



Word Aflame

Botswana Province Newsletter

April-May 2009

Word from the Provincial

Dear Confreres,



The Oscar night held on 22 February, 2009 belonged to *Slumdog Millionaire*, the rags-to-riches tale that has enchanted audiences around the world. The film, set in the slums of Mumbai, won eight awards in total, including gongs for best adapted screenplay, cinematography, sound mixing, film editing, best original score and best song. The story of Jamal Malik, an 18 year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai, who is about to experience the biggest day of his life- with the whole nation watching, he is just one question away from winning a staggering 20 million rupees on India's "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" But when the show breaks for the night, police arrest him on suspicion of cheating; how could a street kid know so much? Desperate to prove his innocence, Jamal tells the story of his life in the slum where he and his brother grew up, of their adventures together on the road, of vicious encounters with local gangs, and of Latika, the girl he loved and lost. Each chapter of his story reveals the key to the answer to one of the game show's questions. Each chapter of Jamal's increasingly layered story reveals where he learned the answers to the show's seemingly impossible quizzes. At the heart of its storytelling lies the question of how anyone comes to know the things they know about life and love. The essence of the film is about

optimism and the power of hope and our lives.

Dear confreres, in the coming days we enter in to the final journey of Jesus. We contemplate on passion narratives: how movement, composition, light, color, music, scent, faces and voices can be stunningly shaped to create the most exquisite drama of a quick and brutal death. Passion prayer is deep prayer; it demands care, delicacy, sensitivity, quiet, a giving of self in love and surrender, and being with. We experience the passion, to com-passionate, to suffer with Jesus' suffering. The real meaning of Jesus story lies in his life rather than his death. The seemingly impossible quizzes of our lives gather its answers from our deep union with Jesus. At the heart of narrating Jesus story lies the question of how anyone comes to know the things they know about life and love. Resurrection is about the relentless hope that defies all hopelessness. Even more it is about the hope that can sustain us in the face of bewildering odds we meet in our own personal religious missionary commitment in radical discipleship. *Slumdog Millionaire* is a spirited underdog fable marinated in modern India's melting pot that feature orphans, slaughter, organized crime, poverty, enslavement and police brutality. The heartfelt underdog tale leaves audiences 'smile-on-the-face feel good' with its rousing ending. I must weep at the empty tombs of my life. It is here I am awakened to hear my name called. It is in this awakening we become pathfinders and whistleblowers. May we all once again embrace the aliveness of God in and around us through relentless hope especially when we often get into a never-ending succession of religious-missionary credit crunches! May this Easter leave us *smile-on-the-face feel good!*

Shiju Paul



THE VULNERABLE GOD – A GOOD FRIDAY MEDITATION

We all have an inborn idea of God, a sort of dictionary definition of God: God is almighty, all knowing and all pervading: creator of everything and lord of all, ultimate source and final goal of our life. God is immanent and transcendent. In him we live and move and have our being... with this image of God let us go up the hill of Calvary. There we stand before a man who hangs between heaven and the earth. The heaven has apparently forsaken him, for he cries out: My God, my God why have you forsaken me! (Mt 27:46). The earth has abandoned him, for all his close friends have left him alone at this moment of agony. He could not come down from the cross; he was unable to save himself. (Mt 27:42). The transcendent God above the heavens does not seem to respond to his cries, the God within the cave of his heart does not seem to wake up. Here is a man who undergoes the deepest suffering of human beings: utter loneliness. With the eyes of faith we look deep into his tearful eyes, his bloodstained face and confess: this is God's face turned towards the world. When we do that all our powerful images of God crumble and all the beautiful pictures of God turn into dust. Here we are confronted with the paradox of faith in the crucified God:

We conceive an almighty God, but the cross reveals to us a God who is weak and feeble. (1Cor 1:25)

We imagine an all knowing God, but the cross unfolds the foolishness of God

We look up to heaven in search of a transcendent God, but here God meets us on the blood-stained paths of this earth.

We meditate on a God resting within our heart, but God encounters us in the struggles of human life.

We conceive a God who is enthroned above our heads as the Lord of all; but in Jesus God meets us as a slave waiting to wash our feet. (Jn 13.3)

We imagine a God seated on the peak of this universe, but in Jesus God walks with us in this valley of tears.

We contemplate God as the absolute beauty permeating the entire creation: but in Jesus God encoun-

ters us in the wounds of the humans and in the woundedness of the mother earth.

We cry to the almighty God who has the power to remove all sufferings from this world within a moment; but on the cross we meet a God who himself becomes victim of the deepest suffering of human beings. We often ask, why God does not intervene at the atrocities committed by human beings; but the cross shows how God himself has become a prey to human cruelty.

In our frame of mind God the Lord of history is above history for he is beyond change and suffering, but the crucified God is God within history: God suffering with us. Here we meet God on the evolutionary paths of our life stained with blood and tears, shaped by sweat and soil. The God revealed in the crucified Jesus is not the *motor immobilis* of the philosophers, but the Emmanuel God with us in the shadows of suffering and death. God's being is becoming; God's action is passion. This is the mystery and message of the cross of Jesus. God suffering? How to reconcile these two terms? Yes it is a paradox to look at the crucified face of Jesus and discover there the face of God...In the risen Christ God revealed his healing presence in the world, the recreating dynamism in the universe. Resurrection is the manifestation of the power of God: not the omnipotence, but the transforming love. God saves humanity not as an almighty God from above, but as a saviour who takes part in our struggles and in our creative endeavours. Emmanuel – God is radically with us in our sufferings, and in our creative pursuits as well; God is with us as the crucified and risen Lord. Crucifixion and resurrection are not just historical events of the past, but salvific realities of the present. They reveal the way God is with us in our midst here and now. Look deep in to the wound of a wounded person and confess *my Lord and my God!* – This is Christian contemplation. Get involved in the initiatives of integral liberation and feel, *God is with us* – this is Christian commitment (Painadath, Sebastian *The Spiritual Journey* pp.87-97).

AFRAM MISSION SECRETARIES WORKSHOP IN LUANDA, ANGOLA

A five day workshop for the Mission Secretaries of AFRAM zone was held in Luanda, Angola from March 8-13, 2009. There were 10 participants including Fr. Xene Sanchez the AFRAM Zonal Coordinator and Fr. Pio Estepa the Generalate Mission Secretary. Fr. Pio was the main facilitator of this workshop. Some of the topics discussed and reflected on in our workshop were:-

1. How to promote collaboration of the SVD and the lay people especially on the Mission Animation.
2. How to facilitate the inculturation of the Mission Animation's work in Africa? Adopt in a realistic mode the triple responsibility of the Mission Secre-





taries in the actual context of the continent. In his presentation/talks Fr. Pio said that the role of the mission secretary is to help stir up missionary reflexivity through ongoing dialogue between the *mission project* (what should be done) and the *mission practice* (what really happens) within a province, region or mission. And it would be appreciable for the Mission Secretary to form a team with the coordinators of the Biblical Pastoral Ministry, the JPIC, and Communication – a team serving as mentor to the provincial or regional leadership. The Mission Secretary is to help awaken, nourish and sustain mission awareness and generosity within local churches.

Fr. Pio also stressed the importance of SVD-Laity Mission Partnership. It was brought to our attention that the question of lay collaboration or participation in our mission came up in several General chapters and the 16th General Chapter of 2006 passed two recommendations regarding “Lay participation/ Collaboration.” They are as follows._

1. That the Divine Word Missionaries support and strengthen already existing projects of collaboration with the laity in the different provinces/regions, zones/ sub zones, and promote such projects where they do not exist

2. That the Society promote where possible the participation of the laity in relevant sessions within our provincial assemblies and chapters in line with our Statutes for Chapters, our initial and ongoing formation, our SVD administration, and our missionary work *ad gentes*.

Fr. Xene the zonal coordinator in his talk explained about the Manual of Mission Secretaries. In one of the sessions Bro. Facatino of Angola province shared about the realities of Angola as well as the SVD apostolate on the level of the Characteristics Dimensions. At the end of the workshop the following Plan of Action was drawn for our future considerations.

PLAN OF ACTION: LUANDA 2009

1. That SVD Mission Secretaries in AFRAM take a PROACTIVE role in spiritual ongoing formation of confreres.

2 That SVD Mission Secretaries in AFRAM encourage and support every confrere in his role as PRIMARY Mission Animator.

3 That SVD Mission Secretaries in AFRAM promote SVD-Lay Associations for mission partnership.

4 That SVD Mission Secretaries in AFRAM explore new and creative ways of fundraising as ministry.

The workshop was a great success and it was very well organized and planned by the host province (Angola). The Provincial, the Mission Secretary, the Superior Delegatus of Angola together with the confreres in Angola worked very hard in making all the arrangements for our workshop. We were also given opportunities to visit many of our Missions and Parishes in Luanda and also some interior missions.

Sunny Vattapparayil SVD

RADIO MOSI-O- TUNYA - LIVINGSTONE

Radio Mosi-O- Tunya, the Catholic Radio Station of the diocese of Livingstone will clock 5 years of its existence on the 22 October 2009. The vision of the radio station is to foster integral evangelization that targets all individuals, families, communities, institutions and situations. The station is committed to holistic broadcasting through quality production and programming by providing a forum where Gospel values are communicated to the local community.

Fr. Louis Mathew serves as the Vice Chair person of the Board. He co-ordinates and supervises the religious programs. He coordinates a team from the Diocese comprising of priests, religious and laity in producing and broadcasting programs. Programs include Mass on radio, reflections on saints, reflections

on readings of the major feasts, etc. He began working with the radio 5 months ago. The station has been limping for quite some time now due to various reasons like change of management and mismanagement of finance etc. One of the objectives of the station is to become self sustainable by the end of this year. Louis says, “I can already see the wind of change in the radio station with the new Director and the board. I am happy to associate with this institute. I can still recollect the confusion we had when our Bishop threw this idea of “evangelization through radio” in our first meeting in 1999. It took many meetings to get into the shoes of Bishop and of course many years to begin the walk.”

COUNCIL CORNER

The Provincial Council will meet on April 21-22 in S. Africa. If there are any matters to be taken up in our discussion kindly let me know.

Fr. Nathan from Tamale, Fabian Kalaluka and Peter Sindazi from Kinshasa will be arriving in Zambia in the coming months for their pastoral year.

Fr. Peter Chibale returns to Tamale after his pastoral experiences in Sichili mission in Zambia at the end of April. All the best for Chibale for his final vows preparation in the coming weeks!



Fr. A. Singarayar has been transferred to INC by the Generalate. We thank him for his services to our province especially in Zambia for the past three years.

Zambia and Botswana Districts have hosted their District Assemblies in view of our Provincial Assembly to be held in May. South Africa will have the same in the first week of May.

We welcome back Fr. Peter Sledz after his Sabbatical in Poland. He arrived on 27 March in Dambwa.

Frs. Victor and Elfridus are back from their well deserved home leaves. Welcome!

April-May Home Leaves

Joseph Vadakkan
Roman Janowski
Francis Allah
Frederic Lauricio
Tomasz Trojan
Thomas Nelluvely

Priesthood Ordination

Please remember in prayer Deacon Vincent Mwiya who will be ordained to the priesthood by Rev. Bp. Raymond Mpezele of Livingstone Diocese on Saturday, July 11, 2009. It will be in St. Francis Catholic Church, Dambwa along with three other diocesan deacons. Vincent did his OTP in Nicaragua, Theology in Tamale, and he is assigned to Zimbabwe. Kindly note the date so that all of us participate in the ordination.

ST. ARNOLD'S DAY IN TONOTA SCHOOL



St. Arnold's Day celebrations in our Primary School at Tonota were celebrated on 7 March 2009. It began with Holy Mass at 8.30 a.m. It was followed by entertaining programs performed by our students. Program included debate on polygamous marriage, puzzle, cultural dance, Vision 2016 Speech, poem, and a well appreciated Taekwondo martial art performance. Thanks to the organizers!

April & May Birthdays

APRIL

Marek Marciniak	4
Alex Mwafuililwa	4
Singarayar	10
Victor Noronha	15
Lutwin Dollwet	25
Simon Nyrenda	28

MAY

Joseph Vaddakkan	1
Martin Kawana	3
Francis Allah	4
Kuriakose	10
Rajesh D'Souza	18
Elfrid Ujan	19
Raji Mathew	22
Ariel Tampus	25

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY: VENUE AND DATE

Venue: Provincial House, Francistown
Date: May 19-22, 2009
Arrival: Tuesday, 19 May
Closing: Thursday, 21 May (by supper)
22 May – Meeting for Under Six
(Kindly begin processing your visa for Botswana)



VOICES FROM OUR FORMANDI

PARAGUAY: When we arrived in Paraguay I was surprised to see the big number of 20 seminarians. In Zambia we never even reached up to 15 seminarians at any given time. In novitiate (Ghana) too, we were few, just 15 guys from 4 different countries. Most of the seminarians spoke Gurani in the community. It made learning and practicing Spanish very difficult. We began the year (2008) with seven theologians, of whom only Brian and I have remained. Since we are two Zambians it helped us a lot for mutual support. We have learnt Spanish well. I hope all these experiences will be something which will help us to be persons who God wants us to be!
Fr. Maximillian

My Experiences in Accra as a Brother Candidate.

I came to Accra on the 21 July 2008 after my first profession in Nkwatia. It was a very big transition, from the novitiate straight into the capital city. And I definitely have to admit that those are two different worlds altogether - Novitiate with all the solitude and seclusion, and the noisy city life! I do Information Technology studies in Accra. I interact with Moslems, Pentecostals and other non-Catholics. I hear different languages such as Ga, Twi, Fanti Twi... Besides the academic studies, I'm also attached to a parish for my pastoral work. I am part of the youth group in the parish. At the moment we are six in the community: Three of us in temporary vows, two finally professed brothers and one priest. Bro. Peter Atubah is studying electronics and Bro. Lambert Azieve is doing building and construction studies at the Accra Polytechnic.
Bro. Mark Tachiona

