

DECEMBER 2015

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For God so Loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life

Jn 3.16

**Merry
Christmas
and a
Happy
new year!**

FROM THE PROVINCIAL'S DESK

Dear Confreres,

Emmanuel ... God is with us!

Perhaps to some of us, the year 2015 might be ending a bit too fast than expected... Whether the acceleration of the year has been too fast or not, one thing for sure is that the grace of God has brought us to this stage! Thus we all witness the true refreshing presence of the Lord throughout the year and it is fitting all to say: "Thank you Lord, you who have brought us this far through Your divine providence!" Yes, let us all *'Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His kindness endures forever!'* Ps 107:1

As we look at the year in retrospect, a lot has happened in our lives in the Province, both as individuals and as communities. As the Year of Consecrated Life is also drawing to a close, we may ask ourselves how well the celebration of this year has renewed us, both on personal and community levels. One of the strong points in marking the year was the call of the Pope to all religious to showcase the joy of our calling, the joy of living out our vowed religious life. Do the people around us really see and feel joyful witness of our calling. Do our day to day living and our interpersonal interactions with our confreres really reflect or make tangible this great joy of following Jesus, the Christ. A gloomy person is a counter-witness to the Gospel of joy. As we celebrate Christmas it is my prayer that the joy heralded by the angels at the birth of the Messiah may inspire us all to enter the New Year with that joyful exuberance, that will liven the entire New Year.

There is a natural connection I see with the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Divine Mercy. Experiencing the unconditional abundant mercy of our heavenly Father, we cannot but be joyful at such a gift. This is the gift He gives to us and thus, we are all called to be like our Father himself, to be divine and show the same mercy to our fellow brothers and sisters. "Charity," they say, "begins at home." We must therefore live this out practically with ourselves and in our communities, and only then, justifiably to our brothers and sisters outside. This must be our special effort and commitment during the New Year 2016.

We thank all confreres who have truly sacrificed themselves to the mission of Christ in their various life situations and apostolates in keeping the Province on track. We are all called forth to emulate the self-emptying of Christ himself that began with his incarnation, which we celebrate during this festive season. May God's blessings descend on each one of us so that our witnessing to the Incarnate Word remains solid, and joyful. Obviously, there are always rooms for improvement and I have seen a number of situations that need to be improved, and I am glad I had the occasions to do so with a number of confreres. As we come to the end of this year, it is also fitting for each one to sincerely examine himself and see how he measures up to his dedication to the SVD.

There should be no need for coercion in doing what we each, have freely opted to do the day we pronounced our final vows to live our religious missionary life as Divine Word Missionaries. This undoubtedly, was clearly outlined and explained to each of us during our Novitiate. While the Superiors are there to encourage us to be on track in respect of our constitutions and to keep steady our Christ-centred living, we must honour ourselves by owning our own life and vocation; and joyfully so must we do that!

Among the many good things happening in the Province, let me mention just a few: the choosing of our confrere to become the second bishop of the Diocese of Ho; the arrival of our confreres in Christ the King Parish in Zwedru in Liberia (and hence the opening of that eighth District of the Ghana Province), and the 2015 Excellence Leaders' Gold award for Peace building and Reconciliation received by our confrere Most Rev. Vincent Sowah Boi-Nai, SVD. It is also heart-warming to mention and commend the unfailing daily posts of reflection on God's Word for the day through the modern electronic social media by Fr. Andrews Obeng SVD and Bishop Emmanuel Fianu, SVD. This laudable apostolate of presenting the Divine Word in a format that is easily accessible to many outside the confines of our own Province and nation, must be encouraged and supported. Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year 2016! Also, may you all have a gracious Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Divine Mercy!

George Clement Angmor

Arrivals

- George Angmor returned from Liberia after accompanying the 'Liberia' Team to their place of work.
- Fr. Eugene Agyapong [PANAMA] arrives on the 29th Nov. for his home leave.
- Fr. Mathew Yeng [NICARAGUA] arrived for his vacation.
- Fr. Alex Chandy arrived after attending the renewal programme at Nemi.

Departure

- Fr. Edward Tetteh [USC] left after his vacation.
- Fr. Titus Tuoyintir [PAR] departed to his province after his holidays.
- Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, Bro. Emmanuel Affum and Sr. Adeline SSpS depart in January for Steyl to attend a six-week Directors of 30-Day retreat workshop.
- Fr. Anthony Hibur leaves for good for his province after many years in Ghana.
- Frt. Dinailton Mendes de Souza returns to Brazil after learning English Language and some experience of OTP

Appointments and Transfers

- Fr. Alex Chandy has been given a temporal appointment to the Freinademetz House, Tamale. He would be the praeses for the academic year 2015/16
- Fr. Samuel Adu with residence in the Freinademetz House, Tamale: Director of OTP and new missionaries' assigned to Ghana.
- Fr. Abraham Kposu: Assistant Vocation Director.

Confreres to arrive in 2016

- Fr. Benjamin Asare after completing his studies in Leuven.
- Fr. Paul Dogba returns after his studies in the Philippines
- Fr. Binsasi, Egidius Melchides (vide IDE)
- Fr. Kim, Nam Doo John (vide KOR)
- Fr. Phung, Vinh Ngoc Peter (vide VIE)
- Fr. Sarenas, June Lee (vide PHC)
- Fr. Tran, Tuan Quoc Peter (vide VIE)
- Fr. Ma, Cyril (vide IPB)

SVD Finally in Liberia!

In 2012 as the Ghana Province planned activities to mark the 75 years of the presence of the SVD in Ghana for the following year (*exact date of 13th October*), Fr. General and his Council threw a challenge to us in the province to consider opening a mission in Liberia as part of marking the occasion. We took up this challenge and that is what culminated in the history made in Liberia with respect to the SVD worldwide mission activities.

On Monday the 9th of November 2015, the Provincial of the Ghana Province, Fr. George Clement Angmor, led a team of three confreres to Monrovia, Liberia, to begin our mission work in that country. Most Reverend Andrew Jaggy Karnley, Bishop of the Catholic diocese of Cape Palmas who had invited us to take a parish in his diocese, was at the airport with one of his priests to welcome us. On the Sunday that followed on November 15, 2015, in the Christ the King Parish in Zwedru City, Grand Gedeh County at 10:00 am, Bishop Karnley presided over the celebration of the Holy Eucharist to officially welcome the SVD into his diocese, and in fact, into the whole of Liberia!



In Monrovia ready to embark on the journey to Zwedru

In the hour preceding the Mass, the contract between the diocese and us the SVD was duly signed and sealed with the signatures of Fr. George Angmor (witnessed by the leader of our team, Fr. Jozef Mazur) on the one hand, and Bishop Karnley (witnessed by his Vicar General) on behalf of the Diocese of Cape Palmas. The church with about 600 seating capacity and recently renovated and painted by the sole efforts of the parishioners, was filled for the day's happy occasion. Various groups of women, youths, Knights and Ladies of St. John International and Marshall were all in their beautiful outfits. The Mass itself was filled with a lot of lively songs throughout. At the end of his sermon, the



Bishop called the SVD priests and gave them a special blessing for our mission before continuing with the rest of the Mass.

Bishop Karnley is so joyful and grateful to the SVD for accepting to come and collaborate to fulfil the Lord's mission in his diocese which covers five of the fifteen Liberian counties (regions) and thus one of the biggest of the three dioceses of Liberia. Presently he has fifteen diocesan priests but only ten are active in his diocese.

The Liberian mission has been opened as a new district under Ghana province. Ghana therefore provided two confreres from the province and requested the help of Fr. General and his council to help us with the rest. Thereupon we now have four for the mission. They are Frs. Jozef Mazur, Joseph Addai and Louis Yao Awoudja. The fourth and the youngest, Fr. Jean-Bertrand Tchekpi from Togo, who did his theological studies here in Ghana and assigned to Ghana for the Liberian mission, was ordained in August this year but will join the team in Liberia in the new year.

The Bishop announced Fr Mazur as the new parish priest of Christ the King Parish, Zwedru on the same day of welcoming.

Fr Addai will work still in the educational apostolate of the parish and indeed in the diocese because he has been made the Manager and Supervisor of the three elementary and high schools in Grand Gedeh county in the diocese. Two of these schools: St. Philomena elementary school and the Bishop Juwle High Schools are in Zwedru, while the third one is the Our Lady of Angelus elementary school in Zleh Town, some forty kilometres or so from Zwedru. Fr. Awoudja, being francophone, his area of focus of ministry is to be with the Ivorian refugees in the UN refugee camp

in Zwedru. It has over 48,000 registered members not counting the others.

Zwedru city is the capital of the Grand Gedeh county that is found on the eastern part of Liberia bordering Ivory Coast. There are a lot of faith communities that can be built up and existing ones strengthened. Thus there is a rich amount of mission work that can be undertaken. The local Krahn language may become very handy to achieve these and so our confreres after settling, will have to pick up the local dialect. English is however highly used. Time will also be needed to learn other parts of the new culture our confreres find themselves. Zwedru houses the UN contingents from China, India and Nigeria. The town is lush with vegetation and also water. Motorbikes are the common means of ferrying people from one place to another or functioning as taxis. It was my impression that there are a lot of youths in the town and they love to do a lot of physical exercises.

Yes indeed, Zwedru is a nice place but around the time of our arrival there, it demanded quite some courageous perseverance to reach – all because of the nature of the road! A day after our arrival, while still in the capital city Monrovia, Bishop Karnley had a message from Zwedru that the road to the place was reported to be bad – wet and trucks getting stuck or spoilt. They advised that we wait for some few more days in Monrovia for the weather to be dry so we could go on the road with little trouble. He explained this to us and added that we may have to wade through mud in certain places.



When he told us, we agreed that there was no use staying in Monrovia and so if he himself was going to pass through the mud, we were ready to do likewise. On our journey on Friday 13th, we got to a certain place and we had had to wait for four good hours as heads were put together to temporarily fix the passageway so cars could cross.

About a little over an hour of travel further along that way, we got to a worse spot at 8:50 pm. Indeed, it was known as the worst spot and indeed so it was as many dozens of cars and trucks had packed at either side unable to cross! We had no other choice than the eight of us travelling together, including the bishop, one of his consultants, one sister and a driver, to sleep that night on our seats in our two vehicles (Toyota Landcruisers). The bishop arranged in the night for two cars to be brought from the other end in Zwedru in the morning. When they came, we then walked through the mud in our wellington boots we had been given in Monrovia. At 10:30 am on Saturday morning, we could continue our journey, finally arriving about 1:15 pm in Zwedru.

The three full days we had in Monrovia before departing for Zwedru

were very useful. Bishop Karnley had drawn up an elaborate programme that we followed in our orientation in Monrovia. It took us to meet many important figures such as the Archbishop of Monrovia, Most Rev. Lewis Zeigler, the Apostolic Nuncio both of whom invited us for supper and lunch respectively on different days; meeting some veteran missionaries in Liberia especially Sr. Barbara Brilliant, FMM and her community in whose hostel/compound we had stayed in Monrovia; Fr. Gary, SMA; visit to places that also brought us to grave side at the cathedral of the late archbishop Michael Francis, who first thought of inviting the SVD to Liberia 25 years ago, saying a prayer there; the study/school community of the Holy Family Sisters in Monrovia, a local congregation of the diocese of Cape Palmas, where we were also invited for supper; some shops and offices as well as other places. Over this time, their immigration documentations were set in motion and also, we were able to secure for them their Liberian drivers license as well as local cell phone SIM registration.

We thank Fr. General and his council for the challenge, the interest and support for this mission. Through the intercession of St. Arnold and the Founding Generation, I can foresee a great SVD mission work arising in Liberia and we pray that their spiritual support will be with us to achieve this dream for the glory of God.

George C. Angmor

FAMILY FEAST, SOUTHERN SECTOR
THURSDAY 28TH -FRIDAY 29TH JANUARY
AT SVD NOVITIATE, NKWATIA KWAHU

Nine Profess Final Vows in Tamale



The 9 professing their vows

Nine seminarians at the Common Formation Centre (CFC), Tamale of the Society of the Divine Word, Ghana Province have professed their perpetual vows. The event which took place at the Carmelite Chapel makes these young men fully professed religious and full members of the Society of the Divine Word.

They are Frts. SVDs: Martin Kotchoffa, Ronald Aming'a, Augustin Amanor, Alfred Mbalanda, Sabastine Sob, Alphonse Fahin, Rodrigue Ongong, Emmanuel Arthur, and Emmanuel Makayie. They vowed to live the evangelical counsels of consecrated chastity, poverty and obedience as in accordance with the constitution of the society.

Receiving their vows was Very Rev. Fr Marek Dabrowski, SVD, the vice provincial of the SVD Ghana province who stood in for the provincial.

In his homily, he admonished the young men to continually seek the will of God in their life and endeavour to respond each day to their call "Here I am to do your will". He reminded them to live the vows with hope, faith and be ever willing to go where ever they are missioned. Again, he said their vows should help them to live totally to the cause of Jesus, the Divine Word and to draw people to him.

He congratulated them for the bold step they have taken to serve the church in the Society of the Divine Word and entreated them to remain prayerful always so to overcome the challenges that will come their ways. He thanked and asked for blessings for the families of the candidates for giving them to the church and for all who contributed to their formation.

Fr. Rodrigue Ongong, SVD on behalf of his brothers thanked all those who contributed one way or the other to their formation; the Superior General, the provincial and his



Vice provincial Marek Dabrowski with the finally professed and the concelebrants

council, formators and lecturers, colleagues, class mates and families and friends. He again called on them to always pray for them that they may reach the Altar of the Lord and their mission.

In attendance were several SVD priests and brothers from Yendi, Tamale, Koforidua, Accra and Togo, the Rector and formators of St Victor's Seminary, priest and religious from other diocese, seminarians from SVS, as well as family and friends of the candidates from Ghana, Togo, Benin and DR Congo.

By Paul Amuzu, Freinademetz House



Fr. Henry being congratulated

Fr. Henry Duah celebrated 25 years as priest at St. Michael Parish, Nkawkaw his home where he was ordained. The church was filled to capacity with parishioners, priests, religious, family members and friends. Fr. George Angmor, our provincial was there to grace the occasion. Most Rev. Afrifa-Agyekum could not make it due to the anniversary celebrations of the church in Akyem Swedru. He was represented by Msgr. Twum Barima, the Vicar General of Koforidua. The homily was delivered by Fr. Abankwah, the manager of St. Dominic hospital, Akwatia.



'I BELIEVE' VIDEO SERIES AND HYMNS OF PRAISE TV SHOW

DATE: SATURDAY 6TH FEBRUARY 2016
VENUE: CHRIST THE KING HALL
TIME: 3PM

'I believe' videos feature Catholic Teachings on DVD (English Version)

Most Rev. Philip Naameh ordains 16 Deacons



Bishop Philip Naameh with the Deacons

The Metropolitan Archbishop of Tamale, Most Rev. Philip Naameh, recently ordained nine (9) of our finally professed as deacons together with seven (7) diocesans at the Saints Peter and Paul Parish, Tamale. They were Revs. Martin Kotchoffa, Ronald Aming'a, Augustine Amanor, Alfred Mbalanda, Sabastine Sob, Alphonse Fahin, Rodrigue Ongong, Emmanuel Arthur, Emmanuel Makayie, all SVDs and Richard A. Abingya, Adiita A. Vitus, Atongdem A. Ebenezer, Babugi. K. Rudolph, Binchantim. L. Pius, Adjei. M. Daniel and Nibeen Gordon, all diocesans.

The ceremony was concelebrated by Fr. Marek Dabrowski, SVD, the Vice- Provincial Superior of the

Ghana Province, Fr. Cletus Kullah, Rector of St. Victor Major Seminary, and scores of priests (mostly SVDs) from various parts of the country and beyond.

In attendance were Religious, Seminarians, family and friends of the ordinandees from Ghana and beyond, Friends of the SVDs from St. Margaret Mary, Dansoman- Accra, Christian Mothers, the St. Theresa society, other societies and people from all walks of life.

In his homily, the Archbishop admonished the Deacons to focus on eternal things and abstain from things that will not last forever.

He emphasized that their aim

should not be gaining material things but rather be committed to their vocation. He bemoaned the situation where some priests have abandoned their ministry and have become materially- centred. He indicated they have been called to the service of the altar and of charity. And therefore should totally consecrate themselves to an undivided heart. They are to believe what they read, teach what they believe and practise what they teach.

The Prelate also congratulated the parents of the Deacons for offering their sons willingly to mother church and asked them not demand too much on their sons. There was a picnic after the ordination.

*By Anthony Larweh,
Freinademetz House*

Bishop Vincent Boi Nai wins ExLA Gold Award 2015

Most Rev. Vincent Boi Nai, SVD, the Catholic Bishop of Yendi was awarded the 2015 ExLA Gold Award for Peace and Consensus Building in the Gold category during the 5th edition of the Excellence Leadership Awards 2015 (ExLA) held on the 24th Oct. 2015 at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel in Accra.

The multidimensional nature of the ExLA Awards distinguishes it from others as it cuts across all leadership circles – leadership in the media, political leadership, corporate and entrepreneurial leadership, arts and entertainment, leadership in sports, youth leadership, religious leadership among others.



Bishop Boi-Nai receiving the award assisted by Frs. Campbell and Godwin Fiawoyi.

Citation read at the presentation said Bishop Vincent Boi-Nai had demonstrated and fostered peace and reconciliation and by ecumenical prayer services that brought together Christians, Muslims, and traditional believers of both chiefly and non-chiefly

tribes; horizontally through activities aimed at facilitating intercultural dialogue, friendship and trust in all of eastern Dagbon.

These categories include the ExLA Platinum Award which is the highest order of the ExLA Awards, Gold Category and the Silver Category under which the Young Achievers Awards falls.

Excellent Leadership Awards Group (ExLA Group) is a Non-Governmental Organization in Ghana, committed to the empowerment of individuals, especially young people for active corporate life, entrepreneurship and leadership, in order to contribute directly towards national development.

The ExLA Awards is an awards scheme that identifies and honours personalities and organizations that have distinguished themselves in their various fields of endeavor across the nation.

Fr. Stephen Osei-Asante

LOVERS OF HYMNS

WATCH 'HYMNS OF PRAISE'

ON GTV FROM SUNDAY 14TH FEBRUARY, 2016 AT 3.30PM

DIRECTED BY REX A. VEGBEY, SVD

Kumbungu Rectorate in progress

Fr. David Tengey, SVD is not only building the community at our mission at Kumbungu but also making sure that the needed infrastructures are in place. He embarked on the construction of a rectorate. The pace of the construction work is however slow due to the lack of the needed funding. It is roofed and two rooms are habitable although it has only the basic things to be able to sleep in peace. He has no problem with 'dumsor' (a Ghanaian term meaning power rationing) since he has no electricity in the house. Contributions are coming in bits whilst the community including Muslims is providing some free labour. Fr. David says your contributions are welcome to take care of the following items: Plywood for the ceiling, paint for the house, floor tiles, funds

to fence the house to protect the opened land from encroachers.



Fr. Marek with Fr Tengey, the priest in charge

Currently Mass is celebrated in the thin corridor of the rectory. About 18 -25 attend Sunday Masses; that is when schools are in session otherwise "I pick the skeleton congregation to join another outstation to celebrate the Mass. The average Sunday collection in the main station is GHc5.00 (\$1.20) and the average monthly income for the seven stations including the main station is GHc80 (\$20.00). The land is not the best for cultivation, so Fr. David has embarked on guinea fowl rearing as a way of self reliance.

According to Fr. David, Kumbungu would soon develop due to its proximity to the phase lift of the Tamale airport. "you are welcome to come and see, there is one 'missionary' room to house you and I am looking forward to your contribution", he concluded. *(Editorial note: If you would like to support Kumbungu mission please send your donation to the Province Treasury "Kumbungu Church" or call Fr. David Tengey +233 244119731 or +233 200910550)*

Fr. Antonius Hibur bids farewell to the Ghana Province



Fr. Antonius Hibur, SVD

Ordained priest in Indonesia in 1994, Fr. Antonius Hibur arrived in Ghana on 24th January 1997 and was appointed to work in Yendi. According to him before coming to Ghana, some of his people in Indonesia had no idea about Ghana and took it to be Canaan, the Promised Land.

After spending about two weeks in Accra, the then District Superior, Fr Joseph Panel Kennel came to Accra to pick him up to Yendi to be introduced to his new mission. After a brief stay in Yendi, Fr. Hibur received his assignment to Tatale but later had to go to Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (TICCS) for language learning and culture immersion for neo-missionaries. After the course which lasted about a month. He returned to his mission where he served at the parish with Fr Joseph, the then Parish Priest, who was also the district superior. It was during this period that the Yendi conflict also was ongoing and Fr. Antonio Sarto Mitakda and Fr. Gino were managing Yendi from Tatale. They were managing 37 outstations composed of Basares, Kokombas and Dagomba communities.

Since the only way to reach out to the communities is through the ability to communicate in the local language, Fr. Hibur consecrated a good time to the learning of the local languages in order to be an effective missionary. When Fr. Joseph left for further studies in Canada

in July 1999, Fr. James Arul was transferred from Chereponi to replace him as Parish Priest. Fr. Hibur continued collaborating with him as his assistant until 2002 when Fr James left Ghana for good.

Fr. Hibur was made the Acting Parish Priest until he was confirmed the substantive Parish Priest in Tatale in 2004 with Fr. George Alhassani as his assistant. He served in this capacity till 2006. At that time, Fr. Hibur was contemplating doing a refresher course at Nemi but it was rather proposed to him to partake in a formation course in the Institute of Continuous Formation (ICF) in Cape Coast which he did successfully from 2006 to June 2007. Immediately after this course, he was called upon to assist Fr. Mariusz Pacula in Gushiegu parish from July 2007 to 2008. He has also served as a member of the District council.

After serving in the north for over ten years, Fr. Antonius Hibur expressed the interest to learn the Twi language. However, this desire did not materialize immediately because of the difficulty of getting confreres to work in Yendi.

When Fr. Hibur returned from his home leave in 2012, it was proposed that he resides in the SVD House in Yendi. Meanwhile, his interest in learning the Twi language was revisited once again but instead of Twi, he was sent to the Krobo land where he worked from 2013 to 2014. The Krobo mission has not put an end to the pastoral activities of the indefatigable missionary. Once again there arose an urgent need in the Formation House and Fr. Hibur was called upon to take up the role as a formator in the St. Joseph Freinademetz Philosophy House in Tamale. He served as the

Praeses of the House until it is time to bid his farewell to the Ghana Province. According to him, he actually fixed his departure in June 2015 but the Provincial requested him to extend it to enable Fr. John Doborkoe to return from studies and take over from him. At a point in time, with the continuous postponements, his home Provincial was wondering whether Fr. Hibur would really return home as he stated in his will. But finally the time has become ripe for him to leave for good to his home province.

He has expressed his gratitude to God for enjoying a very good health for the past 18 years that he has been in Ghana and praised the proverbial Ghanaian hospitality, the generosity and the patience of the faithful. He said these attitudes the people displayed from the beginning of his mission in Ghana motivated him to stay longer in the country and to dedicate himself to his missionary service.

He described Ghana as a peaceful country and encouraged the confreres to be conscious of the need to build the province together as members of the society since the individual SVDs that make up the province. "As SVDs we should always be optimistic and we should avoid comparing ourselves to other congregations. We have enough vocation to be proud of and we need to strive in unity to achieve our missionary goals," he added. He considers it a blessing to have been appointed to Ghana. Now that he joins his home province of Rutteng, he hopes to use his missionary experience from Ghana to help in school apostolate, in a retreat centre, in formation or language learning programmes. He could also help in preparing new missionaries who are going out for mission but he does not also rule out the possibility of a parish apostolate. The Ghana Province is grateful to him and wishes him the best in his future assignments.

ST. CHARLES LWANGA PARISH, SABOBA @ 50 JUBILEE CELEBRATION!

On the 29th of November, 2015 St. Charles Lwanga Parish - Saboba in the Diocese of Yendi launched its 50th year jubilee celebration with the theme: MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TO ALL PEOPLE, THE WAY FORWARD.

The Saboba Parish was established in 1965 under the tutelage of Rev. Fr. Joseph Connolly SVD. The Parish gave birth to Sambuli Holy Cross Parish and Wapuli Holy Trinity Rectorate in the Yendi Diocese.

Together with other early missionaries such as Rev. Fr. Mike Yochim, Bill Kane, Mike Knight, Casmir Banacski, Joseph Mazur, Tommy Thomas, Francis Naduviledattu, Fred Timp, Matthias Helms and Br. John Klein-Dowel, Roman Olkowsky, Dennis Williams, Andrew Kedziora etc. all of SVD have brought about huge transformational changes both spiritually and physically to the people of Saboba and its environs.

The recent increase in the population of Ghana has had a spill-over effect on Saboba and its parishioners as well. The Saboba youth is faced with a taste for spiritual development, education, jobs, marriage and family life, guidance and counselling. In all these challenges, the Parish Priest- Rev. Fr. Sunil Rodriques SVD is leaving no stone unturned to keep the flame of Christ evangelization flickering for the salvation of his parishioners.

Bishop, rhetorically asked “how many clergies have St. Charles Lwanga Parish, Saboba produced in these fifty years of existence?” Hereafter, he underscored the need for parishioners to pray for vocations and heed to the call of God and serve in His vineyard.

Bishop Boi-Nai, unequivocally applauded the early SVD missionaries who indeed propagated the gospel of God in Saboba despite the hard times they went through.

His Lordship Most Rev. Bishop Sowah Boi –Nai, the bishop of the Yendi Diocese thereafter, launched the anniversary amidst the installation of the Parish Pastoral Council. It was on this day that the Jubilee Prayer was said, Jubilee song was sung, Jubilee T-shirts were auctioned and the program rolled out for the entire period of the celebration.

Acknowledging that day as an Advent Sunday or time of Christian waiting, His Lordship Bishop seized the occasion to underscore the essence of the coming of Christ and as Christians and for that matter children of God, there should not be fears and unnecessary worries in us and on our ways as we journey towards the kingdom of Our Lord and master saviour Jesus.

Time is inextricably linked to man and nature and therefore, requires discipline and constant preparations in whatever one does as such Christians are encouraged to be “active time waiters rather than passive time waiters” hence, the need to prepare our life and invest our time for the coming of Christ in our daily life, at Christmas or in the end time.

As followers of Christ we are bound to face certain challenges and disorders of our earthly life, nevertheless, we cannot afford to give up Christ, we got to lean unto God and continually render thanks and glory to Him in all circumstances. Believing with strong hope in the holy teaching that whatever God promises He always does and that Christ will surely come to redeem us. We simply, have to open our hearts and minds, act according to His divine directions and benefit from His holiness.

His Lordship Bishop Sowah Boi – Nai, further stressed on the recent ostentatious life style among the youth. The youth today have clouded their minds with get-rich-quick tendencies and this materialistic acquisition in life has befallen unto families and communities social menace – “sakawa” boys & girls, teenage pregnancies, abortions, drug addiction etc.

In all these difficulties and uncertainty in life and our society, we as Christians must remain faithful and trust worthy in God. We are called to serve, love fellow mankind and chart a path of holiness that will appease God and by so doing we will be preparing ourselves towards the kingdom of God.

Finally, Most Rev. Sowah Boi – Nai, left Psalm 25 as his spiritual food for the Parishioners to pray with.

All and sundry are cordially invited to the climax of St. Charles Lwanga Parish Saboba @ 50 on the 6th February, 2016.

Secularization and marketization of Christmas

More and more than before, people regardless of their social backgrounds, religion and status are yearning for the Christmas celebration. Shops are being equipped to suit the demands of the events, streets are decorated, and prices are sometimes inflated. Cultures today are being aware of the celebration, almost everywhere holidays are observed. Public places are open for celebrations. In short Christmas has been made a secular festival. However, Christmas taken out from its religious roots will lose its relevance; Christmas is not just a social festival but primarily a religious festival. The trend which Christmas has taken today cannot leave Christians indifferent. It must raise plethora of questions which seem to be overlooked by modern man. Such questions are the following: Is Christmas about giving out a gift to someone, upgrading the items on market to suit the event? Is Christmas just wishing merry Christmas for people? Is Christmas organizing public show?

The religious apathy which we are experiencing has come to win almost all the spheres of our daily lives, economic, social, and even religious. Thus, today, events even religious ones are seen by some from the secular angle.

Let us explore the field of definition to see if Christmas can be assimilated to marketization or secularization. **The marketization** in the English dictionary is defined as exposure of an industry or service to forces. Secularization refers to the historical process in which religion loses social and cultural significance. As a result of secularization the role of religion in modern societies becomes restricted. In secularized societies faith lacks cultural authority, and religious organizations have little social power. **Christmas** comes from the Old English

words *Cristesmoesse*, 'the mass or festival of Christ'. The first celebration took place in Rome about the middle of the fourth century. An analysis of terms, even a simplistic one shows an antagonism which alludes that these word cannot be welded, on one hand **marketization** and **secularization** and on the other side **Christmas**. At the heart of this welding lies a serious dichotomy between what Christmas is supposed to be and what Christmas is now.

For many people, Christmas is a time of sorrow. They don't have the extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Many are saddened at Christmas time when they think of their loved ones who will not be able to come home for various reasons. Turkey dinners may be only a wish and not a reality for some.

The celebration is moving gradually to a Godless festival. Christmas is laid bare of its religious essence. People who celebrate sometimes do not understand the meaning of what they are celebrating. Public holidays are declared and massive movements are observed in almost all parts of the world without the fundamental question of what is being celebrated. Christmas is now best celebrated in shops, streets, houses, night club. Christmas has nothing to do anymore with God and religion.

Christmas is being celebrated as cultural event that has been assimilated to cultures. The fact is that most cultures today are secular and Godless. Thus, to assimilate Christmas to such cultures implies its secularization. For example the *Florey* decisions upheld the constitutionality of a Christmas program with religious elements, the courts held that such religious elements had a secular effect. The *Florey* district court (Bogue, District Judge) gave its basis for upholding the constitutionality of the

school's new Christmas program rules: Because Christmas music with religious content has been assimilated into our culture, this Court finds that the performance of Christmas music with religious content does not constitute a religious activity *per se*. The primary effect of presenting these materials at a school Christmas assembly in accordance with Rule 3 is not to promote a religion. Therefore, Rule 3's primary effect is secular.

"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28). Christians are to wake up and claim back their feast which is being robbed of its meaning. The secular is making a serious mistake to celebrate Christmas without acknowledging the meaning surrounding it. It has to be sued by Christians in the court of love, sacrifice and repentance which are basis for the coming of Jesus into our world.

By Bruno Wensan'na, SVD
Student of CFC, Tamale

THE OVERSEAS TRAINING (OTP) PROGRAMME IN GHANA

The aim of the OTP as a part of formation

The OTP is a part of our basic formation programme. It is a time for learning, practicing and reflecting. It is a time to facilitate a process of growth on the personal, spiritual and missionary levels. The aim of the OTP is to give the young confreres the opportunity to learn missionary skills and to grow personally and religiously.

Visit www.svdghana.org to read more on the OTP in Ghana.

Interview with Fr. Patrick Kodom

I caught up with Fr. Patrick Kodom [OES] when he came home for his well-deserved holidays. The following is the interview I had with him.

Q. What ministries is the Austrian Province involved in?

The Austrian Province is involved in Mission Animation and parish work but in recent years Migrants and Refugees Ministry has become one of the Province's priorities.

Q. Recently you pursued further academic studies, what called for it, was it the nature of your apostolate?

After about 8 years of involvement in the Migrants and Refugees pastoral work it became necessary that I undertake some professional studies in this line. That is why I went to Rome to study Pastoral Theology of Human Mobility (Migration).

Q. Could you please paint the immigrant situation in Austria?

The Phenomenon of Migration is at its crucial point in the whole world. There was never a time in the world's history when so many people were on the move for economic reasons as well as wars and natural disasters. This year Austria has recorded its highest number of migrants in its history. In fact it is said that not even the first and second world wars created such a big number of migrants and refugees in Austria. It is very difficult to mention numbers since it changes almost every day. Though all migrants and refugees have difficult situations to face, it is sad to say that African migrants and refugees have extra difficulties unfortunately due to their skin colour and a whole lot of other prejudices.

For this reason the migrant ministry has various aspects. We minister to refugees in deportation camps and migrants in prisons. In all these areas unfortunately, Africans have the worse problems to face. The difficulties of Africans are serious concern for the SVDs, and one of our responses is to try and increase the number of African SVDs.

In this way prejudice is decreased because when the priest as a minister in the Austrian local community is African



Fr. Patrick Kodom [OES]

the people become conscious of what the African can offer positively to the community. Also we encourage formation of African Catholic communities which due to its vibrant nature brings life to the local Church and we SVDs are very much involved in formation of foreign language communities not only for Africans. The regular presence of the few African SVDs in schools so far is changing the mentality of children as far as relations with Africans are concerned.

One day a discriminative comment of a mother to an African yielded a response, "Mama don't forget one of my teachers is African and he is very intelligent". This came from her own daughter. This is just one example.

What is the future of the SVD in Austria in terms of personnel and ministry?

The SVD Austrian province which, come 1st May 2016 will comprise Croatia, Austria, Switzerland and France, can think of personnel only when it looks to the wider SVD world. Vocations in these countries are zero and so we can only depend on other provinces for personnel. It may be sad and interesting to know that our present Provincial is the last SVD confrere who was ordained in the province. This is just to tell of how bad the vocation situation is. The last five years have really been a success in terms of receiving mission assignment to the Austrian Province. The Province will in the future intensify its ministry to the Migrants and Refugees due to the alarming situation of the migrants in Europe.

CLIMAX OF THE YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE AT CHRISTIAN VILLAGE KUMASI 21st -23rd JANUARY, 2016

Supper: 6:00pm
Rosary Procession and welcome address: 6:45pm
22nd January, 2016
Arrival at Opoku Ware School Park and Song ministrations: 8:30am
First Talk on the theme by Bishop Fianu: 9:00am

Banquet: 19:00pm
23rd January, 2016
Morning Prayer and Mass: 07:00am
Departure:

JPIC**COORDINATOR: Fr. Peter Kabutey, SVD*****Let's promote JPIC in our parishes and institutions—coordinators charge each other***

Coordinators of the Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) recently met at Asutsuare, one of our SVD run parishes to take stock of activities of the year and also plan for the upcoming year. The two days meeting brought together four of the coordinators who reflected on the year 2015, and their joys and challenges and to see how they could surmount some of the challenges in the year 2016.

At the meeting members were generally happy at their efforts at promoting justice and peace and integrity of creation at their various places of assignment. It was however observed that much could still be done to ensure that issues of justice and peace were promoted in many of the parishes and institutions where the SVDs work, and also in some of our SVD communities.

In the year 2015, members were able to speak to individuals and groups about JPIC issues. The coordinators also organized to have an interaction with our aged confreres who have now retired from active service and are being housed in the retirement home at McCarty Hill in Accra. After the warm interactions some donations were made to the home to support the upkeep of our aged confreres.

As the year 2016 draws near, members charged each other to develop strategies at promoting justice and peace at their various places of assignment, especially as the country enters into an election period. They have again resolved to educate the public on the harmful effects of environmental pollution in the coming year and also to interact with some prisoners and “Kayayoos” in Nsawam and Accra respectively.

Fr. Daniel Odei Dankyi, SVD

BIBLE**COORDINATOR: Bro. McDaniel Acquah, SVD**

I would like to share with you the second part of the

KEY NOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE DEI VERBUM 2014

Theme: “Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained Scriptures to us?” (LK 24:32)

Two Disciples encounter Jesus on Road to Emmaus

BY MSGR. W. AMEWOWO

Disciples of Emmaus TEXT LK 24:13-35

1. In this course, Dei Verbum 2014 you will know Jesus better and be closer to Jesus Christ-the Word of God. God did not send us a Book. He sent us a PERSON – his son Jesus Christ

The facilitators will help you open the Word of God written for our salvation in the words of humans. Jesus Christ will explain and open the meaning of the Scriptures to you as he did to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. The Word of God written in the Bible is NOT for your information and file. The intention of God is that his WORD should TRANSFORM us as Jesus did for the Emmaus *talmidim*

1. In this course therefore you will deepen your knowledge of Jesus. The knowledge you will acquire or deepen ^{here is} meant for your HEARTS not for your head. We must learn to shorten the distance between our head and our heart. This is Biblical Spirituality of Life.
2. During this course you will acquire more zeal in reading the Bible every day. You shall acquire the habit or strengthen the habit of Bible reading individually and communally. The Bible should be read
 - i. Intelligently as in “Lectio” and “Meditatio” in Lectio Divina
 - ii. The Bible should be read **comprehensively** as Jesus explained starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained the passages throughout scriptures that were about himself (Lk 24:27).
 - iii. The Bible should be read, studied, loved and lived SYSTEMATICALLY

- iv. Above all the Scriptures should be read prayerfully. God speaks to us (Heb 1:1-3). Our prayer is our human response to what God is saying to us. We need to pray so that the Holy Spirit will help us to understand the Word of God.

The Vatican II Council (1962 -1965) urges all Christians to learn to know Jesus Christ by frequent reading of the Scriptures. We should acquaint ourselves with the text itself either in the **LITURGY** which is rich in Scripture or by devotional reading –LECTIO DIVINA or by **instruction** as in the Dei Verbum Course and through other suitable aids like the INTERNET on your mobile phone. The Vatican II Council says we may remember that prayer should accompany our reading of the Scriptures so that God and human beings must talk together. For we speak to God when we pray; we hear him when we read the divine sayings (DV25) It is important that you listen attentively to the teachings –to all the subject especially the kingdom of God, the Beatitudes of Jesus Lectio Divinaall of them are necessary for the fruitful understanding of the message of Christ.

3. For the course to set unquenchable fire in your life and make your hearts burn within you; I urge you to keep the rules of the course and the rules will keep you. My dear Sisters and Brothers, I wish you joy, try to grow perfect, encourage one another, have a common mind and live in peace-peace with the Creator, peace with the neighbor and peace with the creation around you and the God of love and peace will be with you (2 Cor 13:11). Let all your actions be for the good of everybody, and especially of those who belong to the household of the faith. Through reading and study of the Scriptures may the Word of God spread rapidly and be glorified; (cf 2 Thes. 3:1) and may the treasure of the revelation bequeathed to the Church fill our hearts even more fully. Just as the life of the Family of God- the Church is strengthened by frequent celebration of the Eucharist, so we may hope that the life of the Spirit will in the same way be kindled afresh by the growing reverence for God's word which endures forever and ever.(cfr DV 26)

COMMUNICATION

COORDINATOR: Fr. Rex A. Vegbey, SVD

I wish to thank the editorial team: Fr. Erasmus Norviewu-Mortty, Frt. Abraham Dzibitor, Frt. Stephen Osei Asante, Fr. Andrews Obeng and our contributors from Tamale: Frt. Martin Kotchoffa, Paul Amuzu, Anthony Lawer and all those who contributed to the Newsletter this year. I pray the Lord to give you the grace to continue to support the Newsletter. We appreciate the encouragement from our cherished readers and the articles from our confreres abroad. May the coming year bring us more wisdom to improve the Newsletter. Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with the blessings of the Lord.

LAY SPEAKERS!

PREPARE TO BE ON FIRE DURING LENT

**SVD GHANA Communications, in conjunction with the
Arnold Janssen Spirituality Centre invites LAY SPEAKERS to participate
in the Workshop**

‘DELIVERING TALKS TO BE UNDERSTOOD’

DATE: Sat. 23rd January 2016

TIME: 9.00am – 4.00pm

PLACE: Christ the King Hall

COST: GHc 50.00 (to cover the
Cost of the fully air-conditioned hall and lunch)

PLEASE CALL/WHATSAPP TO BOOK: Fr. Rex Vegbey, SVD 020 8291717 svdghanacom@yahoo.com

NB: Please bring along your old copies of Catechetical week, Laity week or any other Talks booklet for the exercises.

MISSION OFFICE

COORDINATOR: Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, SVD

I bring seasonal greetings to all from the Mission Office.

As we celebrate with the Word Made flesh let us all become the word Made flesh in our communities and Parishes and communities. Merry Christmas!

Since I will not be around for the greater part of January and the whole of February, Fr. Godwin Fiawoyi will be the point of reference in my absence.

He will distribute the lent mission fast envelopes at the end of January. Please contact him for the envelopes to help raise funds for the missions.

POSTULANTS UNDERTAKE CLEANUP EXERCISE AT SHEKINAH CLINIC

The postulants of the Saint Freinademetz House of philosophy, Tamale have undertaken a clean-up exercise at the Shekinah Clinic in Tamale. This activity which is the second of its kind at the clinic formed part of activities marking the commemoration of the 12th anniversary of the canonization of Saints Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz under the theme "Sts Arnold and Joseph, models of the religious life and missionary life". Dressed in their working gear amidst chants of songs (jamma), with their tools, postulants turned out in their numbers to weed around the clinic. The exercise took nearly two hours and was done in cheers and excitement.

The owner of the clinic, Dr. David Abdulai, who is a friend and a benefactor of the Freinademetz House was grateful to the postulants for the kind gesture exhibited. He used the opportunity to encourage postulants on the need to be united and be ready to share issues that bother them with one another or even someone they could confide in. His advice came at the backdrop of the incidents of suicide among the clergy and the religious in the Church in Ghana in recent times. Within two years the church has recorded three cases of suicide; two priests and a brother. He said these events are alarming calls for concern and attention. He therefore urged postulants not to entertain loneliness and be open to share their problems any time they fall depressed since depression is a major cause of suicide.

The Dean of the third years Brother Eric Ewusi also, on behalf of the postulants thanked Dr. Abdulai for advising them on the issue of suicide.

Other activities marking the celebration included a candle light procession that ended up with solemn vespers and the launching of the week-long celebration, an inter-class volley ball competition won by the third years, a triduum was held in honour of the two saints from Thursday to Saturday and the celebration was climaxed on Sunday. During the triduum, prayers were offered for all missionaries of the Arnoldus family and for all those in various stages of formation as well as all those supporting the mission and formandi in diverse ways.

By Paul Amuzu

St. Joseph Freinademetz House, Tamale

MAILS

Thanks very much for the information from the Ghana province. This is very satisfying for my soul. Even though I am presently in the exam week, I took my time to read from page to page. May God bless you all in the good work you are doing for the upliftment of the province. I am studying MA Psychology with specialization in Clinical Psychology. I started only January this year. Pray for me.

My regards to all.

Elorm Akpatsa, PHS

John Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana proclaimed our confrere Fr. Andrew Campbell JESUS OF GHANA. This was during a live televised launch of Government achievement book. According to the president, it was the 'Jesus of Ghana' who took him to pay a visit to the cured lepers at Weija.

WORTH REMEMBERING**January 2016**

01	Vincent Boi-Nai	Birthday
01	Abraham Dzibitor	Feast day
01	Yohanes Lengari	Birthday
02	Asiamah, Dennis	+2008
03	Vinsensius Wangge	Birthday
05	Jacobson Dey	Birthday
06	Gideon Awudi	B & Feastday
07	Akumblim Raymond	B&Feastday
07	Peter Claver Narh	Birthday
08	Yophesius Ogachi	Birthday
09	Isaac Anim Addo	Birthday
11	Martin Dumas	Birthday
11	Frederick Timp	Birthday
12	Kangwa Bwalya	Birthday
12	Josef Jud	+ 1985
13	Stephen Appiah	Birthday
14	Anthony Anala	Birthday
15	Vincent Agbeyome	Birthday
15	Tarcisius de Ruyter	+2014
15	Vincent Aarah-Bapuah	Birthday
16	Harold Rigney	+ 1980
17	Anthony Anala	Feastday
17	Victor Gbotso	Birthday
19	Marius Razafimandimby	Feast day
19	Mariusz Pacula	Feast day
20	Fabian Cofie	Feast day
20	Sabastine Sob	Feast day
20	Sebastian Sperl	Feast day
23	Lawrence Thornton	+ 2003
24	Francis Dolagbenu	Feastday
24	Edward Tetteh	Birthday
24	Jan Francizak Res	+2012
26	James O. Amankwah	Birthday
26	Stephen Domelevo	Birthday
26	Stanislaw Gergont	Birthday
26	Titus Tuoyintir	Feastday
31	Yohanes Lengari	Feastday
31	John K. Tumawu	Feast day
31	Kodzo E.A.J-B Glidoh	Feastday

February

01	Joseph Addai	Birthday
03	Nicholas Irungu	Birthday
04	Gerald Tanye	Birthday
06	Titus Tuoyintir	Birthday
08	Emil Setsoafia	Feastday
09	Tomy Kanjiramalayil	Birthday
10	Deepak Tigga	Birthday
10	Josef Glatzel	+ 2000
11	Oswald Bangfo	Birthday

13	Charles Roesslein	+ 1999
14	Gatefe, Godwin	Birthday
15	Boguslaw Berek	Birthday
16	Dionisius Kopong Ola	Birthday
19	Joseph Panabang	Birthday
19	Andrew Quaye-Foli	Birthday
20	Justin Toda	+2010
22	Peter Lampitey Forgor	Feastday
22	Titus Grawey	+ 1986
22	Leslie Hatfield	+ 1987
24	Martin Ninnang	Birthday
24	Mathias Yaadar	Birthday
24	David Schouten	+ 1993
26	Alex Awuah-Osei	Feastday
28	Oswald Bangfo	Feastday

Explosion at Adoagyiri

"At about 3pm last Wednesday as I was finishing up my nap I heard a loud noise. I was convinced it was a gas cylinder that had exploded in the kitchen only to hear that a dynamite had exploded at Paebo a quarry near Adoagyiri, Nsawam along the Adeiso road", says Fr. Wilfred D'Souza. That noise was enough scare for the whole of Adoagyiri only for the next louder blast to occur which shook the three-storey DWCCC structure and the main house to their foundations. There were broken louvre blades flying everywhere, the shut CCC chapel door was forced opened by the impact and part of the ceiling peeling off. The total cost of the damage at the centre is not immediately known. However, it is believed to cost some thousands of Cedis. The same situation was registered at the Orthopaedic Training Centre (OTC) as well as the St. Martin's Senior High Chapel and administration block.



*A bed in one of the DWCCC rooms
Covered with broken glasses*



Part of the main house

"I got off from my desk a few minutes when flying louvre blades filled my chair, I was only lucky", remarked Bro. Godwin Gatefe.

According to Mr. John Avorga the care taker of the DWCCC, there were about 100 SOS children who used the facility and left 20 minutes before the incident occurred. The Adoagyiri Parish was neither spared.

According to a radio report, the original owner of the quarry abandoned the site until recently when a new operator started using the place.

An officer from the Base and Ammunition Depot of the Ghana Armed Forces, told the IGP that their initial investigations showed that there were a total of about 27 containers filled with explosives at the quarry site and that apart from seven of them that were still intact, all the others exploded.

He said their initial investigations indicates that the explosion is suspected to have occurred as a result of a naked fire getting into contact with ammonium nitrate. Official report indicates one death and about 20 injured.

(Visit www.svdghana.org for more photos)