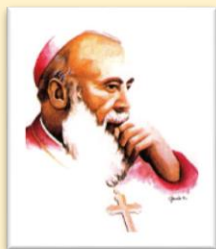


Mission Letter

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

December 2023



Charles Lavigerie, Founder of the White Fathers, 1884

Christmas reminds us that to be happy, we must be reborn every day. No matter how old we are, it is today, now, that Jesus exhorts us to remain awake and fully alive because yesterday is gone and I cannot live in the past. I believe that we have here the real attitude that allows us to be happy on earth as Jean Ferrat's song, "C'est beau la vie!" (How beautiful is life!) reminds us.

Despite our physical and cognitive limitations, advancing in age implies dying only at the moment of our last breath. This positive attitude allows us to remain in wonder at everything around us and to be able to look at the world with the eyes of the heart. More and more, people are becoming aware that the essence of human life, or the key to happiness, is to love.



Every year we celebrate the birth of Jesus who is Christ and Redeemer. Sometimes Christmas brings me back to the past and to what I have gone through so far, not to fall into nostalgia, but to give thanks to God to **still** be here, to **still** be able to love and not to withdraw into myself. It is in this spirit of gratitude for all that God has done with me, for me and through me in my life that I can accept to 'be born again' today, that is to say, '**re-cognize**' that something new is coming in my life throughout the new year 2024, that every day will teach me to be more human, more loving, wiser. Let us live it by keeping the eyes of our hearts open to better appreciate the privilege of still being here to welcome it.



These are my wishes of peace and joy for all of you who continue to support us in the mission that the Lord in his goodness has kindly entrusted to us.

Réal Doucet M.Afr



Paul LeBlanc
(1931 – 2023)

Dear friends,

Paul LeBlanc died recently after a long illness in Sherbrooke and went to meet his Lord whom he served faithfully as a missionary priest for 65 years in Africa, the United States and Canada. He was known to many in Toronto as he served as Pastor in the Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption for three years and in our community of Indian Road Crescent from 2000 to 2013.

I first met Paul in Tabora, Tanzania, where he worked as a curate in a parish and later served as chaplain in the Student Centre for many years. He was then chosen to serve his confreres as Assistant Provincial and then Provincial for 6 years.

I came to know him in our community of Indian Road Crescent, where we lived together for ten years. He spoke fondly of his experiences in Africa and in the Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, where he loved the people and appreciated the cooperation of the lay people in building the parish community. He treasured the active participation of the Filipino people in the parish, particularly through the association of B.L.D. Even after he departed from the parish, he continued to accompany this association at their different weekends.

Paul was a man of community and personal prayer. He was community-minded, and always ready to help. This was expressed in a particular way as the administrator of the community which was not only a book-keeping job but involved shopping, shovelling snow, etc. He had a sense of humour when speaking of others or even himself. He was very much appreciated in our community.

Paul, Good Bye and may God, whom you served for so long, welcome you in His Kingdom!



Marc Angers, M.Afr