

Mission Letter

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA (WHITE FATHERS)

September 2020

Dear friends and benefactors,

Evangelization

“We must stand in the midst of them as the peaceful witnesses for the All Powerful, as those who covet nothing and scorn no one, people capable of truly becoming their friends. It is our friendship that they are waiting for, a friendship that should make them feel they are loved by God and redeemed in Jesus Christ.”
S. Francis of Assisi.

To evangelize is to take the Gospel to the people, to take Christ himself to the people. This is what the apostles did when they came out of the Cenacle after receiving the Holy Spirit. From that moment on, they were out among the people doing good as Jesus himself had done and many accepted their message and became Christians.

From that moment on, wherever Christians went, and for whatever reason, they took their faith in Jesus and, by expressing their love for the people, they spread the message. In Antioch, people were saying of the Christians: “See how they love one another”. By this we realize that “mission” is not reserved for a few, but belongs to every single person who has been baptized and has become a child of God. Many could say: “I have not been trained for this. How can I be a missionary?” By doing good, by showing love to the people around us, by being their friends, especially those who need love, those who suffer, those in need, those who are rejected.

Here are some examples of missionaries in Africa. The first step was to be able to communicate and preach the Gospel. This is for those who are in church on Sundays. What about the others who are not in church? How do we reach them? How do we make Jesus known to them? By becoming their friends, by showing them love, by caring for them. And the best way to do this is to know the people where we are



Adult education.

sent and see how we can help them get out of their difficulties, their problems, their suffering.



Digging wells and so helping people get water.

In Tanzania, I have seen missionaries building bridges to help people get their produce to the markets where they could sell them. I have seen missionaries digging wells and so helping people get water in their village instead of going every day to the river, sometimes far away. In South Africa, in one particular parish called Orange Farm where I have worked, after meeting the people in charge of the township and hearing about the problems of the area, we sat down to see what we could do. One of these

problems was unemployment. To answer it, we built a technical school where school-leavers could come and learn a skill: carpentry, mechanics, sewing and knitting, home care, computer literacy, adult education. The result is that today thousands of young people have a job and can earn a living because of the school.

The second problem was AIDS which was killing 800 people a day in South Africa at the beginning of this century. One missionary tried his best to show his love. He began by visiting the families of sick people; then he invited the members of those families to come and learn about AIDS so they could help their sick without getting infected themselves. He did that with the help of nurses and doctors. Those nurses and doctors also taught others who later were sent to teach the people of the area how they could protect themselves from that sickness. Then he opened a clinic where health professionals were helping the sick. This missionary, coming on home-leave one year, told me that that very year, they had sixty adult baptisms.

To do good to others, to show them love and care, is it not to preach the Gospel? This is what Jesus did, and what we are all invited to do. This is what the Pope is inviting us to do every time he reminds us that we are all *“missionary-disciples”* of Jesus. I end with an example of school children in Tanzania. I have seen some of them, on their free day, gathering firewood, or collecting water to take to the elderly who could not go by themselves. And one day one old lady asked a boy: Why do you do that? And he answered: Because I am a Christian!



St. Charles Lwanga Adult Education Centre.

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