Fr. Pat Shanahan (Mill Hill) from Ghana. ①
- Fr. Paul Hannon (Newcastle) from Sudan. ②
- Fr. Frank Barnes (Stockport) from Burkina Faso. ③
- Fr. Jack Thora (Rochdale) from Uganda. ④
- Fr. Bill Russell (Kilmarnock) from Zambia. ⑤
- Fr. George Smith (Kircaldy) from the Philippines.
- Br. George Ascot (Dorking) from Tanzania. ⑥
- Br. Trevor Robinson (Horsforth) from Ghana. ①



## DEPARTURES

- Fr. Joseph Cummins (Croydon) to Burkina Faso. ③
- Fr. Eddie Woo (Hong Kong) to Hong Kong.
- Fr. Jean Devrièsère (London) to France.
- Fr. Paul Gigli (Blackpool) to Uganda. ④
- Sr. Frieda Schmil to Paris.

## FATHER JOHN MACWILLIAM



*writes from troubled Algeria where the people have been caught up in violence for several years. Let us remember them in our prayers.*

Life here remains as before - plenty of violence and a pretty miserable Ramadan and Eid for the people. There doesn't seem to be an end in sight, though we all go on hoping and planning for better days.

## ST. ANTHONY NOVENA

### St. Anthony friend of the poor

At this time of the year it is quite fitting that the main articles in this issue and the April-May issue of the magazine should have dealt with Morocco and the Western Sahara. The reason for this is that Morocco was the country which, directly and indirectly, changed the life of St. Anthony of Padua.

Anthony was inspired by the work which Franciscan missionaries did in Morocco and especially with the martyrdom of five of the Order in 1220. He had already been impressed with the way the Franciscans lived and preached and the deaths of the missionaries helped Anthony make the move from the Augustinians to the Franciscans. Then in the Autumn of 1220 Anthony himself went to Ceuta (present day Sebta) in northern Morocco as a missionary.

Unfortunately his health was not good and he had to return to Europe after a short time.

Anthony's life took a different direction when he came back to Italy and at first he spent some time as a hermit and then taught theology to his fellow Friars. After this he journeyed through Italy and France and became well known for his preaching. This worked was based on his previous studies and his intellectual gifts.

The strong devotion which people have to St. Anthony probably has its roots in the latter part of his life. He was known as someone who cared for the poor and needy and often even helped some of them in legal matters when he was in Padua. Since the 17th century he has been called upon to find lost articles. In the 19th. century Anthony's care for the poor gave rise to the devotion of 'St. Anthony's Bread'. Often he is depicted, as in the picture of our statue, distributing bread to the poor.

### St. Anthony's Novena 13th. - 21st. June

Some years ago Fr. William Burridge WF. started the Student Bursary Fund. Fittingly, St. Anthony was chosen as its patron saint. Anthony was drawn to work in Africa and, even though he did not remain there long, he kept his missionary zeal in his preaching and concern for the poor. Today, with the help of funds raised in our islands, the education of future missionaries continues.

Once again the White Fathers' annual Novena of Thanksgiving to St. Anthony of Padua will run from Friday 13th. June (St. Anthony's feast-day) to Saturday 21st June. During this time, Mass will be offered each day for the intentions of our benefactors in all our communities, and White Fathers specially remember our benefactors in their prayers. We invite readers to send their Petitions, in the enclosed envelopes, which will be placed at the Altar during the Novena.

*The statue of St. Anthony in the chapel at the White Father's house in Sutton Coldfield. In previous years we have had numerous requests for such statues. As far as we know it is unique and was specially commissioned for the 'St. Anthony's Burse'.*



*Writes from Mwanza, Tanzania. Jeanette is a Dutch candidate training to become a Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa (White Sister). For part of the time she was working with Sister Chimwemwe. (See 'Joy in the streets of Mwanza.' No. 327, April/May 1996.)*

I want to tell you about two of the most striking experiences I have had in Mwanza - so striking that they will be forever carved in my memory.

The first is about an AIDS patient who lived with her two children not far from us. I visited the lady very often during the day when her children were at school in a Centre for street children.

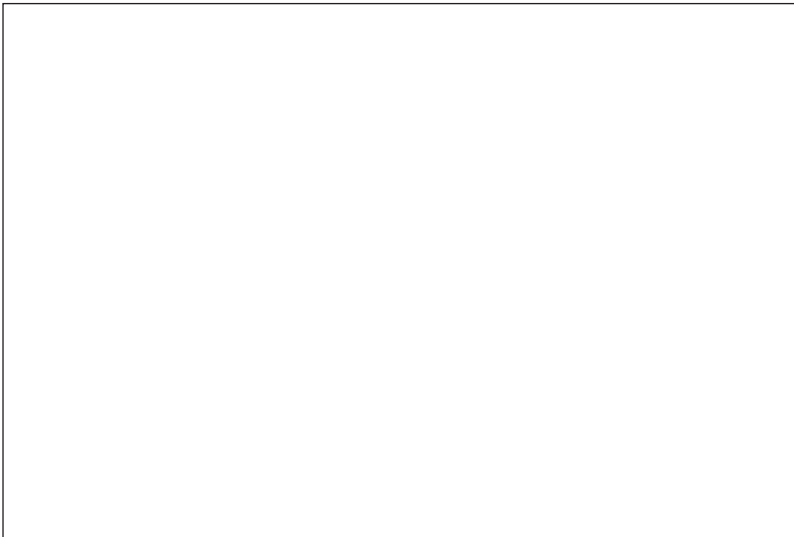
During the last weeks she was not well as her TB started up again and her strength was diminishing. Then on December 22nd. (1996) I went to bring her a Christmas gift. I found her lying on the floor on a mat in a dark and dirty room. The children had not been home for several days and the neighbours were not able to help her. She said she was dying of hunger. After cleaning her room a bit, I heated some water for tea and heated the beans I had brought. She was very grateful; "God sees what you are doing and He will reward you."

A few days later, while practising the Christmas play with the children, a neighbour came, "Sister, please come," she said. "She has tried to burn down the house". As I approached her

house I heard the screaming, "I am dying! I am dying!" She explained to me how she had tried to light a fire for tea, but the match had fallen and her blanket had caught fire.

After some discussion with my community and with the neighbours, we decided to take her to the Government hospital. At the reception the nurse said, "This is not a case for us." I refused to take her to another, bigger hospital. The boys who were helping us, put her on the floor to wait for the doctor. I took her in my arms and tears welled up in my eyes and rolled down my cheeks, as I knew she was dying. I marked her head with a cross and prayed. She was Muslim, but I knew Jesus was waiting for her.

When the doctor finally came, I expressed my anger "Why did she have to die in such an in-human way?" I was sad because I had lost a friend. But there was an inner peace. She was released from her suffering now. And then I heard a voice: "This is why you have come to Africa."



*Jeanette with one of the street women and her baby*

*There will be a second part of this article in the next issue.*



*reflects on some of the events of 1996, many of which, sadly, are still with us. Bishop Michael reminds us of the glimmer of hope which can be had from dialogue between different religions.*

1996 has been marked by violence which has caused suffering for so many people. Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire come immediately to mind. But there was also the war in Chechnia, the (almost) forgotten wars in Sri Lanka and Kashmir, the attacks against Israelis and Palestinians and the bombing of Southern Lebanon. There have also been the continuous killings in Algeria. The kidnapping and subsequent murder of the seven Trappist monks of Tibhirine, and then the bomb which took the life of Bishop Pierre Claverie and of his chauffeur, Muhammad, touched us very closely. Christian de Chergé, the prior of the monastery of Our Lady of Atlas, had been my student at the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Pierre Claverie was a Member of our Council and had taken an active part in our Plenary Assembly last November. They were both prominent figures in Christian-Muslim dialogue.

These assassinations have provoked strong reactions from Muslims as well as from Christians. Our Council has set up a liaison committee with representatives of International Islamic Organisations. At a meeting of this committee, in Cairo, it was our Muslim partners who first unambiguously condemned the crime committed against the Monks of Tibhirine. It may well be that the suffering will bring us closer together. This is certainly true, by all accounts, of Christians and their Muslim friends in Algeria itself.

So dialogue goes on. Our Council, with the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research, Amman, co-sponsored a colloquium in Rome on the use of the earth's resources. There was such easy agreement on this theme. Another meeting in which I took part was much more difficult. It brought together Jews, Christians and Muslims, the majority of whom live in Israel and Palestine. We were asking them to try to outline a common vision for Jerusalem. This is of course very difficult in the present circumstances. It is perhaps remarkable that the group was able to come to an agreed statement, even if in extremis.

## To Help Our Missionary Work Please Remember Us In Your Will

*Where there's a will, there's a way*

### White Fathers

"I give to the **Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)** the sum of ..... free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Father Provincial of the Society in Great Britain, who now resides at 42 Stormont Road, Highgate, London, N6 4NP, shall be a good discharge."

White Fathers' Registered Charity No. 233302

### White Sisters

"I give to the **Missionary Sisters of our Lady of Africa (White Sisters)** the sum of ..... free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Sister Provincial of the Congregation in Great Britain, who now resides at 25 Waldemar Avenue, Ealing, London, W13 9PZ, shall be a good discharge."

White Sisters' Registered Charity No. 228983





writes from Mwanza, Tanzania. Readers may remember a former article by this lay missionary entitled 'An African Woman Weeps', issue No. 323 Aug/Sept. 1995. Some people wanted to know the end of the story, so Ray was asked to write again. Here is his answer.

Dear Sister Mary,

I am very grateful to you for asking me to write about the patient Theresa in your White Fathers and Sisters magazine, because after that I received two donations of money for Theresa.

After her operation was postponed I left Tanzania to go on home leave. When I returned I heard that she had got her operation finally and the hospital did not charge her any money. However the operation did not succeed and she went home to her village still with her medical problem the same. I then tried to contact her

in order to give her the donations which had been sent. It was not easy to find her. I traced her name in the hospital records and discovered that she came from a village 100 miles away. It took me some months to find it and get a message through. However we then discovered that while we were trying to find her she had returned to my own hospital and unknown to me was waiting once again for another operation. After delays of several weeks, owing to the long waiting list, Theresa decided to travel about 200 miles to another hospital where she had heard there were surgeons also able to help her condition.

At this point I did get a message to her and sent her some money. At that hospital she had about three operations, but still they were not able to cure her condition, so after several months she decided to return to Mwanza to see me, for she knew I had some money for her. She was admitted again, this time all

smiles, because she knew she had friends both in the hospital and in Europe. A visiting surgeon from Kenya, an expert on her condition, operated on her. Her condition improved by 50%. So after about five operations she is not yet completely cured, and that is the story up to the present. She has now gone back to her village

and will return to Mwanza around March this year. (This letter was written in January 1997.) We are expecting another visiting surgeon then, this time from the U.K., Dr. John Kelly. He may decide to operate on her.

I think the story of Theresa shows how the Church is able to give hope to one of the poorest women in the world. We are doing our best to give special attention to all the other women in our hospital with similar problems and to make sure that, although most of them have no money, they are given a priority in our hospital with the help of Church funds.

Through your connections Theresa has been given great comfort. I am most grateful and encouraged. Many thanks.

God bless, Ray Towey.

### Change of address

If you are about to move, or have moved, and would still like to receive the magazine please fill in the form below and return it to:  
 'White Fathers - White Sisters' 129, Lichfield Road,  
 Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 2SA.

Your Name: .....

Old Address: .....

..... Post Code .....

New Address: .....

..... Post Code .....

### FATHER ANDRÉ SCHAMINÉE

Many of our readers will remember Fr. André from his days as the Rector of St. Edward's-the White Fathers' College, in Totteridge, North London. Since leaving Totteridge Fr. André has gone to Bangalore in India to work in another of our houses of formation. This time Fr. André is with prospective White Fathers from the Sub-Continent who are just beginning their training. It is from there that he drops us a line to tell us something of his work.

It is almost one year since I started my task here in India, which consists in preparing young people to offer their service to the Church of

Theresa, all smiles, in Mwanza hospital

Africa through our Society (the White Fathers). Although there are great differences, there are also immense similarities with Africa and that is why I had no trouble in getting accustomed to my new place.

At present we have twenty seven students, spread out over four years. They come from seven different states each with its own language. Besides being the Rector here, I am also Vocations Director. So I am kept quite busy, but I am happy to be able - in this way - to get new 'workers for the rich harvest in Africa.





Sister Alice Bangnidong, a Ghanaian Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa (White Sister), then studying in England, now in Kenya. As part of their studies, Alice and her companion, Margaret Poreku, also from Ghana, went to the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham. The President of the World Bank, Mr. James Wolfensohn, addressed a large audience in St. Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham. He didn't know what he was letting himself in for. Alice writes about the speech of Mr. Wolfensohn:

His main point and emphasis was how the World Bank has used different strategies to help improve the economy of the Third World countries. He had no idea what he was letting himself in for by citing some examples of Third World countries whose economies they have helped "improve". Ghana was one of the countries he cited as an example. Their economy used to be very poor, he said, but owing to the assistance given by the World Bank (finance, strategies etc.) Ghana's economy has improved tremendously. If that is true, I thought, how come that Ghana's debt to the World Bank is 6 times higher than in the 80's.

Well, I could not but stand up to challenge him on the grounds that many Ghanaians, like the masses of other Africans, are still struggling just to meet their basic needs and nothing more. I tell you, in spite of my poor English and the big crowd of people, I began to have my say. I started by saying I was a Ghanaian, born and brought up in that country. I left the country for the first time in 1990. Then went home again in 1994. After this I asked him quite a lot of questions concerning himself and Ghana. Just to mention a few: had he ever been to Ghana? to which he said "yes". I further asked whether he had gone around

the whole country or had he just remained in Accra in a big hotel and then gone away.

Well, my point of argument with him was that they, the top people, don't often know the realities of the common, ordinary people in the society. In fact he had only got to Accra, obtained his information from only the top people, like himself there, who normally don't know anything about the masses of the people in the country.

I don't know where I got the courage that day or the ability to articulate my thoughts. I went on and on. As soon as I sat down, Margaret Poreku (another Ghanaian White Sister) got up and carried on ... Most of the people attending were happily shocked at our reaction. After the talk many of the people came to congratulate us for our courage to speak out against the false impression he was giving concerning Ghana.



Sr. Alice Bangnidong



writes from Kakonko. We include this note from Fr. Peter, even though he wrote in October last year, as he gives us his first impressions on his return to Africa to take up a new appointment in Tanzania.

I was given a warm welcome by the confreres in Dar and especially by the British confreres Geoff Riddle and George Ascott. On the move again, I flew to Kigoma and caught a lorry and then a pick-up, which brought me to Kakonko on roads made even worse than usual by a cloud-burst. Thereafter the travelling stopped.

Now, two months later, I'm making progress in Swahili and hope to go to the Kipalapala Language Centre (in January). For me it has

been a wonderful experience to be here, although all I can do is help out here and there.

As Swahili is pronounced as it is written, it was not daunting to celebrate Mass in Swahili even from the first week. On Christmas night I will celebrate Mass in an outstation, followed by two Masses the next morning. The previous Sunday I will negotiate a marriage and Baptism in the Mass, which will last about three hours.

The cloud-burst in October was an isolated event and the rainy season is now several months late. Either the famine or the political instability is producing thousands of refugees coming from Burundi into the diocese. We ourselves awaited a deluge of them, but they used other ports of entry.

## THE WHITE FATHERS MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

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- Educate in Evangelical justice and peace

**Respond to particular situations:**

- AIDS and other diseases,
- wars and violence all over the continent,
- uncertainty over future political developments,
- Africa's seemingly insoluble problems.

**For information about the White Fathers please contact:**

Fr. Damien Watine  
The White Fathers,  
4 Grove Street,  
Edinburgh EH3 8BB  
Tel. 0131-228-6843



C/O Vocation Director  
St. Edward's College,  
46 Totteridge Common,  
London N20 8ND  
Tel. 0181-959-2553



# Let Us Pray

*For the following  
who have died recently:*

Mr James Anthony, 1 Ashgrove, Blackburn, West Lothian.  
 Mr Maurice Baroni, Flat 25 - St.Cuthberts Court, Myddleton Street, Carlisle.  
 Mrs Bore, Beckenham, Kent.  
 Mrs Mary Magdalen Bowen, 34 Hazeltree Croft, Acocks Green, Birmingham.  
 Mrs Virginia Bowyer-Tagg, 10 Caxton Court, Broadwater Road, Worthing.  
 Mr Ronald Ernest Broadbridge, 41 Stoke Lane, Little Stoke, Bristol.  
 Reverend Father Augustine Brocklehurst O.C.R., Mount Saint Bernard Abbey, Leicestershire. (Brother of Sister Mary Brocklehurst W.S.)  
 Mr Thomas Brown, 38 Leylands Road, Rudloe, Corsham, Wilts.  
 Mr Peter Cao, 14 Boyer Walk, Derby.  
 Mrs Susan Cartwright, Gidlow Lane, Wigan.  
 Miss Teresa Cassell, 12 Brook Road East, Waterloo, Liverpool.  
 Mrs A. Clark, 4 Gowanbank Road, Ayr, Ayrshire.  
 Mrs Agnes Coyle, Flat 2/3 53 Barloch Street, Glasgow.  
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 Mrs Mary Docherty, 128 Craiglea Road, Renfrew, Scotland.  
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 Mr Pat Duffy, 11 Montague Street, Hillhead, Glasgow.  
 Mr Albert Enticknap, 8 Parkhill Court, Parkhill Drive, Leicester.  
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 Mrs J. Ford, 187 Rotherham Road, Maltby, Yorkshire.  
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 Mrs Kitty Gemmel, 25 Barrachnie Crescent, Garrowhill, Bailieston, Glasgow.  
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 Miss Ellen Glencross, 11 Copland Street, Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire.  
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Mr Louis Hodgson, 2 Bisham Court, Park Street, Slough.  
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 Mr J. G. Joyce, 115 Tweedsmuir Road, Glasgow.  
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 Mrs Anne Lynch, 58 Lamington Road, Glasgow.  
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 Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus Order - European Province.  
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 Mr Bernard Smith, Meadowhead Road, Wishaw. (Uncle of Sister Helen Scullion W.S.)  
 Mr J. Smith, 1 Selby Drive, Highfield, Wigan, Lancs.  
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 Mrs Traynor, Bellshill, Lanarkshire.  
 Mrs Margaret Welsh, Kilallan House, Houston, Renfrewshire (formerly of Paisley and Johnstone).  
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take for your heritage  
the kingdom prepared for you  
since the foundation of the world".*

(Mt. 25.34)



**May they rest in peace**

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