

SEPTEMBER 2015

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**“OUR
INSISTENCE
THAT EACH
HUMAN BEING
IS AN IMAGE
OF GOD
SHOULD NOT
MAKE US
OVERLOOK
THE FACT
THAT EACH
CREATURE
HAS ITS OWN
PURPOSE.
NONE IS
SUPERFLUOUS”**

Laudato Si §84

FROM THE PROVINCIAL'S DESK

Dear Confreres,

As you read this newsletter you will see the province is very much alive and active. Many things are going on from ordinations of our confreres, to people coming and going for various reasons, and confreres reflecting more deeply on issues of concern. There are arrivals and departures, appointments and transfers, profession of vows, dedication of churches and more. Activity is one sign of life, so all these activities are encouraging in many ways; they affirm that the province is striving to carry on its work and mission.

Activity for the sake of activity however is not what we are looking for. As Pope Francis has said in his letter announcing the *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, we have to go to “our own rich spiritual patrimony the deepest motivations for our concern” to know why we are doing all these things. Our constitutions also affirm that whatever we do must be oriented towards our primary aims: “proclaiming the Word of God to all, bringing new communities into being within the people of God, fostering their growth and promoting communion among them and with the whole Church” (c 102). To keep our activities focused on our goals and purposes requires that we constantly reflect on what we are doing and why we are doing it.

As we are preparing for our province chapter which begins on Monday 5th October, we have a province-wide opportunity to reflect on what we are doing as a province, and as individuals. As we pray and reflect and hold our local chapters we may begin to see that it may be time to let go of some places, activities, ministries that we have been involved in for many years and take on others. Not all will immediately agree on what we should let go of or what we should now take up. This requires time and effort in individual and communal discernment of where the Spirit is leading us. We need to listen to one another with respect and not only to those who agree with our position, but especially to those who see things differently. Each one of us comes to an issue with a different perspective and if we ignore or deny the perspective of the other we can make serious mistakes.

Even after all these have been done it is always painful to give something up, especially for those individuals who have been involved in it. We need to be aware of the pain of those who suffer when we let go of something, we need to listen to their pain, and do all we can to ease it. When we let go of a parish, a ministry, a residence it is not saying that those who have committed a significant part of their life to that parish, ministry, residence, etc. have failed, or that their efforts are not appreciated, or were not important. What they have done has been important and often very significant. When we have completed our task in one area however, we move on to another as St. Paul was always ready to do (Rm 15:19-20) and our constitutions say we should be prepared to do (c 217), “even after

years of service”.

As you read about the many things we are doing in the Ghana province rejoice in the good we are doing! Support those who are suffering! Be inspired to do your best! Ask the Spirit to guide us so we may effectively serve the proclamation of the Gospel!

George C. Angmor, SVD

Arrivals

- Fr. John Straathof returned from his home leave
- Fr. Deepak Tiga arrived after his deserved vacation at home.
- Fr. Henry Noordermeer arrived after seeking medical attention at home.
- Frt. Mervin Gyasie returned from DR Congo to continue his Theological studies at CFC, Tamale.
- Fr. Mathias Felber [OES] came for a short visit to witness the blessing of the St. Joseph Freinademetz Church at Ekye Amanfrom, Afram Plains, a project he initiated when he was there as the Priest-in-charge.
- Fr. Edmund Afagbegee [USW] arrived to take his vacation.
- Fr. Emmanuel Anyomi arrived for his vacation.
- Fr. Edward Tetteh [USC] is home for his home leave.
- Bro. John Bissue [GEN] was home for his home leave.
- Fr. Martin Dumas [JPN] accompanied Frt. Gideon Davordzi home for medical attention.
- Frt. Gideon Davordzi [OTP-JPN] arrived to receive medical attention.
- Fr. Patrick Kodom [OES] is home for his home leave.
- Fr. Michael Obeng Shang [COL] is home for his vacation.
- Fr. Moses Awinonya [GER] for a short visit.
- Fr. Dominic Asare [USW] for his home leave.
- Bishop-Elect Fr. Emmanuel Kofi Fianu arrived from Rome to prepare for his episcopal ordination.
- Bro. Samuel Dagadu [ROM] arrived to join his mate Bro. Affum to celebrate 25 years in vows.
- Fr Titus Tuoyintir [PAR] arrived for his homeleave.
- Fr. Emmanuel Tetteh [USC] arrived for his homeleave.
- Fr. John Doborkoe arrived after obtaining his Licentiate in Philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome.

Departure

- Fr. Mathias Felber [OES] returned to his province after a short visit.
- Fr. Alex Chandy left for Rome to be part of the Nemi programme this year.
- Fr. Moses Awinonya [GER] returned to his province after a short visit.
- Bro. John Bissue [GEN] left after his holidays.
- Fr. Edmund Afagbegee [USW] left for his province after his holidays.
- Fr. Martin Dumas [JPN] left after a very short trip. He arrived safely.
- Fr. Phaniel Agudu departs for Louvain [NEB] to pursue Anthropological studies.
- Fr. Joseph Anorkwah [GER] returned to his province after his vacation.

Appointments and Transfers

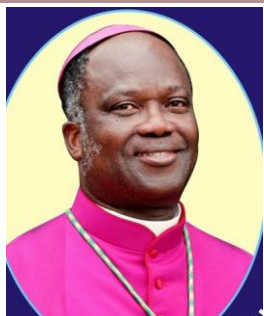
- Fr. Lawrence Kponor is appointed to St. Maria Gorretti Parish, Battor as an Assistant Parish Priest.
- Fr. Daniel Odei Dankyi is appointed as the acting Priest-in-Charge of St. Dominic's Parish, Adweso.
- Fr. Eugene Asante is appointed to Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Kwahu- Tafo as assistant Parish Priest.

Pray for our sick

- Bro James Djadoo is still in hospital at Battor.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF VOWS CELEBRATION OF REV. BROS. EMMANUEL AFFUM AND SAMUEL DAGADU ON 21ST OF SEPTEMBER 2015 AT ARNOLD JANSSEN SPIRITUALITY CENTRE AT 9.30 AM PROMPT. YOU ARE INVITED.

All is set for Fr. Fianu's consecration as Bishop-elect of Ho



Fr. Emmanuel Fianu, SVD

All roads lead to Ho on Saturday the 3rd of October 2015 at the Jubilee Park for the consecration of our confrere Fr. Emmanuel Kofi Fianu. According to the organisers on the ground the procession would begin at 9.45am for the Mass to begin at 10.00am prompt. The principal consecrator is His Eminence Peter Cardinal Appiah Turkson. He would be assisted by His Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Most Rev. Jean Marie Speich and Most Rev. Francis A. K. Lodonu, Bishop of Ho.

The MCs of the day are Frs. Jesse Amedzi and Prosper Kwaku and the commentators would be Frs. Vincent Kwame Owusu, SVD and Evaristus Amegadze.

All vehicles with stickers are to park at the House of Chiefs and all other cars are to go to the Holy Spirit Church car park; there would be security personnel to direct vehicular movements.

Vestments would be provided for concelebrating priests and concelebrating priests would vest at the regional house of chiefs

If you wish to sleep overnight please report at the Catholic Secretariat, Ho and you should inform Fr. Dieu Donne on 0208824428 by the 18th of September for a place to be reserved for you.

Lunch would be served at the Bishop Konings Guest House behind the Secretariat and coupons would be given at the Jubilee Park.

Among the special guests expected are Fr. Robert Kisala the Vice Superior General; John Mahama the President of the Republic of Ghana who was invited expressed the interest of being present but unfortunately he would be out of the country on the said date but he would send a representative.

Fr. Fianu until his election was the Secretary General of the SVD with his office in Rome. He was ordained in 1985. His SVD classmates are Frs. Andrew Quaye-Foli, Gabriel Sosu [ZIM] and Bishop Kumordji, Bishop of Donkorkrom apostolic vicariate, Ghana. He hails from Tegbi in the Keta-Akatsi Diocese.

Three received Mission Cross



R-L: Frs. Eugene Asante, Vincent Akpah, Emmanuel Adjetej decorated with their respective mission cross. Flanked by Fr. Godwin Fiawoyi, (extreme left) and Fr. George Angmor, Prov. Superior (extreme right)

In a simple but an impressive ceremony, Fr. George Angmor, the Provincial Superior performed the rite of 'Mission Cross' at the SVD Guest House Chapel during the morning Mass of 7th September. The three, Frs. Eugene Asante, Emmanuel Adjei Adjetej and Vincent Akpah who were ordained last July were each decorated with a cross.

Reflecting on the readings of the day Fr. George said, "Jesus came to achieve the mission of bringing the word and liberation to the people." He added that in doing so Jesus faced oppositions. "So as missionaries we should be ready to face opposition; we should not be deterred from those difficulties. Rather, we should champion the value of the faith we profess." He concluded that we are all called to fulfil the mandate of Christ to spread the word. "When we are faced with challenges we should look to Christ and his cross for strength." He added.

Fr. Asante has since reported to his mission in Kwahu Tafo, Ghana, and Fr. Emmanuel Adjetej departed to his mission province of Togo-Benin. Fr. Vincent Akpah is still processing his travel documents for his mission in Papua New Guinea.

Priestly Ordination at St. Dominic Parish, Koforidua

On 18th July 2015, three SVD deacons Rev. Vincent Agbeyome Akpah, Rev. Eugene Bruce Konuah Asante, and Rev. Emmanuel Adjei Adjetey, were ordained as priests. The ordination took place at St. Dominic Parish- Adweso in the Koforidua Diocese by Most Rev. Gabriel Edoe Kumordji, SVD, Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Donkorkrom.

This is the second time that SVD priestly ordination has taken place at St. Dominic Parish- Adweso. The very first one was in 2003 during the ordination of Rev. Frs. Stephen Dogodzi, Cyprian Kuupol and Marcel Kakraba Kwashie.

In his homily, Most Rev. Gabriel Edoe Kumordji, SVD, stated that the day was a great day which will always be remembered by the candidates, their parents, the Society of the Divine Word and indeed all gathered there.

According to the bishop, the call of the three deacons could be likened to the call of the apostles; very unique and specific in the sense that their names were mentioned and they answered individually, signifying their readiness and willingness to carry out the mission of Christ.

The bishop challenged the candidates to be simple, humble, prayerful, community minded and above all be pastors to all especially the poor and the less privileged.

He further pointed out that, it is very challenging to be a priest in this era where secularism as it were is on the increase. He was however quick to add that if they (the candidates) will unite themselves to Christ who is the vine, (Jn. 15:5), they will be able to rise above difficulties and challenges that may come their way.

Rev. Fr. John Asiedu, the Prefect of Common Formation Centre Tamale, presented the candidates for the ordination.



The three soon after the imposition of hands and investiture.

In his vote of thanks, Rev. Fr. Vincent Agbeyome Akpah, SVD on behalf of his other two brothers expressed his gratitude to God and to all those who have made it possible for them to reach the altar of the Lord.

In attendance were Most Rev. Joseph Afrifa-Agyekum, the Bishop of Koforidua Diocese, Rev. Fr. George Clement Angmor, SVD, the Provincial of Ghana Province, Rev. Fr. Peter Kobla Accorley, SVD Provincial of Togo-Benin Province, priests and religious, seminarians, the friends of the SVD, parents, relatives and well-wishers.

Rev. Fr. Vincent Agbeyome Akpah, SVD, has been appointed to Papua New Guinea, Rev. Fr. Eugene Bruce Konuah Asante, SVD is appointed to Ghana while Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Adjei Adjetey, SVD is appointed to Togo.



During the litany

Fr. Eugene Asante celebrates Thanksgiving Mass

Fr. Eugene in his sparkling white alb and adorned with colourful beads around his neck and wrist waved his white handkerchief from an open pick-up in a long procession amid drumming, singing and dancing that started at about nine in the morning. The procession took about an hour to reach the church premises for the Mass to begin at the St. Dominic Parish, Adweso..

At the church, the acting Priest-in-charge, Rev. Fr. Daniel Denkyi welcomed all to the first Eucharistic celebration of Fr. Eugene Asante, SVD. Rev. Fr. Eugene then took over and continued the celebration singing and chanting most parts of the Mass. Fr. Andrews Obeng, SVD who in 2002/2003 had his pastoral year at the Parish was the preacher of the day.

Fr. Andrews pointed out to Fr. Eugene three ways that he could demonstrate that he is called.

Firstly, Fr. Obeng asked Fr. Eugene not to administer the sacraments just because the church has asked that it should be administered; for if that happens, then he will become a functionary priest. Rather, he should administer the sacraments with passion so that it will have an impact on the faithful.

Secondly, the homilist advised Fr. Eugene to be passionate in his interpersonal relationship with his parishioners outside the administration of the Sacraments. For instance he should try to find out where they live and to be aware of their bad times and their good times to give them the necessary pastoral support.

He further impressed upon him to demonstrate a high sense of compassion in his relationship with his community members since he will be staying in an SVD community. "Do not use the pulpit to chastise your confrere when there is a misunderstanding in the community", he emphasised. In addition, he said compassion should move him to go out of his comfort zone to help the other confrere who is in a challenging situation. He should also show concern for his staff: the cook, the watchman, the laundry man etc, since they are also part and parcel of his ministry.

To the congregation, Fr. Andrews asked that they should also be compassionate to Fr. Eugene spiritually by constantly and consistently praying for him and to give him concrete feed backs and support his ministry and projects.



Rev. Fr. Eugene Asante, SVD.

Frt. Stephen Nyantey

FR. EMMANUEL ADJEI ADJETEY, SVD CLEBRATES THANKSGIVING MASS AT ST. ANNE CATHOLIC CHURCH, TESHIE

At exactly 7:45am the newly ordained religious priest was given a rousing welcome by the Parish Pastoral Council, Priests, Religious, Seminarians, Parishioners, the church choir, Family members, and other relations with beautiful and symbolic presentations of water and a flower bouquet amidst singing, drumming and dancing.

Fr. Emmanuel Adjei Adjetei, SVD originates from Teshie and grew up in this parish. There were nine concelebrating priests and a religious brother. The Arnoldus Family was well represented to support their confrere in this celebration.

There were six SVDs, five SVD seminarians and an SSPS sister. The whole celebration was in the context of a week-long celebration of the dedication and elevation of St. Anne Catholic

Church, Teshie, into a Parish.

This parish was begun in 1952 by the late Mr. Augustus Ahia Kwei and Fr. R. Derrick, SVD and has grown to be what it is today. It will later be dedicated to SS. Joachim and Anne.

In his homily, Fr. Samuel Adu, SVD encouraged all the faithful and especially the newly ordained priest to build formidable Christian relationship each single day in their lives based on God, with others, and with self.

It was all joy during the Eucharistic celebration as the room was charged with powerful and inspiring music from the choir who sang so beautifully. Family members, PPC, Societies and groups in the church as well as individuals made various presentations to the newly ordained priest Fr.



FR. EMMANUEL ADJEI ADJETEY, SVD

Emmanuel.

The celebration was crowned with 'item 13' to refresh all who were present.

THANKSGIVING MASS OF REV. FR. VINCENT AGBEYOME- AKPAH, SVD

With a procession amidst drumming, singing and dancing, Rev. Fr. Vincent Agbeyome- Akpah, SVD, was given a rousing welcome in the Cathedral Garden with a presentation of Flower Bouquet by a little girl.

Fr. Filton Mensah, the Cathedral Administrator gave a word of welcome after which Fr. Vincent led the procession to the Grotto and presented the flower to 'Mother Mary'. The Mass took place in the Holy Spirit Cathedral, Accra and was presided over by Fr. Vincent and concelebrated by 9 priests – 5 religious and 4 diocesans priests.

In his homily, the preacher, Very Rev. Fr. John Louis exclaimed that he had no doubt that Fr. Vincent's vocation is a genuine one. He said, "Having graduated as a Pharmacist, practised and joined the Pharmaceutical Council, and the fact



of being the only son of his parents, and Fr. Vincent still decided to leave all these securities behind to embrace religious and priestly life is an indication of a true call." Fr. Louis dwelled on the theme "**A Good Shepherd.**" He gave Fr. Vincent a slogan: 'Shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me'. He asked him to be identified by this slogan any time he addressed his flock.

Fr. John Louis enumerated five qualities of a good shepherd; courageous, selfless, caring, vigilant and patient which

he asked Fr. Vincent to emulate.

According to Fr. Louis, besides living the Vows of Poverty, Obedience and Chastity, there is a constant sacrifice to respond to the sick and being available to the flock by visiting them and praying with and for them. Fr. Vincent was also challenged by the homilist to be patient, vigilant and constantly looking for the lost sheep.

He admonished Fr. Vincent to always prepare well before celebrating the Eucharist. Just as wrong prescription by a pharmacist can lead to the death of a patient, so also bad preparation for liturgical celebration can lead to "Spiritual Death" of the faithful. He asked him to do his work with humility and celebrate the Eucharist worthily and with dignity.

Fr. Emmanuel Makayie

14 YOUNG MEN PROFESSED FIRST VOWS

On Sunday July 5th, 2015, fourteen (14) novices made their first commitment by professing the three evangelical counsels: Consecrated Chastity, Apostolic Obedience and Evangelical Poverty, according to the Constitution of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) at St Peter's Senior High School's chapel, Nkwatia-Kwahu. The colorful profession was made before the Provincial Superior of Ghana, Fr. George Clement Angmor, SVD and in the presence of friends, family members and well-wishers. They are from six different countries namely Ghana, Togo, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Madagascar.

Indeed after a canonical year of novitiate which "provides a basic introduction to the following of Christ as outlined in

The newly professed with the concelebrating priests



the life and spirituality of the SVD as well as in their Constitutions," these young men were able to mature and clarify their call to serve the Lord within this particular religious congregation.

With this bold step, they have also become spokespersons of God.

The main celebrant, Fr. Angmor, in his homily exhorted the young men to be true and trust worthy prophets of God since it is He who has chosen them in spite of all their human weaknesses. He further challenged them to be calm and to remain men of prayer, humble, simple, just and above all transparent in their daily dealings with God's people. Difficulties and challenges will surely come their way, he stressed, but through well-built prayer life they will be able to withstand them all.

A fraternal sharing of sumptuous and delicious meal put an end to that memorable day.

Prior to this wonderful event, twenty-one (21) young men were officially accepted in a private ceremony of investiture, to begin their one-year novitiate program with the Society of the Divine Word at Nkwatia-Kwahu.

Fr. Martin Kotchoffa



Bishop Kumordji starting the rite

St. Joseph Freinademetz Church, Ekye

It was a big celebration for the people of Ekye the 'gateway' to the Afram Plains when the new church St. Joseph Freinademetz was dedicated on the 19th July. The rites were performed by the Bishop of the Donkorkrom Vicariate Most Rev. Gabriel Kumordji, SVD. Among the concelebrating priests were Frs. George Angmor, Provincial Superior, Alex Chandy, the Priest-in-charge, Fr. Victor Gbortsu, the assistant priest, Fr. Mathias Felber, former priest-in-charge and the initiator of the project who came from Austria to be part of the celebration.



The old chapel



The new chapel



The interior of the chapel

Fr. Felber gave a brief history of the new church acknowledging those local and international donors who in diverse ways contributed to build the church. He estimated the capacity of the church to be 450 excluding the sanctuary. Fr. Alex Chandy who took over from Fr. Felber and continued the project from the roofing level in terms of the supervisory and mobilization of funds, expressed his gratitude to those who worked hard to complete the church. A special mention was made of Mr. Bernhard Kaestle who came from Germany to contribute free of charge his professional carpentry skills to complete the project. Not only that but Bernhard also organized funds to procure some materials for the project. His grandfather Josef Baur donated an amount of 35,000 cedis towards the project.

According to Fr. Chandy apart from some Ghanaian locals who were generous to help, some confreres like Fr. Dreyer contributed the tiles; the paint was sponsored by Fr. Andy Campbell whilst Fr. Schilitz helped with the window slabs. Fr. Mastan on his part helped in the mobilisation of some funds. "The contribution of Fr. Felber was immeasurable", he added. "The SVD donated the tabernacle; in all I am grateful to all who helped to finish the church", he concluded. In his sermon Bishop Kumordji explained that the rite he came to perform was a dedication not a blessing like that of a church in an outstation. During the dedication, 52 members of the church received confirmation. Relating it to the gospel of the day, the Bishop said, "we need shepherds and these confirmandi would be the shepherds to strengthen the church."

It was a celebration for all the churches in Ekye who were present to grace the occasion. The Chief Imam was also present. About GHc2, 000 (\$500) was raised on that day.

Perpetual Vows: Friday 13th November at CFC in Tamale

Diaconate ordination: Sunday 15th November at SVS, Tamale

Fr. Straathof honoured by Star of the Sea Parish

“Fr. John Straathof deserved to be honoured by the Star of the Sea Parish; and that was just what we did; I believe it was a great moment for him”, remarked Fr. Charles Ackon, the Parish Priest. This great celebration took place at the Parish at Dansoman a suburb of Accra and the Holy Mass was presided over by Fr. Straathof.

When he was the Parish Priest of St. Margaret Mary, Dansoman in Accra, Star of the Sea was an outstation under his care, he paid a special attention to the latter preparing it to become a Parish one day. Not only that, Fr. Filton-Mensah the diocesan priest who was assigned to assist at St. Margaret Mary Parish was trained well by Fr. Straathof to manage a Parish. It was no wonder that when the Star of the Sea was erected as a rectorate, the Bishop was confident to appoint Fr. Straathof's assistant Fr. Filton-Mensah as the first priest-in-charge. The parishioners of Star of Sea commented to me that the hardworking Fr. Filton-Mensah clearly demonstrated that he had undergone the tutelage of Fr. Straathof.

Present at the celebration were the Parish Priest Fr. Charles Ackon and his assistant Fr. Gabriel and our confrere Br. Pius Agyemang.

In his sermon, Fr. Gabriel Etienne the assistant parish priest said that any family that forgets what their father has done for them is an ungrateful family. “Today, we are reaping the fruits of the seed that Father [Straathof] sowed,” he added. He said because Fr. Straathof was interested in societies, he introduced the Kofi and Ama day groups so that everyone could belong to a group. “This brought about solid unity that helped developed the church leading to the name ‘Miracle Church’, we are grateful to him”, Fr. Etienne concluded.



Fr. Straathof (middle) enthroned as “Igwe”

One of the oldest parishioners, Mr. Sarfo who worked with Fr. Straathof when he was the parish priest of Margaret Mary presented a citation on behalf of the church to him for building on the foundation of the early SVD Missionaries like Frs. van der Wurf and Marek Kowalik.

Some gifts were given to Fr. Straathof from various people including the Nigerian community who gave him an authority garment of the chief and enthroned him the ‘Igwe’, (meaning a chief among the Ibo of Nigeria). This was done to give a place to the Nigerian community whose powerful presence cannot be missed out at the Star of the Sea Parish like many of the Parishes of Accra.

In his response Fr. Straathof recalled how six months after his ordination he was sent to Ghana and has been in Ghana since then. “In Holland they were praying for priests and practically there were priests in every family”, he said, “The situation has changed drastically and only old people go to church”, he added. He appealed to the people to pray for vocation to get more Missionaries to go and preach in other countries like his country Holland.

Obviously there was a lot to eat sponsored by the Parish.

MISSION OFFICE

When the question is asked, “who is responsible for mission animation or mission awareness creation in a province?” Obviously, all fingers would point to the mission secretary. It is true though but some may disagree. How then do we ascertain the truth of the above question?

To find the correct answer to the above question, let us go to our constitutions. “Wherever we work, we always keep in mind that we are missionaries: we seek to keep alive the universal Church's awareness of its missionary responsibility, promote and prepare vocations for missionary service and support the missionary cause of the Church both spiritually and materially” (c 102.2).

COORDINATOR: Fr. Stephen Dogodzi

I think the quoted constitutional provision gives the right answers. In effect those who were thinking that mission animation and creation is reserved only to the mission secretary are refreshed by this quote. I would encourage all confreres to embark on a vigorous preparation of their parishioners and communities for mission Sunday 2015. This year's celebration falls on the 18th of October and as part of activities marking the day, we shall promote the sale of stickers for this mission Sunday. Every confrere should try to be involved in the sale to create mission awareness among our parishioners and all those we are engaged with.

BIBLE MINISTRY

COORDINATOR: Br. McDaniel Acquaaah

The following are excerpts from the statement that was issued at the end of this year's refresher course:

INTRODUCTION:

We, the participants of Dei Verbum, Ghana graduates of the year groups 2000 to 2014 met at the Divine Word Catholic Conference Centre, Adoagyiri in the Diocese of Koforidua, for a five-day refresher course under the theme: “**Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church: (50 years of Dei Verbum)**” from 31st August to 4th September, 2015.

We numbered 23 in all from Arch/Diocese of Cape Coast, Accra, Obuasi, Damongo, Navrongo-Bolgatanga, Sunyani and Donkorkrom Vicariate.

We were put into four groups namely: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

During the course, we were refreshed on the following topics:

- Bible Facilitators Seminar (BFS)
- The New Evangelisation (spreading the joy of the Gospel)
- The Role of Women in the Bible



The procession marking the opening of the course

We also had the chance to report and share experiences on what we had been using the skills acquired within the different years in the Christian faith and in the service of the church.

These took the form of presentations, discussions, group assignment, group sharing and open forum.



The participants

Some insights gained

After 50 years of Dei Verbum in the whole wide world and 15 years in Ghana:

1. We have proclaimed and shared the Word of God
2. We have listened and lived the Word of God
3. We have celebrated the Word of God
4. We have protected the Word of God
5. We have formed and strengthened Small Christian Communities
6. We have seen the need for the Bible to be translated into the various local languages of the people of God
7. We have gained more insight in Bible Sharing and Group Participation.
8. We have been strengthened to renew our commitment to study, live and share the Word of God
9. We have gained more skills in facilitating through self-discovery communication and better leadership skills

10. We have been reminded to renew our commitment to the new Evangelisation process.

RESOLUTIONS

Having deliberated on the above insights, we have resolved to:

1. Continue to proclaim the Word of God.
2. Continue with the Bible Sharing in the Societies and Small Christian Communities.
3. Continue to witness our faith through our personal experiences.
4. Evangelize all cultures and races.
5. Make good use of modern technology in spreading the Word of God.
6. Train more facilitators to aid in the Bible Sharing groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We also recommend that:

- a. The Word of God should be translated into our local languages.
- b. Bible sharing at all societal meetings in the Church.
- c. Bible sharing at all Catholic families and Institutions.
- d. More pastoral agents (catechists/prayer leaders, lectors, etc.) should be encouraged to participate in Dei Verbum Ghana programs for the building of Small Christian Communities in all Arch/Diocese in Ghana

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/ GRATITUDE

We thank God for the immense blessings, presence and the apostolate of the SVDs in the

service of the Word of God.

We also thank the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference for their support.

We duly acknowledge the various organisations and donor agencies in the Church that have been very supportive.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the following:

- National Commission for Biblical Apostolate
- SVD Ghana Province
- Arch/Dioceses, Vicariate, Parishes and individuals
- Facilitators
- The Dei Verbum Team

At the closing Mass, Fr. Joseph Tabase, of Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese and the Biblical coordinator of the Bawku deanery reflected on the theme "make disciples of every event". Touching on the Gospel of the day, he said it was a double coincidence as the apostles were called to go on a mission. In the same vein St. Gregory whose memorial fell on the day was also called and he abandoned his aristocratic life to go on a mission. The emphasis is that we can bring transformation in our daily events. Sharing his experiences, he recalled an old Muslim lady who at a ripe age of over 100 years became a catholic because he was visited by the Catholic priest. The Bible therefore should reflect in our lives. Commenting on the programme, Peter D. K. Piuuor, secretary to the Domongo diocesan catechists Association and a coordinator of the Renewal Group of Christ the King, Tinga said he was in doubt as to how the course was going to be but at the end of it, he was very much touched and hopes to use the knowledge acquired to touch others lives. According to Martin Amalitinga from Navrongo Bolga diocese " the programme has been very inspiring and it is going to help me as a prayer leader and. a catechist.

Mary Asigbetse Adugu from Mary Help of Christians, Comm25, Tema, said the programme was very refreshing, educative and inspiring. She said "the programme was handy especially for me as a leader in a new community where I would use the knowledge acquired to help the catechumens to understand the Word of God and to correct the wrong notion that Catholics do not read the Bible."

COMMUNICATION OFFICE

COORDINATOR: Fr. Rex A. Vegbey

At the last AFRAM coordinators meeting in South Africa, an Action Plan was generated by the Communication coordinators. The first on the list is ***"Each PRM should identify a media platform(s) accessible to confreres and the general public (for example: newsletter, blog, website, social media etc) to convey news, biblical reflections and other mission information. This could be done in collaboration with the other dimensions' Coordinators."***

In our province, some of these means of communication are already being employed to disseminate information to confreres and to the general public. Although the Action Plan is calling for the use of online tools to disseminate information, so far the more effective way in our province seems to be the use of phone calls to confreres; some confreres still have difficulty in sending or accessing SMS or text messages on their device.

So far 58 confreres are on the Province whatsapp group and the majority access it for information. E.mail access is still a problem in some of the SVD areas. Whatsapp seems to be an effective tool at the moment as it does not need much Bandwith to receive and send texts which many of the Mobile Phone Providers are able to give. We may have to consider for now the use of Whatsapp as the preferred tool for confreres information within the province. You are invited to join the group if you have not done that yet.

The abuses of over emphasizing Religious Liberty

The abuse of religious liberty in recent times is very alarming. I recall some horrible stories circulating on social media where some so called “men and women of God” (MWG) were involved. Some of these MWG, according to the stories stand on worshipers for instance to preach the Word of God. Some ask women to come to church without under wear and that when they sit in church they should open their legs in a manner that the “Spirit” will have an access into their bodies through their private parts. Others give people concoctions mixed with their (MWG) blood to drink in order to effect healing or exorcism. People are stripped naked in the name of healing and exorcism, just to mention a few. Interestingly, almost all these stories that have come to my knowledge are reported to have taken place in Africa. One would have thought that these events were the characteristics of the Middle Ages. So why are we still experiencing them in some parts of the globe in this postmodern world? Certainly, Christianity and Christians are at times hated because of some of these abuses.

Interestingly, these MWG and some of their followers resent any attempt to curb these abuses. They see such an action as infringement on their religious liberty or freedom of worship. Some argue that the constitutions of their countries of abode allow and support freedom of worship. But does religious liberty mean no control of religious beliefs or practices that are detrimental to peace, dignity and wellbeing of the human person? Can't the right to religious liberty be restricted? To seek answers to these questions, first let us remind ourselves of what the Church says about the right to religious liberty. The Church via the Second Vatican Council, in *Dignitatis Humanae* teaches that:

The human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and

of any human power, in such ways that no one is to be forced to act in a The human person has a right to religious freedom.

This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such ways that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits. [#2]

The stress here should be put on what the Church terms “within due limits”. Thus “within due limits” is situational.

My understanding of the Church's declaration is that religious liberty can be restricted and controlled when it is abused. Take for example, when the practice of my religion and religious beliefs obscures public peace and wellbeing, when it runs counter to the natural moral law then it is justified when I am asked or coerced not to practice my religious liberty. The fact is the public moral good must always be protected.

From the aforementioned, we can argue that the stress on religious liberty is good but it is not good enough. Religious liberty is at times clouded in the danger of the principles of relativism. We should not make a mistake here of taking relativism for pluralisms. The two are entirely different.

Relativism is a philosophical ideology or theory that opines that conceptions of truth and moral values are not absolute but are relative to the person or group of persons who hold them. In short, it is the denial that there are certain kinds of universal truths. Pluralism on the other hand, stresses the multiplicity of means to attain the final universal good. Thus it emphasizes diversity rather than homogeneity, multiplicity rather than unity, difference rather than sameness.

This brief clarification aside, I reason that in our quest to emphasize our right to freedom of worship, we should rather enshrine and encase our claim in the natural moral law than in religious liberty. With the natural moral law, the authenticity of religious practices is measured against what is morally right and correct and not on the basis of the right to our religious liberty. The natural moral law cuts across all religions and societies. It is to the universal moral law that all people irrespective of their religious affiliations, political and social ideologies must conform their activities and beliefs.

I do not intend here to go into the argument of relativism and the question of the existence of God. However, allow me to briefly note that some philosophers question the very foundation of the natural moral law. They anchor their argument in Kant's critique of the traditional proof of the existence of God. These people mistakenly opine that since the source of the natural moral law is God whose existence is shrouded in metaphysics and for that matter cannot be proven by human reason, the natural moral law therefore cannot command our obedience. For them, the only law that commands our obedience is the law that the human person via reason gives to himself. This ideology is what unfortunately, I think, has degenerated into the pseudo “good” of relativism that is plaguing our world today.

It is therefore our responsibility as SVD's and Catholics in general to do more to help sensitize, educate and correct the erroneous conception of what I call the “pseudo absolutism of religious liberty”. As much as I acknowledge and agree that each one of us has a role to play in this exercise of sensitization and education, I call on the coordinators of our four characteristic dimensions and those in mainstream education ministry to take an active role in this exercise since these abuses are rooted in poverty and ignorance.

Benjamin Asare, SVD, (Louvain Belgium)

St Vincent College of Education, Yendi, takes off

Join us train effective Rural Teachers for Ghana

The SVD, in our quest to contribute to the academic development of the people of Yendi helped in building schools among which is the Saboba Technical School which trains young people in different skills. There are many basic schools dotted throughout the district. Getting qualified teachers to staff these schools is a challenge because the district by nature is a difficult area due to its rampant conflicts. This lack has contributed to the low performance of the children at their final exams to enable them cross over to the second cycle institutions which leads to school dropouts in the district. To address this issue, Most Rev. Vincent Sowah BOI-NAI, SVD, the Bishop of Yendi and I teamed up in 2011 and with the support of some friends and benefactors, including Mr. Francis Leong of Perth Archdiocese Catholic Mission Office to set up a Teacher Training College in Yendi to train primarily locals to feed the schools in the area.

The efforts of these pioneers were boosted by the generous support and contribution of many others, almost exclusively from Australia. These comprise our own SVD Congregation in Australia, and a few Catholic Parishes and Schools in Perth, Western Australia.



Front view of the classroom block



The caterpillar at work levelling the grounds for the take-off in October

Today, St Vincent College of Education has not only constructed a beautiful three large lecture halls and four offices with lavatories but has just successfully negotiated its formal partnership with the Ghana Ministry of Education and ready to admit students, come October 2015.

Presently, the College has taken delivery of a 40 footer container of educational items (including, 100s of refurbished laptops, printers, photocopiers, and projectors) from its friends in Perth, Australia, and another 20 footer container of educational goods, also from Perth. The College will thus, have average office equipment as well as sufficient classroom furniture to cater for more than 100 students, who are to be admitted this October to begin their teacher trainee program.

The Ghana Government through its urban roads department has built a decent and robust bridge over the stream that crosses the path to the College campus, and a new gravel road is being constructed presently to link the college with the main Yendi to Tamale (the Regional capital) road. Further, the Ghana Government has just published the tender for bidding for the construction of an Administrative block complex, a two-storey students' dormitory and a quarters for the Principal. Further, the Ministry of Education has delivered 100 metallic student beds and mattresses to the college for our students.

However, we still have some challenges while we prepare to take off formally this October.

1. All aluminium framed glass doors have been fitted nicely, but we are still seeking funding to complete the purchase and installation of remaining aluminium framed glass windows.
2. We are partitioning each of the three large lecture halls into two, thus, enabling us to cater for the most essential administrative and teaching and learning spaces prior to our October reopening. A few new doors and windows for the additional office spaces must be created and fitted with aluminium framed doors and windows, as well.
3. We need to also mechanise the borehole water donated to the College by the Dagbon Regent, his Royal Highness, Kampa Kuya Na Abdulai Andani.
4. Connecting the college campus with electricity and with a few outside security lights, remains a major challenge before the academic year starts.

The Catholic Diocese of Yendi continues to express its sincere appreciation and gratitude to all its numerous friends and generous partners who support its Yendi rural Teachers training project. It appeals once again to any SVD confrere in and outside Ghana who wishes to support this venture to do so through the SVD Ghana Province Treasurer.

Erasmus Norviewu-Mortty, SVD

“SEKAN”

Sekan is an expression in Tok-Pisin which simply means a ‘handshake,’ i.e. to shake hands with someone. However, *sekan* can take on different meanings depending on the circumstance and the context. For example it could mean acceptance, or welcome, or thanksgiving etc. On special occasions when I visit a community for a celebration, there is often a *sekan* as a sign of appreciation by the community.

Once I was invited by the Legionaries of Sts. Cyril & Methodius Parish, Mikarew, to their Acies meeting for one-day recollection and renewal of their legionary promise. The Legionaries came from all the four praesidia of that parish. I gave them a spiritual input on the implications of the ‘*fiat*’ of our Blessed Lady for their duties and commitment to the Legion of Mary. Then, as usual, there was time for them to visit the Lord in the sacrament of Reconciliation. This was followed by the celebration of the Eucharist. During the Eucharistic celebration, the Legionaries had the opportunity to renew once more their allegiance to the Blessed Virgin Mary in these words: “My Queen and my Mother, I am all yours and all that I have is yours.” At the end of the celebration, there was *bung kaikai* on the parish premises. It was time for interaction and sharing of food and drink. Then after, it was time for *sekan*, i.e. the Legionaries want to show their appreciation.

As the saying goes in Papua New Guinea, “we don’t only say ‘thank you,’ but we do ‘thank you’ as well.” Thus, *sekan* is their way of doing thank you. Here, I was invited to stand up from where I was sitting among the people. Then the presidents of each praesidium took turns to come forward to render a few words of gratitude and then to present what they had brought as their gift. The items presented consisted mainly of the produce from their garden. Special among



Fr. in the middle holding the buai or beetle nut with the people

the items was the *buai* or beetle nut which I am holding in the picture. The *buai* is highly valued because of its social and economic values.

The real significance of *sekan* is relationship. That is, before I was only an ‘outsider’ to the parish Community, but now, I have assumed a new relationship with the people; I have become one of their own. I am no longer an outsider. In essence, they are my new family. Thus, this simple gesture has a profound meaning on person’s relationship with the rest of the community. It is also a way of receiving new members into the community.

Relationship defines almost every aspect of the daily lives of the people – social, economic and political. Relationship also provides a sense of security. A person’s achievement is not so much depended on his or her merits as on his or her relationship with the rest of the community. This is how serious one’s relationship with his or her community can be. With this understanding, any community I visit, their *sekan* means a lot to me and for my work among them as a religious missionary.

Eric Ankamah, PNG

MEMORIAL DAY 2015

TUESDAY 3RD NOVEMBER, 2015 AT 9.30 AM AT NSAWAM

MAILS

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MAILS

Receive warm greetings from Brazil. I am fine here and preparing my bag for the next mission outreach. After finishing the study of the Portuguese language in Sao Paulo in the Central province, I am doing my pastoral in a Parish in the State of Rondonia in the north-western part of Brazil. Rondonia is one of the deprived areas in Brazil. Most of the inhabitants depend on agriculture and live very simple lifestyle. The region is predominantly Christian but there are also few indigenous religious groups in the villages and rural communities. This time of the year is extremely hot and the municipality where we work has not experienced any rain for the past three months. The heat really leaves many people uncomfortable and restless.

In the parish, we are three SVD confreres in the community. Fr Irénée Dossou from Togo is the Parish Priest and Fr Manokarados is his assistant. There are also three Franciscan sisters who help in the pastoral activities of the parish. As an OTP student, I assist the pastoral team in the various parish programmes. More directly however, I accompany closely the Family

apostolate, the Pastoral Communication (PASCOP), the Charismatic Renewal (CCR), vocation promotion and the visit to the sick. As part of the Family apostolate, I do home-to-home visitation where I spend more time with families sharing in their joys and challenges, listening to their problems and praying with them.

The objective of these visitations is to renew the hopes and the expectations of the family life, assist parents and their children relive the joy of family life and bring the assurance of the Gospel to the homes. Since fifty three of the fifty nine Basic Christian Communities that make up the parish are located in rural areas, I spend most of my time out of the comfort of the city. I normally spend a week or two in very far and remote communities out of coverage areas and stay in families where I engage in my apostolate. I return to the city for few days for evaluation and planning and go back again to a different community. The effort is however fulfilling and bearing fruits and I am happy sharing my life with these families and learning from them. I send my best regards to all the confreres working in the different apostolates in the Ghana Province and thank you for the newsletters that always keep us updated about the province.

From Frt. Abraham Dzibitor, BRC

Greetings from Papua New Guinea (PNG)

Thank you for sending me the SVD Ghana Newsletter.

It was good to read and inspiring. More grease to your elbows!

We do not have enough priests in my diocese where I have been working since 1993, hence I have volunteered to take on another parish about 4 hours driving. This makes me quite busy but tiring. Volunteers are welcome to PNG precisely Diocese of Kundiawa.

Finally congratulations to confreres pronouncing their first vows, renewing, Perpetual and those going to be ordained.

May the almighty God bless you all.

Fr. Joseph Nene Sakite, SVD [PNG]

WORTH REMEMBERING

October

02	Frederick Opoku Obeng	Birthday
04	Francis Allah	Feast day
04	Aming'a, Ronald	Feast day
04	Wumborti Bakilatob	Feastday
04	Francis Damoah	Feastday
04	Godwin Gatefe	Feast day
04	Franklyn Nubuasah	Feastday
04	Alex Omondi	Feastday
05	Arthur Schenker	+ 1970
06	Bruno Yirzie	Feastday
07	Emmanuel Makayie	Birthday
07	John Straathof	Birthday
08	Ignatius Ayivor	Birthday

October

08	Dionisio Nellas	Feast day
09	Piet van der Thiel	+ 2007
12	Andrzej Kedziora	Birthday
13	Edward Tetteh	Feastday
13	Frank Charles	+ 1999
15	Samuel Adjei	Birthday
16	Konrad Dreyer	Birthday
16	Elmer Powell	+ 1989
16	Baldericus Tenscher	+ 1985
17	Ignatius Ayivor	Feast day
18	James Fisher	+ 1998
19	Augustin Mevor	Birthday
23	Jan Urban	Feast day
25	Christophe Sekle	Birthday
26	Rudolf Krajcik	+ 2000

October

27	Thaddeus Nyanuba	Feastday
30	Alphonse Dungdung	Birthday
31	Wisdom Agbovi	B & Feastday
31	Michael Obeng-Shang	Birthday
31	Rex Vegbey	Birthday

November

01	Samuel Adjei	Feastday
01	John Duah Prempeh	Birthday
01	Sampson Fenuku	Feastday
01	Joshua Gariba	Feastday
01	Daniel Lenwah	Feastday
01	David Tengey	Feastday
01	Maurice Lesage	+ 1977
03	Emmanuel Adjetey Adjei	B&Feastday
03	Samuel Dagadu	Feastday
03	Martin Dumas	Feast day
03	Paul Gbortsu	Birthday
03	Thaddeus Nyanuba	Birthday
05	Martin Gouna	Birthday
05	Tomy Kanjiramalayil	Feastday
05	Jojo Monoth	Birthday
08	Sofronio Endoma	B & Feastday
09	Romeo Cofie	+ 2003
10	Edmund Deku	Birthday
11	Martin Gouna	Feast day
11	Ayédo Martin Kotchoffa	B&Feastday
11	Martin Ninnang	Feastday
12	John Dauphine	+ 1993
15	August Gehring	+ 1949
16	Othmar Auinger	Feastday
19	Eugene Agyapong	Birthday
20	Edmund Afagbegee	Feastday
20	Edmund Deku	Feast day
20	John Schilitz	Birthday
22	Peter Lampitey Forgor	Birthday
22	Amos Frerichs	+ 1986
23	Clement Angmor	Birthday
23	Bernard Adjei Appiah	Birthday
23	Patrick Ofori	Birthday
23	Albert Kretschmer	+ 2002
24	Sebastian Sperl	Birthday
28	Eugene Bruce Asante	B&Feastday
28	John Heckel	+ 1999
30	Andrew Campbell	Feastday
30	Andrzej Kedziora	Feastday
30	Andrews Obeng-Aboagye	Feastday
30	Andrew Quaye-Foli	Feastday
30	David Tengey	Feastday
30	Rex Vegbey	Feastday

December

01	Nicholas Aazine	Birthday
01	Dionisius Kopong Ola	Feastday
01	Marcelo Oyarzún	Birthday
02	Jean-Paul Sikpe	Birthday
03	Francis Mastan	Feast day
03	Jean-Baptiste Tchandama	Birthday
04	Emile K Dzokpe	Birthday
04	Peter Edze	Birthday
04	Tarcisius de Ruyter	Birthday
06	Nicholas Aazine	Feastday
06	Kostka Piotrowski	+ 1981
06	Paul van Riel	+ 1995
07	Abraham Dzibitor	Birthday
10	Anthony D. Mensah	Birthday
18	Jean-Bertrand Tchekpi	Birthday
20	Abraham K. Agosseme	Feast day
21	Aloysius Hoguth	+ 2006
23	Samuel Dagadu	Birthday
23	Victor Leones	Birthday
25	Emmanuel Affum	Feastday
25	Emmanuel Azure	Feastday
25	Emmanuel Fianu	Feast day
25	Emmanuel Kimario	Feastday
26	Theodore Afanyedey	B & Feastday
26	Stephen Appiah	Feastday
26	Stephen Ayisu	Feastday
26	Stephen Bonsu	Feastday
26	Stephen Dogodzi	Feast day
26	Stephen Domelevo	Feastday
26	Stephen Nyantey	Feastday
26	Stephen Osei Asante	Feast day
27	John K. Acheampong	Feast day
27	John Ohene Akuffo	Feast day
27	Jean-Aimé Andrianandrasana	Feastday
27	John Asiedu	Feastday
27	John Bissue	Feastday
27	John Cudjoe	B & Feastday
27	John Dorborkoe	Feastday
27	Jan Schilitz	Feastday
27	John Straathof	Feastday
27	Maurice Mayo	+ 1977
28	Innocent Adanlete	B & Feast day
28	Charles Kukah	+ 1985
29	David Kpatcha	Feastday
29	David K. Tengey	Feast day
30	Sabastine Sob	Birthday
31	Abraham Agosseme	Birthday