

## OUR THREE NEW DEACONS

Three SVDs were ordained deacons on 11 October 2008. Rev. *Gideon Nana Apreku* (Ghana), Rev. *Bakoma Damien Dadjomgou* (Togo), and Rev. *John Kudjo Dorborkor* (Ghana) courageously took up the task of the Ministry of Service with a vow of life-long dedication and commitment. Held at Divine Word Parish, Nairobi, the event was graced by many confreres, religious sisters from different congregation, the parishioners of Kayole, guests and seminarians. In his homily, Nairobi's auxiliary Bishop *David Kamau* highlighted the joy we should feel and share when serving the Lord.

For their mission appointments, Rev. Gideon is assigned to Kenya-Tanzania,



*From left to right: Revs. Gideon, Damien and John*

Rev. Damien to Paraguay, and Rev. John Kudjo back to his home province Ghana.

The ordination ceremony was followed with lunch in the parish for all the attendees and well-wishers, and, later on, dinner at CFC-Langata. ✍

## PROVINCE SHAKE-UPS

The 2008-2011 triennium saw the induction of new faces in the provincial administrative team, and major exchanges of personnel on several fronts. Leading the charge is Fr. Eusebio Manangbao who is the new provincial superior. In his council are Fr. Carlos Lima (vice provincial), Fr. Martin Cingel (Admonitor), Frs. Justus Rottuk and Peddy Castelino as councilors. Pulled out of Kayole parish, Fr. Shaji Michael now mans the office of the provincial treasurer.

In our formation houses, Fr. Mervin Noronha has been moved to CFC-Langata as prefect, replacing Fr. Joseph Djabare who is now a co-pastor of Ruai parish. Taking Fr. Mervin's place in Soweto formation house is Fr. Justus Rottuk. Otiende-philosophy house also got a new pair of formators, namely, Fr. Augustine Rodriguez (rector), and Fr. Narciso Cellan (prefect).

Replacing Fr. Augustine as the pastor of Soweto

parish is Fr. Arata Sato. Otiende's former rector and prefect Fr. Leo Fernando has been appointed co-pastor of Burka parish in Arusha, Tanzania. Bro. Lawrence

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The new Provincial Council having a discussion with our provincial treasurer Fr. Shaji Michael. Not in the photo is Fr. Justus Rottuk



## Editorial

Dear Friends:

### *Towards the Birth of a Missionary*

The Advent's precursory role over Christmas is more than liturgically symbolic as it is really a reflection of life. Similar to the many things that we do and are engaged in, preparation and the sowing of seeds precede any form of creating, growing, nurturing, maturing, and, eventually, harvesting.

The Bible is bursting to the seam with this theme of waiting, and is full of raging prophets telling us to be ready and be prepared. Management gurus, too, advise us to plan ahead and work out for what we hope to come. After all, it was not raining when Noah built the ark. Failure to plan, as it is often said, is planning to fail.

Twenty-five years ago, a sowing of seed took place when the SVD came to Kenya. At that time, our pioneering confreres might not have particularly waited for 2009, but they were certainly hoping that what they started out would grow and bear fruit. Fast forward, this year 2009 has come almost unchallenged. Facing what it brings to us would be what is daunting and challenging.

For one, there is the unprecedented global economic meltdown. Although thought for a while as a temporary jolt and an off-the-beaten-track occurrence, it has nevertheless catapulted into a harrowing financial crisis that refuses to ebb away despite the billions of dollars injected into economies. Also, violence and terrorism continue to claim lives and disrupt progress, particularly with what happened in Mumbai, India, and, continuously, in the Middle East. Then, the prices of basic commodities have sent shivers down our spines, as people feel threatened to outspend their daily income and compromise family earnings.

Indeed, signs for the New Year and omens of the future are all there for us to see and decipher. That we are one global village is a realization long accepted. Yet, in situations where even the working class would feel acutely vulnerable, we get to understand that everything else can happen.

As missionaries, we cannot remain indifferent to what is happening in the secular world. Almost everyone belongs now to the same country, if we are to

base our citizenship on the international map of geo-politics. The world is shrinking, and is becoming flat. What used to be a pedestal has come tumbling down. The iconic Wall Street of the U.S. is no longer invincible and towering above the rest. "We are all in this together," someone quipped.

As a nation, Kenya has had her share of turmoil and collective hiccups. The 2008 post-election violence demonstrates that, for peace to work, everyone must come together and protect it. The controversial bills on Communications and Human Reproduction currently tabled in Kenya's Parliament and debated in public have reinforced the awareness that people are interconnected.

Truly, many things taking place in the secular society are posing questions to us regarding our missionary identity and how to stay relevant.

In this issue of *Jambo*, we focus on the theme 'The Birth of a Missionary'. Our wise and indefatigable elder Fr. Tom Leyden has given us deep insights to help us reflect on the theme. The SVD's arrival in Kenya in 1984 could be marked as a missionary birth, and our presence here of 25 years could very well qualify us as missionaries who have attained some degree of maturity and coming of age. However, was it really the case? In his article in this issue, Fr. Tom opined, "The birth of the missionary is never simply a biological (or physical) arrival... and is not some static definition about us."

A quarter of a century is not a very long time by any mission standard. And because missionary commitment and identities could not be defined in terms of years, numbers, or age, perhaps we could ask ourselves if our province has already given birth to any SVD missionary in Kenya and, by extension, in Tanzania. For all we know, many of us might have still to be born as missionaries despite the number of years that we have been here.

One thing is sure, the realities of 1984 are not the same as the ones of today. We need to undergo a new missionary advent, so that our presence and work as missionaries would be an incarnation of the Lord into the present circumstances.

We are now 25 years old. Our hope is that our Silver age would hasten our missionary birth.

- N. Cellan, svd

# A New Church for Simanjiro Parish



The people of Simanjiro parish (Tanzania) have great reason to rejoice and to be grateful. Since the SVD missionaries took over the parish in 2002, Eucharistic celebrations and other religious and social gatherings had always been held in their uniquely designed wooden church — a structure that created an interesting imagery right at the heart of the Simanjiro plain. In a place where water is scarce and rivers and seas are abstract concepts to many, seeing a boat-shaped church in their midst would appear rather strange.

Of course, boat is well represented in the Bible. Noah and his family were saved from the Great Flood through a boat. Jesus himself was on several occasions seen on a boat with his disciples, braving the winds, negotiating through the waves, and, at some points, commanding storms to stop. Then, while standing on a boat, he made that emphatic command to his fisherman-disciples to “cast the net into the deep”.

However, despite its imported biblical symbolism, Simanjiro’s boat — the old church — was dilapidated, looking like a ramshackle, a far cry now from its former glorious self. It would have been good for a few more years still, but its basic structure had already been decayed by elements and weakened by time. Thus, it was wise that Fr. *Eusebio Manangbao*, Simanjiro’s former parish priest and our current provincial superior, initiated the project to build a new church. This was two years ago. On 19 October 2008 the new parish church was officially blessed. During the Eucharist, thousands witnessed and joined the celebration. Archbishop Josephat *Lebulu* of the Archdiocese of Arusha was the main presider, and in attendance were several confreres from Kenya and the provincial himself. The event could easily pass as one of the highlights of the Archdiocese for 2008.

The project was realized through the generous assistance and in partnership with the parishioners of Athenry parish in Ireland. Fr. *Peter Pinto*, Simanjiro’s present parish priest, played a key role in its completion and in the run-up towards its blessing. It must be recalled that, prior to the SVD’s arrival in the area, Simanjiro was a dormant parish community. There were months and years when the Eucharist was not celebrated, and no priest had come to visit the place. Indeed, Simanjiro was vacated by missionaries but not forgotten.

The church of old is still standing and will not disappear anytime soon. For now, it will continue to be used for other functions, and will serve as a testimony to the people’s faith and determination to build a community of faithful despite the odds. They must have realized that, in order to move on, what they need is not really a boat, but its captain — the Lord — who will steer them and set the course for the parish. - *N. Cellan, svd*

# Reaching out to



# Prisoners

by Fr. Mervin , svd

Our two SVD communities – the Common Formation Centre in Langata and the Philosophy House in Otiende, – have jointly made a commitment to render pastoral care to Kenya's largest women's prison based in Langata, Nairobi. The initiative came in response to the request from the Nairobi Catholic Chaplaincy for Prisons. The Missionaries of Charity Sisters, who have been involved in prison ministry for years now, made the proposal to us.

Frs. Narciso Cellan and Mervin Noronha had the privilege to make the first entry into the vast prison which seems like a village in itself. The campus which is home to about 600 women prisoners and a good number of staff is grouped into 3 for pastoral purposes – the prison staff, the ones in remand and the Condemned (Life Sentence). Among those in remand, some of them are allowed to attend the mass for the prison staff and serve as choir. The ones under Life Sentence program are barred from most external contacts.

According to earlier reports, until a couple of years ago, Kenyan prisons were notorious for being one of the most inhuman and deplorable places to live in. The famous book *Deadly Money Maker* by Saga McOdongo, a Kenyan who spent about 6 years in the same prison where we now serve, attests to this fact. Prisoners were stripped of human respect and dignity. It was with the coming to power of the National Rainbow Coalition government in 2002 (which ended the 26 years long rule of Moi, the former president of Kenya) that some much-needed reforms were introduced in the Kenyan prisons — thanks to the then-Vice President and Home Minister, Mr. Moody Owori, under whose docket the responsibility fell. Although still incomparable to the prisons in developed countries, Kenya's prisons now have undergone marked positive changes. The cleanliness and hygiene alone reflects the reforms that have been initiated and still seemingly on course.

Being new to this ministry, I am yet to get acquainted with the set up and arrangements on the campus. On one occasion I was led to a certain group for Holy Mass. We had a beautiful, well sung and well participated Eucharistic celebration. The animation of the Mass was simply commendable. After the mass I just asked my guide as to which category the congregation belonged. I was amazed to hear that it was the group that serving Life Sentence. The person added that there was no more death penalty in Kenya, and hence they would basically remain in prison for life. Even so, the joy, enthusiasm and celebratory mood that was so visibly present on their faces didn't give me the slightest impression about their actual situation. It seemed to me that they had accepted their life-situation joyfully and were prepared to face it courageously. I also believe that the strength and comfort that they draw from the Holy Mass and other sacraments keeps their faith and hope alive.

I am reminded of the Jewish psychiatrist *Viktor Frankle* who in his famous book *Man's search for Meaning* tells the story of how he survived the atrocities of the concentration camp. He says that one of the worst sufferings at Auschwitz was waiting: waiting for the war to end; waiting for an uncertain date of release, and waiting for death to end the agony. This waiting caused some prisoners to lose sight of future goals, to let go of their grip on present realities and to give up the struggle to survive. But this same waiting made other prisoners like *Frankl* accept it as a challenge, as a test of their inner strength and as a chance to discover deeper dimensions of human freedom. In situations of human struggles and untold suffering, one can resign to despair, hopelessness and anguish, or one can opt to give hope a prominent place. This is what the prisoners at Langata have seemingly opted to do: to give hope a clear chance.

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# The BIRTH of a Missionary

by Fr. Tom Leyden, svd

**T**he birth of a missionary does not admit observation. It is a process that happens to us. Allow me to speak of *Jacky Nafula*.

*Jacky* is not a celebrity. She never gets headlines, but she is a missionary, even if her life rings few bells for most people. *Nafula* is a Ugandan woman, born in the years when *Idi Amin* was rampaging through Uganda. Her mother migrated to Kenya, bringing *Nafula* with her. After the death of her mother in Kenya, *Nafula* got involved with a man in a relationship that bore seven children. Then, the man disappeared.

*Nafula* was living in Kibera slum when the post-election violence erupted. The Mungiki people targeted *Nafula*, and that resulted in another flight by night, from being homeless to becoming houseless. In the meandering of the stateless and the powerless, *Nafula* again finds a living space in Kibera.

I claim to have known *Nafula* for years; at least, I know some of her story. But I also know that I will never know *Nafula* because I have never had her experience.

*Nafula* follows Jesus. Hers is a missionary life, and she is a missionary in a manner and to a depth I will never probably reach. Knowing *Nafula* as missionary effects the birth of a missionary in me. *Nafula* has little or no income at all. Her children sleep on the hard ground. It makes me aware that holding the purse strings endangers the birth of the missionary in me.

The birth of the missionary is never simply a biological arrival. Becoming a missionary is something that happens to us and is not some static definition about us. Being called a missionary, Divine Word or otherwise,

***“... What we remember most about you was the time you got seriously sick amongst us. It was then we looked after you and it was then that we really loved you.”***

does not in itself make me a missionary. Moving to another country and learning another language do not automatically make a person a missionary.

I recall a moment 38 years ago when I arrived in Indonesia thinking of myself as the arrival of a missionary hoping to be welcomed. The first question I was asked was ‘what did I think I came there to do?’ I believe that the question to which I gave some predictable answer has changed my entire view of what it is to be a missionary. Since then, I have realized that what I see is more important than what I do. If God sends me, He sends me to see. God sends me primarily to see what is offered to be seen, rather than to do something to change what is offered to be seen. I realized that, when I do something, it allows me to seemingly be in charge of the context I do it for. While, when I see what is to be seen, it allows the context to instruct me before I ever begin to destroy it. Observation is so constantly important, and affluence is the enemy of the observation.

*Bill Burt*, an SVD confrere now in Australia, tells the story of a moment of revelation for him in Indonesia. He was stationed on a small island far out to the sea. While there, he felt rightly that he had made a very big contribution to the welfare of the islanders. After returning to Australia, he had the opportunity to make a visit to the island. The welcome given to him was marvelous. The many expected words of thanks were expressed. But in the flow of words of gratitude, the one he carried away with him was spoken quietly, the way truth usually comes. ‘Fr. Bill’, a person said, ‘we want you to know how much we appreciated and loved you while you were with us, but what we remember most about you was the time you got seriously sick amongst us. It was then we looked after you and it was then that we really loved you.’ Being loved is more important than doing things. We become missionaries in many ways.

We are born as individual human beings, and we spend our entire life invited by Jesus to let go of our securities. Each time we let go, we become more of a missionary. Jesus tells us, ‘Bring nothing with you for the journey.’ Yet, increasingly, we enquire how much luggage we can bring with us as we travel. If in sending us, Jesus sends us to die, to be people in whom Jesus can

*The Birth .. (continued from page 5)*

continuously die, then every moment of death is a missionary moment.

Now, how can I speak of *Nafula* as a missionary when she is not known as such. She is in her mid-thirties with seven young children dependent upon her. As if her journey so far has not been missionary enough, she is carrying in her body a serious cancer, possibly critical and probably terminal. She tells me she has no family in Kenya to bury her. Knowing her, the missionary spirit rubs off on me.

I recall one of my earlier conversations with Bishop *Philip Sulumeti*. My invitation to Kenya was to be missioned in the Kakamega Diocese. He said, 'When you expatriate missionaries come to us and give so much to us, when you get sick, don't run away from us. Let us look after you, and let us bury you in Africa.'

I reckon it is only our bones that will eventually know what it is to be a missionary. It could be that our death becomes our birth as a missionary. It is not so much for us that our birth as a missionary with an experience to follow, but rather our experience on the human road could lead us to our birth as missionaries. ✍

*Reaching out ... (continued from page 4)*

One of the striking factors that cannot go without a mention is the confidence and trust placed by the prison authorities in us. In our visits to the prison, I have never been asked to produce any document to gain entry to the prison campus. Our faces are the only document. The cordiality with which the officials welcome and lead us through the procedures can easily make us forget the fact that we are on the campus of a prison under maximum security.

Although the request asked of us is to offer Holy mass on Sundays at the three chapels of the vast prison campus, it is hoped that more avenues of ministry may gradually open up which will turn into opportunities for our seminarians to exercise their ministry to serve. Other than offering spiritual solace and nourishment to the prisoners, it will give us an opportunity to grow in our commitment to the neediest. The inmates' active participation, their bright and welcoming smiles and their desire for the Word of God is simply amazing. It cannot fail to challenge our faith and our religious calling.

It has been four months since we started doing ministry at the prison. Our prayer is that, through our presence in the prison, we may rekindle a ray of hope in the lives of the inmates and help them understand the mystery of God's love and forgiveness in their painful situation within the walls. ✍

*Province .. (continued from page 1)*

Kibaara, Otiende's former procurator, is helping Fr. Justus in Soweto. The former co-pastor of Ruai Fr. Daniel Bria is transferred to Dol Dol parish as co-pastor to Fr. Marci Karwot. Fr. Jose dos Santos, a newly ordained confrere from Brazil, has been posted to Simanjiro parish. Meanwhile, Fr. Albert Fuchs is now in India for spirituality program.

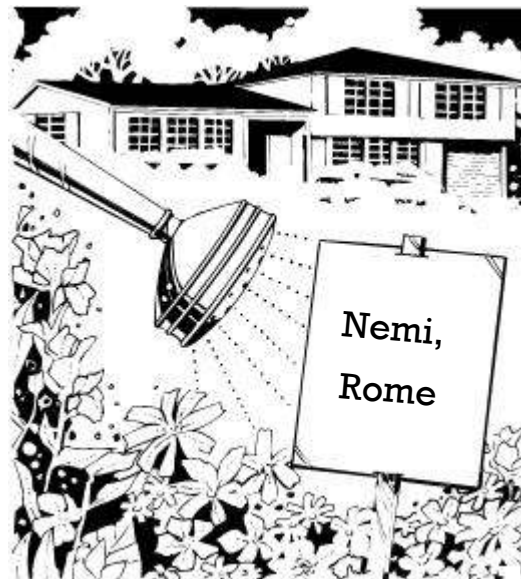
Some confreres have been given more than one appointment. Fr. Mervin, for example, is the new OTP Director, Fr. Justus as the Vocation Director and the Director of our newly founded Divine Word High School in Katani. Fr. William Owire is our new Mission Secretary, besides being a co-pastor of Kayole parish. Fr. Narciso is the new Communication Coordinator and the Provincial Secretary. Bro. Lawrence is retained as the JPIC coordinator of the province, and has been elected as the new AFRAM coordinator for the same office. ✍

# TERTIATE RENEWAL EXPERIENCE

The tertiate renewal experience has been a time of grace and blessing for me. Being together as disciples of the Lord from different corners of the globe, staying together and sharing each other's talents, knowledge and experience for the growth of all has been a real and tangible blessing of the Lord.

The stay at St. Michael's, Steyl was a unique experience for me as an SVD. The place of course is where the Arnoldus Family Story began in 1875. Reflecting on the beginning of the Arnoldus Family, the struggles and pains that our Founding Generation went through those days and the determination and the unshakable faith they had in the Lord urged me to recommit myself to follow the Lord in my mission ever more closely. Visiting, spending time and praying at the homes of Sts. Arnold and Joseph, and Bl. Josepha at Goch, Ojes and Issum respectively brought me closer to them and to their deep experience of God, particularly to the way they responded to God's call to be His servants.

The humble beginning and the tremendous growth that our Arnoldus Family has been blessed with so far is something that we can thank the Almighty with both hands. The lectures and reflections on various topics focusing as part of the Renewal Program on our personal, emotional, spiritual and missionary growth were so helpful to me. They helped me to take a close look at myself and my personal, spiritual and missionary life so far. They enabled me to ask myself where I have come from, where I am now and where and how I am going! The reflections and lectures specially by our own thinker and teacher, Fr. *John Fuellenbach* kindled the fire of God's love and mercy in me, and challenged me to kindle that fire in the lives of those I meet in my missionary journey. The pilgrimages to Subiaco, Assisi and to the four major basilicas of Rome reminded me that I am a pilgrim here on earth, and that I am following great saints like Sts. Peter, Paul, Benedict, Francis of Assisi and Clare in their footsteps as a pilgrim in



by Fr. Rethinasamy Amaldoss, svd

my own humble yet human way.

The jewel on the crown, as they say, was the guided retreat. Listening to the Spirit in silence, praying more and letting the Lord guide me during the retreat was a deep spiritual experience which will remain part of my renewal and on-going journey. I remember with deep gratitude Fr. *Tony Bon Pates* (the Renewal Course Director), and *Joe Francis* (the Spiritual Director) for accompanying me and my companions during the entire renewal journey. They both and the staff at Nemi and Steyl were valuable and available. May they continue to inspire and guide many more confreres and disciples of the Lord who need their help.

It was nice that some of our General Councilors found time to share their knowledge and experience with us through lectures. Fr. Superior General, *Antonio Pernia* took time specially to welcome us when we arrived in Nemi, and, later on, he returned to meet those of us interested to meet him. These gestures of our Superior General and the General Councilors were certainly encouraging and made us feel part and parcel of the Divine Word Family.

May the Divine Word be praised forever for bringing his sons together as His servants to Steyl and Nemi so as to experience His love, care, compassion and forgiveness as companions on the renewal journey. May He continue to accompany me and my renewal-companions on our continuing journey. ✍



by Bro. Lawrence Kibaara, svd

The December 2007 general elections were marked with the biggest chaos ever witnessed in Kenya. A lot of questions were asked by Kenyans and foreign countries. Why, of all the countries in Africa, Kenya could do that? It was supposed to be a peaceful and democratic country. How then did it happen?

We never know Peace until we lose it. Looting was done, people were killed, properties destroyed, families displaced, to mention just a few. Some scenes we used to watch only on the television we now saw them live right in our front yard. Ironic, because Kenya has been playing key mediating roles in some African countries, so as to broker peace and promote development. And, yet, our country bit the dust when its people descended into chaos and outright lawlessness. Some lessons we need to learn from what happened.

Peace is of utmost importance to everybody and to every state. Without peace, no development can take place, investors will keep out of our country to go to a safer place, corruption gets out of control, level of poverty increases, crimes would rule the day, prices of commodities skyrocket and the currency depreciates.

We as a Church should therefore be at the forefront in educating Christians on the need to living in harmony. The issue of ethnicity should be addressed. Here, the theological foundation of our social teachings can be re-echoed — that we are all created in God's image and are equal in the eyes of God. Yet, in our parishes, we see situations wherein tribal affiliations or preferences are allowed to exist. One tribe, for example, dominates a certain choir group, and leadership positions have always been controlled or held by individuals from the same ethnic group. There is a need to pay closer attention on how social groupings are formed in our parishes, with an aim of promoting deeper integration, collaboration, and peaceful co-existence.

In our schools, children need to be taught about the value of peace. Discussions can be organized in order to understand better the causes of tribal clashes, and why we have Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The consequences of not having peace should be explained to the students in our schools.

We now mark the first anniversary of the post-election events that shook our nation. If at all we have truly learned something, we can make Justice and Peace a strong advocacy issue in our Small Christian Communities and convince lay leaders to be more open in sharing leadership and membership in our different parish organizations and movements.

Lastly, we need not wait until the next general election to educate or animate our parishioners on the need to respect one another as well as our properties. The earlier a program is implemented on this regard, the more effective it can be.

Wounds get healed but scars remain. It is upon you and me to preach justice and peace, starting in our families and communities. Of course, prayers are an essential aspect. We thus ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in our campaign for what is good and in denouncing what is evil. ✍



#### Facts:

The Republic of Kenya gained its independence from UK in 1963. With a diverse population of 42 ethnic groups, the country's estimated 38 million people live in a 582,646 sq.km. land expanse. Muslims in Kenya are said to comprise 10% of the population, protestant groups are 45%, Catholics are 33%, and the remaining 12% are from the indigenous beliefs.

Sources: [www.kenya.go.ke](http://www.kenya.go.ke)



by Fr. William Owire, svd

Promotion of the laity is the basis of all mission animation. Our missionary work aims at bringing communities to maturity so that they might be effective witnesses to the coming of the Kingdom. So, “we encourage the laity in every way to participate actively and take on responsibility” (c. 109). Therefore, promoting missionary mindedness is at the very heart of a specifically SVD contribution in local churches (c.110).

St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, the patroness of the mission wanted to be a missionary. As her health made this impossible, she offered her daily life within the confines of the convent for the mission of the church. In many ways, the laity / our Christians can do mission in their day to day life. It is our task, however, to form and inform them.

This year, the Church celebrated mission Sunday on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October. We took it upon ourselves to make it an opportune moment for our SVD identity and presence to be felt among the people with whom we work. In this regard, I met our confreres in CFC, and together we discussed how best we could celebrate mission Sunday this year. CFC students and Philosophy students divided themselves into three groups to promote SVD identity and mission in three of our parishes within Nairobi — Divine Word Parish (Kayole), St. Joseph Freinademetz Parish (Ruai) and Sts. Joachim and Ann Parish (Soweto). They got a chance during Eucharistic celebrations to explain to the Christians our SVD

charism, apostolate and the four-fold characteristic dimensions. The students introduced themselves at the end of the mass. In Kayole, particularly, people noticed and were amazed at our internationality, which is in itself a great witness value. Thanks to the Communications Office that readily accepted to make vocation promotional materials which were distributed and shown to the Christians. Our students got time to interact with the parishioners especially young people who were interested to know more about our congregation.

I begin to realize that communication, vocational promotion, mission animation and even biblical apostolate are intertwined so much so that we cannot divorce one from another. These offices are closely working together to produce brochures for vocational promotional and an 2010 SVD calendar especially as we go Silver in Kenya. Last but not least, we printed envelopes and gave them out to the Christians to contribute to the mission of the SVD in Kenya.

I would like to register my heartfelt thanks to the confreres and Christians of these parishes for their generous contribution and support to the SVD mission in the province. Next year, we will make prior arrangements with all our parishes. I remember last year we marked mission Sunday with our confreres in Eldoret and Burka and it worked so well.

Thank you confreres for promoting the SVD identity and mission among our Christians.

| <b>Contributions collected last Mission Sunday</b> |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| St. Joachim & Ann Parish                           | - KSh 14,745         |
| St. J. Freinademetz Parish                         | - KSh 17,735         |
| Divine Word Parish                                 | - KSh 70,586         |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>- Ksh 103,066</b> |

## REAFFIRMING OUR MISSIONARY COMMITMENT

by Fr. Peddy Castelino, svd

As we reflect on the theme *Birth of a Missionary* in this issue of Jambo, allow me to start on the premise that a missionary is a person who has a unique and deep experience of the Risen Christ from whom he/she draws strength. He/she then undergoes a transformation that serves as an impetus in putting his/her experience with Christ in his/her actual life situation. To be a missionary means, first and foremost, to have an experience of the Risen Christ. Secondly, it means transforming one's life and then incarnating that experience so that we become bearers of Christ's message. Hence, a missionary could be any one (not necessarily a consecrated religious) who is moved and affected by that experience.

The Bible is full of such missionaries. From the book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation, we know individuals who had an experience and who were blessed with a deep sense of encounter with God. The Bible reveals openly the birth of these missionaries and their life of witness.

Abraham could be considered as the first missionary. Being the father of faith and called to bear witness to God, he gladly accepted his experience of Yahweh and lived it with full conviction (Gen. 12:1ff). The last book of the Bible also shows John the Evangelist as a type of missionary fully focused and centered on Christ. He was a follower of the Master and manifested in his life the profession that Christ rose from death (Rev. 1:1ff).

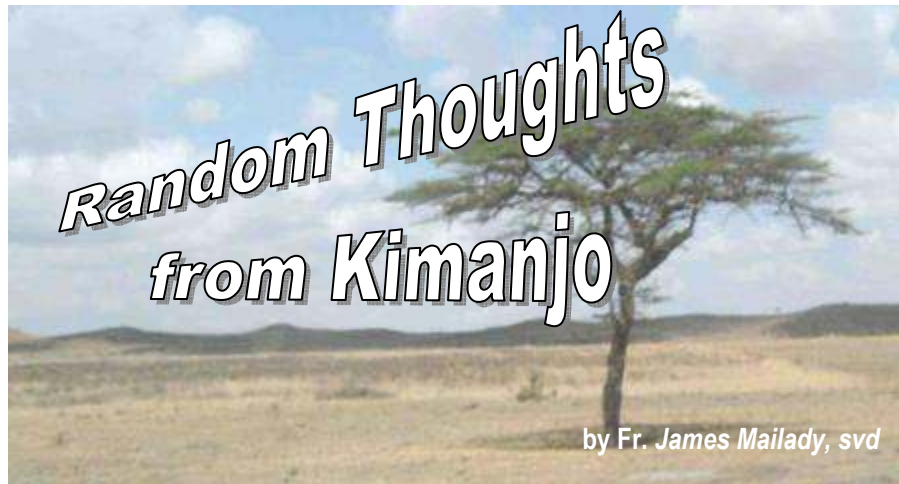


Let us look at the great missionary St. Paul as we celebrate the centenary of his missionary life this year. His missionary zeal was incomparable, and the enthusiasm he exhibited in proclaiming the gospel deserves the highest admiration and an all-time distinction. Prior to his conversion, Saul was already uncompromising in his commitment in defending Pharisaic traditions to the point that he went about killing the followers of Christ who were posing, in his point of view then, a great threat to his Jewish faith. He was on his way to Damascus when the Risen Lord appeared to Him. The incident became the turning point that made Paul a missionary and servant of Christ. He seemed to be a man possessed, unrelenting in efforts and tireless in the way he preached the good news of Christ's salvation. He realized that what he had been believing for years as infallible faith were all leading him to the fulfillment of the Yahweh's promise of salvation — the Messiah. The conviction with which he used in killing the followers of Jesus was the same conviction he now displayed in spreading the message and teaching of Christ. Everything was possible for him because of his deep experience of Christ. An enemy of the Lord in his earlier life, he finally recognized Jesus as the Son of God. For Him, to live is Christ and to die is Christ. He realized Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega (Acts. 9:1ff).

Hence, may I draw a conclusion that having a profound experience of Christ is a must so as to be born a missionary. A missionary's identity evolves from a life-changing faith-experience and the living out of that faith. This experience has to transform one positively so as to have the virtues which are of Christ. This will bring in us the new life which St. Paul himself tells us as he asks us to be clothed with Christ (Col 3:1ff) .

Perhaps we can reflect on the following questions: What motivated and moved us to decide to be a missionary of the Divine Word? Do we still remain faithful to that experience which moved us to be missionaries of the Divine Word?





Kimanko is a village-town. It sounds a bit strange, a bit paradoxical, but I cannot help it because that is the way it is. In fact, life itself is like that. For example, people say life is full of paradoxes. *People say many things, and we seldom take them all very seriously.* Anyway, people say that Christianity is a religion of paradoxes. For that matter, Jesus was a man of paradoxes and his teachings were full of paradoxes. Many of his teachings were not only paradoxical but even beyond our ordinary commonsense. For instance, Jesus said, **in giving you receive, in losing you gain, in dying you live!**

People also say (*I don't*), their experiences are completely different from those of Jesus. I agree with them because I live with them. When you come to think of it, you know it doesn't make much sense to our common sense. Jesus is saved from much criticism today, because *we as a human race are caught up in a rat-race.* Hence, nobody has time to stop and think – *probably a blessing in disguise!*

I am sorry I was bit carried away by emotions. It is really interesting, isn't it? Even after years of *basic formation, ongoing formation and religious life itself, you are easily carried away by silly emotions.* The spirituality of '**control to conquer**' seems to be giving way to '**carry on, we shall see**' spirituality today. The fact is that slowly, gradually, you learn to live with these kinds of paradoxes amicably. So, as a people, we at Kimanjo do not ask many questions. It is not that we are apathetic or are not inquisitive. Again, when you come to think of it, asking questions is a sign of ignorance or stupidity. Just to give you an example, the village hand pump, the only source of water, has not been functional for the past two years! It is quite some time, right? Until today, nobody has dared to ask – **why?** *You are surprised, but I am not.*

Kimanjo is proud of its basic village character and cultural heritage. We are a happy lot without the modern amenities like running water, electricity, phones, cable TV,

etc. We don't really miss much – do we? Not exactly. But, anyway, who cares? The problem is not there. The problem is when the so-called **civilized** people come to visit us. Of course, they are surprised, and out of their stupidity *they ask the wrong questions* – about the running water and the phone network, for example. It is difficult for them to understand when we tell them, *we have running water whenever it rains and our network is perfect on local market days!* Thanks to global warming and climate change, rains have become a luxury today. In fact, I am amazed at our people's firm resolve not to give in to the mounting pressure and temptations from globalizations and global villagers! The prayer, '**lead us not into temptations**' still seems to work wonders for us!

Just the other day, somebody asked me, '*Excuse me, can you tell me something about the nightlife and entertainment in Kimanjo?*' Honestly, I felt like kicking him down the stairs, but since he was really **somebody**, I decided to be polite. In fact, it made me reflect. The only nightlife I know about is that we go to bed once it is dark, because our understanding is that nightlife is for the wildlife. The silence of the night and our slumber would be disturbed only by the braying of a donkey or by the violent eating habits of the elephants. As for the question of entertainment, I couldn't think of any because that word is not in our dictionary. We cherish, enjoy and live our life. *Our life is entertainment in itself, for we are a major tourist attraction.* But there is something else, which an **outsider** may consider of having entertainment value, i.e. *the occasional heart-rending renditions* of a few – without gender bias – who celebrate life and glorify the Creator, after an extra doze of **kairas** (not *kairos*), a local hard drink. But if you happens to observe it from close range, you may mistake it for the ultimate spiritual journey – **bearing one's soul in front of the Creator.** *I am yet to reach that state of perfection.*

(Continued on page 12)

# DWHS

## Divine Word High School



As missionaries, we SVDs would always point out that we formulate our mission initiatives according to the situations on the ground and based on the needs of the local Church. Having this principle in mind, we have also come to realize early on in the history of our Society that education or school apostolate is an important aspect of our proactive stance in doing mission. So important is school ministry to us that it has become an area where the four characteristic dimensions of the Society is supposed to be applied and lived out in an integrated and collaborative manner (cf. *In Dialogue with the Word, Nr. 3, pa. 28-29*). Given the number of schools that we own and run worldwide, we can only assert that truly school apostolate is deeply rooted in our mission ideology and praxis. After all, many of us SVDs are products of our own schools even before we entered the seminary.

The province's decision to establish a school in Kenya was nothing but a confirmation of our long-held mission tradition. Still, such project, which is seeing completion just now, can be rather viewed as a delayed initiative, if we are to consider our 25-year presence in the country. Be that as it may, we can fully admire the determination with which our confreres, particularly Bro. Karl Schaarschmidt, supported the move towards the founding of the school. Bro. Karl raised the necessary funding and personally supervised the building of the school.

The school is scheduled to open in February 2009. The timing is meaningful to us as it is the same year that the SVD will reach its 25th anniversary in Kenya. *Divine Word High School* — is what it is going to be called. Fr. Justus Rottuk, its first director, is overseeing the launching, the recruitment of teaching staff and personnel, and the campaign for enrolment. As the first educational institution of the province that bears the Society's name, fully managed and administered by the Society, the school deserves nothing less than our utmost support and prayers. We commend Bro. Karl for his tireless efforts in ensuring the realization of the project. —N. Cellan, svd



Bro. Karl (3rd from left) discussing with confreres during their visit to the school in Katani, Nairobi. On extreme left is Fr. Rod Salazar, former president of San Carlos University, Cebu, Phil.

(Random ... continued from page 11)

So, based on our hypotheses, we can ask: What makes Kimanjo a village-town? I think the secret lies in our ability to keep balance. In other words, **we keep our equilibrium!** In fact, the secret of life is all about *keeping the balance or striking a balance like the fiddler on the roof!* The present imbalance, be it economic, environment or spiritual, is a direct consequence of our inability to keep the balance. *However strong the attraction, like the stars of heaven, we don't go off the balance.* The serenity of the village, the magnificent landscape, the simplicity of our people, the fresh air we breathe, the absence of traffic jams, noise pollutions, etc., help us to keep our village identity and sanity. But on our letterheads, we prefer the name "**Kimajo Trading Centre!**"

*Kimajo Trading Centre can boast of twelve utility stores and five cafe's that give it a 'townish look'. Since we have not signed the G-8 non-proliferation treaty, the intrusion of five bars – dens of loud free thinkers – is seen as a direct invasion into the privacy of our utopian dream village. But, then again, it gives Kimajo a village-town character!*

# Note of Thanks

First of all, I would like to thank God who gave me the gift of life and the opportunity to be in Ruai for almost two years and in Kenya for almost three years. Thanks also to my parents who gave birth to me and who brought me up with Christian education in the Catholic Church, and to my siblings for the strength, courage, spiritual support and friendship we shared.

My deepest gratitude to the SVD Congregation: our confreres in Brazil, for letting me come to Kenya; the Kenya-Tanzania province who supported and received me as an OTP student. I arrived in Kenya on January 21, 2006, and stayed in CFC- Langata for some time while learning English.

I came to know Ruai through the visits I made to all the three outstations -- *St. Cecilia, St. Peter, and St. Joseph*. The visits provided me with opportune time to meet families and to get introduced to individuals. The Jumuiyas (Small Christian Communities), the youth group that re-established itself in August of last year (2007), the staff and students of St. Joseph Freinademetz school, the Baraka Trust from Boys Town School, and the children of Nursery School – I wish them all happiness and success in their hopes and aspirations. I feel so blessed for having met them!

Lest I forget, I must particularly mention my SVD confreres in Ruai who journeyed with me and taught me many things. I appreciate the assistance and guidance of Frs. Tony Amissah, Daniel Bria, and Joseph Djabare. I treasure the friendship and camaraderie I received from CFC seminarians, namely, Jerome, Daniel and Damien, the DST sisters, the Brothers of Charles Lwanga, the workers of St. Joseph parish (Martha, Joel, Joseph, Alloys, James), and all the children who left indelible marks of human kindness in my heart.

To me, coming to Africa, especially Kenya, was a great opportunity for learning a lot of things concerning culture, society, music, celebrations, among others. I shall never forget Ruai and its people. My two years of stay in the parish have become, in more ways than one, a defining moment for me as a person, as a missionary, and as a Christian. As I leave, I carry with me some photos of people who have become part of my life.

On one side, I am feel sad leaving Ruai and, in general, Kenya. I understand though that, as a missionary, life is a series of movements, a constant shifting from one place to another, testing my resolve to remain open to whatever is given or offered to me.

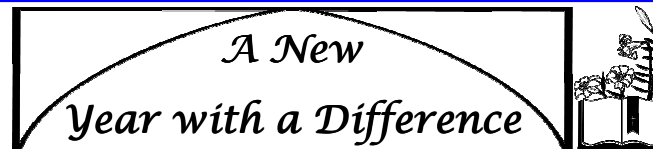
On the other side, I am happy thinking about my people back home – my family, relatives, and friends who are all waiting for me, anticipating my return, wanting to accord me with happy welcome and warm hug. I shall meet them with all the news of goodwill that I bring with me from Kenya, and, by extension, the whole of Africa.

May St Joseph Freinademetz, its patron, bless the whole parish of Ruai and its people. May by his intercession the parish will grow ever more faithful in serving the Lord and in offering Him true worship in unity, peace, and love.



In the Divine Word,  
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Fr. Mervin, svd

On Tuesday, 30 December, 2008, at about 10 AM, a young girl came to see me. I had never met her before but she desperately wanted to see me. I said I don't know you, I haven't met you, what do you want from me? She was shy and nervous. I sensed that she was frightened and not so sure if she could share her agony with me. I am Susan, she revealed. A young girl, her self-pride was holding her back for a while from expressing what she came for. Finally, she opened up. Fumbling and with tears rolling down her cheeks, she narrated her story at one breath – 'I come from Kibera.' (Kibera is one of the largest slums in Africa, located in Nairobi, Kenya). Susan continued, 'I am the eldest of 3 girls in my family. My father is not with us. He has run away. My mother, Elizabeth, who has been the bread winner, has taken to serious illness. She is suffering from acute malaria and typhoid. I am a grown up lady. I feel ashamed to beg. I hate it. I don't have a job. I have roamed all over, looking for work, tried my every best but all in vain. I am ready to do any job. But I don't get one. My heart is piercing when I see my mother suffer and I am watching her helplessly. That has brought me to you here.

Listening to her story, I am stuck and feel so helpless. I live in a seminary where we operate from a subsidised budget that just keeps us going. I ask myself if I have made a mistake by becoming a priest, by coming to Africa. I say I have come to help people but when people come for help, I feel lost more than the person seeking help -- not because I don't like my vocation, my job, or the people in Africa, but because I have come to help the people yet I am helpless myself.

What can I offer to Susan? Her need is genuine. Her mother is languishing in untold pain at home, her siblings are looking up to her for food, and the land owner is after her for the house rent. If not attended to, she will lose the only treasure that she has – her bedridden mother. She might be unable to give Susan and her siblings food but her presence is the strength of the family.

One thing comes to my mind. I must show Susan the strength of HOPE. That is what I have gotten from the Christmas that I celebrated on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December. Hence, I assure her of my moral support and prayers. Susan's face lights up with a smile. For a moment she has forgotten all her worries. Then I tell Susan, I don't have money but I have some maize flour, about 4 kg, given to me as an offertory during the previous Sunday mass I celebrated at Kenya Technical Training College (KTTC), Gigiri, Nairobi. I also wonder how a small gift from a certain community can revive hope and bring joy to an unknown person in another corner of the city. The giver doesn't know the receiver, nor does the receiver know the giver. But hope has been rekindled in the life of a desperate person. Maybe it is just a small gesture, a temporary solution but still worth it.

I rush to my room and pick the packet of flour and add KShs. 250/- (about US\$ 5) on top and place it on Susan's hands. Susan sheds joyful tears. Her joy has no bounds. She repeatedly expresses her gratitude with endless thanks. As she bids goodbye, she pleads, 'Father, please pray for my ailing mother and our family'. She repeats it three times. I assure and reassure her of my prayers.

Susan disappears from the scene. I don't have her contacts and don't know her whereabouts. I don't even know if I will ever meet her again. But I know I will surely meet many other Susans with similar cries, stories, struggles, pains, and agony. Until we refuse to change the way we live, the way we deal with our fellow humans, until we refuse to fight for a just and equitable society, Susans will always come to us. Where will they go after all? I may not be able to change the world. I may not be able to change our country or city or village or community. But I can always change myself. I can change the way I do things. I can change the way I perceive things. I can make a difference. Change begins with each person. That is the kind of New Year I wish for you and for myself.

A life-transforming New Year to us all. A New Year where God is present in all and to all!



Dear Kamau,

I'm now back in the land of flying *matatus* and rain-starved *sukumawiki*. My arrival did not cause a stir among the crocs in Tana river, for there was nothing much for them to stir in the first place. The dry season continues to cast a long spell on the weather, barring *Mama Mvua* – Mother Rain – from pouring and kissing the earth. I'm sure it has nothing to do with my arrival back in the country, Kamau. There were few days when heavens decided to open up and let *Mama Mvua* water the ground. In most cases though, the dust is having a field day, joyfully strutting and gliding with the wind.

How are you now, Kamau? Many things have taken place since the last time I wrote you something. I hate to think that we've lost interest in each other; yet we both know that there are other ways of remembering and staying connected. Hence, when you don't hear anything from me here, I must be somewhere else communicating with you in a way that requires you to visit the faceless virtual domain of the *world wide web*.

Some things have evolved while we were not watching, Kamau. A new mode of establishing social network has come to the fore. There was a time when a person is known through the pictures of the people he kept in his wallet. That was a lifetime ago, Kamau. Our village has gone virtual, and everyone is a chief. For millions of individuals nowadays, virtual is what is real. Don't turn pale and blow your top when someone accuses you that you are not real because you don't exist online.

Blame the spooks and the spies for it, Kamau. Things started when someone thought of encoding personal data of people into computers as a way of monitoring and tracing them. Many years since then, the *pyramidic* structure of the traditionalists and the aristocrats collapsed, leveling the field of human interaction and expanding our social reach. You can now have a friend up in the North Pole without stepping out of your room or buying a plane ticket, Kamau. You can get introduced to Obama without arranging for an audience with him, as long as you're willing to sign in and put your name in his blog site. But if you want to meet Bush online, forget about throwing shoes.

This brings us to the topic most dear to you and me, Kamau. You will be transported into the parallel realm. You will be thrown out of the window, so to speak, so that you can be viewed through millions of windows. Your presence will be multiplied many times over, and you will reach in seconds your destinations in different corners of the globe thousands of miles away. You can become accessible to whoever you want to see you, and your existence will no longer depend on paper and ink. How's that for a freer life, Kamau?

Before you jump for joy and start celebrating in careless abandon, there is one more important thing you got to hear from me, Kamau. Well, actually, two things: first, you must overcome your fear of mouse; second, you need to understand that not all keys are for doors, cabinets, drawers, or cars. In the fantastic world of computer technology and sophisticated gadgets, one elemental truth stands supreme: the key belongs to the board, and it is called *keyboard* — meant for typing, not inserting.

Having taken those two basic lessons to heart, go ahead now, Kamau, type away. In matter of hours, you will get the hang of things. Don't let impatience fail you. Nevertheless, if you think things are not really coming your way, leave the window, go through the door, and call me. I will be more than willing to give you a printout of Jambo. *Merry Christmas* and *Happy New Year*, Kamau!

Your Friend,  
Soy Cellan



# Goings and Comings

## Out

- Fr. Albert Fuchs - in India for spirituality program.
- Fr. Carlos Lima - in Brazil for home leave.
- Fr. Daniel Bria - in Indonesia for home leave
- Bro. Karl Schaarschmidt - in Germany for medical operation
- Fr. Stan Roz - leaving soon to attend the golden wedding anniversary of his parents in Poland.

## New Members of the Province

- Fr. Jose Eudes Santo - former OTP student; from Brazil, now assigned to Simajiro, Tanzania
- Fr. Michael - from Indonesia; still learning English and staying in CFC

## Back in the Province

- Fr. Tony Amissah - back from home leave in Ghana
- Fr. James Mailady - back from India to visit his old and ailing father.
- Fr. Josef Ola Sabhe—back from Indonesia to visit his ailing father
- Fr. Rethinasamy Amaldoss - back from Nemi, Rome for renewal course

### PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

Place: CFC-Langata

Date: 15 January 2009

Time: 8:30AM onwards

Note: For the program, please  
consult the last issue of



# Our Birthday Celebrants

## JANUARY

15 - Fr. Jose dos Santos  
18 - Fr. Peddy Castelino  
24 - Fr. Justus Rottuk

## FEBRUARY

01 - Fr. Jacek Rejman

## MARCH

17 - Fr. Peter Pinto  
24 - Fr. Josef Ola Sabhe  
31 - Fr. Mervin Noronha



## SWAHILI PROVERBS

1. Heri kufa macho kuliko kufa moyo.  
[It is better to lose your eyes than to lose your heart.]
2. Asiye kubali kushindwa si mshindani.  
[He who does not admit defeat is not a sportsman.]
3. Kila ndege huruka na mbawa zake.  
[Every bird flies with its own wings.]
4. Kujikwa si kuanguka, bali ni kwenda mbele.  
[To stumble is not falling down but it is to go forward.]
5. Kutoa ni moyo usambe ni utajiri.  
[Charity is the matter of the heart not of the pocket.]