

# White Fathers - White Sisters



Editor, Illustrations and Lay-out: Bill Turnbull W.F.

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*Front Cover: children from the Sisters of Mother Teresa of Calcutta Home in Kigali*

*Back Cover: statue of St. Anthony, Sutton Coldfield.*

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**EDITORIAL**

The first part of this issue is about the work of the **White Fathers in Ethiopia**. We see the Society's role in an ecumenical environment which gives a different dimension to the missionary vocation. By working with the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church we continue to preach the Gospel and help to keep alive religious traditions that are the country's heritage.

In the articles by White Sisters we see the work they do in Africa and how they are developing by welcoming more African vocations. **The Symbol of a Hoe** tells of the reception of two candidates into the Congregation and **An Experience in an Oasis!** of the contrasting life between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Algeria. **The Growth of a Seed - Joint Medical Stores (JMS)** shows the cooperation between White Fathers and White Sisters for the benefit of the people in Uganda.

Finally the White Fathers would like to thank all their benefactors who took part in the annual **St. Anthony's Novena**, especially those who sent in donations. It is only with your support that we are able to continue our work.

**Calendar Note:** there is a mistake in this year's Calendar. **Mission Sunday** is marked as being the 17th. October. It should be the **24th. October**. We are sorry for any inconvenience caused by this.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

We would like to apologise for any problems caused when people write with a change of address. Due to the print schedule it is often not possible for the alterations to take effect with the next issue of the magazine. The dates for receiving address alterations are similar to those for when names need to be received for inclusion in the Obituary List as seen on page 31.

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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 5 Charlbury Grove, Ealing, London, W5 9PZ, shall be a good discharge."

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# The White Fathers in Ethiopia

Compiled and Edited by Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

The following articles have been put together to give an idea of the work that the White Fathers do in Ethiopia. In the short time that we have been there, as you will see, we have achieved a great deal on all sorts of different levels. A major part of the work has been to help build up the local church by helping in the training of local priests at Adigrat Major Seminary and also to be a bridge between the Orthodox and Catholic Christians.

Although this is a special way to carry out our missionary vocation it is not unique in White Fathers' history. This role is directly inspired by the work done by, the then, Archbishop Charles Lavigerie who founded the White Fathers and White Sisters. Lavigerie had a great interest in the Oriental Church and wished to help revive

it. He was against the Eastern Churches being Latinized, believing that it should retain its rites, languages, customs and liturgy. He wanted to reconcile the Churches while they kept their different traditions.

This took on another dimension when the Greek Catholic Patriarch proposed that Lavigerie establish a seminary for the **Melkites** of the Greek or Byzantine Rite of Constantinople. He did this at St. Anne's in the Old City of Jerusalem. A Junior (1882-1946) and Senior Seminary (1886-1967) thrived there until they were transferred to Rayak and Harissa, respectively, in Lebanon. [1]

There are no **Melkite** Christians in Ethiopia but the principles which were the basis of the White Fathers' work at St. Anne's are true today in fostering of the local Ethiopian Church.

## How the White Fathers Arrived in Ethiopia

By Fr. Rudolf Wigger W.F. [2]

When in 1961 the Catholic Eparchy (Diocese) of Adigrat in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia was restored, the newly appointed Eparch (Bishop) Abune Hailemariam Kehsay remembered a visit to Jerusalem a few years earlier. There in the seminary of St. Anne he had met European missionaries who were training Eastern Catholic priests of the **Melkite Rite**. These White Fathers did not try to impose a Western, Roman Liturgy

on the **Melkite** Christians. They respected the Oriental liturgy and culture of the Christians of the Middle East. Ethiopia has had a painful history with some Catholic missionaries trying to impose a Western, Roman way of praying. Not only the Orthodox majority of Christians in Ethiopia were offended, but also many Catholic Ethiopians.

*Editor's Note 1: The Melkite Catholic Church (Byzantine Rite). The term 'Melkite' (Melchite) has a Semitic root (Melk, which is Syriac for king) with a Greek ending (ites) meaning imperialist. Melk is used in all the Semitic languages to mean the Roman Emperor, forming Melkite for those who were followers of the Emperor Marcian. In the fifth century Melkite was used by Monophysites (known as Jacobites in Syria and Palestine, and Copts in Egypt) as a derogatory term for those from Syria, Palestine, and Egypt who opposed their views and followed the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon. The Melkite Church spread in the Eastern Mediterranean and with the founding of the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch (at the Council of Nicaea, 325 A.D.) and Jerusalem (at the Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D.) it gained its structure. Melkite remained the name for those who were faithful to the Roman Church, both Catholic and Orthodox, until the Schism of Photius (867) and Cerularius (1054) split them once more. From that time there were two strands of Melkites in these countries: the Catholic Melkites who kept communion with Rome; and Orthodox Melkites who followed*

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### POPE PAUL VI GAVE THE EPARCH A HANDWRITTEN LETTER

Eparch Hailemariam wanted to make sure that he would get helpers to train his future priests in the ancient traditional rites of Ethiopia. He went to Pope Paul VI and asked him to send White Fathers to start and develop his Diocesan Major Seminary. Pope Paul gave him a handwritten letter to the Superior General of the White Fathers.

In 1967 the first White Fathers arrived in Adigrat in order to build a seminary and instruct the Ethiopian seminarians. They first learned the local language Tigrinya, and even acquired some knowledge of the ancient liturgical language Ge'ez. Until today White Fathers are involved in training priests for the Eparchy of Adigrat according to their local culture and tradition.

The spirit of love for the culture of Ethiopia is alive among the White Fathers who live and work in this country today. The newly built Catholic Church in **Wukro** is a jewel of Ethiopian tradition, architecture and art.

#### WHY COME TO ETHIOPIA AS A MISSIONARY?

On my recent visit to Ethiopia I spent some time in **Wukro**, which has become the centre of the activities of the White Fathers in Ethiopia. The youngest of them is Fr. Aloysius Beebwa

*Constantinople and other Christians. Although the name Melkite is used for both these groups, since the split in the Patriarchate of Antioch (1724), the term is usually applied only to any Byzantine (Eastern) Rite Catholics of the three Patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem, which are in communion with Rome. The Melkites in Syria and Egypt resumed communion with Rome at the time of the Crusades, although definitive union only came in the early 18th century and use Greek, Arabic, English, Portuguese, and Spanish in the liturgy.*

*Patriarchate Maximos IV (1947-1967), head of the Melkite Church, played an important role at the Second Vatican Council. He also spoke on behalf of the Orthodox Church and acted as a bridge between the Church of Rome and Orthodoxy. His successor the Patriarchate Maximos V Hakim (November 22, 1967) has continued this vital work.*

*See the article The White Fathers In Jerusalem by Fr. Denis Starkey W.F. in White Fathers - White Sisters, issue 345 of April-May, 1999, at [www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/345jer.html](http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/345jer.html)*

*Editor's Note 2: Fr. Rudolf Wigger W.F. is the White Fathers' Vocation Director based in Kampala, Uganda. This article first appeared in 'Petit Echo', No. 946 - 2003/10, and was entitled 'How did it happen that the White Fathers are in Ethiopia?'*

Picture above: Fr. Kevin O'Mahoney and Fr. José Bandres visit an Orthodox community

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The White Fathers are a small number in Tigray. All the same they have made a great effort to serve people who are often living in great poverty and who have many spiritual and material needs. The beautiful Catholic Church in **Wukro** is not the first building the White Fathers built there. A School of Commerce and Agriculture helps the youth in this impoverished area to learn skills that will enable them to have a better life in the future. In a country that often has poor soil and insufficient rainfall, grains that produce a higher yield are developed in the agricultural section of the school. Cattle that produce more meat and more milk and yet remain resistant to local diseases are bred, and a tree nursery will contribute to the planting of trees in a country that is largely deforested.

## Visit of André-L. Simonart to Ethiopia

By Fr. André-L. Simonart W.F. [3]

Eight Ethiopian candidates began the new academic year in Adigrat on Friday, 26th. September, 2003. Around 5 o'clock that afternoon they gathered in the chapel with Fr. Gaetano Cazzola, who preached their recollection. The following Monday they would start attending lectures at the Major Seminary next door. To reach Adigrat some had been on the road for several days: four of them had come from the far south of the country and one from Addis-Ababa. The other three had already arrived by Tuesday as their families live in Tigray.

The fact that our candidates in Ethiopia come also from beyond Tigray shows that Fr. Eddie Ndahinda, the vocation promoter, has been

### A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

A Social Centre is also run by the White Fathers. As Tigray was much affected by the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, many war and AIDS orphans live in **Wukro** and its surroundings. There are families who have lost their parents; an elderly lady or the eldest sister or brother may be the head of the family. Such families are supported by the White Fathers. In Adigrat the staff of our formation house was not content to form future missionaries; they founded a home for street children where the staff and the students of our formation house do pastoral work outside the seminary. The White Fathers want to make a small contribution to the spiritual and material development of the people in Tigray.

throwing his net widely. With the help of parish priests and Religious Congregations in the South, he has managed to get young Ethiopians interested in our missionary charism. The fruits of his labour and dedication are beginning to appear. Not however, that Fr. Eddie is after high numbers. Before going to the First Phase of their training, aspirants are required to attend a full academic year at St. Kizito House, the vocation centre in **Wukro**. At the end of that year a serious selection is made.

Concerned about the increasing work load of vocation promotion, the White Fathers decided during my visit that another colleague be asked to give Fr. Eddie a hand. [4]

*Editor's Note 3: Fr. André-L. Simonart W.F. was one of the General Assistants on the last White Fathers' General Council. This article first appeared in 'Petit Echo', No. 946 - 2003/10, and was entitled '18th September to 8th October 2003 - Visit of André-L. Simonart to Ethiopia'*

*Editor's Note 4: Since the article was written Fr. Aloysius Beebwa has joined the community in **Wukro**, after having studied Amharic in Addis Ababa. Fr. Aloysius is from Uganda. He spent his Pastoral Experience in Ethiopia, completed his studies at St. Edward's College and returned to Ethiopia after ordination.*

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### FIVE WHITE FATHERS IN ADIGRAT

In Adigrat there are five White Fathers. They live in three different places. At the hired premises for formation, the guest house of the diocese, Fr. Jean-Pierre Roth keeps Fr. Gaetano company, or is it the other way round? At present Fr. Jean-Pierre is full time learning Tigrinya, an arduous job requiring a lot of patience. His Swiss background is no doubt an asset for such an undertaking. Fr. Gaetano was put in charge of formation four and half months after his arrival in 2001. With his well-known enthusiasm and dynamic approach to things, he is fully committed and convinced the White Fathers have a great future in Ethiopia. He is happy in his formation work. About the candidates, he states: "They are good, eh?"

At the Major Seminary, Fr. Dietmar Lenfers has started his twenty-fifth academic year, teaching philosophy and African Traditional Religions. Though fit as a fiddle, Fr. Dietmar is gradually handing over some of his responsibilities. The year before last, another staff member took over from him as Dean of Studies and this year a local priest was appointed his assistant for Fr. Dietmar's work as financial administrator of the diocese. In a small rented house Fr. José Bandres, the dedicated Superior Delegate who also teaches Ecumenism at the Seminary, and Fr. Kevin O'Mahoney have both their offices and sleeping quarters. Fr. Kevin works at the archives of the Eparchy. With a passionate love for Ethiopia, its history and its people, he keeps on writing. During my visit I read his historical novel of the Ethiopian revolution, Meaza of Ethiopia. His latest book on the life



of Blessed Fr. Gebre Michael should be out by now.

In **Wukro** three White Fathers form a community with two local priests. Abba Bahlubi, ordained in 1991, is in **Wukro** since November 2002 and is the parish priest. Abba Endzias arrived very recently from studies in Dublin where he resided at Cypress Grove. He will be teaching at St. Mary's Commerce and Agriculture School. Besides Fr. Eddie, the vocation promoter, the two other members of the community are Fr. Angel Olan and Bonaventure Mashata Choza, who is on his Pastoral Experience.

Fr. Angel has been asked by the bishop to be a kind of overseer at the school, which has of course a local headmaster, and at the Social Centre. Such a task is at times not only time-consuming but also delicate. Fr. Angel in his quiet, gentle and very compassionate way also makes himself present to the many destitute in **Wukro**, in particular to the numerous orphans. When I asked Angel about his activities, he replied: "It is not the amount of activities which matter to me. I try, I mean I try to do everything with a Christian spirit." To see him live and

*Picture above: Some of the White Fathers in Ethiopia. Front - Fr. Angel Olan, Bona M. Choza; standing - Frs. Jean-Pierre Roth, André-L. Simonart, José Bandres, Kevin O'Mahoney, Edward Ndahinda, Dietmar Lenfers, Gaetano Cazzola*

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move around bears out these words. Bona, as he is called here, is already reasonably at ease with the local language. He continues however to spend two hours daily learning Tigrinya with a local teacher. He proved to be an efficient bursar as we all realised during the meeting of the vocation promoters.

#### AND TWO MORE EXPECTED SOON

Two more White Fathers are expected in Ethiopia soon. Fr. Everiste Mwelwa, who was ordained priest last August in Mansa (Zambia) and David Suze Manda, for his Pastoral Experience.

The gradual increase in personnel over the last four years brought us during my visit to reflect on the apostolic project of the White Fathers in Ethiopia. Up to now this project has had four main elements: to contribute to opening up the local Church to the universal mission of the Church, Ecumenism, relations with followers of Islam and, as the *Ideal Image* puts it (Cap. Acts 1998), to make ourselves neighbours to the poor and marginalized - here we added, involvement in the promotion of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. The question how-



Picture above: Wezero Mwheret who cooks for the community with hambasha, the local bread she has baked

ever was to see whether the time had not come to launch a new venture by taking on a new pastoral commitment. Pastoral needs are great in various parts of the country. Possibilities and requests are plentiful. As a matter of fact the Eparchy of Adigrat handed me an official request in that line for the General Council. The main question however is to know whether in the years to come the Society will continue to send students for their Pastoral Experience and White Fathers to Ethiopia regularly. Present commitments have to be kept, it was felt, and consideration must be given to the fact that insertion in the local culture as well as in the spirituality and liturgy takes four years on average. We admitted that our contribution in the pastoral field would always be a humble one. Full of confidence and hope in the future however, we did formulate guidelines in view of making a wise choice for a future 'missionary outreach' project in Ethiopia.

#### A NEW HOUSE FOR THE CANDIDATES

So far our Ethiopian candidates have changed residence four times. They started living at the

Major Seminary, then moved to a rented house, which became too small, then to a bigger one. At present they reside at the diocesan guests-house. We agreed that the time had come to have our own premises for formation. However the question was where. In Addis? In Adigrat? Recent difficulties at the consortium in Addis led us to opt for Adigrat, at least for the next 10 to 15 years. On my return to Rome, the General Council gave the green light to start looking for a plot and drawing the plans for a house of formation which would accommodate a maximum of 15 candidates.

One Sunday Fr. Gaetano took three of us for an outing. After three and half hours drive in the mountains we reached the holy city of Axum. We were just in time to take part in the ceremonies at the foot of the mysterious obelisks in honour of the finding of the True Cross, the feast of Meskel if my memory serves me right. The Orthodox Bishop presided over a very colourful celebration. At the end, fire was then set to a small stake on which



a wooden cross had been placed. Hardly had the fire died down then people rushed to take hold of some small piece of the charred cross. The visit of the Monastery of Saint Frumentius, who brought Christianity to Ethiopia around 330, left a deep impression on me. Here we admired some 6th. Century paintings in the sanctuary. We paid a visit to the ancient ruins of the Queen of Sheba's palace and saw the house where the *Ark of the Covenant* is supposed to be preserved. The journey back to Adigrat allowed us to admire once more the high mountains, the deep cliffs and grandiose sceneries. In the evening, tired and hungry, we were filled with gratitude for our skilled driver who on a few occasions had overtaken

lorries on the small narrow mountain passes and brought us safely home. [5]

#### THE UNIQUENESS OF ETHIOPIA

All the White Fathers I met told me that they were happy to be in Ethiopia. They appreciate the uniqueness of its population, its rich cultural and religious traditions, while feeling challenged by the poverty of the people. The ideal put forward by the 1998 Chapter of harmonizing the dreams of the young and the wisdom of the old requires a lot of patience, mutual listening and searching together. I believe my visit enabled such an exercise in harmonizing dreams and experience. It was certainly a successful exercise, thanks to the good will and generosity of everyone.

## Vocation Directors' Meeting at Wukro

By Fr. John Gould W.F. [6]

For one week in September, 2003, the White Fathers presence in Ethiopia increased by 100%, when the community at Wukro hosted the bi-annual meeting of vocation directors from East

and Southern Africa. The meeting was scheduled to begin on the 20th. September, and over the preceding days White Fathers flew in to Addis Ababa and then 310 miles (500 kms.)

*Editor's Note 5: See the article 'The Ark of the Covenant and Tabots' on page 11.*

*Editor's Note 6: Fr. John Gould W.F. is Rector of the White Fathers' First Phase, Jinja, Uganda and will be known to many of our readers as the former Provincial of Great Britain. This article first appeared in 'Petit Echo', No. 946 - 2003/10, and was entitled 'Vocation Directors' Meeting Wukro Ethiopia'.*

Picture above: Sabu, an Idian White Father Student on Pastoral Experience, with five of the candidates who began studies in September, 2002

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is limestone hills and rolling grasslands divided into small fields of cereals. Everything was surprisingly green - we arrived at the end of the short rainy season. But even in a good year the land cannot support the population. So **Wukro** has its share of orphans and street children, problems of malnutrition, lack of medical facilities etc. Now five thousand Ethiopian soldiers are stationed in and around **Wukro**, leading to an increase in prostitution, and HIV infection. The projects and pastoral work of the **Wukro** community focus on alleviating the suffering caused by these problems.

north to Mekele, an hour's drive over the mountain from **Wukro**. Some of us enjoyed the hospitality of the Jesuit community in Addis while waiting to fly to Mekele, and again after the meeting.

We also visited local churches carved out of rock, some dating from the 4th. century, and had a day out to Adigrat, where we met the Bishop and visited the seminary where our White Fathers have worked for so many years. After a wonderful meal at the First Phase Training Centre we went to see the street children's project where our candidates work for their pastoral experience. In the afternoon we drove to Salambesa, a town on the border with Eritrea, which was occupied and demolished by the Eritrean army in the recent war. The whole area is very tense, with UN soldiers guarding the disputed border.

The war has added to the social problems which are the legacy of the past history of famine and poverty in Tigray Province. The countryside

The parish team consists of the parish priest, a young Ethiopian who lives with the community, Fr. Angel Olanan, who has been in **Wukro** since the beginning, and Bonaventure Choza from the Congo. Fr. Angel Olanan showed us around one morning. It is difficult to realize at first sight the size of the compound at **Wukro**. The buildings are spread out and surrounded by young trees, hedges and gardens. There is a workshop for training in carpentry and metalwork, an arts and crafts centre, classrooms and a large community hall used for Sunday Mass. There is also a School of Agriculture and Commerce. As well as training students, the school provides advice to local farmers on improving animal breeding and the yield from their fruit trees and crops. High-yielding and drought-resistant varieties are grown in demonstration orchards and fields. Next to the hall is a beautiful church, the last building to be put up.

*Picture above: White Fathers who attended the meeting and may be known to some of our readers. Front - Fr. Aloys Beebwa; first row - Frs. John Gould, José Bandres, Julian Kasiya, Alain Gingras, Edward Ndahinda, Jean-Pierre Roth; second row - Frs. André-L. Simonart, Gaetano Cazzola, Matthieu Van Vlierden, Rudolf Wigger, Emanuel Adebao, and Bill Dyer.*

Apart from the buildings of the parish and projects, there is of course the vocation centre, where the aspirants come for preliminary sessions and then spend seven months preparing for entry to the first cycle. This has been Fr. Eddie's responsibility for four years now, along with the vocation promotion work, which involves a great deal of travelling. Fr. Eddie can call on the White Fathers for help with sessions and

selection, and the aspirants are also involved in pastoral work.

The welcome and hospitality of the White Fathers of **Wukro** and Adigrat was wonderful, and it was interesting to get an insight, not only into the work they do, but also the vision behind it and the challenges they face. Ethiopia has a long, proud and unique Christian heritage, and even a brief visit was a fascinating experience.

## The Ark of the Covenant and Tabots

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

According to the Ethiopian traditions, the **Ark of the Covenant**, known as the 'Sacred Tabot', is kept in a chapel at Axum (Aksoum, Aksum) in Tigray Province, northern Ethiopia. How it reached there is shrouded in mystery and legend. The Queen of Sheba's palace was also at Axum, as she ruled the area, and its ruins can still be seen there today. She visited King Solomon's court in 980BC and according to legend had a son, Menelik, by him. Menelik I was the founder of the Ethiopian Empire which lasted up until Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974. [7]

The various tradition tell that Menelik and his companions took the **Ark** from the Temple in Jerusalem through Egypt and the Sudan. On the way they are said to have stopped at Assuan (Egypt, where a Temple was built for the **Ark** which was destroyed in 410BC) and Meroe (Sudan) with the **Ark** arriving at Tana Kirkos (an island off

Ethiopia) in 400BC where it stayed for 800 years, and was then brought to Axum. Historically it is not certain when the **Ark** disappeared from the Temple but evidence shows that it was during the reign of Manasse (687-642BC). According to the Tana Kirkos traditions the **Ark** did not reach Ethiopia before 470 (which leaves a gap of 200 years).

The **Ark of the Covenant** is supposed to have played a crucial role in the battle of Adoua when Ethiopian forces fought the Italians. On the 1st. March, 1896, the **Ark** was brought out by



*Picture above: Women at the feast of the Epiphany*

# Consecration of the Church of the Presentation of St Mary in Wukro



The 13th. November, 2003, was a day of prayer and feasting as the new Church in **Wukro** was consecrated by the Eparch of Adigrat, Abune Tesfaselassie Medhin. Bishop Tesfaselassie was assisted by more than twelve priests, most of whom came from Adigrat. Three White Fathers also concelebrated: Frs. Dietmar Lenfers, José Bandres, and Kevin O' Mahoney. Before

this Mass was celebrated in a classroom or in the hall of the social centre. **Wukro** with a population of thirty thousand, the majority of whom are Orthodox Christians, has seen the number of Catholics grow to about a hundred. The ecumenical dimension of the Catholic church was strengthened as a good number of the Orthodox priests took part in the ceremony.



<- The procession is entering in the church with the **Tabot** Fr. José Bandres is accompanying Bishop Tesfaselassie



The **Tabot** is carried during the blessing of the church, Bishop Tesfaselassie is blessing the outside of the church helped by Fr. José Bandres ->

Menelik II when the battle began. Although the Ethiopians were badly prepared, and less well armed, they faced the enemy and in less than six hours won a vital victory.

## TABOT REPLICAS

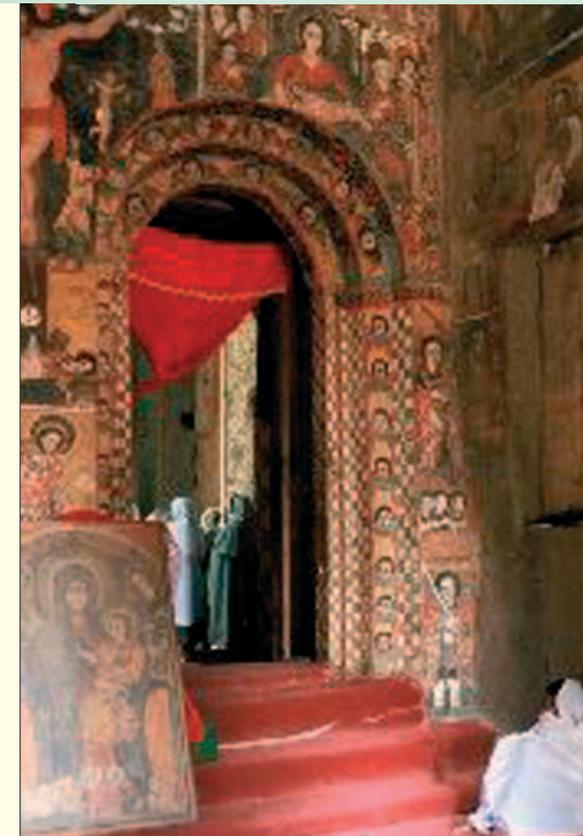
There are replicas of the **Tabot** in every church in Ethiopia where they are central to the community's liturgy and part of the country's living traditions. Most **Tabots** are not copies of the **Ark** but of the Tablets of the Law that were contained within it. These are made of either wood or stone and represent the **Ark of the Covenant** itself.

The **Tabots of Maqdala** were taken by British troops at the fall of Maqdala, in 1868. Emperor Tewodros II ruled Ethiopia at the time and he clashed with the British who sent a military expedition, commanded by Lord Napier, to lay siege to Maqdala, his capital. On his defeat the Emperor committed suicide rather than be captured. The British troops celebrated their victory by looting the city, especially treasures from its churches that included manuscripts, books, various sacred objects, and the **Tabots**. Many of the looted items were auctioned to finance the campaign. Some of the treasures were kept by individuals but others ended up in the British Museum including nine **Tabots**. In Britain the Maqdala episode was regarded as shameful and even Lord Napier felt that the items should be returned to Ethiopia.

The **St. John's Tabot** is one of the **Maqdala Tabots** and is believed to be 400 years old. It was taken by a Captain Arbuthnot of the 14th.

*Editor's Note 7: The origins of the **Falasha** - meaning 'exiles' or 'landless ones' in Amharic - are unknown but according to one of their traditions they trace their ancestry to Menelik I - some scholars put the date at around the second century BC. The **Falasha** considered this term pejorative and today and call themselves the **Beta Israel** - 'House of Israel'. The **Falasha** live in the region north of Lake Tana. They were subject to persecution after Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974. More than 12,000 **Falasha** were airlifted to Israel from refugee camps in Sudan in 1984-1985 in the Israeli government's 'Operation Moses' and the U.S. government's 'Operation Sheba'. The airlift continued in 1989. A further 3,500 **Falasha** emigrated to Israel in 1990 and another 14,000 **Falasha** were evacuated by the Israeli government in May 1991. Some **Falasha** still remain in Ethiopia. In 1975 they were recognized by the Chief Rabbinate as Jews and allowed to settle in Israel - gaining the name of the 'lost tribe'. Despite this they were still required to undergo pro forma **halakhic conversions** to Judaism.*

Picture above: The beautiful church decorations



This picture, and the one on the previous page and at the bottom left of this page, show the beautiful traditional decoration painted around the exterior of St. Mary's church. Here Mgr. Tesfaselassie is seen blessing the main doors of the new church during the ceremony. ->

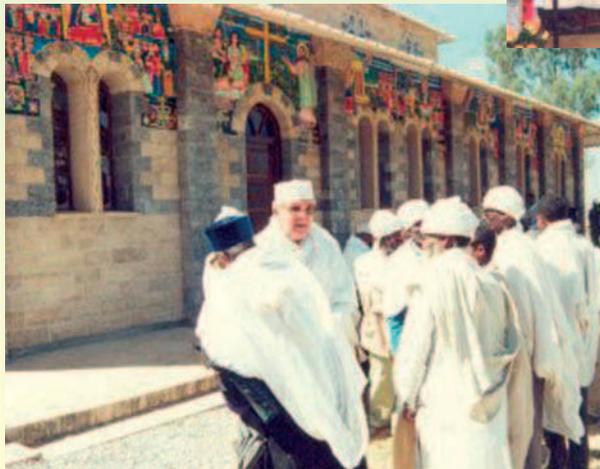
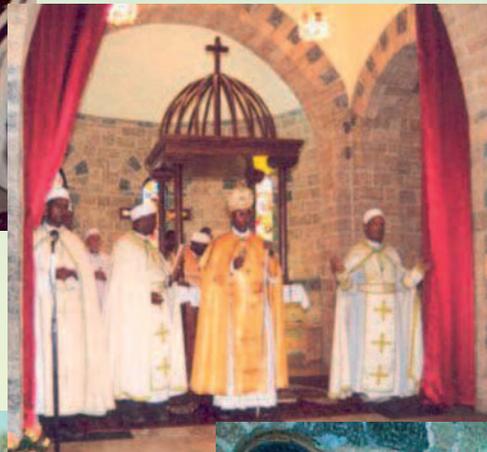


<- Many orthodox priests singing in St. Mary Church during the consecration



Mgr. Tesfaselassie during the consecration Mass of the church ->

Fr. José greeting orthodox priests, many of them joined the blessing of the church ↓



One of the stained glass windows in the new church ->



**Tabot** was handed back to representatives of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church at a ceremony held on the 27th. January, 2002. The following month there were celebrations at the Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa, which marked the **Tabot's** return home.

The **Maggs Tabot** was brought to England by Hormuzd Rassam, a scholar and Queen Victoria's Special Representative to Emperor Theodore. It was purchased by a collector who put his collection of Ethiopian books and artefacts on sale through Maggs Bros, a book dealers in Mayfair, London. Dr. Ian MacLennan saw the **Tabot** in a sales catalogue and, being a member of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, realised the significance of the **Tabot**. He bought it and arranged for its return to Ethiopia on the 1st. July, 2003.

WHAT FR. RICHARD NYOMBI FOUND [8]

**Timket**, or the **Feast of the Epiphany**, is celebrated in the January, 2004. The 3-day event commemorates the baptism of Christ and is one of the most colourful Ethiopian festivals. The night before the **Timket**, priests take the **Tabot**



from each church to a tent at a consecrated pool or stream. There is frenetic activity, including the ringing of bells, blowing of trumpets and the burning of incense. In Addis Ababa, tents are pitched at Jan Meda, to the northeast of the city centre. At 2am Mass is celebrated, attended by crowds of people carrying lighted oil lamps. At dawn, the priest uses a ceremonial cross to extinguish a candle burning on a pole in a nearby river. Inevitably, some of the congregation leap into the river. The **Tabots** are then taken back to the churches in procession, accompanied by horsemen, while the festivities continue.

## Background Notes on Ethiopia

Compiled by Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

**INDEPENDENCE:** Never colonised - oldest independent country in Africa, one of the oldest in the world - at least 2,000 years

**NATIONAL HOLIDAY:** National Day (defeat of Mengistu regime), 28 May (1991)

**UN MEMBERSHIP:** 13 November 1945

**OAU MEMBERSHIP:** 25 May 1963 (African Union)

**TOTAL POPULATION:** 55,979,018 (July 1995), 65,891,874 (July 2001 est.), 66,557,553 (July 2003 est.)

**AREA:** 446,953 sq. mls. (1,157,603 sq. kms.)

**DENSITY:** 40 per sq.km. (1995)

**NEIGHBOURS:** Djibouti (NW), Eritrea (N), Kenya (S), Somalia (E & NE), Sudan (W)

*Editor's Note 8: Fr. Richard Nyombi was one of the General Assistants on the last White Fathers' General Council.*

*Picture above: Adigrat Cathedral*

White Fathers - White Sisters August-September 2004

# The Federal Republic of Ethiopia



National Regional State; The Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State; and The Tigray National Regional State.

**CAPITAL:** Addis Ababa

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 45-50%, Ethiopian Orthodox Christian 35-40%, Traditional Religion 12%, other 3-8%, about 18,000 Falasha Jews still live in Gondar and Tigre.

**ETHNIC GROUPS:** Afar 4%, Amhara and Tigre 32%, Gurage 2%, Oromo 40%, Shankella 6%, Sidamo 9%, Somali 6%, other 1%

**LANGUAGES:** Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromigna, Guaragigna, Somali, Arabic, English (major foreign language taught in schools)

**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** 49 years (1995), total population: 44.68 years, male: 43.88 years, female: 45.51 years (2001 est.) total population: 41.24 years, male: 40.39 years, female: 42.11 years (2003 est.)

**INFANT MORTALITY RATE:** total: 103.22 deaths/1,000 live births, female: 92.65 deaths/1,000 live births (2003 est.), male: 113.48 deaths/1,000 live births

**HIV/AIDS:** adult prevalence rate: 6.4% (2001 est.) people living with HIV/AIDS: 2.1 million (2001 est.) deaths: 160,000 (2001 est.)

**ADULT LITERACY RATE:** total: 35.5%, male: 45.5%, female: 25.3% (1995 est.) total: 42.7%, male: 50.3%, female: 35.1% (2003 est.)

## The Catholic Church in Ethiopia

ARCHDIOCESES / DIOCESES	PARISHES	POPULATION			PRIESTS		CATHOLICS PER PRIEST	RELIGIOUS	
		TOTAL	NUMBER OF CATHOLICS	CATHOLICS AS %	DIOCESAN	RELIGIOUS		MALE	FEMALE
ADDIS ABABA ARCHDIOCESE	33	21,265,000	51,196	0.24%	27	142	302	248	219
ADIGRAT DIOCESE	33	3,500,000	17,427	0.50%	74	11	205	38	47
EMDEBER [1]	14	-	18,476	-	16	6	839	-	-
AWASA [2]	17	5,320,000	140,135	2.63%	7	39	3,046	53	70
GAMBELLA [3]	4	420,000	3,500	0.83%	3	5	437	8	7
HARAR [2]	19	5,700,000	23,175	0.41%	6	20	891	26	63
JIMMA-BONGA [3]	14	3,000,000	10,378	0.35%	-	8	1,297	11	11
MEKI [2]	10	5,583,551	20,517	0.37%	11	13	854	23	54
NEKEMTE [2]	70	6,000,000	31,252	0.52%	23	12	892	12	38
SODDO-HOSANNA [2]	28	6,700,000	167,374	2.50%	23	33	2,988	46	54

ARCHDIOCESES / DIOCESES	ERECTED / ELEVATED	PRESENT ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS	TOTAL AREA
ADDIS ABABA ARCHDIOCESE	31 October 1951	Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel C.M.	116,106 sq.mi. (300,600 sq.kms.)
ADIGRAT DIOCESE	20 February 1961	Tesfaselassie Medhin	30,900 sq.mi. (80,000 sq.kms.)
EMDEBER [1]	25 November 2003	Musie Ghebreghiorghis O.F.M. Cap.	3,544 sq.mi. (9,176 sq.kms.)
AWASA [2]	15 March 1979	Lorenzo Ceresoli M.C.C.I. [4]	28,968 sq.mi. (75,000 sq.kms.)
GAMBELLA [3]	16 November 2000	Angelo Moreschi S.D.B. Prefect	19,312 sq.mi. (50,000 sq.kms.)
HARAR [2]	4 May 1846	Woldetsensaé Ghebreghiorghis O.F.M. Cap. [4]	100,425 sq.mi. (260,000 sq.kms.)
JIMMA-BONGA [3]	10 June 1994	Theo van Ruyven C.M., Prefect	19,776 sq.mi. (51,200 sq.kms.)
MEKI [2]	21 December 1991	Abraham Desta [4]	156,600 sq.kms. (60,486 sq.mi.)
NEKEMTE [2]	25 March 1937	Leonardus Dobbelaar C.M. [4]	38,158 sq.mi. (98,792 sq.kms.)
SODDO-HOSANNA [2]	15 October 1982	Domenico Crescentino Marinuzzi O.F.M. Cap. [4]	21,243 sq.mi. (55,000 sq.kms.)

Foot Note: 1 = Apostolic Exarchate; 2 = Vicariate Apostolic; 3 = Prefecture Apostolic; 4 = Vicar Apostolic.

SOURCES: Background notes are taken from the SuttonLink fact sheet series. A fuller version is on the [White Fathers UK Web Site](http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/et_fct.html) at [www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/et\\_fct.html](http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/et_fct.html); Church details from the [Catholic-Hierarchy.org](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org) web site at <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org>; and the Ethiopia page on the [AMECEA](http://www.amecea.org/countries/ethiopia.htm) web site at <http://www.amecea.org/countries/ethiopia.htm>.

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Ityop'iya Federalawi Demokrasiyawi Ripeblik)

**FORMER NAME:** Abyssinia, Italian East Africa, Ethiopia (one of the oldest independent counties [mentioned in writings of Herodotus 5th. C. B.C. and Old Testament]; never under colonial rule except for Italian occupation 1936-41; Italians defeated by British and Ethiopian forces and Emperor returned to the throne; Eritrea province begins fight for independence in 1962; ruled by ancient Ethiopian monarchy until Emperor

Haile Selassie deposed in 1974; Eritrea gains independence in 1993; Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia installed in August 1995; border war between Ethiopian-Eritrea in 1998-2000.)

**SUBDIVISIONS:** Addis Ababa Administrative Region; Afar National Regional State; Amhara National Regional State; Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State; Dire Dawa Administrative Region; Gambella People's National Regional State; Harari People's National Regional State; Oromiya National Regional State; Somali

# Missionary Movements

## ARRIVALS:-

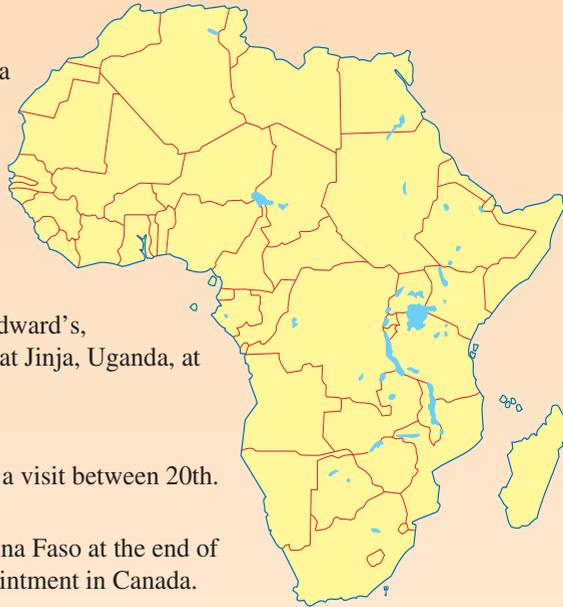
- Bro. Bernard Black returned from Zambia and to take up an appointment at Corfton Road, London.
- Fr. Richard Calcutt returned from ANB-BIA, Brussels, to take up an appointment at Oak Lodge, London.

## DEPARTURES:-

- Fr. Edward Wildsmith moved from St. Edward's, Totteridge, to take up an appointment at Jinja, Uganda, at the beginning of August.

## PASSING THROUGH:-

- Fr. Martin Addai, from Ejisu, Ghana, for a visit between 20th. September and the 20th. December.
- Fr. John Boos is due to arrive from Burkina Faso at the end of August, on his way to take up an appointment in Canada.



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)

## Change of Address

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# An Experience in an Oasis!

By Sr. Zawadi Barungu W.S.

My name is Zawadi Barungu and I am a **Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa (White Sister)** who was born in Bukavu, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. I have now been in Algeria for two years. After a time in Algiers to learn Arabic I was appointed to El-Golea, an oasis in the Sahara, the great desert situated in the south of Algeria.

We are five sisters in community, two are French, two are Spanish and I am Congolese. Together with Fr. René Leclerc, a **White Father**, we are the only Christians in an oasis with a population of 30,000 inhabitants. But we are not the only believers as we are surrounded by our Muslim brothers and sisters who remind us, five times each day, of the greatness of God! "Allah Akbar" that is, "God is the Greatest!" This gives us the opportunity of finding God through them.

Each sister has different activities and these give us the chance to meet and dialogue with our Muslim brothers and sisters. Sr. Teresa Ortiz teaches sewing and embroidery to the young girls who are deaf and dumb and two afternoons every week there is a group of girls who come to learn knitting. Sr. Marcela Lopez's main task is hospitality and she is always around to welcome those who come for a visit while the rest of us are away working with women or children. She also keeps very busy with many tasks: shopping, gardening and cooking, a job, which she shares with other members of the community.

Sr. Christiane Beaulieu teaches French, arithmetic and Arabic writing to a group of handicapped children. All through the week she also takes groups of children who need special help in learning French. She also visits many families who have handicapped children to teach their mothers some physical exercises, which help

their children. The women who are completely veiled, except for the eyes, when in the presence of men who are not their husbands make her very welcome. When I see this I realise how wise our founder, Cardinal Lavigerie was when he insisted that women apostles should be the ones who go out to contact other women.

Sr. Cécile Henry and myself give tailoring classes to twenty ladies who are between the age of 20 and 37 and who have not been able to continue their higher education. I also teach young children French to help and encourage them with their studies. Together with Sr. Christiane, I also visit the mothers of handicapped children.

We are all considered as the other women in the oasis. Like them we are invited to attend the weddings of their children. It is wonderful to see all the women gathered together in a room, separated from the men and all sitting on cushions on the floor, whatever social rank they belong to. We all bless the bride and share



Picture above: Sr. Zawadi being taught how to make couscous, while Sr. Marcela Lopez watches



a delicious meal of couscous. Recently we were also invited, for the first time, to the engagement of a young girl of a family we are friendly with. Normally this event is only reserved to the women of the family and very few special friends. The ceremony consists in welcoming the future mother-in-law who comes to ask the girl's hand for her son. This made us happy as we realised that the members of this family consider us as their true and close friends, and in this way express their trust in us.

I shall now share with you some experiences we have lived. One of us went out, one evening to buy five metres of wire to repair the swing where the children like to amuse themselves when they come in our courtyard to play. The shopkeeper gave the sister the wire she asked for but refused to accept any money. The sister thanked him and told him that she would be

using the wire to repair the swing. He then said to her: "Well, your aim is that of doing a good deed for the sake of the children ... so now it is my turn to do you a good deed."

One Friday morning we had a visit. Since it is a holiday we usually have more visits on this day. An elderly lady was visiting us when a Missionary Father arrived at our house. She immediately got up and said that she wanted to return to her house as she said the fact that our 'Marabou' (priest) had arrived was the sign that it was our time for prayer and she did not want to delay that. Before she left this lady then gave us the gift she had brought for us: couscous and vegetables and spices that were necessary to prepare special soup for the eve of Ramadan.

The 27th. day of the month of Ramadan is called 'the night of destiny'. On that day we were

invited by a family. On arriving there we found that Fr. René was also invited. The descent of the Koran to Mohammed is celebrated and a feast day meal of couscous marks this festivity. During that night the men spend their time at the Mosque in prayer, while women pray at home. We also spent that night in prayer and confided all the believers around us to the Lord. On this particular feast people express this wish to each other: "May God grant you what you would like to ask Him for tonight!"



## TAX REFUNDS TO CHARITIES

By courtesy of the Inland Revenue those taxpayers who complete a Self Assessment Tax Return can donate all or part of any repayment due to them to a Charity of their choice.

The taxpayer can also indicate on the return that Gift Aid should apply to the donation.

The donation plus Gift Aid can be paid, without the need for a claim by the Charity, by simply entering the Charity's code in the appropriate place.

**The White Fathers' Code: VAC56FG - The White Sisters' Code: XAA74GG**

*Picture above: An Algerian family invites Sr. Zawadi and Sr. Gertrud on the Feast of Aid*

White Fathers - White Sisters August-September 2004

One day an 8-year-old little girl came to our house. I wanted to get to know her and I asked her "Where do you live?" She replied: "I live in the same compound as the Christian Marabou, we are neighbours!" She was referring to Fr. René.

The Marabou in Islamic Tradition is a holy man 'who goes around doing good' in his lifetime. Muslims pray to Marabous after their death and ask them to intercede for them and to obtain for them various graces. One can see little shrines where people go and pray to the Marabou in various parts of Algeria.

I am the only black sister in my community here and in our 'Parish'. The people around are

surprised to see that I am the only black person living with white sisters and that I can share my life with them and that we get on well together. Among the population there are also black Algerians in this oasis, but they are descendants of slaves and do not mix with the white Algerians and there are very few mixed marriages. My presence as a black Christian, witnesses to the fact that inter-racial communities are possible and that not all Africans are Muslims.

This part of Africa is so very different from my own country and I am very happy to have this opportunity of living my apostolic mission here and particularly in this oasis in Algeria.

## Working with Women in Tamale, Ghana

By Sr. Jacqueline Picard W.S.

For some years now I have been working with **COLWOD**. This word stands 'Collaboration (col) with women (wo) in distress (d)'. The project was established in 1995 in Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana to help women in distress, especially those who are ensnared in the net of prostitution, which is a form of slavery. We have at present forty-six women in **COLWOD**. Some are trained as hairdressers, others as seamstresses, others do batik and tie and dye.

We also have some who are involved in the production of food processing, like groundnut extraction, rice polishing, corn grinding. I had to open a small store in town to sell the products and particularly what the women produce in the line of textiles. I pay the women for all they produce right at the beginning in order to help them get ready cash, so they can pay the rent, buy food for the children and send them to school.

## THE ANNUAL REUNION OF THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE WHITE FATHERS

Date: Sunday August 29th. 2004

Venue: St. Andrew's Cathedral, Clyde Street, Glasgow

Mass at 2 p.m. followed by a Buffet Reception from 3 p.m. onwards in the Cathedral Hall

We look forward to welcoming all our friends

Tickets: Adults - £5.00 Under 12 - £3.00

Available from: Fr. Chris Wallbank W.F.

9 Milrig Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2NG

Telephone: 0141 613 0209 E-mail: wfscotland@care4free.net



When COLWOD offered her training in batik, she accepted readily. She was given a loan so that she could buy what she needed: pails, basins, wax, dyes, fabric, charcoal and a table in a shed. When, after two years, she repaid her debt, she asked for another loan in order to buy a refrigerator. Helped by her ten-year-old daughter, she sold iced water. She also repaid this loan in good time.

Seeing that Fusia was doing well, her mother sent one of her younger daughters from a village in the south of Ghana. This younger sister was a dressmaker but she had no sewing machine. COLWOD lent her what she needed and gave her some sewing to do. She was thus able to buy her own sewing machine with the money she earned. She is now working for COLWOD, making articles from batik material: from kitchen aprons and saucepan holders to fine dresses.

Fusia also had a younger brother in the village looking after their old mother. When this brother died at the age of eighteen, the mother was left with no income to care for the youngest child, who was sixteen years old. So eventually Naomi, the youngest sister, also arrived in Tamale. Fusia took the initiative of paying the fees to help Naomi to be trained as a hairdresser.

When I found out that Fusia was helping her youngest sister too, I gave her a loan so that she could set up Naomi as a hairdresser in her own village. She soon had many clients and she too has repaid her debt. This youngest sister is now the one who supports her old mother as well as other members of the family.

Not long ago, Fusia came to tell me that her husband had reappeared after eight years of absence, saying that he wished to establish the household again. She accepted his return on two conditions: that he should get work and that he should be tested for AIDS. He agreed and, now at work, he pays for the education of two of their children.

After a while they become independent and they, in turn, set up their own business, in town. Some have succeeded very well and are already completely independent. Many now even have their own bank account.

This work requires a great deal of patience. The results are not always visible, but sometimes I enjoy real consolations. This is one of the examples of how by helping one woman I was able to help a whole family.

Fusia was one of the first prostitutes welcomed at COLWOD. Her husband had abandoned her, and she was left with four children, aged from one to twelve to provide for. Fusia had never trained for any profession, nor had she ever been to school. It seemed as if there was only one way of getting money to pay the rent, food and education of her children and that was by practising prostitution.

The last good news I heard from Fusia was that she was expecting a child – the fruit of their reconciliation! I was proud to see how eight years at COLWOD had transformed Fusia into a responsible independent woman.

I consider myself to be really privileged to work with these women in COLWOD and feel I am at the heart of my missionary vocation. The work demands a lot of patience and a readiness to give another chance. To change a mentality and form a character at their age is not an easy job. Once they have managed to change their

attitude and way of life they are very grateful for all we do for them. We constantly need to forgive. Above all, they need to feel that we love them very much and that we desire nothing but their own good.

Indeed, it is very rewarding to see poor and abandoned women becoming self sufficient and capable of managing their own affairs and their own household with pride and competence. I thank God for the possibility I have to help women to regain their dignity and live a life they can be proud of.

## The Symbol of a Hoe

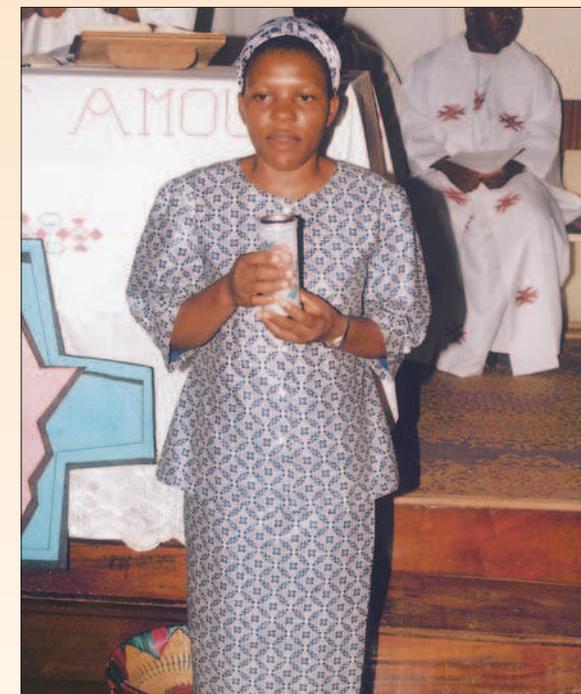
Compiled by Sr. Kathleen Kietzman W.S. \*

On Trinity Sunday, 14th. June last year, the college chapel at St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle welcomed us for the celebration of our reception into the Congregation. Our sisters from many surrounding missions came to celebrate with us. Several White Fathers were also present as well as young people interested in the congregation. The youth choir from the area had worked hard at rehearsals and sang joyfully in French, Swahili and Mori.

For readings, we had chosen articles from our constitutions and the passage from Chapter 15 of St. John, which tells us of the firm and ardent union with Christ which 'bears fruit in plenty.'

Among the symbols chosen for the occasion, we had selected a hoe, the sign of our wish to be available in all circumstances for Christ's mission. Fr. Georges Jacques who officiated at the Mass, spoke at length of the symbol, emphasising the relationship between the hoe and the one who cultivates. We have chosen to be good hoes in the Lord's hands - free and available instruments. Fr. Georges also underlined the importance for the hoe to accept being 'useless' at times. Like the hoe, which is often idle, we

too have to accept that there must be times of relaxation, even periods of being quite simply useless which brings to mind the call to value 'being' more than 'doing'.





When the time came to pronounce our vows, we said our 'yes' one by one in the presence of all our sisters - a 'yes' to follow Christ and for the salvation of the world, especially Africa. We received the Cross, the sign of our belonging to the Congregation, followed by another significant moment when Sister Gisela officially appointed Brigitte to Kalanbakura in Mali, and Valerie to Mourouj in Tunisia. We each were presented with a symbol of the country to which we were appointed; the congregation applauded joyfully.

The celebration ended in a happy gathering at our local community.

## Rwanda Ten Years After - Part 2 \*

### THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The priority for the Church in Rwanda is reconciliation. The conflict has opened wounds which are slow to heal in short time. Hatred and desire of vengeance still animate some areas of the population. The celebration of the diocesan synods and of the first century of evangelisation of Rwanda have favoured pastoral work aiming at healing the wounds of the community and laying the basis for a future of peace, unity and reconciliation.

Another challenge is that of respect of human rights and developing a sense of justice, not animated by a spirit of vengeance.

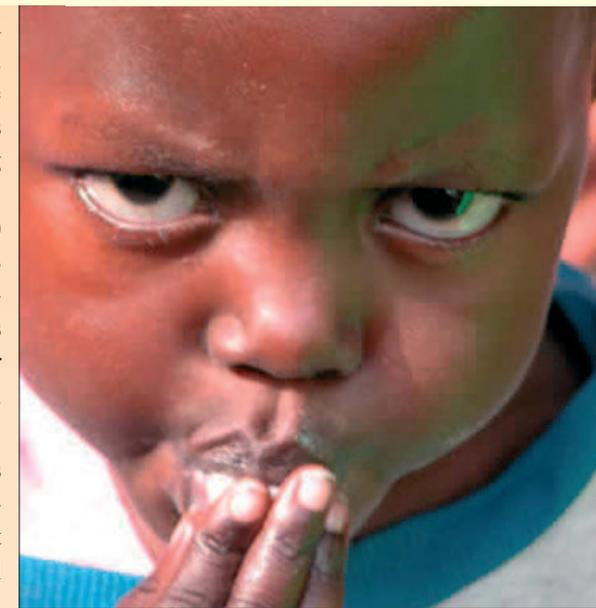
This Church has paid a high tribute in blood during the genocide and today it is in the first line seeking for national reconciliation. The **Rwandese Bishops' Conference** was decimated during the war. 103 priests, 65 religious persons and 47 brothers were killed together with 3

bishops: Archbishop Veincent Nsengiyumva of Kigali, Bishop Joseph Ruzindana of Byumba, and Bishop Thadeé Nsengiyumva of Kabgayi. Another bishop, Mgr Phocas Nikwigize, from Ruhengeri, took shelter abroad, but since he tried to return to his diocese, on November 30th. 1996, he has never been heard of again. Since then no news has come from him or about him, he has probably been killed and buried in one of the common graves.

Now the **Bishops' Conference** has been reconstituted: there are one Archbishop and 8 Bishops and it is presided over by the Archbishop of Kigali. There are 132 parishes. Presently there are 366 diocesan priests, 119 priests belonging to religious congregations. There are 1,217 women from religious congregations and 134 men. There are more than 120 missionaries belonging to the following institutions: Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), Jesuits,

Pallotines, Salesians, Dominicans, Marian Franciscans, Benedictines, Brothers of Charity, Brothers of Christian Education, Josephite Brothers. The major superiors of the institutions have created an association (COSUMA) meeting regularly to discuss the problems of the country. The women have a similar organisation (USUMA) gathering about thirty congregations. Religious men and women have gathered in another association (ASUMA). There are 3 major seminaries at Nyakibanda, Rutongo, Kabgayi, and 8 minor ones at Ndera, Kabayi, Butare, Nyundo, Zaza, Cyangugu and Nkumba.

The catechists play a crucial role in the Church's apostolate. Their work is shared by many religious movements (Legio Mariae, Sacred Heart League, JOC, JEC, Xaveri, Neocatechumenal way, Emmanuel Community, Spirit Renewal, Focolari) and by the work of the base communities. The latter amount to about 4,000 groups only in the diocese of Kabgayi, each group gathering 50 families. Due to the lack of priests



many church realities are animated by laypeople and there has often been need of extraordinary Eucharistic ministries (there are more than 500 in the diocese of Kabgayi).

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF RWANDA

#### KIGALI ARCHDIOCESE

**Archbishop:** Thaddée Ntihinyurwa.  
**Area:** 1,936 sq.mls. (3,116 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 1,400,683.  
**Catholics:** 718,852. **Parishes:** 18.  
**Priests:** diocesan 56; religious 44.  
**Religious:** men 37; women 283.  
**Seminarians:** 56. **Catechists:** 1,112.

**Situation:** the archdiocese has experienced a strong population growth. Many of the Tutsi returning from exile come to Kigali or the surrounding areas. Pastoral priority is reconciliation, guided by a renewed faith and put in practise through action and inter-church relations. A pastoral office gathers the reflections of ten post-synodal committees in the interest of the whole Christian community gathering in the base church communities.

#### BUTARE DIOCESE

**Bishop:** Philippe Rukamba.  
**Area:** 1,217 sq.mls. (1,958 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 715,979.  
**Catholics:** 441,308. **Parishes:** 20.  
**Priests:** diocesan 82; religious 22.  
**Religious:** men 77; women 352.  
**Seminarians:** 19. **Catechists:** 229.

**Situation** at Butare there are two important centres for the studies and training of religious persons, novices and laypersons: the Institute of Religious Sciences (**ISR**) and the High Institute of Pedagogy and Catechesis (**ISPC**). Pastoral work dedicated to families is carried out, and also for young university students: in the "compound" of the State National University of Butare there is a parish assisting hundreds of students.

**BYUMBA DIOCESE**

**Bishop:** Servilien Nzakamwita.  
**Area:** 2,082 sq.mls. (3,350 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 1,121,064.  
**Catholics:** 459,995. **Parishes:** 13.  
**Priests:** diocesan 33; religious 6.  
**Religious:** men 14; women 104.

**Seminarians:** 33. **Catechists:** 272.

**Situation:** the conflict has killed 200,000 people, and more than 300,000 arrived afterwards. The population is made up especially of young people (50% is less than 18 years old and 10,5 are orphans) and women (70%). Since 1996, 21 centres for youth training have been opened, schools, and dispensaries serving 80% of the population living in extreme poverty.

**CYANGUGU DIOCESE**

**Bishop:** Jean Damascène Bimenyimana.  
**Area:** 1,146 sq.mls. (1,844 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 575,684.  
**Catholics:** 280,554. **Parishes:** 10.

**Priests:** diocesan 30; religious 7.

**Religious:** men 11; women 108.

**Seminarians:** 22. **Catechists:** 168.

**Situation:** about 25% of the population is of traditional faiths, while 3% are Muslim.

**GIKONGORO DIOCESE**

**Bishop:** Augustin Misago.  
**Area:** 1,278 sq.mls. (2,057 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 501,043.  
**Catholics:** 215,503. **Parishes:** 10.  
**Priests:** diocesan 15; religious 3.  
**Religious:** men 0; women 31.

**Seminarians:** 23. **Catechists:** 81.

**Situation:** it is the poorest diocese in the country and it has very much suffered during the conflict. Twelve priests and about 75,000 civilians were killed. In the Diocese there is the church of Kibeho, where from 1981 to 1989 apparitions of Mary have been registered, and recognised by the Ordinary on June 29th. 2001.

**KABGAYI DIOCESE**

**Bishop:** Anastase Mutabazi.  
**Area:** 1,365 sq.mls. (2,197 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 867,092.  
**Catholics:** 528,633. **Parishes:** 21.  
**Priests:** diocesan 91; religious 7.  
**Religious:** men 40; women 186.

**Seminarians:** 75. **Catechists:** 491.

**Situation:** in a frame wrecked by the conflict the problem of the widows and the orphans appears crucial. Young mothers too, more than 6,000, are a pastoral urgency. Great help comes from the base communities, with about 4,031 groups. In October 2002 at Gitarama an institute for high studies opened: the Catholic University of Kabgayi.

**KIBUNGO DIOCESE**

**Bishop:** Frédéric Rubwejanga.  
**Area:** 1,659 sq.mls. (2,670 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 933,266.  
**Catholics:** 367,406. **Parishes:** 12.  
**Priests:** diocesan 12.

**Religious:** men 5; women 100.

**Seminarians:** 22. **Catechists:** 247.

**Situation:** after 1994 the Diocese has registered a growth of more than 200,000 people (especially Tutsi). 17% of the population belongs to traditional faiths. Sects prosper also in this Diocese.

**NYUNDO DIOCESE**

**Bishop:** Alexis Habiyaambere.  
**Area:** 2,485 sq.mls. (4,000 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 1,334,767.  
**Catholics:** 494,898. **Parishes:** 19.  
**Priests:** diocesan 38; religious 10.

**Religious:** men 10; women 70.

**Seminarians:** 48. **Catechists:** 262.

**Situation:** it is the largest diocese in the country. It has been deeply wounded during the war: 32 priests have been killed. Sects have been growing recently. Two of them are strongly syncretistic (Eglise de la Restauration and the Bahai) and spread especially in urban environment.

**RUHENGIRI DIOCESE**

**Bishop:** Kizito Bahuji Mihigo.  
**Area:** 1,095 sq.mls. (1,762 sq.kms.).  
**Population:** 850,115.  
**Catholics:** 418,299. **Parishes:** 11.  
**Priests:** diocesan 19; religious 21.  
**Religious:** men 27; women 48.

**Seminarians:** 32. **Catechists:** 210.

**Situation:** the diocese has suffered a lot from 1996-1998 because of the war between the rebels and the Rwandese army. Since the year 2000 the diocese has recovered: all the Parishes have at least three priests; there is a Marian shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima; the main pastoral work is dedicated to families and young people.

## The Growth of a Seed

In 1979, after the conflict during which Idi Amin was overthrown, the seed was sown for the establishment of the **Joint Medical Stores (JMS)** in Uganda.

The **Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)** were involved very closely in the negotiations leading up to the creation of this joint venture between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of Uganda. The donor agencies of both Churches abroad helped to speed up the process and organised the importation of medical supplies sent by Churches in Europe ready to help. A **White Sister**, Claire Michelle, was chosen to help Fr.

Lea, a **White Father**, in the management of the first supplies to arrive.

In 1982, a conference took place with consultants from the Netherlands and the U.S.A. This was an important turning point, for up to now the **Joint Medical Stores** had been a channel for relief aid. Now, the question was debated on how to find ways and means to become self-supporting by creating a Revolving Fund. This was a daunting task at a

time when the economy was unstable and civil war brewing.

The decision was taken by the Board of Directors to appoint Sr. Claire Michelle as pharmacist and I was asked to become the first Managing Director. It is useful to recall in the early 80's not even aspirins were on sale in Kampala, the Capital City! The Board of Directors, the Executive and Finance Committees were all very supportive in the running of the project.

There was great insecurity in those troubled times and many burglaries occurred from the



Picture above: Sr. Gertrud with staff of the Joint Medical Store



quent iron grill-fortification around it. There was also a row of containers to remedy the lack of space. Finally, the finance and the pharmacists' office were set-up in a brick house; an improvement surely, but still patchwork.

By now, we had established the famous *Revolving Fund*, but it did not 'revolve' very well! The difficulty in obtaining foreign exchange was great and the possibility nearly non-existent and we were proud of each Letter of Credit we managed to extract

store, despite the iron grill fortification, which had been erected. Times were very difficult with much suffering among the people. Our young men often practised locking all the innumerable padlocks of the store in the shortest possible time so that they could run for their safety, if need be!

Then, in 1982, the first alarming reports came from doctors about a strange, new disease - AIDS. A conference was organised to alert medical personnel, especially concerning the use of blood transfusions. At the time these were still given rather easily without having access to previous blood testing facilities!

Again, the donors were ready to help equip some hospitals to establish blood - banks in the four regions. Later a simpler testing-equipment was made available to all the hospitals.

During the time when the country was divided into two halves, thanks to the co-operation of the UNICEF representative in Kampala, use could be made of their flights to transport medical supplies to some of the units, which were cut off during the time of the civil war.

Originally, the *Joint Medical Stores* were in a light pre-fabricated structure, with the subse-

from the Bank of Uganda after much hassle.

Another memory I have of our efforts in '*south-to-south-trade*' is the container load of cotton wool from a Tanzanian firm, transported through the country by rail and across Lake Victoria by boat. Payment was made through the same *Revolving Fund*.

But this was just the beginning. By the time, when in 1990 I handed over to my successor from Holland sponsored by Memisa, we could hope that, with a bit more political stability, things might go on improving. They did improve in many ways!

When I returned to Uganda in 1999 as a delegate for the celebration of the 100th. anniversary of the arrival of our first sisters in the country in October 1889, I had occasion to visit the *JMS*, where Sr. Marlis Gaul has ever been a faithful member of the Staff. I was simply amazed at what I saw on this visit to the new premises of the store.

It made me grateful to have been there when that small seed was sown and to have been part of its story.

Many good wishes for the 25th. anniversary of the existence of the *JMS*!

## The White Fathers

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# Let Us Pray

*For the following  
who have died recently:*

Mrs Eileen Adam.  
Georgette Bellanger, Montreal, Canada.  
Miss B Burgon.  
Mrs Mary Cocks, 11 Echline Park,  
South Queensferry.  
Miss Winifred Mary Frances Conlin,  
11 Pentland Crescent, Rosewell,  
Midlothian.  
Monsignor Alex Devaney,  
Motherwell Diocese, Scotland.  
Mr Dixon, 25 Lower Longshoot, Scholes,  
Wigan.  
Mr Stephen Dolan, Ryland House,  
Edge Lane, Manchester.  
Mr & Mrs Fenton, 46 Langlands Road,  
St.Andrews, Fife.  
Mr M Finn, 8 Kirriemuir Gardens,  
Bishopbriggs, Glasgow.  
Mrs Elizabeth Harrington,  
183 Fleetwood Road North, Cleveleys,  
Lancs.  
Mr Terence Ivan Henry, 16 Tavistock Road,  
London.  
Mr Lawrence Henze, Leicester. (father of  
Fr. Ben Henze W.F.)  
Mrs Maureen Hesketh,  
23 Back Gillmoss Lane, Liverpool.  
Mr Frank Lowe.  
Margaret McCallan.

Mrs Theresa McLachlan, Flat 1 -  
Southlands, Swan Road, Harrogate.  
Gertrude McLaughlin, Co.Derry, Eire.  
Mrs Mary Margaret McKeown.  
Mr T McKenna, 13 School Lane, Dunleer,  
Co.Louth, Eire.  
Miss Margaret Moon,  
2 Marsh View Cottages, Brindle, Chorley.  
Isobel Murphy, Rutherglen. (sister-in-law of  
Brother John Murphy)  
Father Peter Nzenking - Cameroon,  
West Africa.  
Margaret O'Malley, Viewpark, Uddingston.  
Mrs Catherine Mary Philpott.  
Mrs Charlotte (Lottie) Shorrock,  
261 Pringle Street, Blackburn, Lancs.  
Mrs Katy Smith, 15 Waters Mead, Thorpe  
Hall Avenue, Thorpe Bay,  
Southend on Sea.  
Mrs Mary Ellen Walsh, 52 Downside,  
Hough Green, Widnes, Cheshire.  
Mr B & Mrs R Webster, 62 Brynn Street,  
St Helens.  
Mrs Alison Whalen, 31 Dumbue Avenue,  
Dumbarton.  
Mr Francis Whelan, Westlands Rest Home,  
Rashielee Avenue, Erskine,  
Renfrewshire.  
Mrs J L Whittaker, 11/4 Tuckeys Lane,  
Gibraltar.

## † THE OBITUARY LISTS †

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

Issue No.	Months	Latest Date
378	Oct.-Nov., 2004	14th. July, 2004
379	Dec.-Jan., 2005	14th. September, 2004
380	Feb.-March., 2005	15th. November, 2005
381	April-May, 2005	14th. January, 2005
382	June-July 2005	14th. March, 2005
383	Aug.-Sept., 2005	14th. May, 2005
384	Oct.-Nov., 2005	14th. July, 2005
385	Dec.-Jan., 2006	14th. September, 2005
386	Feb.-March., 2006	14th. November, 2005

We hope that we will be able to keep to these dates. On occasions, due to technical reasons in the production of the magazine, we may have to close the Obituary List a day or two early. If this does happen please accept our apologies and be assured that we will certainly include all the names received in the next issue.

**Calendar Note:** there is a mistake in this year's Calendar. **Mission Sunday** is marked as being the 17th. October. It should be the **24th. October**. We are sorry for any inconvenience caused by this.

*“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**

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