

# Mission Letter

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



September 2023

*Charles Lavigerie, Founder of the White Fathers, 1884*

Dear friends and benefactors of the Missionaries of Africa,

My name is Fr. Paul Johnston and I am proud to say that, for almost 30 years, I have been a member of the Society of Missionaries of Africa.

My journey with the Missionaries of Africa started in September 1986 when I joined our community in Ottawa. Following 7 years of formation in Canada, Zambia, South Africa and England, I became a full member of the Missionaries of Africa on 18 December 1993 in London, England when I professed my Perpetual Oath. I was ordained a priest for the Missionaries of Africa on 27 August 1995 in my home parish of St. Anne in Brampton, Ontario.

My missionary journey has taken me to South Africa, Ireland, Ghana, Zambia, India and the Philippines. Each of these places challenged me in different ways.

Our missionary activity is traditionally centred around parishes, which is how my missionary life started when I joined one of our communities in South Africa following my ordination. However, my missionary life took an unexpected turn in 2001 when I said yes to becoming a formator in our congregation, which has been my main ministry for the past years in Ghana, Zambia, India and the Philippines.

After more than 30 years living outside Canada, I start a new chapter in my missionary life and have returned to Canada, appointed to our community in Toronto. I have come full circle, back to where my vocation started...back to where my vocation was nurtured.



One thing I have learned over my years of missionary life is that there are always challenges. I know there are many things I will have to re-learn about life in Canada, but I have always believed that all things are possible when we allow God into our lives. My new mission in Canada will be no different. In all of this, there is one constant...whether in Africa, Asia, Canada, or anywhere else in our world, I will always remain part of the Missionaries of Africa family following in the footsteps of our founder, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, who tells us...Be Apostles, nothing but Apostles. This is one of the greatest challenges we face in our lives.

I end with a word of thanks to Fr. Mike Merizzi, who, for the past 7 years has been co-ordinating our quarterly Mission Letters. I thank him for his dedication and commitment to keep our friends updated on our life as Missionaries of Africa.

I thank each of you for taking the time to read our Mission Letters and for your continued support of our communities in Canada and Africa. It is your support that gives us the courage to continue the mission entrusted to us. I ask Mary, Queen of Africa, to watch over you and bless your families.

Fr. Paul Johnston, M.Afr.