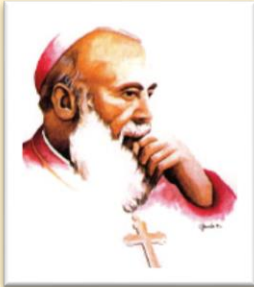


Mission Letter



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

September 2024

Charles Lavigerie, Founder of the White Fathers, 1884



A man named Joseph and his betrothed Mary made the long journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered according to the law. Upon arriving in Bethlehem, they knocked on many doors, but the answer was always the same: “...there is no room for you here...try somewhere else...” Finally, one innkeeper offered them a simple stable in the back for the night. It was there Mary gave birth to a child they named Emmanuel, a name that means God Is With Us!

The story of the journey of Mary and Joseph is repeated many times in our world today. It is a story lived by men, women and children forced to leave their homelands, running from war and violence...running from persecution. They make long and often treacherous journeys only to find doors shut in their faces...being told, “There is no place for you here. Go back to where you came from.” They are searching for a place to lay their heads...a place where they can live in peace and experience things most of us will enjoy this Christmas Season.

In one of his Christmas messages, our Holy Father, Pope Francis presents us with an attitude we must have toward people in our world when he states: *"...May he soften our often stony and self-centered hearts, and make them channels of his love...May he bring his smile, through our poor faces, to all the children of the world: to those who are abandoned and those who suffer violence. Through our frail hands, may he clothe those who have nothing to wear, give bread to the hungry and heal the sick. Through our friendship, such as it is, may he draw close to the elderly and the lonely, to migrants and the marginalized...may he bring his tenderness to all and brighten the darkness of this world..."*

In the coming weeks, our homes will be decorated, lights will be installed, Christmas trees will be erected, gifts will be bought for our loved ones and friends and Christmas songs will be sung. While we make these preparations to celebrate Christmas, let us not forget those making difficult journeys only to find doors closed in their faces.

Christmas is a time of giving and receiving. Above all, it is a time to give thanks for the greatest gift of all...the gift of a small child, born in simple surroundings, cared for by a man named Joseph and a woman named Mary.

As we reach the end of 2024, the family of Missionaries of Africa thanks all of you for your generosity and prayers. We thank you for being part of our missionary family. May the Child of Bethlehem bless each of you and your families. May we continue to work together to ensure the message of Christmas...a message of peace, joy and inclusiveness...reaches every corner of our world and changes the hearts of all people of our world today. May those who knock on our doors not be rejected but may be welcomed with open arms.

Just as the innkeeper made a difference in Bethlehem, may we continue to seek ways of making a difference in our world today and every day. May we **BECOME PEOPLE OF HOPE** in the lives of those around us who have lost hope.

LET US BECOME PEOPLE OF HOPE



Fr. Paul Johnston, M.Afr.
Delegate – M.Afr. - Canada