



Word Aflame

Botswana Province Newsletter

June –July 2009

Word from the Provincial

Called to Counter-cultural Witnessing

St. Kizito



Probably for most of us 3rd June go unnoticed! On this day we celebrate the feast of Ugandan Martyrs. In 1981 our founding fathers Victor, Tony, Bishop Frank and Peter Madden dedicated our province to St. Kizito, the youngest of the Ugandan Martyrs. Ours is the only SVD province dedicated to one of the Ugandan Martyrs. On 3 June 2009, thousands of Christians gathered to pay homage to the Christian martyrs in Namugongo in Uganda. The function marked 123 years since 45 Christian converts, 22 Catholics and 23 Anglicans were killed at the orders of the Kabaka of Buganda, Basamula Mwanga II, after they refused to denounce their faith. Their story begins with the Protestant missionaries who began arriving in Buganda (now Uganda) in 1877. Mutesa—the king, or Kabaka—welcomed them and seemed open to Christianity. He even allowed it to be taught at his court. When the Missionaries of Africa arrived in 1879, Mutesa welcomed them as well.

However, he also flirted with Islam, which Arab traders had introduced into Buganda decades before, and began favoring now one religious group and then another, mainly for political gain. The king's shifting favor created an uncertain, often dangerous climate for Christians, but White Father Simeon Lourdel and his companions took advantage of every opportunity Mutesa gave. They founded missions where they could teach people about the faith, and about medicine and agriculture as well. Mutesa's hostility forced the White Fathers out of the country for three years until his death in 1884.

Joseph Mukasa who served as personal attendant for Mutesa and the new king Mwanga, son of Mutesa, was one of the most dedicated converts to Christianity. He was instrumental in converting many of the five hundred young men and boys who worked as court pages. Joseph detested the king's debauched ways of committing paedophilia with court pages whom the steward tried to protect. Mwanga distrusted foreign visitors, fearing they might report his evil ways to the British government, which had given him the power. The jealous advisors in king's palace called Mukasa disloyal for his allegiance to another king, the "God of the Christians." Their accusations were reinforced when Mwanga assassinated Mukasa for trying to reprimand the king from having the newly arrived Anglican bishop James Hannington beheaded in October 1885.

Mwanga killed Denis Sebuggwago, who had been teaching catechism to 14 year old Mwafu, one of his pages, by thrusting a butcher's cleaver or spear through his throat. That night Charles Lwanga, the new master of the pages, baptized five of them including Kizito, whom he had repeatedly rescued from Mwanga's paedophilic approaches. St. Kizito was the youngest of all the Martyrs who died at the age of 13. He was a Muganda by tribe born at Waluleeta, Bulemeezi County. His father was Lukomera and mother Wangabira of Civet Cat Clan. He belonged to the Lungfish (Mamba) clan -Protopterus. Kizito was a page of the inner private courts of King Mwanga II whom fellow pages credited for his love and determination to follow Christ. Mwanga enraged by the emergence of new allegiance to Jesus by his pages, assembled all the pages and ordered the Christians to separate themselves from the others. The king then ordered every Protestant and Catholic living in the royal enclosure to be put to death. They were led 37 miles away to a place called Namugongo to be burned to death. Three were killed on the way. One of these, a district judge named Matthias Kalemba, declared, "God will rescue me. But you will not see how he does it, because he will take my soul and leave you only my body." He was cut into pieces and left to die slowly by the roadside. They were imprisoned in Namugongo for seven days while a huge pyre was prepared. At the appointed time on Ascension Day, they were forced to lie down on reed mats.

Wrapped up in the mats and tightly bound, they were laid side by side. Fr. Lourdel M.Afr., who tried to save them, reported that afterwards, "they were tied so closely that they could scarcely walk, and I saw little Kizito laughing merrily at this, as though it were a game." Fuel was poured on them, and they were set afire.



The 22 Catholic martyrs were canonised by Pope Paul VI in 1964. During the reign of Mwanga about 100 Christians of various denominations were martyred.

At the beginning of second week of the 30Day Ignatian retreat all of us have contemplated on Christ the King and His call, The Two Leaders and Two Flags. It reveals us what following Jesus involves. The young Ugandan Martyrs were not seduced by the values of the royal court, rather they took a stand for God's law, even when it meant defying the king himself. Standing firm against the seductive values of our culture

is the challenge of our times. Religious missionaries are called to be counter-cultural witnesses. Counterculture is a sociological term used to describe the values and norms of behavior of a cultural group, or subculture, that run counter to those of the social mainstream of the day, the cultural equivalent of political opposition. A general example would be a competing, dissenting culture that wishes to change the nature of, or at least the dominance of, a predominant culture in a particular society. Dear Confreres, martyrdom is not merely a historical memory recalled on feast days, but it is a contemporaneous experience of various levels and realms for those who live as countercultural witnesses. It is the essence of being a religious! St. Kizito, the Patron of Children and Primary Schools, guardian of our province, intercede for us in our apostolic endeavors!

Fr. Ignace Paul

ST. BONAVENTURE COLLEGE

The annual meeting of Board of Governors of St. Bonaventure College was held on 05-07th May 2009 in Lusaka. This academic institute is one of a few centers in the world where Capuchins, Conventuals and OFM friars of great Franciscan religious family live together in the same campus. Two of our confreres Frs. Wojciech and Al teach at the institute.

St. Bonaventure College is affiliated to the Pontifical University Antonianum. There is a new lease of life in the institute with the arrival of SVD, OMI and CMM seminarians for pursuing their philosophical studies. The meeting was attended by Franciscan provincials from all over Africa apart from CMM and SVD provincials.

BISHOP FRANK TURNS 60

On 7th June Bishop Frank turned 60 years. On 3rd June all priests and brothers working in the vicariate gathered at his residence for a thanksgiving Eucharistic celebration followed by a fellowship meal. We wish our bishop many more years and prayers for God's blessings!

NO NOVICES FOR 2009-10!

Two of our candidates recommended by the provincial council for admission to Novitiate in Divine Word Novitiate at Nkwatia-Kwahu, Ghana left us the day after they received their diplomas/degrees at St. Bonaventure. They were our first graduates from St. Bonaventure College Lusaka!

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF SVD MARTYRS

On June 13, 1999 four of our Divine Word Missionaries were declared blessed (the last official step before sainthood is declared). The four, **Fr. Stanislaus Kubista**, **Bro. Gregory Frackowiak**, **Fr. Aloysius Liguda** and **Fr. Louis Mzyk** were among 108 Polish martyrs of the Second World War who were beatified. The ceremony, presided over by Pope John Paul II, took place in Warsaw, Poland. Year 2009 marks tenth anniversary of their beatification.



Fr. Stanislaus Kubista, SVD (Stanislaw Kubista) was born in 1889 in Kostuchna. Following ordination in 1927, he published newspapers for the Society of the Divine Word. When the German Army occupied Poland in 1939, the press was dismantled and all the papers confiscated. All the SVDs were arrested. On February 5, 1940, they were taken to the concentration camp in Gdansk. The camp had terrible sanitary conditions, the weather was cold, and the prisoners suffered from lack of food, hard work and inhuman treatment. Two months later, the prisoners were taken in

cattle trucks to a prison near Berlin. Fr. Kubista died at that camp April 26 in Orienburg Sachsenhausen. An eyewitness reported that he had become very weak from an inflammation of the lungs and intestines. For three nights he lay on the floor in the wash-room where the guards threw all the prisoners who were near death. On April 26, 1940, the manager of the barracks entered the barracks. He stood near Fr. Kubista and said: "You have no reason to live." With one foot on the priest's chest and the other on his throat, he crushed the bones in his chest and throat and transferred the priest's body to the crematorium.



Bro. Gregory Frackowiak (Grzegorz Frackowiak) was born in 1911 in Lowecice. He joined the Society of the Divine Word in 1938. During the Fascist persecution, Bro. Gregory worked in a printing firm in Lowecice. In autumn 1942, mass arrests occurred in response to distribution of anti-Nazi leaflets. Like so many others, Bro. Gregory had read the leaflets and passed them on. In the Fall of 1943, he spoke to his superiors about the arrests: "I am among those who are wanted." "Relax," the superior advised him, "there are many places in Poznan where you can hide." "I know," said Bro. Gregory, "But, Father, may I ask the arrested people to put the blame on me as manager of the press? There are fathers of families among them. Couldn't I take their place?" The next day, Bro Gregory bade his superiors good-bye, and was arrested along with others who had read and disseminated the anti-Nazi literature. The other detainees were allowed to return to their families. On May 5, 1943 Bro. Gregory was beheaded at the camp in Dresden.



Fr. Aloysius Liguda was born in 1898 near Opole. He was ordained in 1927. In 1930 he entered the University of Poznan and earned a Master's Degree in Polish Philology. He wrote three books and continued to teach then was appointed rector of the SVD community in Gorna Grupa. When the Nazis arrived in 1939, the house was turned into an interment camp for priests and seminarians. On February 5, 1940 the internees were taken to a camp in Gdansk, then to Dachau. As a prisoner who spoke German, Fr. Liguda became the interpreter for the other internees, saving them from many embarrassments. On one occasion he wrote: "People may treat me as something base, but cannot make me base, Dachau can rob me of all my rights and titles; the privilege of being a son of God no one can take from me." In 1942, when Fr. Liguda had grown weak in Dachau, one day guards transported him with the invalids from his block to the water reservoir near the camp where the prisoners were all drowned. He had said as he left his cell: "If I Fr. Aloysius lose my life, you will know full Liguda well that they have murdered a healthy man."

The official report was that he and the other prisoners had died, of pneumonia.



Fr. Louis Mzyk, born in 1905 in Chorzaw, Poland, was ordained in 1932. After completing his doctorate in theology in Rome, he was appointed Director of Novices in Chludowo, near Poznan as German forces occupied Poland. In January, 1940 he was arrested after talking to an undercover Gestapo agent about making plans to get the novices out of Poland to Austria or Rome. He was taken to prison in Poznan, where nine priests were kept in a room about 25 Feet Square with part of the floor covered with chopped straw. SS guards taunted them constantly and made sport of torturing them in front of visitors. Fr. Mzyk responded with courage and, along with two other priests, was beaten and shot by the SS camp director at point blank range. Their bodies were thrown out into the snow. (Source: www.svd-ca.com)

SVDS BID FAREWELL TO BISHOP BONIFACE TSHOSA SETLALEKGOSI

On 21 May, 2009 we bid farewell to Bishop Boniface Tshosa Setlalekgosi of Gaborone. Bishop Boniface was a father to all of us right from our arrival in Botswana on 31 July, 1981. During his homily he recalled vividly our own infancy and growth as a religious missionary congregation in Botswana. As a proud father he witnessed the expansion and growth of SVDs in to Zambia, Zimbabwe and

S.Africa. The farewell Eucharistic celebration also marked the conclusion of our provincial assembly held from 19-21 May. Bishop Valentine Tsamma Seane is the new shepherd for Gaborone Diocese. SVD Botswana District will officially greet the new Bishop on 23 June at 6.30pm in Holy Cross Parish Mogoditsane.



ONGOING FORMATION FOR UNDER SIX

The first ever gathering of confreres less than six years in the province took place on 22 May, 2009 in the provincial house with an opening Eucha-



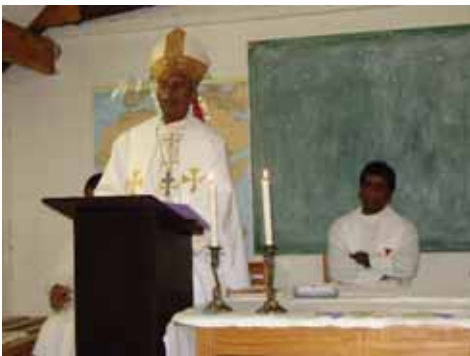
ristic celebration presided over by Fr. Ariel Tampus. It was organized Fr. Sunny, our Mission Secretary. Frs. Gabriel Afagbegee and Godfrey Manunga shared with the participants on the missionary pastoral situation in Southern Africa followed by a brief input on accounting and budget preparations by Provincial Treasurer Bro. Lutwin. Time spent in group sharing by our young missionaries working in three countries of our province was one of the most enriching moments during the day.

PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION

Deacon Vincent Mwiya, SVD will be ordained to priesthood by Rev. Bp. Raymond Mpezele of Livingstone Diocese on Saturday, July 11, 2009. The ceremony takes place in St. Francis Catholic Church

Dambwa, Livingstone. On the following day he celebrates his first Mass in Makunga. Dear Confreres let us make a serious effort to be part of this celebration. Kindly start processing of visas for Zambia!

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY



Botswana Provincial assembly was held in Francistown from 19-21 May. It was a grace filled time for all of us gathering for three days to

pray, share and celebrate. The sessions animated by various confreres included revision of vision-mission statements, personal growth, community life, ministry and mission, formation, administration, finance and ongoing formation. Fr. Marek Marciniak, the

Vice-Provincial, celebrating the inaugural mass urged confreres to imitate St. Paul in our missionary endeavors and pastoral praxis.



COUNCIL CORNER

The provincial council will meet on 10 July in Zambia. If there are any matters of attention kindly let me know.

A Reminder!

I like to call your attention on your budgets. Kindly follow the new accounting format for budgets approved by the Generalate. Many budgets for September Distribution had to be reformatted before sending it to Rome. Let us try to follow it strictly.

I will be away for home leave from 22 July. **Fr. Marek Marciniak**, the Vice Provincial will serve the office in my absence.

A hearty welcome to **Bro. Jan Potyka** in Botswana and **Fr. Pawel Smagljenko** in Zambia and **Fr. Godfrey Manunga** in S. Africa! They are our new confreres in the province.

We welcome Deacon **Vincent Mwiya** who will arrive from Ghana along with **Fr. Nathan Nyanga** in Zambia in the last week of June. **Nathan** from CFC Tamale, **Fabian Kalaluka** and **Peter Sindazi** from CFC Congo (expected in July) will do their pastoral year in Zambia during 2009-10 period.

Tomek Trojan leaves for home leave on 16 June. We wish him a safe trip and pleasant stay home!



BIRTHDAYS FOR JUNE&JULY

JUNE

Bishop Frank	7
Peter Sindazi	8
Isaac Muimui	8
Janusz	11
Brigita	12
Silas	13
Josephine	15
Elizabeth Hoon-Hee	15
Paul	27

Slawek	28
Dorothy	30

JULY

Vincent Mwiya	4
Aldus	6
Marcos	15
Edson Mlambo	16
Gasparina	27



Basilica Church of the Uganda Martyrs, Namugongo.