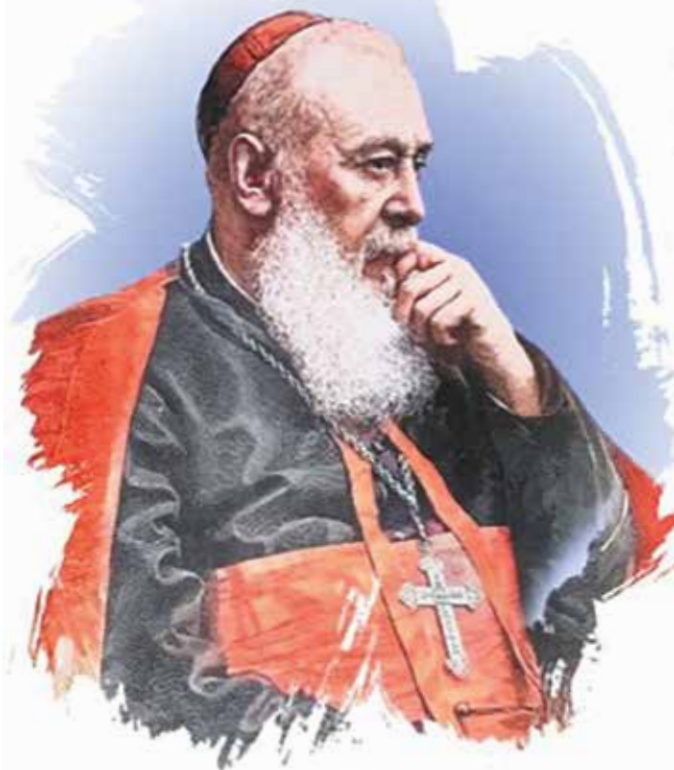


Missionaries of Africa

White
Fathers

FOR A PASSIONATE
AND RENEWED COMMITMENT
TO AFRICAN PEOPLES



1825 - 2025

BICENTENARY
OF THE BIRTH OF THE CARDINAL
CHARLES LAVIGERIE

The mission of the Missionaries of Africa is closely linked to issues of peace and social justice, intercultural and ecumenical dialogue. Our involvement in all these areas is evident in our pastoral commitments in parishes and in our specialised centres, particularly on the African continent. In the name of Gospel values, we also campaign against modern forms of slavery.

We live in intercultural communities that reflect an increasingly universal world. The Missionaries of Africa have around 1,200 members, priests, brothers and lay associates, from 36 different nationalities. Our houses of formation welcome around 450 young people from various African countries, India, the Philippines and Mexico.

For more information, contact the Missionaries of Africa in your region.

See the list on page 14.

You can also reach us by e-mail at this address: ams.voc@mafr.org

Missionaries of Africa on the Internet

Canadian site: www.mafr.net



Website of the Afrika Centre in Montreal:

www.centreafrika.com



American site in Washington:

www.missionariesofafrica.org



International site in Rome:

www.mafrome.org/



**Misioneros
de Africa**
Padres Blancos

Site in Guadalajara, Mexico:

www.misionerosdeafrica.org.mx

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THE BICENTENARY OF OUR FOUNDER'S BIRTH, CARDINAL CHARLES LAVIGERIE

This year, the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Afrika (MSOLA) and the Missionaries of Africa (M.Afr) are celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of their founder, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie.

For the Cardinal's spiritual sons and daughters, the celebration of the bicentenary of the birth of their founding father is an opportunity to present him to the world as a model missionary disciple of Jesus Christ for the African world.

Lavigerie was Archbishop of Algiers from 1867 to 1892 and appointed Archbishop of Carthage and Primate of Africa in 1884. From 1888 to 1890, he was the Pope's delegate for the Catholic Church's campaign against African slavery.

Lavigerie died in Algiers. He was buried in the Basilica of Carthage on 8 December 1892. His remains were transported to Rome in 1964.

In this edition of the Letter to Friends, you will read the testimonies of our confreres in Toronto. Forming a community of four confreres from very different backgrounds. They are inspired by the vision and spirituality of Cardinal Lavigerie.

Similarly, the report on our work in Ethiopia, generously supported by your donations, clearly illustrates the primary vocation of our missionary society among Africans.

Future editions of the magazine will focus on the exceptional legacy of our founder.

Father Serge St-Arneault, M.Afr



THE MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA IN TORONTO

The Missionaries of Africa have been in Toronto for 55 years, from 1970 to the present day..

At the end of 1970, they bought a house in Thornhill, on *Colonsay Road*. It was a fairly well-to-do residential area in the north of Toronto. The main purpose of the house was missionary outreach. In 1978, they bought the house next door, which gave them additional space and enabled them to create a new chapel.

house was officially opened on 21 November 1989.



In September 1996, the house became a meeting place for a small group of 10 to 15 people from Africa and the Caribbean, who met once a month in the basement.

In September 1998, at the request of the Archbishop of Toronto, the Missionaries of Africa took over the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, located not far from our home on *Indian Road Crescent*. They signed an initial three-year contract with the archdiocese. This will be the first parish insertion in Toronto with a community made up of Fathers *Michel Meunier*, *Denis Gagnon* and *Bruno Loiselle*.

Particular attention has been paid to the African community in the



Before the sale of these two houses in Thornhill, steps had already been taken to find ways of developing our vocational animation presence in Toronto. We also wanted to make ourselves available to exercise a ministry among Africans and ensure a presence among the faithful of the Muslim faith. With this in mind, in 1989 we bought a house at *Indian Road Crescent* from the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception. The



Fathers Michel Meunier, Denis Gagnon and Bruno Loiselle.

region, leading to regular meetings every Sunday for a Eucharistic celebration in the African tradition, with music and songs from various African cultures, drums to set the rhythm and people expressing their faith through dance. The Missionaries of Africa left this parish in 2003.

The Archbishop of Toronto then offered them the Francophone parish of Sacré-Coeur, where there was a need for ministry to the region's Francophones, as well as the opportunity to continue their work with Toronto's African community. Due to a lack of staff, they left the parish in June 2008, meaning that the community of *Indian Road Crescent* would be the missionaries' only presence in Toronto, and remains so to this day.

OUR COMMUNITY AND MINISTRY

Our current community at *Indian Road Crescent* is made up of four members - Father Armand Galay (Philippines), Father Andrew Lane

(Canada), Father Paul Johnston (Canada - Northern Ireland) and Father Jean-Bosco Ntihebuwayo (Burundi).

Like most Missionaries of Africa communities, we are of different ages, come from different cultural backgrounds and have a wide variety of mission experiences. We share our gifts and talents, we have our times of communal prayer, we celebrate the Eucharist daily, we eat together and we find times to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays. Although we are different in many ways, our common missionary oath in the Society of Missionaries of Africa, based on the vision and dream of our founder, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, binds us together.

OUR FUTURE

We are ready to commit to a parish in the Archdiocese of Toronto, preferably in the city of Toronto itself, and we are in dialogue with the new Cardinal Archbishop, His



Fathers Armand Galay, Andrew Lane, Jean-Bosco Ntihebuwayo and Paul Johnston.

Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo, to see how this can become a reality. Joining a parish will help us continue to build on our 55 years of presence in the archdiocese. We hope to have a committed community of missionaries in a parish and maintain the one on *Indian Road Crescent* working together and supporting each other with a common vision.

If this were to become a reality in 2025, it would have a special significance for us as our Society celebrates this year the bicentenary of the birth of our founder, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie. His vision and dream led to the formation of our Society and our sister congregation, the *Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa* (MSOLA). For 55 years, our

Toronto community has been part of that vision. Our ministry in Toronto and the Archdiocese of Toronto is one of service and availability, which is at the heart of missionary life, wherever it takes us.

Our community in Toronto and our international society depend on the support we receive from outside. Nothing we have been able to achieve over the past 55 years would have been possible without this support. We are fortunate to have many friends who assist us in our mission in various ways, financially and through prayer. They are part of our missionary family, sharing the dream of Charles Lavigerie.

We entrust our mission in Toronto to Mary, Our Lady of Africa.

OUR MISSIONARIES IN TORONTO

Father **Paul Johnston** took his missionary oath in London, England, on December 18, 1993. Ordained in his home parish of Ste-Anne in Brampton, Ontario, on August 27, 1995, he has served the mission in South Africa, Ghana, Zambia, the Philippines and India. For twenty-two years, he worked in formation communities, helping to train future members of the Missionaries of Africa in Africa, the Philippines and India.



He returned to Canada in June 2023 and was appointed to the Toronto community. Along with other members of the community, he is involved in pastoral ministries such as Masses, confessions and recollections. He is the delegate superior for Canada of the Province of the Americas (Canada, United States and Mexico).

Father **Andrew Lane** is originally from Newfoundland. After his novitiate in Ottawa (1978-1979) and his internship in Algeria (1979-1982), where he spent a year studying spoken Algerian Arabic and two years teaching in a high school, he studied philosophy and theology in Toulouse, France (1982-1985). He took his missionary oath in October 1984 in Toulouse and was ordained in August 1985 in his home parish in Newfoundland.



In 1985, he returned to Algeria for a year, then went to Rome to study at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies. During his time in Algeria, Rome and Egypt, he also visited Tunis, Damascus and Aleppo in Syria, and Nairobi, Kigali, Ghana and Burkina Faso in West Africa.

He came to Toronto in 1997 to begin a graduate program in Islamic philosophy and religion at the University of Toronto (1997-2003). He then taught at the University of Toronto until the end of 2011. Today, he occasionally helps out at a neighbouring parish when necessary and participates in events organised by the Office for Interfaith Dialogue of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Father **Armand Galay** was born in Cotabato in the Philippines in 1968. He was ordained a priest in 2002. As a missionary, he took part in various development projects in Burundi.



Since 2013, he has been appointed to Toronto to promote vocations and mission. He has had the opportunity to work with teams of young professionals and families, offering retreats and weekend meetings.

In 2023, in the Diocese of Saint Catharines, Niagara, Ontario, a number of professional college and university students have expressed an interest in a missionary vocation. This year, one of these young men expressed his desire to become a missionary priest. He has been invited to meet members of the Toronto community.

Let us pray for this young man who has made his choice. At the end of his studies this year, he will join the first phase of training with the Missionaries of Africa.

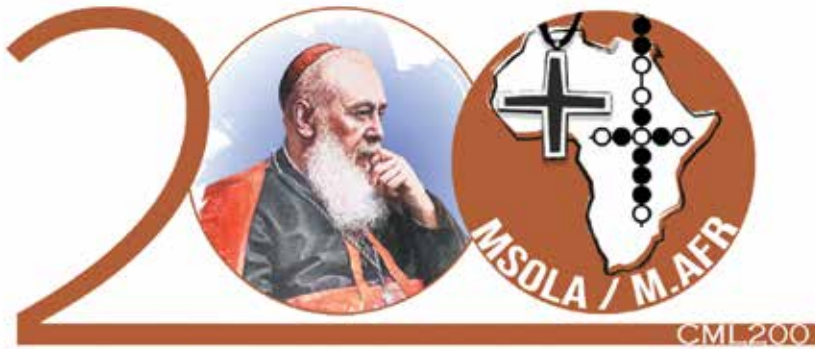
Father **Jean-Bosco Ntihebuwayo** was born in Burundi in 1973 and served for 18 years in various places and positions in Africa.



His experience in Toronto since his arrival on 24 June 2024 has been one of gratitude. He feels part of a community that is striving to integrate the witness of a prophetic mission.

He is pleased that his new community attaches great importance to prayer and mutual respect. He is grateful to experience a deep sense of belonging in a totally new cultural and social environment.

He is filled with hope knowing that his community is dedicated to building a more inclusive, compassionate, mission-oriented and pastoral church in Toronto.



A YEAR WITH CARDINAL LAVIGERIE

**LORD JESUS,
WE THANK YOU FOR THE LIFE YOU GAVE
TO OUR FOUNDER, CARDINAL LAVIGERIE
AND FOR THE MISSIONARY CHARISM
THAT HE PASSED ON TO US.**

**STRENGTHEN IN US
THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER AND SIMPLICITY.
CONSOLIDATE OUR COMMUNITY
AND INTERCULTURAL LIFE.
REVIVE OUR DEDICATION,
ENTHUSIASM AND APOSTOLIC ZEAL.**

**DEEPLY RENEW
OUR MISSIONARY VOCATION
IN THE SERVICE OF THE AFRICAN WORLD.
WE ASK THIS THROUGH THE INTERCESSION
OF OUR LADY OF AFRIKA.
AMEN.**

Aid to Ethiopia

This project dates back to July 2023 and was designed to provide emergency aid to survivors of the war in various regions of Ethiopia. In order to carry out this undertaking, the project leaders from the Missionaries of Africa's three social and development centres, namely the BruhTesfa Youth Development Centre (Adigrat, Tigray region), the St Mary's Children's Home (Adigrat, Tigray region) and the Selam Youth Centre (Kombolcha, Amhara region), were approached for their knowledge of their respective localities and their practical experience in identifying the immediate needs of the local community.

TUTORIALS FOR SIXTH, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH YEAR STUDENTS

During the two years of war (November 2020 - December 2022), schools were closed. In March 2023, the government announced the resumption of the school programme, which finally took place in May 2023.

Given that the pupils had been out of school for more than two years, and even though the schools were reopened a year ago, it was still necessary to help the pupils re-orientate themselves towards the curriculum and develop a renewed interest in their studies.

Support classes organised by the Bruh Tesfa Youth Development Centre have been essential in helping pupils prepare for school and slowly catch up on what they missed during the suspension of the curriculum. English and maths classes were organised for pupils in grades six to eight. The programme



ran for two months and was attended by a total of 185 pupils from all levels. At the end of the programme, all students received notebooks and pens.

FOOTBALL FOR PEACE

This programme is part of an effort to rehabilitate young people. The war caused significant emotional, psychological and physical damage to those who survived. Young people, although apparently strong and dynamic, are very vulnerable to the traumatic experience of war. Many of them, because of compulsory military conscription, have real experience of what it is like to fight in a war. Football for Peace is an initiative aimed at releasing pent-up anger, frustration and fear. The centre has hired professional coaches who are able to instil the values of fair play, tolerance and, above all, peaceful coexistence during training and at the sporting event that follows. A total of 98 young people took part in the programme, which lasted around two months.



FOOD AID PROGRAMME

When the war in Tigray began in November 2020, St Mary's Children's Home began organising relief activities, mainly for the elderly, widows and families with young children. The beneficiaries of this programme received wheat flour. On some occasions, cooking oil, soap and blankets were provided, but it later became clear that food (wheat flour) was needed more than anything else, so the programme concentrated on distributing wheat flour to its beneficiaries.

Report on project 73

In April 2024, a food aid programme was launched to include people from different areas of Adigrat. Representatives from the different areas were approached to select people in need of emergency assistance.

For the month of April 2024, 60 people from different parts of Adigrat each received 50 kg of wheat flour. In May 2024, 32 disabled people each received 25 kg of wheat flour. This activity was carried out under the direction of the Filippini sisters' community in Adigrat. In the same month, 60 people from the IDP camps in Adigrat each received 25 kg of flour.

Finally, in September 2024, 80 people from IDP camps and 70 people from different areas of Adigrat each received 50 kg of flour. September is a month when Ethiopians celebrate their New Year and the Feast of the Cross; the beneficiaries of the emergency aid were extremely grateful for this assistance. The sack of flour arrived at a time when those who can barely get a meal a day have received a gift that will enable them to prepare at least one loaf of bread for these two important festivals.



Report by Father **Clayb Caputolan**, M.Afr, Adigrat, Ethiopia, on behalf of the Missionaries of Africa Emergency Relief Fund for the Tigray and Amhara regions of Ethiopia.



Thanks to your generosity, the amount raised for project 73 has reached \$94,405. Thank you very much.

Refurbishment of the Bamako reception centre in Mali

Today we are presenting a project to support the White Father communities working in Mali and Mauritania in West Africa. There are more than forty confreres in this region. Most of the communities are in remote areas. The missionaries have to travel to the capital Bamako for supplies and also to take a few days off for a well-earned rest. There are a total of 15 rooms in the residence.

The main house has deteriorated badly over the years. There is now an urgent need to renovate this guest house. There is a lot of damp under the floors of the bedrooms and in the walls. The bathrooms are also in a very poor state.

Completion of this project will improve the quality of reception for our colleagues, most of whom live in areas of tension linked to insecurity, and who need a welcoming and restful environment when they come to the capital Bamako.

We would like to thank you for your generosity.

Otmar Strzoda, M.Afr, Josef Stamer, M.Afr,

Maarten Bloemarts, M.Afr, Sylvain Musangu, M.Afr



***The form for your contribution
to project 78 can be found on page 15.***

Parents, benefactors and friends, if you wish to help Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers);

- ∞ with a donation for a specific project
- ∞ with a donation for the works of the White Fathers, in general
- ∞ by investing money with an annuity for life
- ∞ with gifts and bequests in your will
- ∞ by contributing to the training of young missionaries
- ∞ with a donation or gift of publicly traded securities

- ✓ You can use page 15 of this magazine, fill it in according to your intentions, cut it out and send it to us with the return envelope to the address on page 16. We also welcome your Mass intentions. Above all, we thank you for your prayers.
- ✓ You can visit our website www.mafr.net to make a secure online donation.
- ✓ You can also meet a missionary at one of our homes.

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416 530-1887 mafrtoronto@rogers.com

Missionaries of Africa policy for projects that appear in the Letter to Our Friends:

- 1- All the projects that appear in the Letter to Our Friends are exclusively for Africa.
- 2- All the money received goes to Africa.
- 3- A Missionary from Africa oversees all projects.



(Cut out and insert in return envelope)

I want to help the Missionaries of Africa

For an ONLINE DONATION > www.mafr.net > Make a donation

Donation _____ \$ for projet no 78 (See page 13)

Gift _____ \$ for the Missionaries of Africa

A donation of \$10 or more entitles you to a tax receipt.

Other ways to help the Mission:

• Investments with an annuity for life

- If you are 60 or over, you can invest your money in the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) «Investments with an annuity for life». This annuity is guaranteed for life and offers a rate that varies according to life expectancy.
- You will receive a tax receipt for at least 20% of the amount paid. Only a small portion of the payments you receive may be taxable.

• Gifts and bequests

«For a brother and a friend, sanctify your money, rather than let it rust in your chest.» (Book of Ecclesiasticus 29:10)

• Scholarships for our 500 Missionaries of Africa candidates

- Bursary for one year of training: \$1,700
- Bursary for three years of training: \$5,000

I enclose a cheque payable to Missionaries of Africa.



I prefer to pay by credit card (check card).



Name and surname: _____

Card No: _____ your CVV _ _ _

Expiry: _____ Signature : _____

P.S. : *If you don't receive this Letter to Friends brochure, just ask for it and we'll send it to you free of charge, four times a year, in addition to the calendar.*

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Sincere thanks!

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« Don't forget Africa! »
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CML200

A year with Cardinal Charles Lavigerie
31.10.2024 – 31.10.2025



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