

# Missionaries of Africa

White  
Fathers



# Would you dare an encounter with Africans “in the style of Jesus”?

**A trip to Africa... A few years service... A lifetime commitment...**

The Missionaries of Africa, sons and daughters of Lavigerie are present and active in 25 countries of Africa, as well as in the African World outside the continent.

Since 140 years, their aim is to commit themselves by words and actions in the “style of Jesus”. Their motivation is to expand the action of God in the history of humankind, as we understand it when reading the Bible and the Gospels. At present, there are more than 400 young people between the ages of 20 and 35 who are in formation in our Missionary Society.

Are you interested? Curious? We offer you a preparation before joining those who dare an encounter with Africans in “the style of Jesus”.

For more information, you can contact Father Gilles Barrette, Provincial:  
mafrprov@mafr.net

Telephone: (1) 514 849 1167 # 116

or contact the Missionaries whose addresses are listed on the last page of this News Letter.



## The Missionaries of Africa on the Internet Do you know these Websites of the White Fathers?

Canadian Website: Montreal:

[www.mafr.net](http://www.mafr.net)

American Website: Washington:

[www.missionariesofafrica.org](http://www.missionariesofafrica.org)

Mexican Website: Guadalajara:

[www.misionerosdeafrica.org.mx](http://www.misionerosdeafrica.org.mx)

International Website: Rome:

[www.africamission-mafr.org](http://www.africamission-mafr.org)

And also our Websites in Spain, France, Great-Britain, Belgium, Italy, Burkina-Faso...

## Some challenges to take up



Dear friends, our last chapter has defined the Missionaries of Africa in this way:

“Filled with the joy of the Gospel and guided by the Holy Spirit,

We are an Intercultural Missionary Society with a family spirit.

We are sent to the African world wherever our charism is required.

For a prophetic mission of encounter and witness of the love of God”.

This is true for us, and also for you, dear friends of the Mission.

Repeatedly, the missionaries must take up new challenges. Like having to leave a place and begin somewhere else, to live in an insecure and dangerous political situation for the people and for us also, to be threatened of expulsion, to come back definitely to our homeland, to learn a new language, etc. Each missionary sees that the same kind of challenges reaching the daily life of his own family and friends, when they have to leave their house and adapt to a new way of life in a home meant for old-age people.

Sometimes while staying in the same place, new services may be required of them: to take care of children-soldiers who had been forced to handle arms and kill: they have lost their innocence and have been wounded by life. Southern Sudan as well as Burundi have both joined the procession of countries hit by insecurity and the exile of their own population. Our confrères remain present, in solidarity with those who suffer. We rejoice in seeing that the Gospel is alive.

Yet our greatest challenge is this one: Fabrice Hadjadj is quoted as saying: “The Evangelisation of the world is never an adaptation to the values of the world.” It is not a question of making the Gospel to conform with the world, but to transform the world by the World of God, as Saint Paul puts it: “Not as a human word, but as it is really, the Word of God working in us” (1 Thes 2,13). This is our prophetic mission as mentioned above. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Gilles Barrette  
Provincial of the Americas

## Roland Dubourt, missionary in Tanzania

### A) --The spiritual dimensions

The Lord seduced me; I joined the White Fathers, became a Padre serving the people of Tanzania. I thank God every day for this wonderful gift, and for all my friends in Canada who support my work.

### Job descriptions

First and foremost, I pray every day. I'm an apostle, announcing the Good News of God's love and desire to give eternal life to each person. As a priest and pastor, I baptize people who are born again as children of God. I myself confess my sins and I absolve those who wish to approach Jesus in the sacrament. Every day people join me in offering the sacrifice of Jesus anew at Mass, thanking Our Father, and praying for our people here and in Canada. Also, I visit the sick and old people, anoint them and give them the holy food of Jesus. There are first communions and marriages.

### Preparation for service in Tanzania



Roland Dubourt in the eighties.



Children go to school. We repair the old classrooms.

I was born in rural Saskatchewan; life was very simple. We pumped water from our own well; we had an outhouse for a toilet; we did not have a fridge or a television set. The Church was the center of our lives, and we had a school from grade one to twelve. During winter evenings, we skated or played hockey on the road; we listened to games from Toronto and Montreal, and other cities on radio. We played cards, chinese checkers and others with our whole family.

Coming to Tanzania, I was able to adapt to the lifestyle of people, as it was not very different from mine. People eat the food they grow in their fields, sell some crops to get money to buy clothes, cooking pots, or medicine. Some have cattle and goats which they can sell for income.

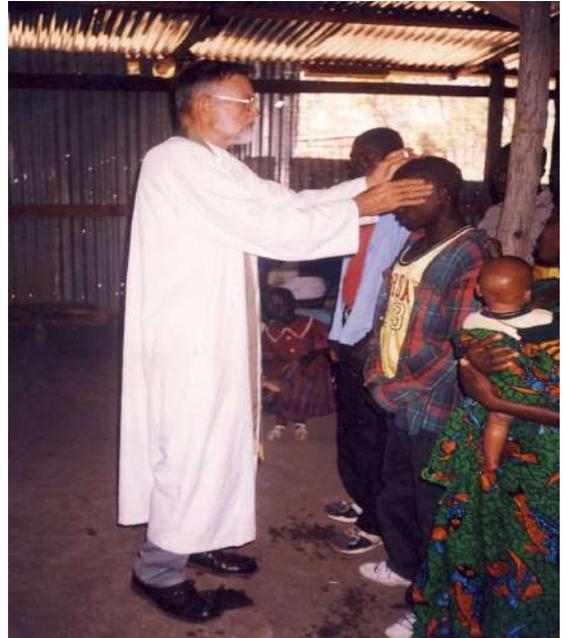
Despite my ignorance of the languages and customs of people, they received

me as their pastor, and put up with my deficiencies. I lived with other missionaries and learned how to go about being a pastor.

I live and work in rural areas. I live simply, no grid electricity, no village water system, no fridge, no T.V. and no computer. I live alone, but I'm surrounded by people who live nearby. Every ten days I go to Mbeya town, about a four hour drive to visit my White Father community and to do shopping.

### **The Holy Spirit grows the Church**

When I arrived here, the clergy and religious were foreign born mostly from Europe or America. The population of Tanzania was nine million; now, the clergy and religious are nearly all Tanzanians; the population of the country is now forty-five million. The missionaries who come now are from other african countries, or from India. There are many congregations of women based in India who come to work in education even to university level; also



**Baptism and anointing of catechumens and children. Always a joyful occasion.**

they work in the medical field. One group of women and men founded by Father Guanela serve the weakest people of Society, the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the old and abandoned people.

In the last years I have been setting up new missions and handing them over to the local Bishop and his clergy and religious. They are even better trained than we were many years ago. They understand better the thoughts and feelings of people and do an excellent job as pastors and teachers.

### **B)--Roland the missionary: the social dimension**

#### **Ignorance is misery**

I live among people. I see and realize the need to help them improve their lives. Our first President, Julius Nyerere, often talked of the enemies of the people, one of which is ignorance. As a pastor,



**Children need bridges to go to school -We help Isebelo village complete their bridge.**

I visit village churches regularly, and I talk about science, cause and effect. When people are sick, there is a cause. Ignorance leads people to look for false reasons for their misery; often, they say witches are to blame.

## Infections

During Mass, the liturgy calls for giving a sign of peace with your neighbor, which means shaking hands. I do not like to follow this part of the liturgy because we do not know whether or not people have washed their hands after going to the toilet. In our churches I insist that we have soap and water at the door for people to wash their hands before going inside.

We Catholics must give a good example to all by having well-built latrines at each home. Many people still do not have toilets; they simply go anywhere in the bush. This results in the spread of hookworm, other worms, dysentery, and cholera.

The weekly town markets where many villagers congregate to sell their



**Producing food is labour intensive. Four Moms help each other plant rice seedlings.**

agricultural products and buy other goods are very important in the life of the people. However, often they eat fruit without washing it or their hands because water and soap are not available. In this way, people are infected with the cholera bacteria. Every year people die because of ignorance and lack of sanitation.

## Building of schools and hospitals

On many occasions, I have been able to help villagers build schools or hospitals; they are staffed by government employees. They teach children and adults preventive medicine. Also, it is very important that all children get vaccinations against diseases such as polio and several others.

I make signs with messages about preventive medicine, and good health, as well as ideas for development. A good many of these signs deal with HIV and aids.

## Building of bridges

In our highlands there are many streams and rivers. Bridges are needed for children to get to school and for transporting goods. On many occasions, I have been able to help villagers build bridges. Our government has been unable to build bridges everywhere.

## Coming to grip with problems in villages

In several missions, I encouraged people to start a group for development. These were especially to look at the problems in a particular village. For example, why do many children die in your village? A mother may have given birth to five children but only one is alive. Why?

Or, in another village, the question is why are people suffering from malnutrition

and famine? I try to help them find answers and solutions for their problems. As a missionary I have always been involved in helping people help themselves.

## Church Development

Many young Tanzanians, women and men, wish to serve God in the religious life and the priesthood. Since many congregations and orders have come to Tanzania as missionaries in the last twenty years, these young people have quite a vast choice of possibilities. Many originate from fervent catholic families who live in rural areas; others come from urban areas. As they progress through the years of education, they reflect on what to do in life after their years of secular schooling; some join religious training centres. For example, in our diocese of Mbeya, there are several women who make their vows to serve God every year. Also, every year we have five or six ordinations of men to the priesthood. Some dioceses have more, and others less.

## Missionary efforts by Tanzanians

Our bishop, who is a member of a missionary congregation asks for volunteers among the Sisters and the priests to go to other dioceses, or to other countries as missionaries. A good number have answered his call. In the past, Canadians were missionaries in many areas of the world, including Africa. Now Tanzanians are missionaries to Europe and to the U.S.A.

## Higher Education

Since about fifteen years, religious and clergy have been able to do higher studies in various fields so that they can be teachers and leaders in their congregations



**Marriage of a young couple, Michael and Olivia with witnesses. Most people like a low-key celebration.**

and dioceses and in the national training houses as well as universities. This has been a very important development for the catholic church in Tanzania.

## Problems

As Tanzania urbanizes, so have congregations and dioceses concentrated their staff in urban areas thereby neglecting rural areas. The religious congregations and the dioceses find it difficult to send their sisters and priests to places where electricity, clean water and telephones are not available. Even the government of Tanzania has difficulties finding teachers and medical staff for rural areas. I think the same phenomenon exists in Canada.

0 Holy Spirit, grow the kingdom of God in Tanzania and all of Africa.

Roland Dubourt, M.Afr.

## Project N° 45 - Everything has to be done again

The Parish of St-Stephen is one of the 27 parishes in the Archdiocese of Khartoum, and the only one administered by the Missionaries of Africa. It is located in the Eastern Suburb of the city, in a district called Al-Hajj Yusif. Before the independence of Southern Sudan in July 2011, the parish numbered nearly 10,000 faithful, more than 95% of them originating from the South. At that time, we had seven outstations, a secondary school, four primary schools and a maternal school.

The independence of Southern Sudan brought a lot of hopes, freedom and better living conditions, and also a mass exodus of people going back home. Before December 2013, the number of our faithful had decreased by half, and the vast majority of those remaining behind, had been regrouped in camps before being repatriated eventually.

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm and the hope that the independence had brought to the country did not last. A failed coup



The official opening of St Stephen Church has been on the Patron feast of the parish – on the 26th of December, 2011. In fact since 1969, no church building has been officially permitted, especially for the Catholic Church in the North of Sudan.

d'état on December 13, 2013, followed by a bloody ethnic war brought once more the populations of Southern Sudan into a nightmare. Our churches were filled again, and our parish is back to 10,000 people.

### Pastoral level

In some way, although we could carry on our liturgical celebrations, we had lost many of the leaders whom we had trained, having moved to the South. So, we have to train again our Catechists. Among the youth there is certainly some good will, yet a basic time of training is also necessary.

Among the faithful who had come back, many have shown signs of trauma, especially among the youth, for having lived through difficult time in the South.



Since December 2013, when violence was widespread among the tribes belonging to different political parties, intertribal relations had worsened. The work of reconciliation will take time. It has to be done in our parish and in different communities. Indeed, it is in the Southern States, closed to our borders, Upper Nile and Unity, that the worst acts of violence and atrocities have taken place. Many among the newly-arrived in our parish come from these regions.

### **On the Social level, we have to face three challenges:**

**Food and medical help:** Mothers come to us to get help in order to feed their children, and in need of medical help. There are no free medical services, everything has to be paid : so you pay or suffer. On a daily basis we receive 15 persons.

At present, we are transforming one of our oldest outstation into a medical centre, where we will have an office for a doctor, a laboratory and a pharmacy, in a district so far deprived of these facilities. For this project, we are being helped by a local doctor, Doctor Wani, who owns a private clinic, not so far from our house.

**Education:** School fees are a constant need. Non-Muslim students often face some discrimination in the public schools. Therefore, our parishioners prefer to send their children in semi-private school. The school fees for a primary school student comes to 900 Sudanese Pounds, a year. (125 C\$). We have been able to help many children. For them it is the only way to hope for a decent future. In fact, those who cannot afford to pay, they are purely and simply sent back home.



**Paul Hannon, Card Wako, Archbishop of Khartoum, Martin Wullobayi and Emmanuel Tredou at the blessing of the foundation stone of the Church on December, 2006.**

Needless to say, that our Church yard fills up whenever the schools reopen.

To relieve the parents, we have opened last year two primary schools (one for boys and one for girls), and a maternal school, at a lower cost. There are 697 children in our two primary schools this year, while there are 78 at the maternal school. The majority of our pupils come from poor families, and are unable to cover the school fees. On top of that, we also have to pay for the salaries of our 29 teachers, three keepers. We have to cover the repairs, the administration, the current expenses such as photocopying, upgrading of our teachers. The salary of one teacher comes to 800 Sudanese Pounds.

We need your help and thank you in advance for your participation.

Joël Ouedraogo

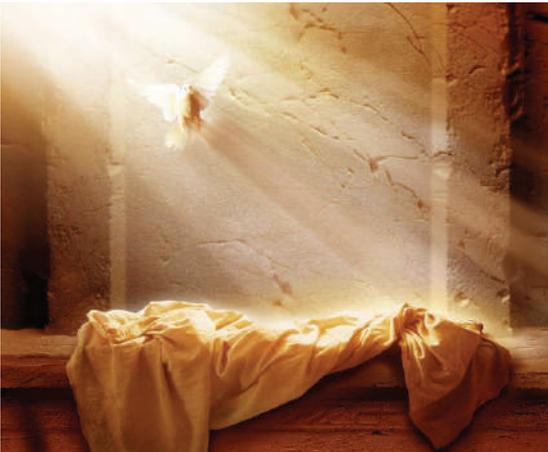
## The Christian Passover, a great movement

“On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. On the way, she even started running. The stone had been removed... the linen clothes lying on the ground, the cloth rolled up and put aside” Etymologically, the Christian Passover means the passage from death to life. Therefore, it is obvious, that a new movement has set in: Christ saves man from sin and calls him to eternal life.

The Resurrection of Christ fulfils the promises made by God to his people: then the feast of Easter, celebrated by a solemn mass, is the most important feast and the top on the liturgical calendar. This joyful day is highlighted in our churches, by the color white or gold, symbol of joy and light.



Mary of Magdala was the first person to see Jesus risen from the dead and also the first missionary to announce the good news.



Then Peter was enlightened, after John had entered the empty tomb. “He saw and he believed” (John 20, 8)

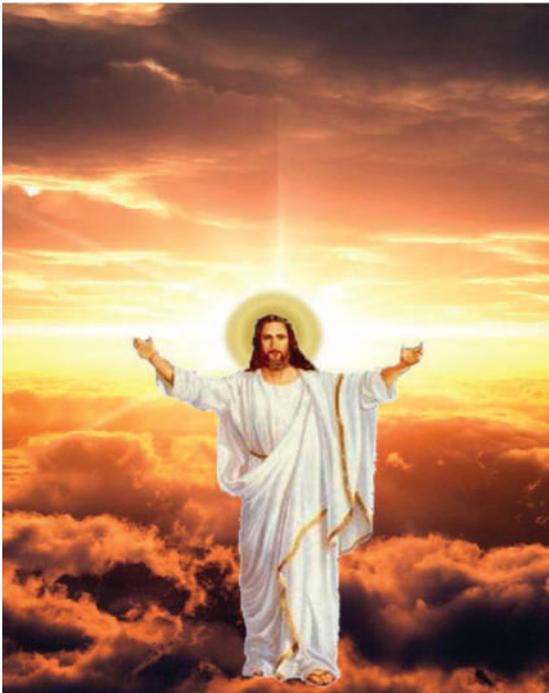
In fact, Mary of Magdala started a new move when she returned to the primitive church, being represented by Peter the leader of the Apostles and by the disciple whom Jesus loved. They themselves took the road, and John helps Peter to verify what Mary had told them. Then Peter was enlightened, after John had entered the empty tomb. “He saw and he believed” (John 20, 8). Truly Easter puts us on the move, interiorly as much as exteriorly.

It is a modern trend to travel, even at Easter. We celebrate Easter, while on the move. We celebrate Easter and we forget Easter. Yet it is exact that Easter, the true meaning of Christian Easter is a movement, a movement from death to life. It is a movement that nobody has seen so far, so it is beyond belief. Besides, a revelation such as Galilee observed about the movement of the earth brought this answer from the people: “If it were true, we should have noticed it”.

We are prepared to believe only what we have seen. The earth is without motion... Galilee listened



Father Michel Fortin, editor of *Letter to our friends*.



Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ is with us always; yes, to the end of time.

to the denial of the people. While he himself thought: “Yet it rotates”. And the disciples of Jesus really affirmed: “The Lord has risen”. Up until now, the movement had always been from life to death. But, this time, it was the other way around.

Since then, we know that life is greater, more mysterious and fragile than we used to observe. Thus, our life is like a way: when we do more than 85 km, we can measure the length we have made so far, and we do believe that the coming kilometres in Paradise with Christ will be a thousand times more numerous and marvellous.

Michel Fortin

## The refugees: to be welcomed?

The problem with the refugees arriving in Europe and America is very serious. This migratory crisis is worldwide and has been going on for decades. From all the Continents, it is mainly Africa that is by far the most vulnerable in this field, because of so many conflicts and wars waged in the past and present.

Who still remembers Idi Amin Dada, Biafra, Darfur, the genocide in Rwanda, the wars and famine in Ethiopia and Eritrea? For the time being it is Boko Haram in Nigeria as well as Shabab in Somalia and in Kenya. The struggle in Southern Soudan is between brothers, and



Burundian refugees waiting a ferryboat to go to Tanzania.

it is once again in Burundi. Since 2012, more and more africans are forced to flee their missions where killing is indiscriminate. The White Fathers have been concerned with old refugees coming back from exile. For example, in Tanzania, once the storm was over in 1994, the Fathers came back to look after their Rwandese parishioners fixed willy nelly in the neighbouring countries in some refugee camps.



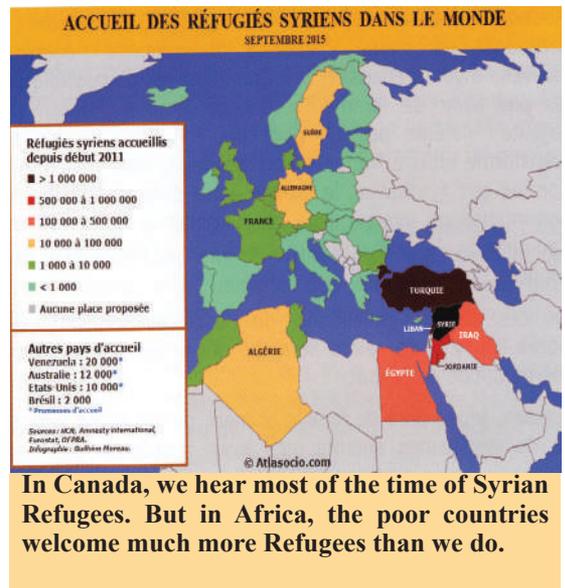
The Liemba, a boat well known by our confreres in Tanzania.

Another example, in the city of Jerusalem, the Fathers welcomed in the Basilica of Sainte Anne, pilgrims coming from Jordan. Many among them were the children of Palestinians refugees who had fled their country and went into exile into the Hashemite Kingdom. This

happened a long time ago. They had the opportunity to speak to a delegation of more or less 40 Catholics coming from Jordan. Among them, was a young woman with twins. She had become an American. Taking advantage of her summer holidays, she had come to visit her family fixed in Aman, and she had joined the pilgrimage of her parish in Jordan. All of them sang in Arabic. In front of the main altar, together they chanted the Our Father in their language.

A mother and her daughter of 18 told the Fathers their joy of being in Jerusalem for the first time in their lives. Their parents born on Nazareth had arrived as refugees, on the other side of the Jordan river during the war of independence. Now they were Jordanians. They spoke of the influx of refugees from Iraq in their country, with all their sufferings. The Christians from Jordan are mobilised to come to the help of their brothers and sisters in exile. The Church in Jordan plays its part in the work of mercy.

In Africa, the White Fathers are involved in multiple actions aiming at helping the thousand displaced persons. To better understand that we are not alone in solving the problem of migrants and that other less fortunate countries are also



assuming their part in welcoming the most fragile, we show you this news from Tanzania on this topic. As far as 10,000 km from Canada.

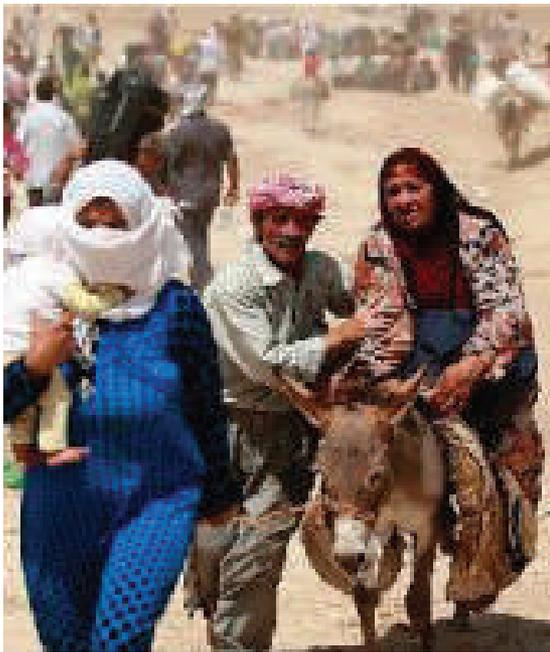
“Tanzania has welcomed 129,210 refugees from Burundi in 2015, and in 2016, they numbered 191,436. According to Mr. Isaac Nantanga, at the press conference held in Dar es-Salaam, since April 2015, 129,210 refugees have fled the political instability of Burundi to find refuge in Tanzania. He explained that the number of refugees in the camp of Nyarugasu in the district of Kasalu had reached the number of 79,290 and that 45,487 more refugees have been added to the camp of Nduta in the district of Kibondo, while 4,543 had been sent to the camp of Mtendeli in the district of Kakondo.

Before the arrival of these refugees, there were others coming from different countries already fixed at the camp of Nyarugasu. Among them 61,887 Congolese, 150 Somalians and 189 of other nationalities, mentioned Mr. Nantanga.

Moreover, this civil servant told the press that Tanzania, through her National Committee of Admission is about to finalise the status of 815 asylum seekers: among them, the Democratic Republic of Congo arrives first with 735 applications, followed by 25 from Burundi, 18 from Syria, 15 from Yemen, 14 from Rwanda, both Iran and Eritrea with 3 each, and 2 from Kenya.



**Missionaries of Africa forming the BENACO team in Tanzania, Once the storm of 1994 has passed, came back to Africa to take care of their Rwandese flock installed in neighboring countries, in Refugee camps.**



**Syrian Refugees running away from troubles and insecurity.**

In order to avoid overcrowding these camps, the Government has added a new refugee camp, beside the one at Nduta in the district of Kibondo, and also reopened the one at Mtendeli in the district of Kakondo. The camp at Nyarugusu in the district of Kasalu is the most crowded with 160,000 refugees. This phenomenon of the refugees is really upsetting and a cause of concern, since these populations are uprooted from their countries and live in almost unimaginable conditions, deprived of freedom and of their belongings. It is difficult to understand the rulers of these countries who have imposed on their people a regime of terror, and therefore forced them to flee?

Michel Fortin



(Cut here and insert in the return envelope with your donation)

# I wish to help the Missionaries of Africa

(For an **ONLINE DONATION**: [www.mafr.net](http://www.mafr.net) > Online Donation)

**Donation** .....\$ for the Missionaries of Africa.

**Mass Stipends** .....\$

*For a donation of \$10 or more, you will receive a receipt for tax purposes.*

## Other ways of helping the Mission:

### • Life annuity investments

- *I you are 60 or over, you can put your money into the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) Life annuity investment. This annuity is guaranteed for life and offers a rate varying between 6% and 9% (according to the rate of life expectancy).*

- *You will receive a tax receipt for at least 20% of the sum paid in. Only a small part of the payments you receive would be liable for tax.*

### • Bequest and legacies

- *“Better let our silver go on brother or friend, do not let it go to waste, rusting under a stone.” (Si. 29:10)*

### • Bursaries for Missionary of Africa candidates

- *One-year scholarship: \$ 1,700*

- *Three-year scholarship: \$ 5,000*

I enclose a cheque payable to the Missionaries of Africa

I prefer to pay by credit card (tick which card)



Card number:.....

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### • Gift of publicly traded securities

- *You will receive a charitable donation receipt and avoid capital gains taxes.*

**N.B.:** *If you do not yet receive this newsletter “Letter to our friends”, on request it will be sent to you free of charge, twice a year, as well as a calendar.*

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.....

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# Thank you!

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“Keep Africa in mind!”  
<http://www.mafr.net>

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