

# White Fathers - White Sisters



<b>Contents</b>	<b>page</b>
Editorial .....	3
<b>Rwanda - Jubilee Year of Evangelisation</b>	
By Venuste Linguyenzeza/ANB-BIA .....	4
<b>Tunisia - Open Doors for the Young</b>	
By Sr. Carmen Sammut W.S. and the Community of Mourouj .....	18
<b>Home and Away</b> .....	22
<b>Obituary List</b> .....	30

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<i>White Fathers - page 26.</i>	<i>Vivant Univers - pages 1, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, &amp; 15.</i>
<i>White Sisters - pages 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29 &amp; 32.</i>	<i>George Smith WF - page 23.</i>
	<i>Front Cover - A smile from Rwanda.</i>

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**EDITORIAL**

This issue of the magazine appears as we remember the seventh anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda - 6th. April, 1994. The article 'Rwanda - Jubilee Year of Evangelisation', by Venuste Linguyenzezaarti, reflects on the delicate situation in the country after the Catholic Church has just celebrated its centenary. The author asks some tough questions, many of which do not have easy answers, and looks to a peaceful future. The 'Editor's Notes' give background information on individuals mentioned in the article and on the Rwandan Church and people.

In the article 'Tunisia - Open Doors for the Young' we see how the White Sisters' Community of Mourouj receive volunteers who give up their time to help in their work. We gain an insight into this activity and how valuable everyone finds this experience.

As we approach Easter Fr. George Smith W.F. writes about Passion Sunday in a South African parish. Fr. George is Parish Priest of Our Lady Queen of Peace, South 'B', Nairobi. Sadly the main parish church of the parish was burnt down at the beginning of December last year. The Parish and the people are known to our Readers and we hope to give more information about this incident, and the present situation in Kenya, in the next issue of the magazine.

Those associated with 'White Fathers - White Sisters' wish all our Readers a blessed Easter. Let us remember the Church in Africa at the time when we celebrate new life which we have gained through the risen Christ.

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**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

# Rwanda - Jubilee Year of Evangelisation

By Venuste Linguyenzeza/ANB-BIA

Last year, the Church in Rwanda celebrated its Centenary. On the 2nd. February, 1900, missionaries arrived at the Mwami's court. [a] One hundred years on, how are things going?

Can we really justify a celebration such as a Jubilee? (1) After all, there's a bishop in prison, and both he and the Church in Rwanda are having to defend their past actions. The Jubilee programme has had to take into account Bishop Misago's appearances in court. [b] How can we possibly celebrate, keeping in mind what happened during the period of the genocide and remembering the unspeakable massacres that took place? Christians are accused of having taken part in the genocide and the Church as having initiated it. Indeed, there is reason for the Church to wonder whether the occasion of the centenary is a time of Jubilee or a time of trial.

However, the needs of truth and justice call for an appraisal of the situation. We must examine our past history in both its negative and positive aspects. We must not be afraid to face up to our failures, our shortcomings, our omissions, our weaknesses. Everything must

be examined in detail. It is indeed a critical moment for all of us, and it's a real pity that the Church in Rwanda has to go through this exercise in such circumstances. There are tremendous pressures against the Church; terrible charges to face up to; the Church's apostolic workers are killed, detained, or are in exile.

In the eyes of the public, the Church is on trial for its alleged or real involvement in politics. The fact is, the Catholic Church has been positively and actively present in many domains, for which the people remain grateful and will remain unfailingly attached to their Church.

The Church in Rwanda is present at all times, be it in times of difficulty or when all is going well. Some even accuse it of being 'too present': i.e. present everywhere ... too powerful ... you can't get away from it. One ambassador put it this way to a missionary who had just been ordered to leave the country: "The Church's presence is harmful". Others say the Church is "young, much appreciated, but easily impaired". (2) Statistics confirm that the Church is present on all of Rwanda's one thousand hills, in all sections of national life.

*Editor's Note [a] Mwami (King) at the time was Musinga.*

*Author's Note (1) Some people, suffering from recent events, felt that they had to protest against the celebration of the Jubilee. They said: "The time for rejoicing has not yet arrived". But their understanding of Jubilee as simply a time for rejoicing, is wrong. In fact, it is a time for repentance, for pardon and reconciliation (Leviticus 25, 8-22). The present Jubilee has come at just the right moment, to help us come to terms with our history. The condition being that we admit that we are 'ill' and that we turn to Jesus whose love will heal us. Message read by Bishop Kizito Bahujimihigo on the occasion of Christmas and the New Year 2000 in 'Notre Lien', no. 3 (January-December 1999).*

*Editor's Note [b] Bishop Augustine Misago - was born in Ruvuna, Byumba Diocese, in 1943, and he became Bishop of Gikongoro Diocese in 1992. He was arrested on the 14th. April, 1999, and held in Kilgali Central Prison, accused of being involved in the 1994 genocide. These include incidents such as: the disappearance of 30 school girls at Kibeho; the murder of three priests at Cyanika; and the massacre of about 20,000 people at Kibeho Parish Church.*

*Reasons for the Accusations - The Rwandan Catholic Bishops, the Vatican and various Catholic media sources have claimed that Bishop Misago was a victim of the Rwandan Government's conspiracy against the Catholic Church in Rwanda and R. D. Congo. The comments made by Archbishop Marcello Zago, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, concerning the Bishop's arrest summarize what many Church leaders think about the situation in Africa. "Public opinion cannot fail to see that in many African countries the Church is subject to persecution. Bishop Misago is not the only one to be targeted. Efforts to weaken the Church, under different pretexts and for different reasons, are seen throughout central Africa, particularly in the region of the Great Lakes.*

*Attacking bishops in Rwanda, and now also in the Congo ... is obviously part of a broader plan that involves the whole of Africa: it is good that the Church and people in general realize this."*

## STATISTICS

People's memories and understanding of events, have been clouded by the genocide, and because of this, other interpretations have been given to the situation of the Church. The fact is, if there had been no genocide, then the Church's presence in Rwanda would have been seen as a real and unquestionable success.

Christianity spread rapidly throughout

Rwanda. In the 1930s, people were talking about the "Spirit blowing like a tornado across the country!" Rarely have there been so many conversions over so short a period. We may well understand the missionaries' enthusiasm for what was taking place. In their wildest dreams they never dared hope for so much,

all the more so as they had just been expelled from Uganda. Leaving aside their motivations or the strategies they adopted in their work of evangelisation, let us simply say that they wanted to 'convert' and bring to Christianity as many Rwandans as they possibly could. And they succeeded.

*When asked "Why are they against the Church?" the Archbishop replied "They want to weaken the Church because she is a force which opposes inhuman systems. This part of Africa is living the same situation as Latin America, with the spread of religious sects and cults. One notes pressure to spread these cults, probably with support from various international economic organizations. At a time when the people are still insecure and bewildered, these sects are exploited as a means of dividing and weakening the Church and taking away her members. ... The Church simply cannot approve what is taking place: ethnic clashes, one group dominating the other, arbitrary trials and sentences without proof, all in total absence of any prospect of reconciliation." (Fides 14/04/2000)*

*Bishop Frederic Rubwejanga, of Kibungo Diocese and Vice-President of the Rwandan Bishops' Conference, was asked by 'Fides' "Why should someone accuse the Church of genocide?" He replied: "The reasons are not at all clear and I cannot say that I know them. One may be that people tend to confuse the Church as a whole with her individual members. Crimes committed by individual Christians are blamed on the Church as institution. It has often been said that the Catholic Church, to which many Burundians belong, played a part in the genocide. But this affirmation does not hold under careful examination. In this regard the Pope spoke words which should be heeded. He said that the Church cannot be held responsible for acts committed by some of her members and that these individuals must have the courage to admit their personal responsibility." (Fides 24/09/1999)*

*The Bishop's accusers are not just the Rwandan Government. Various publications throughout the world have levelled accusations at the Catholic Church and Bishop Misago. They include 'African Rights' (UK), in 'Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance'; 'Solidaire' (Belgium) and 'Goliath' (France). The Acquittal - The Prosecution asked for the death sentence. Eventually all accusations against Bishop Misago were dropped and he was found not guilty of complicity in the 1994 genocide. The Bishop was released from prison on the 15th. June, 2000.*

*Author's Note (2) Title of a video-cassette published in 1990 as a preparation for the Pope's visit to Rwanda.*

*Picture above: A thoughtful moment*



## MANY 'MISSION POSTS'

It was initially a question of getting established. Parishes (they used to be called 'missions') were set up everywhere. Once a Christian presence had been guaranteed in the middle and around the extremities of Rwanda, the missionaries were able to spread out throughout the length and breadth of the land. Today, there are 133 parishes (with approximately 500 outstations attached to the parishes). There are 9 dioceses. Readers will get a better idea of the general picture when we explain that an average parish covers some 200 square kilometres (77 sq.mls), and a diocese an average of 3,000 square kilometres (1,158 sq.mls). [c]

Rwanda was said to be the most Catholic country in Africa, some giving the percentage of Catholics as high as 80% of Rwanda's total population. This is of course exaggerated or at least it shows a poor knowledge of available data. To get a **proper appreciation**, one has to take an average between parishes with a high percentage of Catholics and those which have less. The parish with the highest percentage of Catholics is, of course, Save (the first mission), totalling 85%. The parish with the lowest percentage of Catholics is Gatere in Gikongoro Diocese, with Catholics numbering only 0.7% of the local population. In this way, the Catholic population on a national level, is 51% of Rwanda's total population.

Baptisms continue everywhere. Let's take just one example: Byimana Parish, with a Catholic population of 82.22% had 1,284 Baptisms in 1998. The same year, Save Parish had 2,536 catechumens for baptism.

## PERSONNEL - OF GOOD QUALITY AND NUMEROUS

Once the missionaries had established their 'Parish Plants', their next priority was to bring as many people as possible to the waters of baptism. They genuinely wanted to develop a **flourishing** Local Church. The missionaries

were preoccupied with training good quality and numerous local personnel - first of all to assist the missionaries and then eventually to replace them. All credit to the **White Fathers** and the **White Sisters** who, as a matter of policy, refused to look for vocations for their own congregations. Rather, they were concerned with building up a true local Church with its own leaders. Their pastoral methods differed from other missionary congregations elsewhere which prioritised the recruitment of local priests and nuns for their own congregations and institutes. In Rwanda, the first Rwandese White Sister was professed only in 1961, and the first Rwandan White Father was ordained priest only in 1983.

Very soon, Rwanda had its own local diocesan clergy as well as local religious congregations for nuns, priests and religious. The first two local priests were ordained on the 7th. October, 1917. Note that the Rwandan clergy were very soon placed in positions of responsibility within the Church. In sharp contrast to the colonial power, the Church was the **very first organisation** to entrust Africans with important responsibilities. In 1919, the diocesan clergy took over Murunda Parish. In 1935, three Rwandan priests were asked to found a new Parish (Janja). On the 25th. March, 1956, for the first time in the whole of Africa and even in the world, a black bishop consecrated a white bishop. On the 18th. April 1961, for the first time in Africa, the local clergy took over the running of the seminary.

Regarding the **Religious** in Rwanda, Bishop Hirth wanted to found two local congregations - one of men and the other of women. [d] In 1912, he founded the Josephite Brothers and the First Profession in the Congregation took place in 1916. The first Josephite Superior General, Brother Laurent, was elected on the 11th. January, 1953. Bishop Hirth founded the Benebikira Sisters in 1913. In 1919 the first

Sister was professed in the Congregation. The first Benebikira Superior General, Mama Teresa, was elected on the 12th. January, 1953. On the 24th. April 1956, Father Raphaël Sekamonyo founded a totally Rwandan congregation, the Bizeramariya. Other foundations took place in recent years - some in response to a call from young people who wanted to consecrate their lives to God, but who lacked a more advanced education (they possibly had only been to primary school) and who at the same time, didn't see the necessity of catching up on their education for their future apostolate among the rural population. (Bishop Blaise

Forissier and Bishop Louyis Gasore founded such Congregations to cater for these needs).

Regarding **personnel**; in recent years, quite a number of international religious Congregations, both male and female, have come to our dioceses to work within the context of our diocesan charitable services (also for state-run charitable services). In Rwanda, they saw the possibility of attracting many vocations to their ranks, so much so that they established a number of training houses (29 for Sisters and 19 for Mens' religious Congregations). Butare Hill is called the 'Little Vatican' because of its numerous training houses.

## EDUCATION

The Church is said to be omni-present in education and the medical/social field. What's the reality of the situation?

Regarding **education**; the Church has taken on the responsibility of running many schools

from primary level upwards - private schools such as seminaries; grant-in-aid schools run by the Church but subsidised by the State; state schools which the state has entrusted to the Church such as the famous Butare School Group. The National University was founded by the Dominican Fathers, who ran it until 1974. The Church was asked to take on this responsibility because the colonial power, Belgium, was unable to do so. The first Education Agreement between the State and the Churches was signed in 1925. The Catholic Church did its best to increase the number of schools. There was a **dire necessity** for qualified personnel to train the teachers needed in the schools, so the Josephite Brothers and Benebikira Sisters saw a major part of their vocation dedicated to the field of education.

Unfortunately, as in many other countries, **youth unemployment** is a major concern in Rwanda, and the Church has risen to the



*Editor's Note [c] See the facts and figures about the Church and a map of Rwanda on pages 8, 10 and 16-17.  
Editor's Note [d] Mgr. Jean-Joseph Hirth was a White Father born at Spechbach-le-Bas, Alsace, France on the 26th. March, 1854. He arrived in Rwanda from Uganda in November, 1912, and died on the 6th. January, 1931.*

*The article is continued on page 9  
Picture above: Surrounded by the lush land of 'a thousand hills' in previous years*



## FACTS AND FIGURES ON THE RWANDAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

**KIGALI ARCHDIOCESE** - The Bishop is Archbishop Taddée Ntihinyurwa. The priests working in the diocese are as follows: 40 diocesan; 3 fidei donum; and 43 religious. There are about 210,000 Christians of other denominations. The population has been increasing since 1994 due to the many Tutsi returned from exile.

**BUTARE DIOCESE** - The Bishop is Mgr. Philippe Rukamba (from Kibungo Diocese, nominated 2nd. January, 1997). He took over from Mgr. Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi. The diocese was created in 1961 as Astrida and was renamed Butare in 1963. Before the genocide the population, mainly Tutsi, was 900,000. There were 500,000 Catholics and 30,000 catechumens in 1992. **Save** was the first parish established in Rwanda (1900). At present the priests in the diocese number as follows: 87 diocesan; 4 fidei donum; and 32 religious. Many of the diocesan priests live outside Rwanda (studies, work for the Church, and in exile). Since 1994 25 diocesan priests have been ordained. The Nyakibanda National Major Seminary is in Butare Diocese.

**BYUMBA DIOCESE** - The Bishop is Mgr. Servilien Nzakamwita. The priests working in the diocese are as follows: 4 diocesan; 14 fidei donum; and 12 religious. During the genocide more than 200,000 people were killed in the diocese and 300,000 have returned from exile. These comprise of 50% under 15 years old, 10% are orphans and 70% women. A great deal of the diocese's work is caring for this population.

**CYANGUGU DIOCESE** - The Bishop is Mgr. Jean Damascene Bimenyimana (from Nyundo Diocese, nominated 2nd. January, 1997). The diocese is in the west of the country and was created in 1981. The area is still suffering from the effects of the genocide and the insecure situation. Missionaries who worked in the diocese left,

there are no male religious congregations (previously 4) now and there are 8 congregations of women religious (previously 13). 25% of the population follow traditional religions, and 3% are Muslims.

**GIKONGORO DIOCESE** - The diocese suffered a great deal from the genocide and the ensuing war. 75,000 people, the bishop and 12 priests were murdered, despite the area being part of the French 'Operation Turquoise'. The present Bishop, Philippe Rukamba (from Butare Diocese), took over after the arrest of Bishop Misago. There are 4 diocesan priests and 10 fidei donum priests.

**KABGAYI DIOCESE** - The present Bishop is Mgr. Anastase Mutabazi (1996). In 1994 the then Bishop, Mgr. Thaddee Nsengiyumva, was murdered. Fr. André Sibomana took over as Apostolic Administrator until the appointment of the new Bishop. There are 39 diocesan priests, 9 fidei donum; 5 religious priests. As a result of the genocide and the war there are many social and pastoral problems.

**KIBUNGO DIOCESE** - The Bishop is Mgr. Frédéric Rubwejanga. There are 44 diocesan priests. The population of the diocese has increased by 200,000, mainly Tutsi, since the conflict. 17% of the population follows the traditional religion and there are a number of sects.

**NYUNDO DIOCESE** - Mgr. Wenceslas Kalibushi stepped down on the 2nd. January, 1997, and Bishop Alexis Habiyaambere S.J. (from Butare Diocese, Regional Superior of the Jesuits in Rwanda and Burundi) took over. The diocese is the largest in the north of the country and was established in 1959. During the genocide 32 priests were murdered and several priests and major seminarians are in exile. There are 22 diocesan priests, 2 fidei donum, Josephite Brothers and 5 different Women's religious

challenge by establishing education programmes for the unemployed outside the regular school system. In colonial times these took place in 'Social Centres'; following independence, the Church established Rural Education Centres (CERAI) for young people who had to leave school without completing their education and who had to make a 'go of it' for themselves.

The Church's involvement in the field of education has always been a **ticklish problem** in Rwanda. Already in colonial times, a number of people were calling for the schools to be freed from the influence of dioceses and parishes. Following independence, some were talking about an "intolerable situation". Today the State is being urged to shake-off the Church's hold over education.

If the Church wanted to hang on to the schools, it was because it was able to influence young people. All the children attending Church-run primary schools, **had** to attend catechism classes and were baptised in Primary Five

(there was no obligation to be baptised but I've never known anyone who refused). In secondary schools, however, it was quite common to come across non-Catholic students. The Church made sure it was present among those who had successfully completed their education, as in every aspect of an educated society.

### THE MEDICAL/SOCIAL FIELD

The Church is also present in the medical/social field. But unlike the Church-run schools where the Church's policy was to actively proselytize among the students, in the medical/social field, the Church put everything it had at the service of the **entire population**, especially the poorest and those living in the remotest areas.

The Church is running hospitals and health centres where health care is provided for the people; where very ill people are admitted to hospital; where pregnant women are taken care of until they have given birth or who have just given birth. The health centres are also



congregations in the diocese. Islam is a growing influence in the diocese as are the 'Eglise de la Restauration' and the 'Bahai' sects.

**RUHENGERI DIOCESE** - The Bishop is Mgr. Kizito Bahujimihigo (from Kibungo Diocese). There are 12 diocesan priests, 1 fidei donum, and 19 religious priests. Of the 51 major seminarians 23 are in the country and 28 study abroad. The diocese has 35,000 catechumens and there are 240,000 Christians from other churches. Security is a problem in the area as many of the 'Hutu army' have returned from the Congo and there are clashes with the Rwandan army.

**THE FIRST RWANDAN BISHOP** was Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami (b. 22/12/1904) consecrated Bishop of Nyundo on the 10th. November, 1959.

**THE FIRST RWANDAN PRIESTS** were Balthazar Gafuku (from Zaza Parish) and Donat Leberaho (from Save Parish) ordained on the 7th. October, 1917. Joseph Bugondo (from Save Parish) ordained on the 29th. June, 1919.

nutritional feeding centres for poorly nourished children and where mothers are given some training in providing basic dietary needs for the family. There is, of course, a programme for family planning. However, the Church won't allow its health centres to get involved in large-scale contraception programmes which are extremely expensive and which need a medical follow-up. An under-developed country such as Rwanda is unable to afford such a programme. The Church, instead, insists on **responsible parenthood** (education and information instead of simply distributing mere gadgets the population will have to buy and, of course, has no means of doing so).

The Church is committed to the **social sector** through several charitable organisations (too many to be listed here). These organisations help destitute and elderly people, the blind and the handicapped. There are also specialised

**THE FIRST RWANDAN WHITE FATHERS** were François Xavier Bigeziki, born on the 20th. April, 1948, from Runaba Parish, and was ordained on the 28th. August, 1983. Now working in Burkina Faso.

Ladislas Komezusenge born on the 30th. December, 1949, from Rwaza Parish, and was ordained on the 5th. August, 1984. Worked in Tanzania and was killed in a car accident at Arusha on the 9th. August, 1997.

André Lyumugabe, born on the 9th. December, 1963, from Muyunzwe Parish, and was ordained on the 8th. August, 1993. Worked in Zaire and is now working in Burkina Faso.

Jean Claude Kaburame born on the 18th. March, 1965, from Muhororo, and was ordained on the 18th. August, 1996. Now working in Mali.

**THE FIRST WHITE FATHERS** established the Save Parish on the 8th. February, 1900.

**THE FIRST WHITE SISTERS** established themselves at Save on the 12th. March, 1909.

Centres for development purposes. Butare Diocese, under the leadership of Bishop Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, is to the forefront in this type of work - the other dioceses have soon followed suit. Why? Because the Church is **convinced** that it has a mission to the 'whole person' - body and soul, and so must concern itself with the individual's physical well-being as well as his/hers spiritual needs. You often hear it said: "Mens sana in corpore sano - a sound mind in a sound body". The Encyclical 'Populorum Progressio' added that development is a new name for peace. The Church must concern itself with the entire person and involve itself in every form of human advancement. That's why parishes are involved in development issues. The risk is, of course, that the Church, instead of appearing to be poor in itself and concerned with the needs of the less fortunate, is seen to be rich and powerful (a State within

the State); at the same time it is continually begging for money it needs for its charitable work, from abroad.

## CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

### THE ETHNIC PROBLEM

No report on Rwanda is complete if it does not mention the ethnic problem. All the more so, if such a report were to refer to the Church's action and influence in this area, and were to accuse the Church of having aggravated, if not having caused the ethnic problem. First of all, I would have liked to have said that the Church regrets the thesis put forward by **Bishop Classe** who, in order to gain the sympathy of the royal court and the tribal chiefs,

stated that the "Tutsis are superior". [e] All I can do is to affirm that on this occasion, Bishop Classe certainly didn't speak for the whole Church in Rwanda. It's **unfair** to judge the Church and all its work during 100 years in Rwanda, on the basis of a few unhappy positions adopted by some of its representatives.

What's being said today and the accusations spread around, would have us believe that in 1994, the Church in Rwanda was largely Hutu. Figures show just the opposite. The clergy and the religious congregations were mainly Tutsi.

The ethnic problem remains a **major challenge** for the Church. So what's to be done? The Church must root out all tribalism in its own ranks, and then in Rwandan society in general. The Church must cooperate with civil society, with the educated classes, with the leaders, indeed, with anybody who wishes to

achieve reconciliation among the Rwandan people. Even if a certain kind of **propaganda** is still circulating which continues to cast aspersions on the Church, the people have never lost confidence in it. The Church is there to help the country be reconciled with itself. If Rwandans want to achieve reconciliation with each other, they must be reconciled with the Church. Why? Because the Church in Rwanda is not a foreign body in Rwandan society; it is not a handful of expatriate missionaries. **Rwandans** form the Church. The number of Catholics in Rwanda is such that it would be a gross error to exclude them from the work of achieving national reconciliation and reconstruction. It should be noted that when preparations for the Jubilee were underway, Catholics were to the forefront in emphasising the need for reconciliation.

A Christian in today's Rwanda, especially the priests and Religious, all belong to a particular ethnic group, but, more importantly, they

*Editor's Note [e] Bishop Léone Classe was a White Father born in France in 1874. He arrived in Rwanda on the 21st. March, 1901 and died on the 31st. January, 1945.*

*Picture above: A quiet chat on the verandah*



*Main sources for information about the dioceses: International Fides Service of: 23rd. January, 1997; 13th. and 20th. March, 1998; 8th. May, 1998; and 18th. September, 1998; material received from Rwanda about the Jubilee.*



belong to Christ, and in Christ we are all brothers and sisters, no matter our tribal origin. In Christ there can be no divisions.

### SELF-SUPPORTING

It must be said that when it comes to the question of financing the Church in Rwanda, the missionaries gave us the **bad example** of expecting everything to come from Western countries; they did not teach us to take care of ourselves even if the offertory collection during Mass was an established fact by 1928. So, when it comes to running our schools and hospitals, or when a new church has to be built, or scholarships must be provided for needy students, then we're only too quick to hold out our hands for 'manna from heaven' i.e. from Europe. And that's not normal. We should be prepared to **accept responsibility** at the very least for ordinary recurrent expenses such as running our parishes and paying our apostolic workers. What's happening at present, shows we're living over and above our means.

It's not just a question of money. It's a whole pastoral strategy. My past experiences as former Vicar-General of Butare Diocese only strengthens me in my viewpoint. In my time I instituted an awareness programme that the Church in Rwanda must be self-supporting, that we must not continue to live like expensive irresponsible people. I insisted that every time a parish priest agreed to establish a parish financial council (with an open and above-board accounting system), the parishioners for their part, must agree to pay for certain parish activities, from their small means available. This did help to reduce the money the priest had to find, for example, for running the parish vehicle. Parishioners began to feel they were responsible, together with their priests, for the smooth running of their parishes. Thus, there was a commitment by the laity towards **their parish** at a local level.

The fact is, parishes must become self-supporting, whether they want it or not, because Europe will not go on and on sending 'bank transfers' to their brothers and sisters in Africa. In Europe, the younger generation is growing increasingly fed-up with supporting 'the Missions'. And this is only normal. The Church must take care of itself.

### THE LAITY

The present-day pastoral strategy of the Church in Rwanda, means that the laity must play its **true role** as members of the Church. Particular mention should be made of our catechists and our community leaders in the Small Christian Communities. Vatican II insisted that the laity, by the very fact of their baptism, must be prepared to take on responsibility in their Church. Also, in many places there are fewer priests and we're not getting any younger! This particular problem does not, as yet, apply to Rwanda as our seminaries are absolutely full. But acknowledging the laity's rights and duties has nothing to do with the lack of priests.

It's important to educate lay people to play their role in the Church of God. The Bishops of Rwanda have set up an *ad hoc* Commission to study this issue, but so far, it hasn't produced much by way of results. Pressure is mounting on the bishops from various quarters such as former seminarians, catechists, Small Christian Community leaders, members of Catholic Action and the Charismatic Renewal and from others among the laity, to ensure that the laity's true role as the 'People of God', is recognised. The Church in Rwanda could avail itself of the local Pastoral Centre, but we can only note that those who regularly attend the conferences and updating sessions in large numbers are sent by the bishops from Burundi and Congo RDC's Kivu Province, rather than from Rwanda. Also, more sisters than laity attend the conferences.

If we want the laity to become truly responsible, we have to train them. And the training provided must take into account that the laity do not only belong to the educated section of society.

### INCULTURATION

There was a time when the Church wanted to up-root traditional religion (indeed, do away with all idols and signs of what was once described as 'vain observances'). That time is now over. Traditional religion is now seen as a 'stepping stone' to Christianity.

God's word needs to be part and parcel of Rwandan culture, so much so that Rwandan Christians think, pray and act both as Rwandans and as Christians. We are a Roman Catholic Church, but this is first and foremost Christ's Church established in Rwanda.

It is high time that current theological thinking, our catechism and our liturgy become **specifically Rwandan**, while remaining faithful

to the teaching of the Universal Church. People have to be imbued with the Spirit, and feel they can express their faith in Jesus Christ according to the genius of their own culture. Why not teach theology in **Kinyarwanda** at the major seminary, in the religious training centres and in catechist schools? Don't forget, Rwanda has the enormous advantage of having the same language throughout the country.

The People of God in Rwanda have already made great progress in the field of inculturation, especially among groups which have been influenced by the Charismatic Renewal or by their experiences in Kibeho (apparitions are said to have taken place here).<sup>[1]</sup> People sing and dance during liturgical celebrations, but all this remains a bit too 'cosmetic'. The Bishops have made some steps towards inculturation by publishing the Bible in Kinyarwanda. But it's not enough.

### HUMAN RIGHTS: A PROPHETIC CHURCH

The Church in Rwanda has been blamed for keeping silent. This is only true in part. Many



*Editor's Note [ff] There have been reported apparitions of the Blessed Virgin at the Kibeho Church which began on the 21st. November, 1981. After an official enquiry commission the then Bishop (Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi) gave permission for public worship there in 1988.*

*Picture above: Building for the future*



people, especially those who set out to criticise the Church, are unaware of the bishop's many statements.

The Church must change its way of speaking. It must be prepared to 'risk all for the sake of Jesus' and not limit its prophetic role to ex-cathedra statements and pastoral letters. The faithful must feel that all the pastors speak the same language and share the same boldness.

The Church must be present in **human rights** issues. It's not enough simply to set up Justice and Peace Commissions. Father André Sibomana and his fearlessness in speaking out must not remain an isolated case, never to be replaced when he disappeared from the scene. [g] Even a bishop must not be left to speak out alone. The Church in Rwanda must be prophetic in the service of justice and peace. It must have the courage to speak up for those who have no voice; it must have a preferential option for the poor; it must pay due attention to present appeals emanating from the people. Some people will always accuse the Church of involving itself in politics - even when keeping silent, the Church will be accused of practising a policy of silence. Far better to take a stance on human rights issues, to adopt a policy for justice, peace and unity. The Church must learn to side with its laity who know the issues at stake.

And what about **the Media**? Here's a working tool just waiting to be of service. Sad to

say, the Church doesn't make much use of the Media, and when it does, only utilizes it poorly. Don't forget, there are some publications such as 'Dialogue' and 'Kinyamateka', which could be better availed of. We (clergy and laity), have really got to see how we can make better use of the Media. We must dare to speak out!

### A MISSIONARY CHURCH

The Church in Rwanda is also criticised for not being sufficiently 'missionary'. The same was said when Sekou Touré drove the missionaries from Guinea and, again, when Bagaza did likewise in Burundi. [h] "Rwanda", it was stated, "could have sent some priests to lend a helping hand to their brothers and sisters in need". Even within Rwanda, it's not right that a diocese such as Gikongoro can't get any help from neighbouring dioceses, which, while not having an overwhelming number of personnel to spare, **could** lend a hand. On the other hand, it's rather curious that Gikongoro is said to be lacking priests when one of its parishes, Kibeho, had at least one priestly ordination per year from 1970 to 1990.

Following the events in 1994, Rwandans are now to be found in the four corners of the world, but it certainly wasn't planned. Before this diaspora, the only Rwandan missionaries were religious from international congregations. Those who 'lend to God' will be repaid a hundredfold. The Church in Rwanda must learn

*Editor's Note [g] Mgr. André Sibomana died on the 9th. March, 1998, after an illness (Lytell's Syndrome) which began in 1976. He was born in 1954 and ordained in 1980. He was the Editor of a Rwandan Catholic newspaper 'Kinyamateka', President of the 'Rwandan Association of Journalists' and of the 'Association for the Defence of Human Rights and Public Freedom' ('Association Rwandaise pour la Défense des Droits de la Personne et des Libertés Publiques'). Mgr. Sibomana "denounced the [previous Habyarimana] regime and its abuses of power, breaking with the Archbishop and others in the Hierarchy who continued to give Habyarimana largely unquestioning support" (IPEP 14.74.). He was awarded the 'Reporters Beyond Frontiers' prize in 1994. This did not stop Mgr. Sibomana being accused of involvement in the 1994 genocide after the Rwandan Patriotic Front took power. Other human rights organisations made similar accusations but 'Amnesty International' and 'Reporters Beyond Frontiers' have praised his work, and the OAU's IPEP stated that "André Sibomana was another remarkable priest as well as a human rights activist whose name should stand with those honoured German clerics who defied the Nazis." (IPEP 14.74.)*

*Editor's Note [h] Ahmed Sekou Touré (1922-1984) was President of Guinea for 22 years. He worked with Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana, 1909-1972) for Pan-Africanism during the time that African countries were becoming independent. Jean-Baptiste Bagaza (born 1946) was President of Burundi between 1976 and 1987. He overthrew Michel Micombero (1940-83) and did much to unite the country, but several confrontations with the Catholic Church came to a head in 1985 when the Government introduced many curbs on Church activities.*



to give freely beyond its own frontiers. A Church must be missionary or does not exist.

### IN-DEPTH EVANGELISATION

The genocide proved one thing vis à vis the Church: Christianity in Rwanda is still rather like a flock of sheep following one another, and is still present on a superficial level; in-depth evangelisation has still to be done. But this doesn't mean the Church, in preaching love and the brotherhood of humankind, tolerance and 'togetherness', has failed the people. It rather shows that a long road still lies ahead.

The Church has arrived. It has established its structures and institutions. Now it has to build on the message that has already spread throughout the country. And that's proving no easy matter, even in a Europe where the Gospel has been preached for nigh on 2000 years and

where Pope John Paul II has launched the second evangelisation.

What's now needed is proper planning and a comprehensive, soundly-reflected pastoral strategy - sadly lacking for the moment. We look to the new generation of bishops for guidance in this matter.

### CONCLUSION

On the 10th. November, 1959, Pope John XXIII established the Catholic Church's hierarchy in the Belgian Congo and Rwanda-Burundi. Yes, the mustard seed has already grown high, it has already produced some fruit, but it needs more fostering: we still need to trim it, to dig around it and to add some fertiliser. With God's help, the harvest looks promising. May it prove so in the future.

*Sources: Zenit (<http://www.zenit.org/english>); International Fides Service (<http://www.fides.org/home-ing.htm>); 'Leave None to Tell the Story, Genocide in Rwanda', Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org>); 'Death Despair and Defiance', African Rights; Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org>); 'The Angels Have Left Us by Hugh McCullum; 'Hope for Rwanda' by André Sibomana, Laura Guilbert & Hervé Deguine; 'Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide', 'IPEP' 'International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events', OAU, 7th. July, 2000. (<http://www.oau-oua.org/document/ipep/ipep.htm>); 'A People Betrayed, The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide' by Linda Melvern; 'The Rwanda Crisis History of a Genocide' by Gérard Prunier.*

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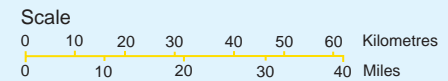
*Picture above: The future of Rwanda*



# Rwanda

## Key to Map

- = Towns & cities
- = Rivers
- = Roads & tracks
- = Prefecture Boundaries



## FACTS AND INDICATORS ON RWANDA

### BASIC INDICATORS

Total Population	7,235,000
Population under-5	1,259,000
Population under-18	3,829,000
Annual no. of births	295,000
GNP per Capita	US\$250

### EDUCATION

	Male	Female
Adult Literacy Rate (15 years and older) *	56	50
Primary School Enrolment Ratio (Gross)	88	88
Primary School Enrolment Ratio (Net)	67	68
Secondary School Enrolment Ratio (Gross)	12	9

### MORTALITY

Infant mortality rate **	110
Under-5 mortality rate **	180
Under-5 mortality rank	18
Annual no. of under-5 deaths	53,000
% Oral Rehydration (ORT) use	47
Life Expectancy	41 years

### IMMUNIZATION

% of 1-year-old children	
BCG	94
DPT3	85
Polio3	85
Measles	78
TT2	83

### NUTRITION

Infants with low birth weight (%)	17
Exclusively breastfed (0-3 months)	90
Breastfed with complementary food (6-9 months)	68
Still breastfeeding (20-23 months)	85
<b>Underweight</b>	
moderate and severe	27
severe	11
<b>Stunting</b>	
moderate and severe	42

## FACTS AND FIGURES ON THE RWANDAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

DIocese	AREA <sup>(2)</sup>	POPULATION	CATHOLICS	PARISHES	PRIESTS	BROTHERS	SISTERS	SEMINARIANS <sup>(3)</sup>	CATECHISTS
Kigali <sup>(1)</sup>	3,116 sq.km.	1,402,689	785,506	18	86	45	224	47	1,112
Butare	1,958 sq.km.	547,500	381,867	20	123	59	336	38	229
Byumba	3,350 sq.km.	953,000	365,544	13	30	9	104	43	272
Cyangugu	1,844 sq.km.	543,652	282,034	9	31	-	109	18	168
Gikongoro	2,057 sq.km.	444,283	126,316	9	14	-	33	22	81
Kabgayi	2,187 sq.km.	738,877	496,333	23	53	-	110	74	491
Kibungo	5,834 sq.km.	760,964	213,794	11	44	10	92	27	247
Nyundo	4,000 sq.km.	1,184,940	462,653	19	24	5	68	42	262
Ruhengeri	1,661 sq.km.	820,000	400,000	11	32	2	90	51	210
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26,007 sq.km.</b>	<b>7,395,905</b>	<b>3,514,047</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>1,166</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>3,072</b>

Editor's Note [c] continued: (1) Kigali is an Archdiocese; (2) 1 square kilometre is 0.3861 of a square statute mile; (3) Major Seminarians.

### Wasting

moderate and severe	9
% of children receiving Vit A supplementation	75
% of households consuming iodized salt	95

### SAFE WATER AND ADEQUATE SANITATION

% of population with access to		
	water	sanitation
Urban	60	12
Rural	40	8
Total	41	8

Footnotes: \* total adult literacy rate = 53%; \*\* per 1,000 live births; DPT3 = diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) & tetanus; TT2 = tetanus twice to pregnant women and mothers. Source: The State of the World's Children 2001, UNICEF.

# Tunisia - Open Doors for the Young

By Sr. Carmen Sammut W.S. and the Community of Mourouj

As Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters), we are eager to share our charism with Christians of all nations and to welcome them into our Congregation. But, of course, in a Muslim country like Tunisia, there is no question of receiving candidates locally. However, other doors have been opened to our Sisters there: they have been asked to receive into their communities young women of different European countries, who stay with them on a temporary basis. Sister Carmen explains how this project works. (Sr. Mary Lampard W.S.)

We welcome the request that was made to us and we saw it as a call addressed to the Province. We did not seek out these young people, but we opened wide the doors of our communities to them and accepted that our plans be disturbed. They are for us a gift of the Spirit who blows where He wishes and changes our habits. For us, this open door is

our way of truly participating in the life of the Congregation, in its effort to interest other people in the work of the Lord and of sharing his love for Africa. That is why we cherish this opportunity to extend our welcome, despite its disturbance. In welcoming young people who want to give freely of their time, we facilitate encounters between people of different cultures, languages, ethnic groups and nations. In this way we hope to multiply everywhere the 'friends of Africa and of the Africans'. We want to make our contribution to diminishing racial and religious prejudices. We offer to the Provinces of Europe and America the possibility of responding to young people who express a desire to come to Africa through a 'come and see' project.

## SHARING IN A ANOTHER CULTURE

The youth who ask to come are young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five; they come from far and wide: Poland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, and Germany. They express their wish either through a Sister they have met or through an organization like 'Voyage-Partage' that makes it possible for young people to go abroad for a period from two months to two years. Others have met with someone who had already

gone to Africa or they are friends or nieces of our Sisters. Their motivations vary enormously: some come for an in-servicing in a foreign country during specialised educational studies or adult education; others, for a sabbatical year between the end of secondary school and higher studies or

after higher studies and before engaging in their profession; a few come for a discernment on their life's journey; at times they feel drawn to serve abroad after meeting one or other Sister, or after spending some time abroad, which opened their eyes to conditions other than their own; or, again, after seeing a documentary on television. They have an urge to leave their country in order to give of their time and of themselves for a personal commitment.

Their expectations are very different but most of them leave home with the hope of discovering another culture. They desire a real sharing of life, both giving and receiving. They are conscious that they have received much and wish to do something useful and to share their life with others who are less privileged.

Why a religious community rather than another group? Often they choose it so as to be with people dedicated to service and who know the country well. For others it is a way of being sure they will come into contact with the local people and avoid remaining only among Europeans or just passing through the country like tourists.

## AN EXPERIENCE THAT LEAVES ITS MARK

At times, when reading the questionnaires that these young people have to fill in before arriving, we wonder what we are letting ourselves in for; but what they share during their stay and especially in their final evaluation enables us to discover the mark, the imprint that this time has left in the hearts of these young women.

*Severine*, nineteen years old, Swiss-born, who came for three months, had written in the space for 'preferred hobbies:' "reading, music, dancing, skiing. Can that be of service to Tunisia?" She desired to work with children: "I hope that with my energy, with the time ahead of me and the affection I have for them, I will know how to give them attention, entertain them and love them ..." Severine worked part time with a group of retarded children having a mental age of six years. "We have had diverse activities such as sports, painting, educational games or just doing home chores. I also gave time to a little boy from a poor milieu who had learning difficulties. I gave German lessons to a high school boy and English lessons to a student. Once a week I went to the kindergarten class where I was



Loure, who helped out for a month, directing craft activities

A group of young women who came to discover 'Tunisia' and to pray in the desert



able to get the children to dance. I also got acquainted with a Tunisian dancer and his troupe and I had the great joy of dancing with them in their musical. During my free time I sometimes went to a neighbouring family where I chatted with the children, or to my friends to exchange ideas, to dance and to chat. The families really treated me as one of their own, inviting me to share in their daily meals. True, their way of life is different from ours, but when we prepare a meal together or when we dance to the same music, it seems that our two worlds are closer. I felt loved and loving.”

**Beatrice**, a Belgian teacher of twenty-three years, who came to Raspail for three months, had written as her preferred hobbies: “dreams, the world of children and bursts of laughter”. She was indeed satisfied during her stay with the little ones of the Kindergarten class where she lent a hand. One of them said to her, when he heard that she was leaving after three months,

“When I get older, I will become a pilot and go and fetch you.”

A third one, another **Severine**, from France, spent five months in various activities, at the Children’s Home at Mourouj, at the High School Library of the White Fathers, while living at the House of Studies. At Mourouj she said “From the beginning, I was greatly impressed in my discovery of ‘the city’. Living among children and deprived families for a day, teaches us to do away with pity and to give way to all the love that we can possibly give them.” As for the work in the library, she added, “To have spent all this time in this little paradise of happiness and of sharing, among these young people in search of their identity, was an extraordinary experience. What a tremendous advantage to have met these young Tunisians who have such an incredible will to work and to succeed! Through their experience the Sisters helped me discover the culture, the religion, the mentality of this country. But more especially, I found that I came closer to the Lord by living side by side with them, and that brought about a great change in me. Living in the hubbub of Paris causes one to forget many things. God is love and He is with each one of us.”

These young people accept the customs of the country and the disorientation that can follow. They show interest in all the aspects of life here:

betrothal and marriage celebrations, circumcision, the Ramadan evenings, the Hammam (steam baths), the painting of henna as a sign of celebration, dancing, different foods. They are able to accept different ways of working, even when that comes as a bit of a shock! They come to understand and accept a different understanding of work. They are happy to learn a few Arabic words to be able to communicate a little and all of them appreciate the course offered at the House of Studies. They also accept to change a certain way of dressing, otherwise they would be too bothered by the boys. One can understand that pretty young girls are attractive and we have had more than one offer of marriage, as it was thought they were our girls! Their availability as well as their good will is tremendous.

What strikes them most is to see that one can be happy with very little. They were very happy here, for they recognised the joy of the people despite the hardships they have to bear. They learn to be satisfied with the simple necessities of life and to live by the values they have come to appreciate here: love, sharing, listening, joy, human warmth, celebration, hospitality - values that go beyond standards of living.

When they return to their own countries they are able to continue to live what they have tasted here and to give a little of their time to voluntary charitable activities, with particular attention to Muslims and immigrants. Some of them experience a true journey of faith and

love in daily life. One, speaking of her participation in the community prayer, wrote, “I have found a new faith, richer, deeper.”

#### OUR MISSIONARY DYNAMISM INSPIRES YOUNG PEOPLE

For the communities who welcome these young people, this adventure becomes a positive experience for it gives them a chance of having young people in their midst. It shakes us out of our routine and with their disturbing questions, they force us to examine our certainties and to explain who we are.

We are called to go beyond all self-seeking in facilitating the stay of these ‘temporary helping hands’; we share our charisma, our house, our friendship, our knowledge of the milieu. There is a whole commitment in helping them to become acquainted with interesting people with whom they can journey for a while, to help them to visit the country and to open our house and our prayer to them. But for us it is especially an opportunity to share with lay women our love for Africa, our attention towards the women and children of our adopted countries, our way of treating others and also of speaking about our friendship with Christ.



All this is not without difficulties, especially because a good number of requests are not followed up to the end. Much time is taken looking for suitable work and a community for them. It happens too that we must refuse a request when it is impossible to find a place for them at the precise time they want to come, or when they do not know French, the language spoken in our communities in North Africa. There are certain local people who help us welcome the young people and make their stay fruitful. After the departure of the latter, these helpers of ours ask for news of

those they have helped and expect them to keep in touch to a certain extent. They are disappointed if there is no further sign of life from their friends. Some of the young people do respond; for instance, one invited her Tunisian friend to go to her home for the holidays.

In considering our experience of this project, we feel that we are letting these young lay women share in the Mission of the Church. Maybe this is a way of bequeathing to layfolk the pearl of great price of which Jesus spoke in the Gospel.

FATHER GEORGE SMITH



is the Parish Priest of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Nairobi, Kenya. He writes about his 'Safari by Donkey' when he visited South Africa.

lot over the crowned head of Jesus. Great blobs of sauce streamed down the face of the Lord from that moment on to the awe and wonder of the many children in the congregation. And as Jesus went down the aisle carrying his cross he kept licking his lips as the sauce oozed past them ...

However, the laugh had been on me a few days before on Palm Sunday. I had been pushed unexpectedly into service that Sunday because of the sudden illness of the priest who had been scheduled to lead that liturgy. The service was in Zulu: the only word I had that far been able to pick up in Zulu was 'Yebo' - which maybe was a shortened form of 'Yes, boss'. However, I was assured that I could get by in English. The liturgy started with the blessing of the palms outside and some distance from the church.

Laughter often comes unbidden and then sometimes at the most inappropriate moments. On Good Friday I was in a parish in an African township near Johannesburg. Our afternoon liturgy was preceded by a Passion Play staged by the parish youth. There was much imagination shown in their rendering of the events of that fateful day - occasionally I smiled at the creativity of Pilate's hat or the obvious fragility of the soldiers' swords. But I burst out laughing at what should have been a most solemn moment ... the crowning of thorns.

When they placed the woven crown of thorns on Jesus' head, one of the young people got a bottle of tomato sauce and poured the whole

Throughout the blessing I was distracted by something I saw out of the corner of my eye - tethered to a tree was a donkey with its foal. I smiled to myself at the coincidence, but then I began to wonder. Maybe, it has something to do with the choir? No, oh no, surely it has nothing to do with me - they couldn't do this to me? That priest suddenly taking ill! And sure enough: when the procession started, to my horror I was invited



MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

ARRIVALS

Fr. John Gerrard from Tanzania



Change of Address

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to get up on the donkey. It was one of those nightmarish moments when it is impossible to turn back: so, I hitched up my chasuble and alb and clambered aboard the poor beast. I encouraged myself that it was only a hundred yards to the church and surely I could hang on for that distance.

There were no reins to hold on to, so I placed my hands on the blanket which had been slung on the donkey's back - and we were off. Junior, the donkey's foal, decided ten yards later that it must be feeding time and made a dive for mother's udder, and in the process almost knocked me off my throne. Finding that my legs were getting in its way and taking breakfast on the trot was a hazardous operation, our foal gave up and decided to run away. I was

## SISTER MARY LAMPARD WRITES FROM UGANDA

### PART I. A SON'S RETURN



I keep pinching myself. Am I really back in Uganda? Am I at Nabbingo, the first ever Catholic Secondary School for girls, where I first arrived by troop-ship and sea-plane in 1945? Is this really Kisubi, where my mother lies buried in the parish cemetery?

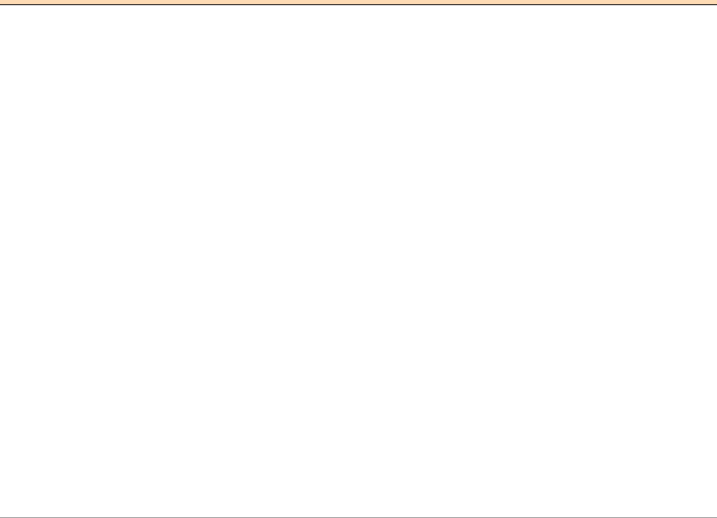
Yes, I am here for three weeks. But it was a tragic accident that brought me here. A young Ugandan man, the son of one of my former pupils from Nabbingo, was living in London. He used to visit me every month and called me 'Jjajja' (Grandmother) and I called him 'muzukulu' (grandson). His name was Mbaaga, after one of the youngest of the Ugandan martyrs, baptised

so distracted at watching the antics of some members of the parish council chasing after the poor wee foal with a rope, I failed to realize that our procession had veered away from the church and was heading into the heart of the township.

And so it was that I paraded through the town, the highways and the byeways, for over an hour. I felt a right clown; I was mortified and hummed silently to myself (to the tune of God save our noble queen) that famous Swahili song: 'O wha ta nas siam'? But gradually I began to acknowledge the respectful waves of the people we passed on our way and to realize that for them I was not an object of ridicule but a meaningful reminder of the Lord Jesus.

shortly before his death, not by the Missionary Father, but by a fellow-martyr. The fact that he is recognised as a saint turned his African name into a Christian name.

On the 21st. November, 2000 he was run over by a lorry. He was taken immediately to the Intensive Care Unit in University College



Hospital, where every possible effort was made to save him; he clung to life for a week, but then died. His mother Teresa Kaddu, was in Uganda, heart broken. She wanted to come to England, but, instead, a series of circumstances made it possible for her son's body to be flown to Uganda, accompanied by his 'Grandmother'. In the end I flew to Uganda two days earlier and was there with his mother and some of the family to receive the body at Entebbe Airport.

It was a long sad wait before the remains were taken from the plane and driven to Nabbingo, the family home. Teresa was with her daughter, Cecilia, who had recently lost her husband in a car accident, a week after the birth of their youngest child. We followed the body in another car and arrived at Teresa's home. Here, in the darkness of the night, a large crowd of mourners had gathered; family, friends, neighbours.

The wide area in front of the house was covered with dry banana leaves strewn on the earth, with palm-mats here and there. Wide strips of coloured tarpaulin formed an awning overhead. The coffin was placed on trestles facing the front door. The coffin was opened. Teresa held me by the hand and approached to look

on her son's face. There was no loud wailing, as I had expected, but low moans and soft cries, "Mbaaga my son, my last-born", revealed the depths of a mother's grief. The crowd pressed around the coffin but it was soon closed. It remained there, covered by a large cloth, until two days later when it was opened once more at the funeral. A priest, a member of the extended family prepared to celebrate the Eucharist.

Time did not matter. We were there to mourn, to grieve, to comfort one another by our presence and - in this country where Christianity has very deep roots - to support one another in our common faith in Christ's saving Death and blessed Resurrection.

My presence was deeply appreciated as a sign of love. In Uganda a visit is welcomed, especially if from afar, as a proof of devoted caring. I was thanked repeatedly and sincerely and asked to speak about Mbaaga, my grandson.

After Mass, some of the people went home. I was taken to the Banabikira's (Daughters of Mary) who had prepared a little flat for me. They gave me some tea, together with another former student of mine, Clare Mukiibi, who devoted herself to my welfare for the next week with a daughter's care and affection.

It was 3 a.m. when I got to bed. Meanwhile Teresa and many of the family remained all night near the body sitting on the ground and sometimes lying on mattresses beside the coffin.

The following morning, Saturday, I returned to the family home and simply spent the day there, praying, meeting Teresa's many friends

and relations, walking in their extensive grounds, thanking those who were cooking for the mourners, chatting with the children ... Over and over again, everyone thanked me for coming. I had lunch and later the evening meal with the 'bakulu' (the important people): the priest, Teresa and her husband, Philip, Clare and some others. In the evening again there was a beautiful Mass in front of the body and again I was asked to speak.

On Sunday at 1 p.m. the funeral Mass took place. Many speeches were made. Teresa and her daughter, Cecilia, had their message read for them by a male relative and a few words of mine, prepared for the funeral Mass in England, were also read. The coffin was opened. Teresa, hold-

### FATHER JOHN SLINGER



writes from Nyegezi, Tanzania, about some major events of the year 2000.

Salaam: peace be always with you amidst the trials and chal-

enges of life. Tanzania has just undergone a General Election. It passed off peacefully and President Benjamin Mkapa was returned for a second 5-year term. Zanzibar retains a special status with its own President.

Maybe the country still basks in the light of its founding father the late Julius Nyerere - 'Mwalimu' or Teacher as he came to be known. "A good leader is one who does not want to be a leader", Nyerere said, "but he doesn't want to be governed by rogues either".

In September I was in Nairobi for a meeting of our Society. I took the opportunity to pay a visit to another great man. Cardinal Maurice Otunga was Archbishop of Nairobi during my eleven years in the parish of St. Teresa's (1976-87). I respect the Cardinal who retired in 1997, the last time I met him.

ing my hand to keep me near her, stood there, while all the people filed past and out into the garden where a grave had been dug. The sides and base were tiled and the coffin was lowered in. A floral tribute which consisted of Mbaaga's name was placed on it by his father and mother. The grave was not filled with earth, but the top was cemented over, on a structure, and was dry by the evening.

All this time Teresa was composed and dignified, thanking all those who offered her their sympathy, thinking of others, quietly bearing her deep sorrow.

As for me, I have learnt that doing nothing but simply loving is the epitome of friendship.

Now he lives in a residence for the elderly run by the Little Sisters of the Poor on the outskirts of town. When he signalled his intention to retire there, many people were dismayed. "We will build you a mansion fit for a man

of your standing", they said. But the Cardinal stood firm. "No, that is where I want to spend my last days" he retorted. Still bright, we enjoyed a morning together sharing news about various places.

In April after a long delay in obtaining a visa I went to Sudan. Our presence there is limited to seven missionaries in two parishes. I had a fascinating visit of two weeks, for the most part in Khartoum. Unimaginably hot at this time, forty-three degrees in the shade but with plenty of iced water to drink, the whole place was like a desert. What with every thing in Arabic script you certainly feel you are in a unique country, though with Swahili you can understand a few spoken words. Khartoum where the two Niles join together is enormous, a population of almost five million of which two million are known as 'displaced', due to conflict, famine, or for just economic reasons drawn to the town.

Sudan whilst a Muslim state with the Sharia law which involves the occasional hand and leg amputation of thieves (I'm not aware whether they have stoned any adulterers yet) is relatively safe - no Nairobi type muggings. Nevertheless it is the regime which is oppressive with denial of human rights, the imposition of Islam and

the abuses and terrible conflict which exists mainly in the south where the population is Nilotic African.

In spite of this the Church in Sudan is very vibrant and there are various communities, e.g. Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox. The only restriction is that new churches cannot be built but the parishes use school halls and there is no problem about meeting or services. On the whole Christians are from the south and look upon their faith as a means of protest against their Islamic rulers. However the conflict is not just north v. south, or Muslim v. Christian, but rather that of an oppressive fundamentalist regime which wants to impose its will on the entire population. Security personnel are everywhere and you cannot move outside Khartoum without a permit.

Life here in Mwanza sees the influence of globalisation. The other day I saw the first Cybernet Café Formerly inappropriately named 'The Snow Café' which sold cheap meals, it has gone electronic. They've even installed pool tables and a video. In one of the small booths with the Internet which I peeped into, there was a young man avidly reading an Olympic page on the victory of Cameroon.

### AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE WHITE FATHERS, RUTHERGLEN

The Parents and Friends Association of the White Fathers invite you to attend the Annual Mass in memory of the deceased members of the Association and Scottish White Fathers.

This will be held at:- 9 Milrig Road, Rutherglen, on Sunday 22nd. April, 2001, at 3 pm.

The White Fathers' Web Site (UK): <http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk>

The White Fathers' Magazine and Information England and Wales:  
[suttonlink@dial.pipex.com](mailto:suttonlink@dial.pipex.com)

The White Fathers' Promotion Centre Scotland: [wfscotland@care4free.net](mailto:wfscotland@care4free.net)



sends news about her work with street children in Mwanza, Tanzania. Since writing she has been appointed Regional Superior of Belgium and had to leave her cherished ministry in Tanzania. Providentially, a Dutch lady ('an angel' Sr. Madeleine claims) a trained social worker, a volunteer with a four-year contract, has replaced Sr. Madeleine. But, as she explains, the main work is done by the team of three Tanzanians.

#### UPENDO DAIMA (UNCONDITIONAL LOVE)

Madeleine, who felt totally unprepared for working among street children writes: "I kept telling the Lord, 'This is **your** project and I trust you will take it fully in hand.'" Our Team consists of three young Tanzanians: Babu, a young man who was once on the streets himself, with Gemma and Paulina, who have done marvels on the streets for the many boys and girls who live there.

They themselves 'baptised' the project **Upendo Daima (Unconditional Love)** which expresses perfectly the secret of their being so totally committed.

"You need a very **big heart** to be able to do this very demanding work," they say with a smile. "It is a vocation we have received from the Lord. We feel that it is He who is sending us!"

More and more I realize that we have become like a Small Christian Community, totally at the service of the street children of Mwanza, boys and girls who are so much in need of a Good Shepherd, who loves them unconditionally and dares hold them close to his or her heart.

One day Paulina and Gemma saw an opportunity of gathering together about twenty street girls, whom they had befriended earlier. These girls had always begged us to help them with an 'alternative source of income' as a means to survive, instead of continuing 'to look for clients during the night'. After much reflection, aware that women and girls are our first priority, we decided that a small capital could be offered to each one to help her start a small 'income-generating project', such as selling vegetables, preparing tea and 'mandazi' (a kind of cake). Soon three girls decided to go home and start their small business there. So they were accompanied home, and everywhere, for the family and for the girl, it was a very happy reunion. Paulina and Gemma followed up all the other girls individually in the planning, the buying, training in budgeting. They did it with so much love and commitment. The girls are now off the streets, hopefully for good. And they

themselves identify the newly arrived girls: they welcome them, and put them on their guard against the dangers of town life.

One day we were informed that five girls had arrived and were living on the streets. They had run away from home for various serious reasons without telling their parents. When the Team interviewed them one by one, they all begged to return home quickly, but accompanied by someone who could meet the parents and plead their cause. Paulina and Gemma went with the five girls. Each time they met the parents alone first, while their daughter was waiting in a neighbour's house. They introduced themselves as workers on a programme for street children. In each home the parents started crying and asked if maybe they had met their daughter in town. They all gave the reason why their daughter had run away and this always confirmed the girl's story. Then the daughter

was brought in - to the disbelief and great relief of the parents. The welcome was very moving!

Many other beautiful stories of reintegration into the family could be told. Each one is like a page of 'Good News for Today.'

#### PRISON MINISTRY

Another Network has been started recently, with the prison in Butima. It is really a prison for adults, but children under 18 are also held there because of lack of other accommodation for them. Our three Team members have gradually built up good relationships with the prison staff. Their commitment and compassion are contagious and have made a real impact inside the prison.

One day the officer in charge asked for a letter from me, explaining our work and aim. I wrote telling him how we try to help the children reflect on their lives and their future; how to improve their behaviour, through counselling, in trust and friendship. I added that we feel it important to visit the children in prison. He congratulated and welcomed us warmly. So now our Team is allowed inside.

Recently, Babu had a meeting there during which he was able to explain that we want to work **with** the guards. The Officer in charge said that next time I should come. I did so and was very touched by the warm welcome I received.

I feel more and more that my presence by the side of our small Team is important: to listen, to support and empower them, to help them discern, to meet and pray together. Yes, more and more I see the importance of simply being at all times 'a praying presence' among them, because they are able to do this ministry so beautifully and generously on their own.



# Let Us Pray

*For the following  
who have died recently:*

Mrs Mary Patricia Adams, 37 Somerset Way,  
Hounslow, Middlesex.  
Mrs Elizabeth Allen, 2 Lupin Point,  
Abbey Street, London.  
Mrs Agnes Anderton, 14a Brunswick Road,  
Birchington, Kent.  
Mr P H Belton, Beech Hill, Woodhurst Lane,  
Oxted.  
Mrs Borley, 69 Alexander Avenue,  
Earl Shilton, Leicester.  
Mr W J Brooks, 9 Glebe Way, Frinton on Sea,  
Essex.  
Mrs Agnes Brown, Blackburn Road,  
Chorley, Lancs.  
Theresa Brown, 7 Seedfield Croft,  
Cheylesmore, Coventry.  
Mrs May Champion, 30 Merry Hill Mount,  
Bushey, Herts.  
Mr Cassidy, 11 Crookston Gardens,  
Glasgow.  
Mr & Mrs Corry, 6 Church Park,  
Chippenham, Wiltshire.  
Mr Denis Dawson, 70 Hawthorne Road,  
Thorne, Doncaster.  
Captain John Joseph Diston,  
128 Beverley Road, Kirk Ella,  
East Yorkshire.  
Mrs E Eagers, 2c King Street, Port Glasgow.  
Miss Mary Gladys Donnewald late of  
Camberwell & Eltham South London,  
Cousin of Anthony White, Burgess Hill,  
West Sussex.  
Mrs A Flanagan, 20 Murdoch Road,  
Murray, East Kilbride.  
Mrs J Flynn, Prospecthill Crescent,  
Glasgow.  
Mrs Josette Galea-Curmi, Birkirkara, Malta.  
Mrs M Glennane, 23 Rivington Street,  
St Helens.  
Mrs Grace, 81 Elsenham Street, London.  
Mr Hale, 31 North Drive, Cleadon,  
Sunderland.  
Mr James Hampson, 32 Kersal Avenue,  
Little Hulton, Manchester.  
Mr Joseph Heenan, 197 Brackenbrae Avenue,  
Glasgow.  
Mr Wilfred Henesy, 18 Clapham Road,  
Anfield, Liverpool.  
Mr Herbert (Bill) Hesketh,  
23 Back Gillmoss Lane, Liverpool.  
Miss E M Higgins, Pendicle Road, Glasgow.  
Mr George Howarth, Dobson Road, Bolton.  
Mrs T A Jones, Church Leigh,  
Stoke on Trent.  
Mr John Keenan, 2 Lomond Drive, Airdrie,  
Lanarkshire.  
Mrs F McCabe, 25 St John's Grove, Redcar,  
Cleveland.  
Mr Thomas McCrudden, Crownhall Place,  
Glasgow.  
Mr Denis McDermott, Runcorn, Cheshire.  
Ms Maureen McKeating,  
39 McGregor Avenue, Stevenston,  
Ayrshire.

Mrs Therese Irene Mercer, 20 Longshaw  
Avenue, Wigan, Lancs.  
Mrs H Moore, 36 Cartmel Crescent, Barrow  
in Furness, Cumbria.  
Mr & Mrs Millership, Sheridan House,  
Penwood, Newbury, Berks.  
Mrs Ellen Morley, 87 Moss Lane, Maghull,  
Merseyside.  
Mrs Helen Nelson, 41 Barshaw Drive,  
Paisley, Renfrewshire.  
Mrs Audrey Nolan, Ruskin Road,  
Droylsden, Manchester.  
John O'Donnell, 100 Cardross Street,  
Dennistoun, Glasgow.  
Mrs Margaret Parker, 51 Malmesbury Road,  
Small Heath, Birmingham.  
Mr David Philp, 26 Osterley Grove,  
Bradford, West Yorks.  
Mrs Josephine Quinn, 18 Marlborough Court,  
Vicars Cross, Chester.  
Mr Terence Reilly, 63 Welch Road, Newton,  
Hyde, Cheshire.  
Mr John Reynolds, Whitstable, Kent. (step-  
father of Fr Richard Calcutt, W.F.)  
Mr John Rodgers, Ascot Court,  
Great Western Road, Glasgow.  
Mr Joseph Rene Roussel, Australia.  
Mrs Samuels, 6 Gonville Road,  
Thornton Heath, Surrey.  
Mrs May Souter, Anglesey Street,  
Kangeroo Point, Australia.  
Mr J Tonner, Robert Burns Avenue,  
Clydebank, Dunbartonshire.  
Mrs A E West, 32 Millfield Grove,  
Tynemouth, Tyne & Wear.  
Eugene Winters, Glasgow.

## † THE OBITUARY LISTS †

Please note that the latest dates for receiving names to include in the Obituary List are as follows:

Issue No.	Months	Latest Date
358	June-July 2001	18th. March, 2001
359	Aug.-Sept. 2001	18th. May, 2001
360	Oct.-Nov. 2001	18th. July, 2001
361	Dec.-Jan. 2002	18th. September, 2001
362	Feb.-March 2002	18th. November, 2001

*"Come, you whom my Father has blessed,*

*take for your heritage*

*the kingdom prepared for you*

*since the foundation of the world". (Mt. 25.34)*

**May they rest in peace**

# The White Sisters

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