

MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

NEWSLETTER No. 32

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Dear Friends, Aspirants of the Missionaries of Africa,

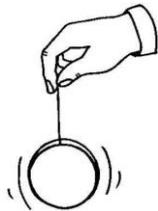
Greetings! I hope this Mission Month has been an inspiration for you. We, the Missionaries of Africa, have been preaching and teaching the whole month on the Missionary commitment of the Church.

We have now two "stagiaires" (students doing their two year pastoral experience), (Martin from Burkina Faso and Samuel from Ivory Coast) studying Zulu in Assisi. Martin wrote a good article of which I reproduce part 1 here on the right. It will continue in the next issue(s).

Here below, I also reproduce an article I wrote for the Archdiocesan News (ADnews of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg). Wishing you good reading!

FROM YOYO TO HULA HOOP

Last year, when our recently ordained Deacons received their appointments, one of them was surprised: Raphaël, a Congolese, who did his two years' pastoral experience in Algeria and studied theology in South Africa (Cedara), was appointed to... Brazil! Quite unexpected for a Missionary of Africa! He himself was surprised, yet happy to fulfil his Mission to the African world. Indeed, our policy is that, while Africa remains the preferential place for our missionary activity, the African world outside Africa is also very important. And we know that there are millions of Africans living in Brazil.



Have you ever played with a yoyo? You know how it constantly goes up and down. It reminds me of how in the past all missionaries were coming from the north going to the south and back to the north. It was the Mission North-South, North-South, North-South... like a yoyo game... People were used to see Missionaries coming from Europe and North America, and that was it!

Nowadays, wherever we go, we meet missionaries from all corners of the world! They come from India, the Philippines, South America, Korea, Australia,... We have started to understand that the Mission is no more like the game of yoyo, but rather like the game of hula hoop! The circle goes in all directions: East-West, North-South, up and down and all around!

One of the most important messages from Vatican II is surely this: "*the pilgrim Church is missionary by her own nature*". For last year's World Mission Sunday, Pope Emeritus Benedict reminded us: "We cannot be content when we consider the millions of our brothers and sisters, who like us, have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but who live in ignorance of the love of God".

Should we not feel compelled to go and evangelise, like we ourselves have been evangelised by so many missionaries? Look around the many parishes in South Africa: we meet priests, brothers and sisters from the Americas, Europe, Asia, Oceania, even from other African countries. I wonder: how many South African missionaries would we find in other countries?... Ask yourself a serious question, **How many Missionaries have we sent to other countries?** If you don't know, ask your Parish Priest...

In 1979, the Latin American Bishops took an important decision which changed the face of their Church: they decided to become a **missionary Church**! They declared solemnly to "**give from our own poverty**". And nowadays many missionaries come from Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, etc... They have understood that **every Christian is a missionary**! Pope Francis constantly calls upon local Churches to become more missionary-minded.

Missionaries go out of their home countries, not so much because of the greater needs of other places; they are motivated by the Lord's mandate: "go out into the whole world, proclaim the Good News to all creatures" (Mk. 16:15).

There is plenty of work to do in South Africa. But do I understand the urgency of the worldwide Mission of Christ? South Africans, "stand up and walk!" Go out: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few." (Lk. 10:2)

Wishing you a good reflection and prayer time on your vocation. Let us pray for all the matriculants!

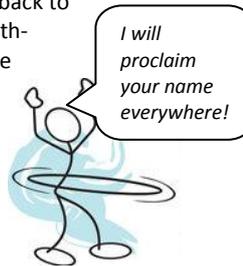
Fr. Michel.

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Missionary life and the fear of the unknown

(Part 1) (by Martin Somda, martinsomda@yahoo.fr)

The word missionary is from the word mission which has a vast meaning. But here, I am using these words in the sense of the religion, precisely catholic. For us catholics when we talk about our mission we talk about the mission of God. It is God who has a mission and He sent his beloved son for his mission; his Son, in turn, sent the Church "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn20, 21) and the Church, in turn, sends us as her members. The mission of God is to make God known. In this way, as Christians we are all missionaries, we are all called to make God known. But we fulfill this mission in different ways at different levels. Thus, some of us like Abraham are called by God to leave our home areas (house, village, diocese, country, and continent) which we can pretend that we know, to go and face other realities outside our home areas. And this is where a missionary at this level can feel challenged by certain questions like: Who am I going to meet? Which language am I going to use? What kind of culture am I going to face? Will I be accepted because of my different culture, different view of events from theirs? Will I be able to learn their language? How will I manage to be for them an envoy and not a scandal? These are questions which sometimes can put down the missionary and sometimes give place to fear. And this is what I call "the fear of the unknown". One may say "how can I fear the unknown". But the fact is that the unknown gives place to this kind of questions mentioned above; these questions come by themselves when one has to face the unknown and they show our interest, our concern, our will to succeed, our worry about the future, and from there comes in the fear of failure, which in this case derives from the unknown. Some of us who have got used to it may say "I do not have to fear. When I will get there I will see". But in fact the fear is there and even this is said out of fear. Maybe it is just his way to deal with his fear. Fear is a part of human essence. No human being is fearless, but the point is: How do I deal with my fear? And this is where we call some fearless and others fearful. Otherwise, all of us, once we are taken out of our security zone (places, things that we have got used to) the fear appears.



**Be Apostles,
Nothing but Apostles!**

