



Word Aflame

Botswana Province Newsletter

December 2010/January 2011

Word from the Provincial



Once again we find ourselves narrating the story of Jesus' beginning; the classic nativity scene unfolds... we set shepherds, add a few wise men from the East, a Star of Bethlehem plus an unwed mother and her husband-to-be, and we get a pretty shoddy gang of characters in our manger scenes. In Bethlehem, writes Luke (2:1-7), Mary "brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn". We meet God in the form of a tiny vulnerable baby in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. Swaddling clothes were baby wraps for keeping the child snug and warm. Manger is a feeding trough for animals. Luke writes that angels an-

nounced the birth of the Messiah to the shepherds in the neighborhood, who visited the baby and spread the news. "After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished" (Lk 2:17-18). Shepherds were the first witnesses of people to hear Jesus story at a time when they were regarded not worthy to be legal witnesses because of their profession. They were poor, unlearned and, social and political nobodies.

Matthew (2:1-12) writes of more eminent visitors: "magi from the east". "Magi" refers specifically to a Persian (Zoroastrian) caste of priests. They were ethnic and religious outsiders. It has been traditionally assumed that there were three Magi – known as Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, names given to them in the sixth century – because Matthew mentions three gifts. The Magi had followed the Star of Bethlehem, which they believed announced the coming of the King of the Jews, possibly because of the Old Testament "Star Prophecy" in the Book of Numbers (24:17). Magi told Herod they were looking for "he that is born King of the Jews". A troubled Herod consulted with his priests, who said the prophecy placed the newborn in Bethlehem. So Herod said to the Magi: "when you have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him" (Mt 2:8). But the Magi were warned by God and avoided Jerusalem. Herod ordered all male children in Bethlehem two years old and younger executed (Mt 2:16). In the meantime, though, an angel had warned Joseph to take his family and flee to Egypt. We venerate those children as the "first martyrs" with the Feast of the Massacre of the Innocents, on 28 December.

Jack Klumpenhouwer, a writer and communications consultant, once said: If the Nativity scene displays teach us anything, it is that Jesus' birth upsets all we've known about who gets ahead in the world. This is one of the wonders of Christmas, and also one of its terrors. How then does Christmas come to me, a non-shepherd? First, notice that although the invitation starts with shepherds, it doesn't end there: "After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished" (Lk 2:17-18). So God's offer comes to everyone through shepherds – the poor, unlearned and, social and political nobodies! It comes through the magi – the ethnic and religious outsiders. Today, we the Divine Word Missionaries call those final characters in our manger scene - *Our Dialogue Partners!*

Dear Confreres, none of the visitors who surround Jesus birth leave behind a memory of their



early marvels and joy in to Jesus public ministry except Mary who kept all events pondering in her heart until the day comes when she can make sense of them (Acts1:14). Cardinal Newman's motto, Cor ad cor loquitur, or 'Heart speaks unto heart', gives us an insight into this understanding of the Christian life as a call to holiness, experienced as the profound desire of the human heart to enter into intimate communion with the Heart of God. This communion happens in our socio-economic and political peripheries-the dwelling place of God! The modern day nativity scenes unfold regularly. If the people who gather around the present day manger pageants are taken seriously in our hearts as our dialogue partners it could disturb anyone! This is the paradox of our missionary incarnation. **Merry Christmas and a Blessed 2011!**

Shiju Paul.

Among the Nobodies- Silvio de Jesus Borges (OTP)



Since February I'm doing my OTP ministry at Brother Robert Shitima School in Kabwe. The school houses orphans and street children, and many poor children from the surroundings. The school is seven kilometers from Pre-Philosophy Formation House, where I live. I know that walking is a good exercise, but to cover this distance I ride a bicycle from Monday to Saturday. It a nice exercise too. In the beginning I was a little afraid, because I did not know the local language. But when I started my work with great courage and dedication, in a few days I made many friends, because the kids are quite affectionate. I have been over eight months in this ministry. The experience has been very rewarding so far. Besides helping in class room lessons, I involve them in catechesis, paintings, puzzle, soccer, computer, etc... I believe the most important component of my life with them is to give them individ-

ual attention and affection. I thank God for everything. And may He keep me going and complete well my OTP experience which goes up to December 2011. I will return to Brazil to continue my theology studies.

Institute of Religious Formation - Freddy from Chicago

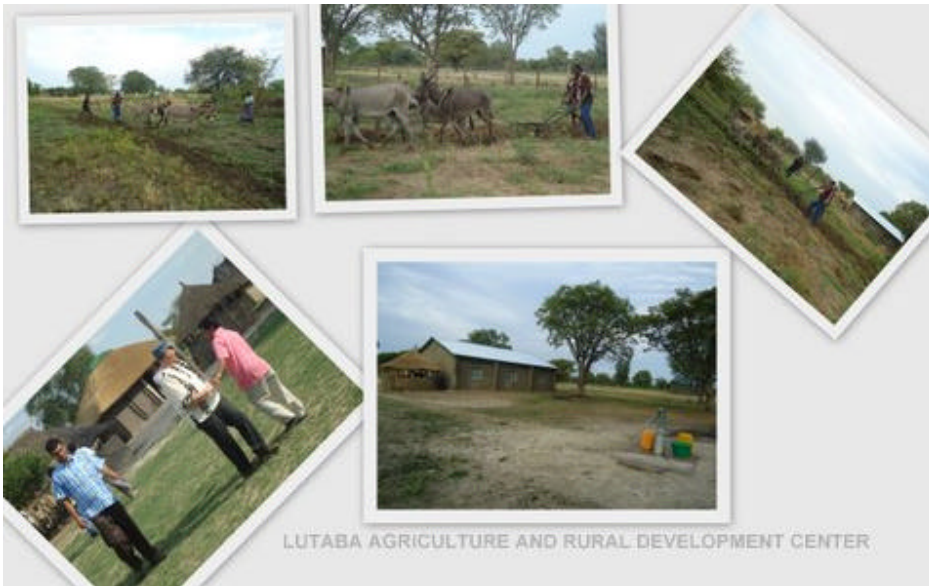


I arrived here in CTU, Chicago on 26 August 2010. The next day we started our orientation program which lasted for a week. We are 14 participants from 11 countries. It was really amazing to hear each other's life story on how God touched one's life and how one was able to respond to His call courageously. Through presentations on one's culture, heritage, and the charism of congregation I was able

to understand and appreciate the personality and uniqueness of fellow participants. So far, most of our topics and lectures were very enriching and challenging. The Myers-Briggs Inventory, which I think I have taken three times already prior to Chicago course, has had a deep impact. I did not pay much attention to it before. But now I see that knowing one's personality can also be used as a tool in guiding a candidate. I realized that formation ministry or to be a formator is not an easy job. There are still many skills that I have to learn and develop to be able to guide a candidate or aspirant in a proper way. Some of the skills that I should develop are: to be patient, to acquire the art of listening, to be able to assess the behavior of the candidate and to accompany them spiritually. The main goal of a formator, as for me, is to bear in mind how he/she could be of help to the aspirant in discerning his/her calling. Community life is given importance. Every Thursday we have our community night. This is a time for our socials, recreation and relaxation as a community. It helps us build the spirit of camaraderie. I am thankful and happy to be in this program.



Dreams of a Rural Missionary



St. Francis Catholic Church, Lutaba is situated about 60 km North West of Mwandi, along the off road towards Sichili in Zambia. It is one of the 9 outstations of St. Arnold's Parish. The Catholic community is cooperative, and active participants in responding to integrated pastoral programs; spiritual, social and sustainable economic/rural developments. Fr. Klemens truly believes Lutaba has the potential to become and could be one of the choices to be developed as a new mission/parish for SVD in the near future. The center runs various socio-

economic development projects such as TEMOGI (Teenage Mothers and drop out Girls), Adult Education, Health and Home Based Care, and Organic Farming practices. Lutaba is also a strategic place to connect to Machile outstation in the catchment's area of Sichili Parish. If we are committed, these two places can be taken and developed as two new missions in the future. **Fr. Klemens Amaunut**

Prison Ministry at Gerald Estate

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me.... (Mt 25:35-36). There is a center for illegal immigrants at Gerald Estates in Francistown, Botswana. It is a vast area, well paved, lighted and secured by the Botswana Government. The inmates are mainly men. There are also a few women and children from various African Countries. They come from DRC, Malawi, Burundi, Nigeria, Uganda, Sudan, Somalia etc. Majority of them escaped from their countries for economic-political reasons without any valid travel documents. They either seek political asylum or refugee status in Botswana. Some of them are accepted as refugees and sent to Dukwee refugee camp. Others are eventually repatriated when they procure their travel documents from their respective

embassies. There is a second group of illegal immigrants from Zimbabwe known as boarder jumpers. They are immediately repatriated. Most of them don't have basic amenities and funds to go back to their countries when they are repatriated. Various churches, NGOs and benefactors assist them. Every Monday to Thursday various churches and NGOs render their services and counseling helps for the inmates. Our turn is Wednesday. Sr. Lucy SC, and Sr. Caroline SSpS visit the women and children every Tuesday and Thursday. It is a faith deepening experience to see the inmates taking refuge and strength in the Word of God, gospel songs and prayer. And in them we meet Jesus! **Fr. Victor**

Zambezi Calling

Water can provide food for us or we can become food for others. In Zambia many villages are situated along the Zambezi River. People really know how to make use of water by cultivating small farms and fishing. Some really do not pool such resources creatively for various reasons. I have caught countless number of fish in various rivers of Africa, and it contributed a lot in our self reliance programs. In contrast to climate change predictions on harsh weather conditions such as prolonged winter seasons and longer dry spells or un-seasonal flooding, in Botswana a dried up river for many years started flowing again! Modern day theories on global warming is going topsy-turvy. Swimming is possible everywhere in our rivers. If BEWARE OF CROCODILES AND HIPPOES warnings are ignored swimming





turns one time adventure only. It is common to see large herds of elephants splashing in rivers leisurely. Jesus invited Peter to walk on the water. His weak faith didn't let him to do so. In present world people use many kinds of boats to keep afloat the waters of life. None has ever succeeded the Jesus way. When our Indonesian scholastics experienced winter in Poland and saw frozen rivers, they said,

"Now we understand how Jesus could manage to walk on water." The Victoria Falls, considered by some to be among the Seven Wonders of the World is in Livingstone. Its indigenous name is 'Mosi-o-Tunya' -literally meaning the 'Smoke that Thunders'. Welcome to Livingstone to experience it all!

Romek svd

More Water!



Apart from spiritual growth, Dambwa Catholic Parish is committed to improve the physical well being of its own people and the community around. For more than a decade the people of Dambwa and the Parish in particular have been experiencing severe shortage of drinking water. With the installation of the submersive water pump and the erection of an overhead water tank, now we are enjoying plenty of running water. It serves not only the church premises, but also the community around. It has brought joy in the heart of people and greenery on face of the land. Now we grow our own vegetable for our daily consumption. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Society for sponsoring the water pump. **Louis**

Bible Convention & Healing Service

A Bible Convention and Healing Service led by Fr. Mathew Naickamparambil and team from India were held in Gaborone Christ the King Cathedral from 8-10 October 2010. A second similar healing service was held at Thapelong Catholic Mission, Kanye from 12-14 October. Noticeably, scores of people from different walks of life and church affiliations turned out for the event. The SVD parish at Mogoditshane hosted the guests. Mogoditshane parish organized their Healing Mass on 15 October at 05 pm. Frs. George and Kuriakose were actively involved in its organization. People's passion for WORD centered preaching was very inspiring. For through the WORD the blind can see, the lame can walk, those suffer from dreaded skin diseases are made clean and the deaf can hear! Out pouring of the power of the Holy Spirit was visibly seen among many of the participants.



SVD Ordination & Handing Over Ceremony



On 29th October all SVD confreres from Zambia District, three SSPs sisters and family of Fr. Peter Chibale gathered in our Pre-philosophy House in Kabwe for the

traditional handing over ceremony of Peter by his parents to the Society. Fr. Theophan Misengo organized the well prepared evening prayer service during which the ceremony took place. Chibale was

presented a traditional hoe, an axe and a calabash by his parents. They are tools of preparing the ground for farming. Now as a grown up adult Chibale was instructed by his parents to take responsibility for his life and for people entrusted under his care. The traditional instruments were a reminder on the need for preparing the faithful adequately for sacraments, and all liturgical celebrations. An agape followed. The Arch Bishop of Lusaka, Rt. Rev. George Telesphoro Mpundu ordained Deacon Chibale on 30th October at St. Charles Lwanga Parish at 09hrs. It was his first ordination of a Divine Word Missionary. Reception was held at Zambezi Reception Lodge, a few meters far away from the parish. The first mass followed the following day. Fr. Chibale is assigned to Kenya-Tanzania Province. He is expected to depart for Kenya early 2011.



Lumko Board Meeting

The Lumko Board Meeting was held in Benoni, Johannesburg on 18th October. It was attended by SACBC department heads for Finance, Evangelization, Seminaries, Christian Formation, Justice and Peace, and Inter-religious Dialogue. Bishop Michael Wustenberg of Aliwal Diocese is responsible for Lumko from SACBC. Following day together with Bps Michael and Slattery OFM of Kokstad, the role of Lumko and Evangelization was deliberated. Fr. Barney McAleer heads the Evangelization Department of SACBC. Some of the challenges facing Lumko are getting all personnel to settle in to the new place to plan for future developments and improvements, building a formidable team and finding ways to generate sufficient funds to repay the loan owed to SACBC.



Formation Board Meeting

SVD Botswana Formation Board Meeting was held on December 2, 2010 at SVD Propedeutic House in Kabwe. Major points of discussion were recommendations of AFB Meeting held in Kinshasa in June 2010 and the revision of our Formation Manual. The team has divided the work among themselves to integrate relevant matters arising from the booklet *Re-Imagining the Pathways of our Common Voca-*

tional Journey in to various phases of formative stages in our province. The final draft is set to be ready for presentation and approval by the end of December 2011. A brief report on intakes for next year was presented by the Vocation Promoter. Currently all our students in Propedeutic year come from Zimbabwe!

Province News

Ordination:

Deacon Marcio S. Passador will be ordained to Priesthood on 11 December at 19hrs in Brazil. He is assigned to Zambia where he did his OTP in Dambwa. Let us continue praying for him.

Family Feast and Zambia 25Years:

Family Feast 2011 will be combined with **Zambia 25 years** celebration scheduled for 19-20 January in Livingstone. **Arrival - 19 January 2011, Holy Mass Celebrated by Frs. Alberto Sacco and George Niravath (25 years in Priesthood) at 17 hrs, Family Feast-20 January, Departure- 21 January.** Those who need visas kindly contact Br. Albertus Babu in Lusaka as early as possible.

Home Leave: Frs. Natun, Sunny and Louis

Transfers : Frs. Maek Grzech and Pawel Smaglijenko to Poland

Arrivals: Br. Silas, Br. Paul Doan Minh Thao from Vietnam and Fr. Peter Madden

Province Retreats 2011: There are two province retreats scheduled for 2011. Mokopane: 11 September, Sunday p.m - 17th Saturday a.m 2011; Zambia 18 September – 24 September 2011

Appointments: Fr. Hilarius Rafael- Tonota, Language Learning- Br. Paul Doan Minh Thao at Metsimotlhabe, and Fr. Peter Madden- Philosophy House Lusaka.

WORTH REMEMBERING - Birthdays

DECEMBER

Ioane	02
Frederic Lauricio	14
Wojciech Szypula	14
Klemens Amaunut	26
Lawrence Likulano	29

JANUARY

Justina	1
Nirmala Tigga	1

Luciana Yoshida	2
Brian Mbulabaya	6
Albertus Babu	9
Benedicta	16
Fernanda	18
Carolina Giay	23
Catherine Obeng	26
Ajit Tirkey	27
Maria Prokesch	29