

APRIL 2015

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"WAKE UP THE WORLD,



WITH FAITH, HOPE AND HOLINESS."

- *Today's religious men and women need to be prophetic, "capable of waking up the world," of showing they are a special breed who "have something to say" to the world today.*
- *"The church must be attractive. Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, acting, living! (Show) it's possible to live differently in this world."*

Pope Francis

A WORD FROM THE PROVINCIAL

Entering into Jerusalem

After completing my visitation of the last of our seven districts – the Afram Plains District, I stopped over at the novitiate where I took part in the Palm Sunday Mass with that community. Our confrere, Bishop Gabriel Edoe Kumordji was also present on his way back to his vicariate. He was the principal celebrant.

In his reflection, one of the things that struck me so powerfully, talking meaningfully to a formation community was causing us to reflect on the fact that Jesus knew he was going to suffer and meet his death and yet went ahead to fulfil his mission. Coming to us, he asked among many questions, "if you know that when you become a religious, you would have to submit to your superiors, would you go ahead?; If you know that when you become an SVD, you may be sent to a far off mission away from home, family and friends, will you still join?; If you knew that you will meet with all kinds of temptations because of your vocation, will you still go ahead?" He went on and asked why sometimes, especially, during the time of formation, we would, in the face of difficulties and some challenges, say things like "... because of this 'small priest I want to chop' I have to suffer so much ...? In other words, why should one go through all the challenges inherent in formation before one is ordained?"

Understandably, it was very fitting for the novices, but we were all novices before becoming full members of our noble congregation. We had had the time to reflect upon the Constitutions that give direction to us in the manner that we conduct ourselves as individual SVDs or as a community. We may have been aware that it may not be that easy, and may be like Jesus, went ahead and professed to lead the vowed life in this congregation.

I believe that the events of the Holy Week, the passion, death and the resurrection of Christ at Easter provide us another opportunity to reflect upon our personal calling to the religious

life, examining anew our motivation and dedication, looking at our own struggles, challenges and joys and thus be encouraged by Jesus' courageous entry into Jerusalem to fulfil his mission, to help us renew our own commitment to living our lives as devoted priests and religious. This is even more important in this year that we are celebrating the Year of The Consecrated Life.

The Pope and other important Church leaders are frequently reminding us to go back to reading our Constitutions, reading the life stories of our founding generations, etc.; all these in the hope of bringing a renewal in our prophetic witnessing to our calling.

May I thank Fr. Vincent Owusu who has finished over two terms of office as Director of ICF, Elmina for the good work done during his term and wish him our prayers and blessings as he takes up as the priest in charge of Sts Peter & Paul, New Aplaku. Fr. John Straathof has accordingly retired from active work after establishing this same Catholic community and working there for fifteen years. Fr. John, well done! We wish you well too during your time of retirement.

May the risen Christ at Easter imbue in us this spirit of renewal that will give us new life and to spread it to the people around us!

Happy Eastertide!

George Angmor

Arrivals

- ❖ Fr. Benediktus Bau arrived on March 10th from Indonesia to join our province. He is coming from IDT Province. Ordained in 2002, he had worked in PNG for a few years and then called to help at their novitiate and later at their provincial office. Fr. Ben, akwabaa! We wish you well in your missionary experience here in Ghana.
- ❖ Fr. Frank Quainoo (2nd Year of Theology in PHC) arrived on the 15th March for his vacation.
- ❖ Fr. Anthony Anala [USS] arrived to bury his brother. Our sympathies.

Departures

- ❖ Fr. Henry Noordermeer left for Holland for a special medical attention. We wish him a speedy recovery.
- ❖ Fr. Martin Dumas returned to Japan after burying the mother.
- ❖ Fr. Deepak Tiga left on the 8th April for his home leave.
- ❖ Fr. Otmar Auinger left for good to his home province Austria on the 25th of April. We thank you for your missionary service in Ghana.
- ❖ Fr. Augustine Kodo left on the 24th April for further studies in Rome. We wish you all the best in your studies.
- ❖ Fr. Maxwell Wullar [CHI] departed on 27th April to his province after a short leave.
- ❖ Fr. Germain Mukinisa [URL] departed on 27th April for his first mission assignment in Russia.

Pray for our sick

Fr. Henry Noordermeer: he had to go home Holland for medical attention. Fr. we hope to see you soon in good shape.

Pray for our dead

- ❖ Bennett Anala the brother of Fr. Anthony Anala who died on 5th April in Tamale. Burial took place in Tamale on the 25th of April. Our Condolences to the Entire Family.
- ❖ Augusta Akua Ablekpe the mother of Brother Jerome Agbeko: who died on 11 April 2015. She was 92 years old. There will be no wake-keeping. Burial Mass on 30 May 2015 at 9:00 A.M. Thanksgiving Mass on 31 May 2015 At: St. Michael's Catholic Church Lolobi-Kumasi (8 km from Hohoe) Our Condolences to the Entire Family. May her soul rest in peace.

CATHOLIC BOOK CENTRE,

IS MOVING TO THE SVD GUEST HOUSE, ADABRAKA, 6 WATSON LOOP, BEHIND THE HOLY SPIRIT CATHEDRAL, ADABRAKA – ACCRA EFFECTIVE **MAY 15TH, 2015**. PLEASE ANNOUNCE IT IN YOUR PARISHES AND INSTITUTIONS

FOR MORE INFO. CONTACT: 0302- 226651 / 0302 234341 / 020-8150821 / 020-1905256.

TIT BITS

George Angmor

JEMA, KRANKA AND MAGAZINE (Kintampo)

Many of you have already heard about these; come end of July, these three stations in the Techiman diocese will be handed over to the bishop. We thank all our confreres, both past and present who have worked hard in all these places; we wish them well in their new places thereafter. A special mention needs to be made of Fr. Otmar Auinger who after the handover will for good to Austria after over forty years as a missionary in Ghana. In the same vein, the bishop of Yendi has been informed, as per the discussions of the confreres in the Yendi district and approved by the Provincial Council, the parish of Chereponi will be handed over at the end of the year.

Castle Drive – St. Arnorld's Chapel

Since the beginning of the Lenten period, the chapel in the Provincialate has been fully in use, mainly by its occupants. It is a cute little quiet chapel which is opened to you to also come for your personal time or recollection. Also, it forms another alternative place, to which you can lead a small group of up to about twenty for a day of recollection or some kind of spiritual exercises. You are all welcome! Call to book the place though, if you plan to do so.

Sexual Abuse Board

As is expected of all provinces to have this board in place to advice the provincial in the event of a case of sexual abuse, with the consent of the Provincial Council, the following six people have so far been approved to form this board covering different areas of expertise: Frs. Henry Duah, Andrew Campbell, Sr. Mercy Boateng, SSL, Mr. George Musey, Md. Helen Dzikunu and DSP Eunice Annor.

Higher Studies

By the grace of God and the Generalate and all benefactors who support and bear the costs of the studies of our confreres, this year the following are expected to finish with their studies and return home: Fr. Joshua Gariba completing his doctorate in Anthropology (Louvain); Frs. Paul Dogba and John Dorgborkoe both finishing their Licentiate in Moral Theology and Philosophy (Manila and Rome) respectively. Bro. John Akuffo is also due to complete his studies in Business Administration at CIBIT, Accra. The following are also leaving this year for their programmes: Frs. Wladek Madziar – Doctorate in Systematic Theology (Rome); Frs. Augustine Kodo and Phanue Agudu both go for Licentiate in Biblical Exegesis and Anthropology in Rome and Louvain respectively. We wish them all well and God's abundant blessings to finish and come successfully or prepare to commence their various programmes.

Relationships with the bishops

It came to my finding from a number of places that we do at times take our relationships with the shepherds of the dioceses for granted. A few have expressed the desire for this to improve. It is good for example, to pay courtesy calls on them and should not be limited to official purposes only. A few questions to ponder on: Do you inform them when you're going on holidays or homeleave? When you are back do you report as such? Again, for those working in parish pastoral ministry, it is a concern of some of the Bishops that we would always take our deserving holidays during the liturgical 'off-peak' season. Lent or immediately after Easter for example may not be ideal since it is expected that we journey with our people and help them prepare in these seasons, and at the same time help them reap the spiritual usefulness of these times for their own lives.

Fr. Otmar informs us that his send-off which was scheduled to take place at Kintampo on the 15th of July has been cancelled due to his ill-health and his early departure to his home province, Austria. He shares his experiences with us in the next issue of the Newsletter.

KOFORIDUA DIOCESE LAUNCHES YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

On the 14th March 2015, the various Religious Congregations in the Koforidua diocese met at St. George Cathedral to officially launch the Year of Consecrated Life. It was in accordance with the declaration of this year by Pope Francis as the Year of Consecrated Life which has already taken effect from the first Sunday of Advent last year and will span to February 2, 2016.

The theme for the celebration was "Wake up the world, with faith, hope and holiness." In his homily, Bishop Joseph AfrifaAgyekum, Bishop of Kofiridua Diocese who presided over the holy Mass, said the religious should radiate and reflect joy as emphasized by the Holy Father, that the religious must be joyful.

Moreover these virtues of hope, holiness and faith highlighted in the theme

must be visibly seen and manifested in the life of the religious. This, he emphasized, must be contagious to reflect the life of the church and the world as a whole. It will go a long way to give hope to the hopeless and joy to the sorrowful.

The commitment and faithfulness of the religious will inspire and put others on

fire for the work of God while the holiness of the religious becomes a serene atmosphere of the sacred presence of God wherever they find themselves thus becoming ambassadors of God at all time. The Bishop thus challenged the religious gathered there not to be signs of contradiction but rather promote prophetic presence and prophetic life by the way they live through the evangelical counsels.

Furthermore, Bishop Afrifa said in spite of the challenges that confront the religious life today, there are far more significant successes chalked by the life and work of the religious in all circles of life.



In the second part of the programme, the coordinator for the Religious in the diocese Fr. Dionisio Nellas, SVD reflected with the Religious gathered on the document published by the Catholic Bishops Conference in conjunction with Conference of Major Superiors. In sum, he said as religious we must be joyful because holiness can never come from sadness. True joy comes from the heart and within where we listen to the Lord in the deep recesses of our hearts.

The Religious Congregations present were HDR, SSPS, SNND, ST JOHN OF GOD, SVD.



The conference Hall

75th Anniversary project – St. Arnold Janssen Spirituality Centre

Part of the structure is ready to use for day programmes. There is a hall, a small chapel and toilet facilities. For booking contact the Director, Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, SVD 024 2889236



Dining Hall, Kitchen & stores

Please donate generously to complete the project; we need funds for the construction of sleeping rooms.

ANNUAL RETREAT

**24th-27th JUNE: FIRST SVD RETREAT BY TONY PATES AT NSAWAM
28th JUNE - 4th JULY: SECOND RETREAT (COMBINED SVD & SSPS)**

ASESEWA ST. AUGUSTINE PARISH CYO HOLDS DON BOSCO RALLY

The Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) is one of the Youth groups in the Catholic Church in Ghana that gives holistic upbringing to its members or crusaders as they call themselves.

As part of the celebration marking the feast of their Patron Saint Don Bosco, crusaders of the St. Augustine Parish in Asesewa in the Koforidua Diocese gathered at one of the outstations known as Kwaopeniase for three days to celebrate this significant person and his contribution to youth development. Some of the activities of the crusaders include Bible studies, teachings on the Catholic faith and doctrines, issues of general knowledge, fun games among many others.



The St. Augustine CYO members with Frt. Emmanuel Arthur, SVD

There was also talk on the theme “the importance of education” by the youth president, Mr. Felix Ogyau. In his sharing he encouraged crusaders that the purpose of formal education is not merely to teach people how to read, write, and calculate but to instill in them good thoughts, wisdom, right conduct, humility and service to society. He therefore encouraged all gathered to remain focused on their education or apprenticeship and work hard toward its fruitful realization. These few days were very inspiring, fruitful, and reflective, and crusaders learnt, prayed and interacted to deepen their faith and to refresh themselves to work harder. New executives for the Parish CYO were also elected and sworn into office.

By Frt. Emmanuel K. Arthur, SVD

THE VALUE OF SILENCE

The American philosopher J. Emerson said that one should make silence and let the gods speak. In fact, this statement makes sense inasmuch as our world today is full of noise everywhere, even within churches. But silence is actually a means which leads to self-awareness and also to be really in touch with God. What is unfortunate is that some religious communities are imitating the noisy society in which we are living. But what interests us is to be fully aware of the place of silence in our daily life and how it could help us develop our spiritual and intellectual capacities.

Silence is actually a state of being relaxed in one's mind and therefore reflects on oneself, God and His creation. Reflecting on oneself profoundly is a way of growing spiritually, emotionally, psychologically and being aware of one's capacities, limitations and one's inner self. Being in touch with oneself leads to the gradual understanding of the mystery of God and also the acknowledgement of the fingerprints of God in all His creatures. It's also important to highlight the fact that silence helps us find out God's will in our life at a particular time.

Another important advantage of silence is also that it protects the inner fire within us. Silence guards the inner heat of religious emotions. This inner heat is the life of the Holy Spirit within us. Thus, silence is the discipline by which the inner fire of God is tended and kept alive.

Keeping silence does not mean avoiding the use of media such as TV, radios, internet, mobile phones and others, but that we should not be slaves of these means of communication that technology offers us. For many of us, silence has become a veritable thorn in our flesh. There was a time when silence was normal and a lot of racket disturbed us. But today, noise is the normal fare, and silence, strange as it may seem, has become the real nuisance. It's not hard to understand, therefore, that people who experience silence in this way will have difficulty with prayer.

In order to see the real effects of silence in our lives, we, as Christians, are encouraged to find time for ourselves in solitude, during retreats, recollections and meditations, in spite of our daily activities, because in solitude we find both self and God. *We as religious should be the first to champion this.*

FRT. ANTOINE ADANLESSOSSI
Novitiate

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE

The term "Peace" has been defined by some in extremely parochial terms thus losing its ultimate meaning. But then one would surely ask, ***"How is man to pursue Peace without throwing the concept of Justice through the window?"*** Principally, Peace is much more than the absence of war. Recent Popes in their encyclicals have persistently exhorted us that Peace is not found in controlling disorder and division between enemies, but in restoring harmony of relationship between brothers. How should we exercise Justice (Fairness) without ruffling feathers in our communities?

Looking at the society today, it is evident that we need to work seriously to restore peace and justice among people. It is imperative not to depart from the fact that justice cannot be defined in terms of victory for my side.

If not, it will fall short of being the product of peace, but rather the fruit of conflict. Our call to humanity is to foster harmony and order in promotion of the sanctity of life.

Fairness in all our dealings should supersede everything regardless of age; this will foster unity and peace.

In supporting the course of Peace in terms of Justice in our communities we should speak with one voice, a voice that is

informed by wisdom from above. Here are some points to note when considering peace and justice in our communities:

- That it is difficult for a lot of us in community to accept that we disagree to agree on some most important things but it does not mean we cannot live in peace and harmony after our disagreements. It is also the solemn duty of our Superiors to see to it that there is fairness in sharing of tasks and duties among the members, thus, enhancing peace.
- The struggle for power should not replace the sense of our unity and the pursuit of our charism in our various congregations. This is because religious leadership unlike political leadership is in service peace and justice. A religious leader is called to unite the odds and promote justice and harmony among his brothers and sisters.
- The social media platform should not be used for dissemination of hatred materials about members.

In conclusion, peace emanates from love that sees the other as self and this peace itself is the gift of God.

To have a relationship based on Justice requires truth because one must accurately judge reality before being able to give to each person and social group what is their due. Injustice always leads to a state of disorder. True justice is found in the being of God. Therefore, there is No Peace without Justice and No Justice without Forgiveness.

*FRT. CASPER MUSEMBE
MUKHUMU, Novitiate*

For your reflection:

*If: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P
Q R S T U V W X Y Z = 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
21 22 23 24 25 26*

*Then H+A+R+D+W+O+R+K
implies*

8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11=98%

K+N+O+W+L+E+D+G+E implies

11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5=96%

L+O+V+E implies 12+15+22+5 = 54%

L+U+C+K implies 12+21+3+11 = 47%

None of them makes 100%.

Then what makes 100% ? Is it

Money? NO! M+O+N+E+Y=

13+15+14+5+25=72% Leadership?

NO! L+E+A+D+E+R+S+H+I+P=

12+5+1+4+5+18+19+8+9+16=97

% Every problem has a solution, only

if we perhaps change our

"ATTITUDE".

A+T+T+I+T+U+D+E is

1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5 = 100% It

is therefore OUR ATTITUDE

towards Life and Work that makes

OUR Life 100% Successful.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE FOR SELF DISCOVERY AND TO TASTE SUCCESS IS RATHER THAN CHANGING OTHER'S ATTITUDE, CHANGE YOUR OWN." Abhishek Shukla

Mission in the Diaspora

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst” (Mt 18:20). This is the reality of missionary life but this reality can be very discouraging when one is really not rooted in this verse and trust the presence of God in the few who are gathered. Indeed God is always there before we arrive to start whatever work is assigned to us, with this knowledge one will never be discouraged no matter the number of people who are gathered. I have experienced the joy of the above verse especially during those shocking moments when I had to celebrate Mass with very few people.

Moving from a more catholic background to a less catholic region where one will call Diaspora, was a very big challenge. But the acceptance of this reality brings joy and nourishment. After 14 months in Benedictine Monastery as a deacon and a newly ordained priest in the southern part of Germany, I was sent to Dresden in the eastern part of Germany where Christians especially, Catholics are the minority. In local parlance this part of Germany is known as “Diaspora”, and one would perhaps be surprised to hear such a thing about Germany, a country which is known for Catholicism.

I was assistant parish priest in two different parishes. This is the region where Christianity was difficult to practice, because it was a communist region and foreigners were not so welcomed. The situation has changed in recent times. The influence of communism in the region



was so strong that one sees its reminiscence today. I encountered people who express their belief in God but had no chance of going to Church; as a result, they don't go to Church today. It was in this situation that I was going to exercise my first assignment for the subsequent three years.

Irrespective of the situation, I was enthusiastic and was really eager to have and make my own experience regardless of what I heard; because most people have prejudice about East Germany. The welcoming Mass was so touching and I really felt at home, but what was missing for me as a Ghanaian was our way of singing and dancing at Mass; in any case, I have become used to the German way of celebrating Mass. It is indeed true that, love and enthusiasm that make a missionary irrespective of colour and race. I was one with the people because I felt belonged to the big Catholic family. I never knew the reality was just about to begin.

My first Tuesday in the community was one of the many days in my missionary work that I will never forget. It was my first weekday Mass in one of the parishes. After some quiet time in the Church, I went to the sacristy to prepare to celebrate the Mass full of joy and love. I rang the bell for the Mass to begin and when I raised my eyes to see how many people had come, I saw only two women, this was a blow although I knew that generally most people do not come for weekday Mass but I never expected that only two people will come. Immediately, the verse of Matthew 18:20 came to mind: “for where two or three are gathered in my name...”. This verse helped me to at least concentrate a bit and to believe that God was really there with us because we were three representing the whole community. Indeed the faith of the two women were felt and it made me really believed that where two or three are gathered in God's name, he is really there. This was not much different from the other communities although there the number was more than two.

I really experienced a live faith in the two parishes in my

three years stay in Dresden. Among other things, I was teaching religion, and since the Catholics are not many in the schools, we have to give this class in the parish (thus class 1-4). To teach these children was one of my greatest joy, a living testimony of the faith. One of the experiences I had in my first months was a burial with the only son of a deceased, and I was really surprised at what he told me at the end of the burial.

He thanked me saying, “I appreciate your coming and the nice and encouraging words and also praying for my father, thank you so much. But Father, do you know something? All these nice word you said and the prayers, I do not believe them, my father will forever remain here beside my mother who died some years back. It was just my father's wish to be buried a Catholic”. I was a bit shocked and looking at him, I thanked him also for his openness and frankness and I started to share with him how the faith and what I believe in has brought me to Germany and even to meet him in the cemetery for the burial of his father. It took us more than an hour to discuss about death and resurrection.. At the end he thanked me once again for sharing with him and also to spend such a time in standing in the cemetery. I was also happy and thanked him.

This and similar situations characterised the mission in Dresden, a region where most of the people are not used to going to Church but which does not make them unbelievers.

I had a talk with one young man who told me he is not used to going to Church and Sundays are meeting days with his friends, because in his small village where he comes from he never saw anyone going to Church when he was a child as such they do not have any belief. He grew up in an environment where religion was not their privilege; for that matter the belief in God. However, our discussion and reflection together led this young man to believe that, every person has a conviction and belief in something. For us Christians, we place our firm belief in God who revealed himself to us in his Son Jesus Christ. He admitted that he has never reflected so deeply on this reality and though he did not believe in God, he believes in his own existence and knows that there is something beyond the mere human existence. These and many other experiences are the joy I find working in the "Diaspora".

It was and still is a rich experience for my life as a person and as a priest.



The many encounters I had in my three years stay in Dresden was really a nice one and it has helped me and will continue to help me in my life as a religious priest and also in the new assignment I have taken. With a joyful heart O Lord, I give all to you. God will never lead us where his love cannot unfold us, where his mercy cannot sustain us, where his peace cannot calm our fears and where his authority cannot overrule for us. Keep us Lord, and mould us for the work you have called us to do.

Fr. Joseph Anorkwah Frimpong SVD
Germany

FRATERS IN CFC NAIROBI RECEIVE MINISTRIES

The Common Formation Centre (CFC) Langata-Nairobi, Kenya has held its Annual Feast Celebration of our founder St. Arnold Janssen. The celebration which was crowned with the Holy Eucharist was presided over by the Provincial Superior of the Kenya-Tanzania Province Rev. Fr. Albert Fuchs, SVD

This was also an occasion which saw ten (10) of our Fraters in temporary vows instituted into the ministries of lector and acolyte in preparation towards priesthood as required by mother church.



Seven (7) Fraters in Theology one were instituted into the ministry of lector while three (3) Fraters in Theology two were also instituted into the ministry of acolyte respectively. During the same celebration, three (3) other Fraters were initiated in their preparation towards Perpetual Profession.

In his homily, the Provincial used the occasion to encourage his young confreres to carry out their ministries as a means of service to God and the people of God who are the church. For, it is by so doing that one finds fulfilment in one's vocation. Also present at the celebration were some SVD Confreres from the Nairobi District, Formators, friends and well-wishers.

The CFC community extends their sincere gratitude to all of you for your prayers.

By Frt. John Jerome, SVD
CFC Nairobi

Lay participation in the Philippine Church

Frt. Frank Quainoo one of our seminarians studying Theology at the Divine Word Seminary, Tagaytay, Philippines is currently having his vacation and he shares with us his observation regarding lay participation in Church activities in his place of missionary work..

Our seminary has two huge storey buildings which accommodated hundreds of SVD seminarians in years past, not to even mention those from different congregations and dioceses who studied with us. About a decade now and especially most recently, the SVD normally has an average of 28 seminarians from first to fourth year of Theology and also with a decline in the number of seminarians coming from other congregations and dioceses. The point I am driving at here is obvious. There has been a drastic decline in priestly and religious vocation in the Philippines and fearfully, it will get to an alarming situation in the coming years in such a major catholic country.

In the light of this reality, the faithful have stepped up their involvement in church activities. To enhance their active and efficient participation in the Church's activities and mission, many lay faithful are undertaking theological studies and other related courses in this regard. Among other institutions and seminaries, our SVD seminary stands tall when it comes to offering courses for the laity. In our seminary for instance, the population of lay students who attend weekend classes are more or less the same as the population of the whole seminary. Apart from this, they have other associations and third orders that are actively involved in Church activities and mission. Two lay groups that I know of which are involved in mission within and outside of the Philippines are the Couple for Christ (CFC) and the Singles for Christ (SFC).

Another area of immense lay participation is in the campus ministry and teaching of catechism in both private and public schools at all levels. Of course this is organized under the leadership of the Church and in fact it is headed by a clergy. But aside being headed by a clergy, all its works and coordination are done by the lay faithful. Through this organization, most of the schools in the Philippines have campus ministers who are mostly lay with few numbers of religious sisters. They are involved in teaching the faith to students at all levels and preparing them for the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion and in some cases Confirmation. It is interesting to know that, most of these are dedicated ladies, some married and others not.

The last but not the least of my experience of lay participation has to do with parish management. In all the parishes, the lay form the core of the organization of the whole year program of the parish. Each parish has its secretary and finance committee, and together with other executives of the Church, they plan all the itineraries and schedules of the parish priest. This includes priest's visits to outstations and other significant events in the parish. They also take charge of and look for priests in the absence of the parish priest. The above mentioned activities and many others are the splendid contributions being made by the laity in the Philippines and this offers me a reflection for my future ministry.

"THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL"



Fr. Eric Ankamah, SVD (PNG)

It was the First Sunday of Lent. Solomon, a diocesan seminarian and I, were on our way to Konguan. This is one of the ten outstations of the parish, Holy Trinity. It is also one of the three outstations in the mountains. The road to it is accessible by car but quite narrow.

Unfortunately, on this day, the road was very wet from the rains of the previous night. After crossing the first creek, I noticed that the road was in an unusual bad condition. Our car could barely

keep steady. Then just a little ahead of us, we saw this Land Cruiser stuck in the mud. Every effort to get it out of the mud proved futile. It was completely covered in mud except for its roof. Thus, the road was blocked.

I began to contemplate the options available to us. The obvious thing which stood strongly on my mind was to turn and go back to the parish. After all, there was nothing we could do in such a circumstance. However, on a second thought, I felt the people will be disappointed if I did not visit them. So I got my Mass kit and with my trousers folded up to knee level and together with my companion Solomon on the trip, we began our hiking. It took us an hour and fifteen minutes to get there.

Mid-way through, I began to pant heavily and then with a deep sigh I exclaimed, "Oh, My God." I told Solomon to let us take a rest. While sitting and resting on a piece of log, so many thoughts flooded my mind. Then, I began to smile and then laughed. I had remembered the words of Pope Francis, "The Joy of the Gospel." At this time, I felt I was one in mind with the Holy Father in his understanding of the missionary work. The sense of regret which was beginning to manifest itself slowly began to give way to a sense of joy and cheerful spirit inside me. With that, my strength was renewed and we made it to Konguan that day.

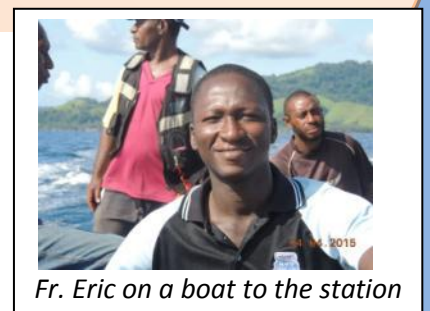
The decision I made to walk for once filled me with a deep sense of joy that I didn't allow self love and comfort take the better of me. Besides, the appreciation of the people for visiting them on foot was overwhelming. *Love and enthusiasm that makes the missionary.*

THE DANCING PRIEST

On Easter Saturday, I had everything ready for my trip to Manam Island. The morning was colourful - clear blue sky, bright sunshine and the green colouring of the trees. I was accompanied by three elderly men including the skipper. Fortunately on this day, the sea was very gentle and so we made our journey just under an hour. Otherwise, it's about an hour and a half.

On arrival at Manam, there were some people waiting who helped to pull the boat ashore. Some boys and girls got our belongings and led us to our new home. At our new home, we were welcomed by the church leader (lotulida) and the sacristan. After making acquaintance with the care taker of the house and his family, I met with the 'lotulida' and sacristan to go through the celebration for the vigil. After that, I took the opportunity to make acquaintance with the few people around.

In the late afternoon, I sat in the confessional for about two hours. After that, I went back to the house to take supper. Afterwards, I got myself ready for the vigil celebration. One thing worth mention here is the decorations. There is



Fr. Eric on a boat to the station

great attention to decorations (bilas) on festive days. There were 'bilas' all over, outside and inside the church. The special thing about the 'bilas' is that, they are all natural flowers. And never in any time are they short of flowers for 'bilas.'

The celebration started as usual with a huge fire. After the preparation of the candle, we began our solemn procession into the church. Everything went on as usual as in the liturgy. However, after the sprinkling of the water, I asked the choir to sing a praise song in thanksgiving for this easter night. I said to those who are interested to clap and dance along. When they saw me clapping and dancing they couldn't hold back. To my surprise everyone was up, clapping and singing, but only a few danced. The church was alive and filled with the easter joy.

Fr. Eric Ankamah, SVD, PNG

'Appreciation' Day at SS. Peter and Paul



Fr. John Straathof

Easter Sunday 2015 at SS. Peter and Paul was not only a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus but a celebration dubbed 'Appreciation Day'. This was a celebration by the Parish to express appreciation to Fr. John Straathof who is going on retirement from active pastoral life after 40 years of missionary life as an SVD. All these years were practically spent in Ghana.

Present were our confreres Bishop Boi-Nai of Yendi, Fr. George Angmor, Provincial Superior, Fr. Vincent Owusu, the Parish Priest, Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, the Mission Secretary and the Director of Arnold Janssen Spirituality Centre, Fr. Rex Vegbey, Accra District Superior and Bro. James Djadoo among others.

In a speech, Bishop Boi-Nai acknowledged Fr. Straathof as a great Community man, a pace-setter among other great qualities that he has. Bishop recalled when he was with Fr. Straathof as a seminarian and how Fr. John influenced his life as a missionary. He expressed his gratitude to him.



The appreciation cake



Youth Choir in named after Fr. Straathof



Bishop Boi –Nai delivering his speech

Fr. Dogodzi on his part acknowledged the good works Fr. John has done for the SVD. He said Fr. John was very instrumental in acquiring the present land at Tuba which is the present Arnold Janssen Spirituality Centre.

Fr. Vegbey thanked Fr. John for the immense contributions to the SVD serving in different capacities from doing pioneering work in Yendi to Accra at the SVD treasury till he moved into parish work again in Accra and now retiring. He articulated Fr. Straathof's special love for seminarians and till date he always has at least a seminarian around him either for holiday apostolate or for a long pastoral year experience. He is always imparting his missionary experiences to the future SVD missionaries. There were speeches all appreciating Fr. Straathof for all that he has done not only for the SVD but for mother church and for Ghana in particular.

In the end Fr. Straathof thanked all who have made his missionary life here in Ghana a success since he arrived on the 5th Jan 1967. He recalled his experience with Fr. Henk Janssen who told him upon receiving his appointment to Ghana that there were many snakes in Ghana so he should be careful.

"Upon arrival in Ghana I felt very homesick but the friendliness of the people made me to survive in Ghana till date", he concluded.

MAILS

I received the February Ghana Province Newsletter. Much information and news inside. Lots of things happening with the SVD in Ghana. Rex Vegbey is doing an excellent production. Sorry about Mark Urey. "Man proposes; God disposes."

Fr. EddieTetteh is ministering wonderfully to his people at Church of Bl. Sacrament and Our Lady of Divine Shepherd Parish. He has really matured and grown spiritually over the years!!

I am finally beginning to realize that at 81 I am getting older and must cut back on a few things. Please keep me in your healing prayers. My lower spine is causing me some trouble. God bless the Ghana province.

Fraternally, Vince Burke

I hope you are fine and doing well over there like myself here in Brazil. Thanks a lot for the Newsletter of the Ghana Province. I wish you all the best and a fruitful Lenten Season! Kindly extend my regards to all the confreres and friends around.

Pierre Pedro, SVD

WORTH REMEMBERING

May

01	Joseph Addai	Feastday
01	Kingsley Sagru-Larr	Feast day
01	Cyprian Kuupol	Birthday
01	Joseph Panabang	Feast day
01	Albert Ziem	Birthday
02	Gideon Davordzie	Feast day
03	Jacobson Dey	Feastday
03	JojoMonoth	Feastday
03	Peter Wildenburg	+ 1984
04	Francis Allah	Birthday
05	Joshua Garibah	Birthday
05	Alexander P. Chandy	Birthday
07	Matthias Felber	Birthday
08	Stanislaw Gergont	Feast day
09	Samuel Aboo	Birthday
09	George Makonzo Mondo	Birthday
10	Samuel Yaw Adu	Birthday
10	Bruno Yirzie	Birthday
12	John A. Asiedu	Birthday
13	Eugene Agyapong	Feastday
14	Matthias King	Feastday
14	Mathias Yaadar	Feastday
14	John McKillip	+ 1979
15	Samuel Victor Kusaga	Birthday
16	Déomba Honoré Karo	Feastday
17	Paul Ayitey	Birthday
18	Mariusz Pacula	Birthday
19	Joseph Youta Djiba	Birthday

May

20	Bernard Assenyoh	Birthday
21	John OheneAkuffo	Birthday
22	Emmanuel Anyomi	Feast day
22	Emile K Dzokpe.	Feastday
22	Emil Setsoafia	Birthday
25	Boniface Issaka	Birthday
25	Fr. Otto Welter + 2003	
26	WladyslawMadziar	Birthday
27	George Wilson + 1985	
30	Frank Quainoo	Birthday
31	Maxwell Wullar	Birthday
31	Alphonse Elsbernd	+ 1997
31	Patrick Murphy + 2011	

June

02	Marcel Kakrabah	Feastday
02	Erasmus Norviewu-	Feastday& Birthday
	Mortty	
05	Boniface Issaka	Feast day
06	JózefHus	+ 1988
07	Franklyn Nubuasah	Birthday
07	John K. Tumawu	Birthday
09	Emmanuel Affum	Birthday
09	JeromeAgbeko	Birthday
09	Sunil Rodrigues	Birthday
10	James Djadoo	Birthday
10	Wilfred D'Souza	Birthday
11	Anthony Bauer	+ 1994
11	Joseph Oliver Bowers	+ 2012

June

12	JohnDorborkoe	Birthday
12	Joseph T. Djabaré	Birthday
13	Eugene Agyapong	Feast day
13	AugustineAmanor	Feastday
13	Anthony B. Amissah	Feast day
13	Moses Awinongya Asaah	Feastday
13	Anthony Dugay	Feast day
13	Richard Botchway	Feastday
13	Antonius Hibur	Feastday
13	Anthony LawerDjimatey	Feastday
13	Anthony D. Mensah	Feastday
13	Joseph Hus	+ 1988
14	Emmanuel Fianu	Birthday
15	LambertAzieve	Birthday
15	Francis Damoah	Birthday
16	RaymondGuidrey	+ 2011
18	FrancisMastan	Birthday
19	DéohombaHonoréKaro	Birthday
19	Gabriel Sosu	Birthday
20	Bernard Tang	Birthday
20	Hans vanKempen	+ 2006
21	DionisioNellas	Birthday
21	John Koster	+ 2005
21	Horst Wrzask	+ 1986
22	Benjamin Asare	Birthday
22	Paul Lengyel	+ 2003
23	Stephen Bonsu	Birthday
23	Vincent Owusu	Birthday
23	Patrick (Joseph) O'Reilly	+ 2006
24	John Acheampong	Feastday
24	Jean-Baptiste Tchandama	Feastday
24	Edmund Nomo	+ 1996
25	Aloysius Turbek	+ 2004
26	DavidKpatcha	Birthday
26	RichardBotchway	Birthday
26	BockmanDamian	+ 1994
27	Benjamin Adusei-Poku	Birthday
27	WladyslawMadziar	Feast day
28	Philip Tekpertey Abaya	B&Feastday
28	Jacques Bidahou	Birthday
28	IreneusBoliLolan	Feastday
29	Peter Accorley	Feastday
29	Paul Agbeyome	B &Feastday
29	Pierre Avonyo	B &Feastday
29	Paul Ayitey	Feastday
29	Paul Dogba	Feastday
29	Peter Edze	Feastday

29	Paul Gbortsu	Feast day
29	Peter Kabutey	Feastday
29	Biju Maramkuzhackal	Feastday
29	Frank Quainoo	Feastday
29	Jean-Paul Sikpe	Feastday
29	Paul Tawiah	–Richmond Feast day

July

01	Thierry Balonda Koula	Feastday
01	James Doerfler	+ 1992
03	Ireneus Boli Lolan	Birthday
03	Thomas D'Mello	Feastday
03	Thierry Balonda Koula	Birthday
03	Lawrence Aurbach	+ 2001
04	Stephen Dogodzi	Birthday
04	Anthony Dugay	Birthday
04	Julius Keeke	Birthday
06	Aures Da Silva	Birthday
06	Samuel Victor Kusaga	Feastday
06	Alonso Arockiadass	+ 1990
10	Hans-Gerber Agbenafa	Birthday
10	Alfred Ayem	Birthday
10	Roman Zbutowicz	+ 1994
11	Curtis Washington	+ 1985
13	Henry Kwaku Duah	B & Feastday
13	Henry Noordermeer	Feastday
13	Yeremias Palur	+ 2002
14	Friedrich Hahn	+ 2006
17	Emmanuel Arthur	Birthday
18	Fred Timp	Feast day
19	Peter Kabutey	Birthday
19	Clement Hotze	+ 2001
23	Matthias King	Birthday
23	Willibald Regnath	+ 1989
25	James O. Amankwah	Feast day
25	Jacques Bidahou	Feastday
25	James Djadoo	Feastday
25	James Kimathi Mburugu	Feast day
25	Christopher Sekle	Feastday
26	Joachim Mika	Feastday
27	Rudolph Chamenyi	Feastday
28	Victor Leones	Feastday