



# Word Aflame

Botswana Province Newsletter

May 2009

## Word from the Provincial

Dear Confreres,

Pentecost Sunday is one of the most ancient feasts of the Church, celebrated early enough to be mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (20:16) and St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (16:8). The entire period between Easter and Pentecost Sunday was known as Pentecost (and it still is called Pentecost in the Eastern churches, both Catholic and Orthodox). The liturgical seasons of Eastern Catholic Churches are equivalent to Year ABC Cycle in Latin Rite: Annunciation (*Subara*), Epiphany (*Denha*), Great Fast



(*Sawma Rabba*), Resurrection (*@yamta*), Apostles (*Slihe*), Summer (*@aita*), Elijah-Cross (*Eliyah-Sliba*), Weeks of Moses (*Muse*) and Dedication of the Church (*@udas-Edta*). The liturgical seasons mold the spirituality of our founder. In our society the solemnity of the Holy Trinity is our principal feast, and we celebrate the solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord as a Titular Feast and Pentecost as a major feast of the society. Praying the *Veni Creator Spiritus* daily and celebration of one mass every month in honor of the Holy Spirit are our spiritual inheritances from our founder himself. We are obliged to celebrate seven masses each year in honor of the Holy Spirit for our missionary work, if possible between the Ascension and Pentecost. At Pentecost we renew our consecration to the Holy Spirit. Our constitution 405 says we celebrate Pentecost as the contemplation of the paschal mystery. The Spirit of the Lord filled the disciples, making them a missionary community to proclaim the gospel with power and courage. In confirmation we too were endowed with the power of this Spirit to profess our faith boldly. Times we witness and live

today are marred by the unhealthy media bias that scapegoats our being a religious or a clergy! It demands the same apostolic boldness borne of a true Pentecost!

Paul



### **Farewell to Fr. Al Villasante SVD**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2010, during the Eucharistic celebration in Dambwa Parish, Fr. Al said good bye to the Province and in particular to Zambia District. Fr. Al came to the province in 1985. He served the Province and the people of God in different capacities as a missionary priest and in formation ministry. During his homily he said that we become Christians, because we love Christ. Whatever he did in the province was because of his love for Christ and his Church. He thanked the Province for helping him to grow as a person and as a confrere. After the thanksgiving song Fr. Biju, the District Superior thanked Fr. Al for all the contributions he made to the province and to the District, especially as a formator. During the meal that followed the Mass, Fr. Kelmens presented a card signed by SVDs and SSpS, and a small gift as a token of appreciation and gratitude. Farewell by Lusaka community will take place on Friday, 21 May at 17hrs with a Mass and Agape in Lusaka Philosophy house.

### **Fr. Vincent Mwiya Receives the Mission Cross**

“Receive this sign of Christ’s love and of our faith. Preach Christ crucified, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God”. (*SVD Ceremonial, II Edition 2009*). With these words Fr. Vincent Mwiya SVD, was presented with the Mission Cross. He received the Mission cross on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2010, during the thanksgiving Eucharistic celebration at St. Charles Lwanga Parish, Chindwin, Kabwe. The whole congregation extending their hands up on Fr.



Vincent said the prayer of *'the Blessing of Departing Missionary'*. Zambia District and wish him all the best in Zimbabwe. Mwende Buyino mukwai ! Fr. Vincent was ordained on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2009 and is appointed to Zimbabwe. He is from Makunka Parish, in the Diocese of Livingstone. He is the sixth Zambian SVD. He had been with the Chindwin SVD Community from September 2009 to April 2010. His presence and service in the SVD community as well as in the parish were invaluable and timely as Fr. Francis Allah, the Parish Priest was just recuperating from the accident. We thank him for his presence with us in Zambia District and wish him all the best in Zimbabwe. Mwende Buyino mukwai !

Fr. Vincent has arrived in Zimbabwe to begin his first missionary assignment. Frs. Tadeusz and Krystian came to Lusaka to pick him. We wish Vincent our continued prayers and God's Blessings!



### Welcome to Plot No. 2089

Daniel, Kangwa, Victor, George – Pre Philosophy

The bright shining sun's rays and the beautiful melody of the birds remind us of the beginning of a new day at Plot 2089. Each morning our prayers, meditation and liturgy lead us to yet another day of great experience. Brought together by the morning star to share in our spiritual meal through mass, it's now time to come together and break the night long fast. *Bonjour* (Good morning) as the busy dining hall bound individuals try to practice some French vocabulary learnt from the previous class just to gear up for the day's work.

"See you after class", as our formators see us off on our way riding to the SMA house for our joint classes with SMA brothers, which happens every other day. The interaction during the class among ourselves and the people we meet on our 20 minutes ride provide a great deal of points of reflection for the day. After a day packed with school work, manual work and many other activities like sports, it's time that we gather as a family for our recreation. It's UNO time and every one is looking forward to see who wins the highest point in the game, well it's a game of luck. On Friday evening everyone is glued to the TV for it is movie time and guess what...it's the survival of the fittest as every one fights to keep their eyes wide open to see the climax of the movie. Sunday presents us an opportunity to go out to our various places of our pastoral assignments in the surrounding parishes. Interactions with the youth, Altar Servers, Stellas, Holy Childhood and many other youth groups present us with an opportunity to share and learn many things that help us become better people.

There is certainly more to the inside of the green gate at Plot No 2089 than you see from a distance. The community prayers, meals, recreation, sports, classes and many other activities make this a conducive place for discernment and self discovery. Just like Jesus answered his disciples when they inquired of where he lives, we say 'come and see'. Welcome to SVD Propedeutic House. Come and stay, you will see!



### **St. Bonaventure College, Meeting of Board of Directors**

The annual meeting of Board of Directors of St. Bonaventure College was held from 04-06 May 2010 in Lusaka. The leadership of OFM, OFM Cap and OFM Conventual's from Rome and various African countries were present for the meeting. The OMI, SVD and Marianhill are the affiliated members of the board since their seminarians pursue their philosophy degree in the same college. Apart from issues of academic interest, formative questions such as owning personal laptops, cell phones and lack of academic hard work were discussed. St. Bonaventure Campus, Lusaka is just one of the few handful of places in the world where the three Franciscan Families live side by side!

### **Congratulations Fr. Likulano**

Fr. Lawrence has obtained distinction in Field Research Papers, Integrated Research papers and examinations in all subjects he has undertaken so far at the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies pursuing his MA in African Studies. Currently he is carrying out the field research for his thesis work. He has also been invited to present a paper on Religious Life in African Tradition in a symposium organized in Nairobi. Apart from his academics Fr. Lawrence has also been involved in various pastoral ministries and retreats for religious of various local and international congregations. We wish him all the best as he continues with his research work!

### **Healing Ministry in Dambwa**

People from various walks of life including pastors from other churches are approaching Fr. Rajesh svd for therapeutic counseling and healing prayers. This is a new ministry initiated by Fr. Rajesh that has been appreciated by many. In the context of mushrooming Pentecostal denominations and prosperity churches his noble work gives a new impetus to Catholic healing ministry!

### **Giyani Farewells and Welcomes**

It is not a usual thing to farewell people and welcome some at the same time, but this was what happened when the St. Augustine Catholic Parish, Giyani did to two SVD confreres on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2009. Fr. James Sebastian has served in Giyani for the last seven years and is taking up residency as Parish Priest at Phalaborwa Catholic Parish. Fr. Joseph Vadakkan was in Zambia for about ten years and is taking up the Parish Priest post at Giyani.

The day began with Mass with Fr Sunny John, Fr John Kennedy, Fr Ioane Racumu, Fr Joseph Vadakkan concelebrating as Fr James Sebastian presided. The parishioners came out in numbers to be part of the celebrations. Fr. James' message to the people was one of dedication and prayerful life. And the need to own and appreciate the different gifts we have. He reflected about the different gifts that he and Fr. Joseph have, and the need not to expect the same things from different people. He thanked the people of Giyani for all the support and care over the years.

The presentations of speeches and gifts followed after the Mass. Even if you do not know Fr James, by the presentations one can see how he has lifted not only the spiritual unity of the people, but also the organization structure and Mission/Evangelization structures to a level that works for the people and the community. And I believe that's the main goal, isn't it. And that created the anxiousness of the people. Will Fr. Joseph live up to the standard and expectations?



In his speech, Fr Joseph reassured people not to expect what James offered them but he will do his best to work with them in all aspects. The confidence that we saw in Fr. Joseph's presentation gave listeners the reassurances they needed. He planted a tree as we watched, signifying the new journey for him and the parish community. They will water and nurture the plant together, just as they will for the parish.

At one time Giyani struggled to get priests to say Mass for them. Now, not even a minute that they're without a priest. Feasting and dancing followed. It was a great day for the SVDs, the people of Giyani and for Fr James Sebastian and Fr Joseph Vadakkan. We wish them well in their new missions.



### **SVD Confreres Move into Phalaborwa Parish**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, Fr James Sebastian and Fr Ioane Racumu moved into the Good Shepherd Parish in Phalaborwa. Phalaborwa is a nice quiet mining town in the northern province of Limpopo. It is five minutes from one of the gates of the world famous Kruger National Park. Fr. Michael Bennett, the former Parish Priest will be moving to Moedjaiskloof near Tzaneen. The transition is slow as Fr Michael hands over the parish to the SVDs. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, the official welcoming and farewell will be done. It will be another great time to witness how people deal with the emotions of saying goodbyes and their readiness to embrace the newness.



We were enlightened by the visitation of the Provincial, Fr Shiju Paul, during his trip here for the ordination of the new Bishop of Tzaneen. We look forward to your visits, and we hope to share the stories of Phalaborwa as they arise.

Reported by Ioane Racumu



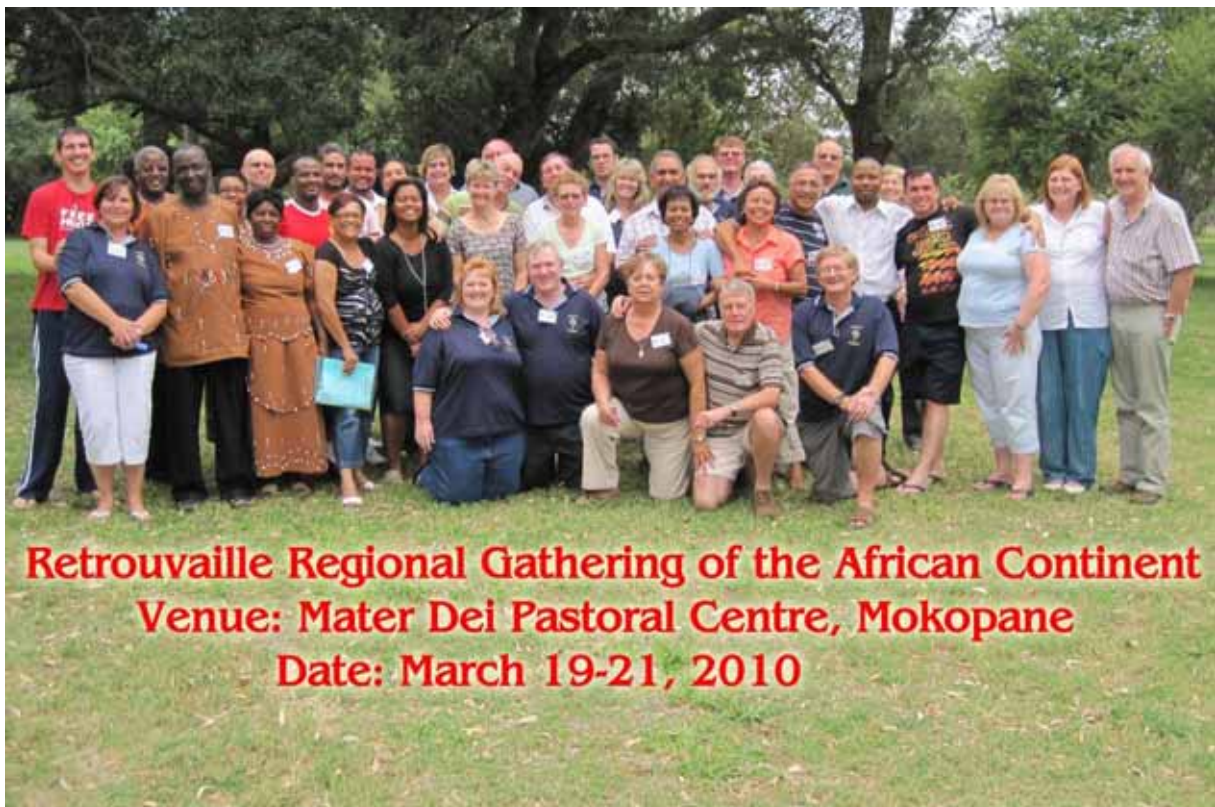
### **MATER DEI PASTORAL CENTRE, MOKOPANE**

SVDs took over the administration of Mater Dei Pastoral Centre of Polokwane Diocese in May 2008. During the last two years we were trying our best to make this Centre a Spiritual and Material Power House of our Diocese. We have succeeded to a great extent to achieve it within a short time. In the year 2009, the Centre was booked by the Department of Health for the training of the care givers in Waterburg district. This brought some income to the Centre. We were able to subsidize some of our courses and retreats which we conduct here because we got lot of booking last year. There are various activities taking place in this Centre throughout the year. We run a Catechetical Training Program for the Catechists of Polokwane diocese which is a two year course. The first group of 45 will finish their classes in May this year and they will graduate in October 2010. We also conduct retreats for Religious Sisters and various other sodalities and youth in our diocese. Most of the weekends are booked throughout the year for different activities of our diocese and also outside Polokwane diocese. Some of the Protestant Churches also make use of the Centre for their seminars and trainings.



### **Retrouvaille Regional Gathering of the African Continent**

Mater Dei Center hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Gathering of the Retrouvaille Community in Africa from March 19-21, 2010. The word Retrouvaille is a French word meaning rediscovery. It is a program that offers tools needed to rediscover a loving marriage relationship. Thousands of couples headed for cold, unloving relationships or divorce have successfully overcome their marriage problems by attending the weekend programs. The main emphasis of the program is on communication in marriage between husband and wife. It will give the couple the opportunity to rediscover each other and examine their lives together in a new and positive way. There were 22 couples and three priests as their spiritual directors for this weekend session. It was an international gathering since they were all from different countries like Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Canada, Lesotho and South Africa. Those couples from South Africa were from different Metropolitan cities like Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth.



**Retreat in June:** From 13-19 June, 2010 there will be a preached retreat for the Religious Sisters, Brothers, and Lay People at Mater Dei Pastoral Centre.

**CATHCA Training:** The Catholic Health Care Association of South Africa (CATHCA) had organized training for their care givers in Limpopo Province from 12-24 April, 2010 at Mater Dei. There were 100 people. We are always happy to get booking of this nature because it supports the Centre financially



### Ongoing Formation for the Priests of Polokwane Diocese

Fr. Roger Schroeder, SVD, our confrere from Chicago Province was the facilitator for a day of workshop for the priests and deacons of Polokwane Diocese. Fr. Roger talked on the Prophetic Dialogue and the Components of Mission. It was very well appreciated by the bishop and the clergy of our diocese in Polokwane. He was the formator and Rector of Maciek while he was studying in Chicago.

Fr. Roger was in South Africa for five weeks giving talks and seminars to various universities and Seminaries in South Africa. He was based at Lumko Pastoral Institute during his stay in South Africa. We like to thank Fr. Roger for sharing with us his clear thoughts on Mission and Church Today



### Congratulations Fr. Chrysostome

Fr. Chrysostome has graduated in Master of Philosophy in Religious Education and Pastoral Theology from St. Augustine College of South Africa on 23 April 2010. His thesis was on *Reconciliation in the Judeo-Christian Tradition and Its Relevance to Zaire/The Democratic Republic of Congo Post 1990 Context.*



### **New Bishop for Tzaneen**



The Episcopal ordination of Msgr. Joao Noe Rodrigues took place in Ave Maria Pastoral Centre, Mooketsi in Tzaneen on 18 Sunday, April 2010 with thousands of people turning out for the celebration. He was born on 8 March 1955 in Cape Town. He speaks Portuguese, English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Italian. All SVDs working in Tzaneen Diocese participated in the celebration. Fr. James was the dynamic brain behind all financial matters initiating various fund raising events to meet the expenses. People were also excited to see a bishop who can sing and dance equally.....!!!

### **Gumare Bids Farewell to Fr. Ajit**





*Lord, I really don't want to move. I like it here - there are so many memories. I am comfortable here because it is familiar. I know it is too large for me now, too much work, but I have such mixed feelings. I don't like the thought of all the change. I am so glad you never change. You are and always will be a constant in my life. Help me to remember that when I am packing and unpacking. Amen!*

*Ajit arrived in Botswana on a Good Friday in 2002, and since then he lived in the most difficult mission in Botswana, Gumare, until Easter Sunday 2010. The teary eyes seen at the farewell Mass speak of how the people of Mohembo and Shakawe loved this humble and simple bush missionary!*

## BIRTHDAYS FOR MAY-JUNE-JULY

### MAY

1. JOSPEH VADAKKAN
3. MARTIN KAWANA
4. FRANCIS ALLAH
10. KURIAKOSE
19. ELFRIDUS
22. RAJI MATHEW
25. ARIEL

### JUNE

7. Bp. FRANK
8. ISAAC MUIMUI
11. JANUSZ
12. BRIGITA
13. SILAS
15. JOSEPHINE
15. ELIZABETH
27. PAUL
28. SLAWOMIR,
30. DOROTHY

### JULY

4. VINCENT MWIYA
6. ALDUS
15. MARCOS
16. EDSON
27. GASPARINA



**Home leave: Alberto Sacco, Thomas Nelluvely, Janusz Prud, Lutwin, Kennedy**

**Welcome Back: Kuriakose, Tony, Chrysosotome**

**Recuperation in Home Countries: Silas, Sacco**

**Appointments: Pawel to Chindwin, Kabwe, Frt. Silvio (OTP)– Street Children Ministry, Kabwe**

**Frt. Peter Sindazi, our pastoral year student in Chindwin, Kabwe, has been asked to discontinue from the Society.**

**Probationary Year: Kelvin Banda in Dambwa**

**Pastoral Year: Frt. Alex from Nairobi in Mwandi, Frt. Kalaluka returns to Kinshasa after his pastoral in Dambwa, and we wish him all the best as he prepares for Final Vows**

**Ongoing Formation program for the Middle Agers will take place from 1 – 4 June in Provincial House**

**Fr. Wojciech, the Chairman of Formation Board Will attend the Zonal AFB meeting in Kinshasa from June 13-19, 2010.**

*South Africa 2010*



You will find here on ([www.churchontheball.com](http://www.churchontheball.com)) regularly updated information regarding the parishes nearby the stadiums where matches will be played and various events offered by the Church. It is the website dedicated to the presence of the Catholic Church in South Africa, on the occasion of the 2010 Soccer World Cup, designed by SACBC. The Bishops of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference have designated Sunday 13 June 2010 as World Cup Sunday. This is timed to the opening weekend of the World Cup and the end of the year for the Priest – so there is much to celebrate.(courtesy [www.sacbc.org.za](http://www.sacbc.org.za))





**The New AFRAM Zonal Coordinator & Execom,  
and Area Coordinators for Characteristic Dimensions 2010-2013:**

Chairman of the Executive Committee	Fr. Zeferino Zeca Martins (Prov. ANG)
Vice-Chairman	Fr. Tadeusz Grenda (Mission Sup. ZIM)
Zonal Coordinator	Fr. Xene Sanchez (CNG)

**Area Coordinators:**

Formation and Brothers' contact person	Br. Guy Mazola (CNG)
Communications	Fr. Mirek Wolodko (TOG)
JPIC	Br. João Fortunato Facatino (ANG)
Mission Animation	Br. Rudy Chamenyi (GHA)
Biblical Pastoral Ministry	Fr. Sebastian Quadros (MAD)

**Abuse crisis is actually a Hierarchy crisis**

The sex abuse crisis is not fundamentally about sex. The phrase is a convenient tag that has been applied to a deeper, ongoing problem that, at its core, has to do with power and authority and how it is used in the church. The sex abuse crisis is actually a hierarchy crisis, it is a crisis of a culture that can no longer maintain its superiority by dint of office or by claim of some ontological difference from the rest of humankind. The overwhelming evidence shows that from parish priest to pope, those charged with protecting the community, on hearing that children were being sexually abused, acted first to protect the institutional church. A central, sad truth runs through the story that has been unravelling for the past 25 years: When the community most needed its leaders to act as pastors they chose instead to act as princes, ignoring the problem all around them while employing every means available to spare the realm. Church leaders have suggested an array of defences. Most of them point to influences outside the clerical culture, to secularism, materialism, relativism, an oversexed society, hostile media, anti-Catholic lawyers, the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and most absurd of all, the defence that what occurred in the church is being unduly highlighted since abuse of children occurs in every sector of society. Surely some among the hierarchy must be figuring out by now that their response to the crisis is steeped in the very secularism and relativism that they condemn. Who among the bishops would stand in a pulpit and admonish a congregation to follow their example in dealing with serious sin: deny, attack the accuser, hide the crime, pay for silence if discovered, and admit "mistakes were made" only when public pressure makes disclosure inevitable?

One need not look outside the confines of the community for causes. It is beyond dispute now, as reporting of the crisis spreads worldwide, that the bishops used the secrecy of their privileged culture, the trust that those within the church and even the wider society conferred on them, as well as the labyrinthine and hidden protocols of their culture to shuffle offending priests and to avoid scrutiny by civil authorities. The bishops' strategy grew out of a model of governance owing more to the concept of royalty and to court behaviour than to the demands of the Gospel.

The royal model admits no wrong, requires absolute loyalty and is accountable to no one. Compassion has little place in the prince's world. History shows, however, that kings and



princes have a difficult time of it when the subjects become educated and understand that they have a right to know what's going on, to be part of the governing process and to demand accountability of those in charge. Fr. Donald Cozzens, who has written extensively about the clergy culture and its shadow sides, commented, "We are witnessing the collapse of the Roman Catholic empire -- not, I hope, of the Roman Catholic church. Empires, whether temporal or ecclesial, no longer work." The ecclesial empire no longer functions well because the people who do its work and project its message into the world no longer trust that their leaders will, perforce, do the right thing. It doesn't work because the 21st century demands accountability of its institutions and leaders. The fact that the crisis seems unending, and in this latest round of reporting reaching to the papal apartment should come as no surprise given the Vatican's record during the last papacy.

No better example exists of the corruption that extended to the highest levels of the church than the late Fr. Marciel Maciel Degollado, founder of the secretive order called the Legionaries of Christ. In recent weeks NCR has documented some of the seamier elements of Maciel's rise to power, a rise fueled by lavish gifts and an endless stream of cash for powerful figures in the curia. The late Pope John Paul II exemplified the blindness of the clerical culture, refusing for most of his long papal reign to acknowledge the persistent cries of abuse victims throughout the world. His action in the Maciel case was especially unfortunate. He aborted a Vatican investigation of Maciel, despite abundant warnings from a host of credible sources that Maciel had repeatedly sexually abused young seminarians in his charge. Instead, John Paul hailed Maciel as an "efficacious guide to youth" and bestowed special honors on the Legion. All the while, Maciel was making a mockery of the church and everything it should stand for, even as he manipulated the curia to his own ends. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, Ireland, after reading the documentation assembled as part of an Irish government investigation of sexual abuse by priests in his archdiocese, predicted that we would become "a humbler church." Martin arrives as a fresh voice, unencumbered by any involvement in the scandal. So far he has rendered a sober and honest assessment of the crisis and its causes. Perhaps Ireland, so thoroughly Catholic and so deeply shaken by the scandals there, could be the place where a new ecclesiology surfaces, one that is more inclusive and transparent than the royal model that is in decline. Perhaps it could be the birthplace of an ecclesiology that is humbler, not in a humiliated way, but in a way that takes stock of what a Christian community should be and how it should be present to the world. Perhaps it could provide an example of the kind of serious and deep introspection that will be required of the clergy, especially the hierarchy, to get to the root causes of the scandalous behavior of the clergy culture and to discern what reforms are necessary to make it a culture of service and compassion. Catholics want to walk with their leaders, not beneath them. We want to be deeply invested in the pilgrim's search, not sent on a forced march. We want to be the people of God, not cowed serfs.

We want our pastors back. We've had quite enough of princes.

*By An NCR Editorial, Created Apr 30, 2010*