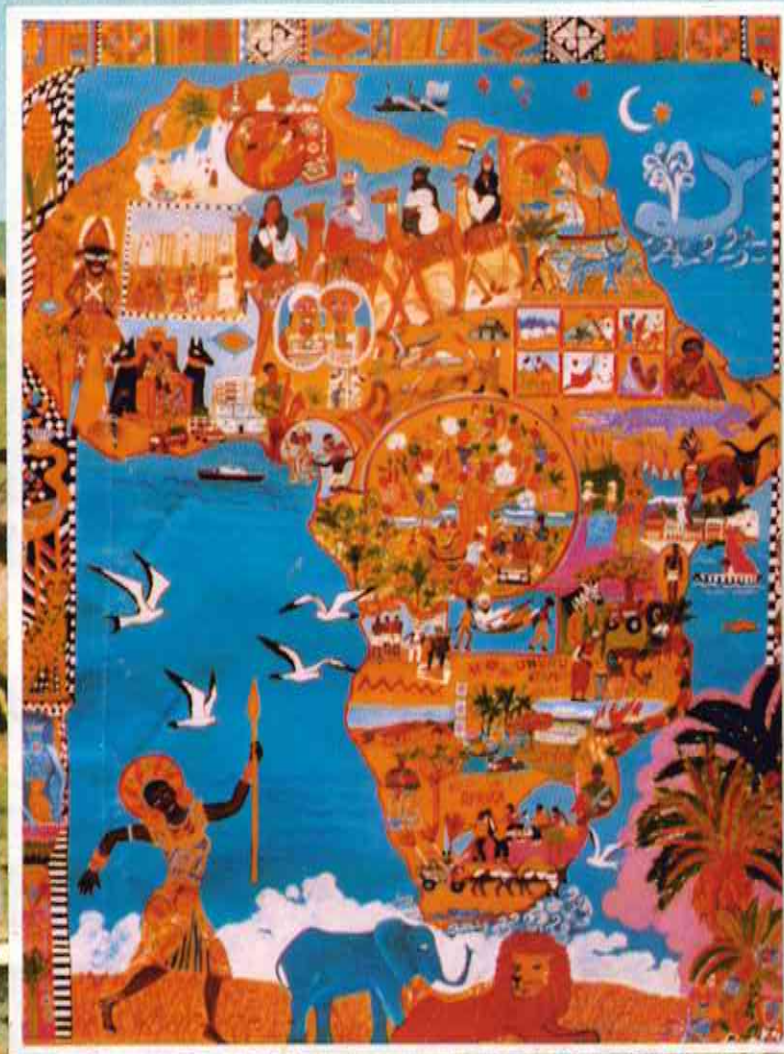


A message

AFRICA

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS OF THE SCHOOLS



YEAR 1991

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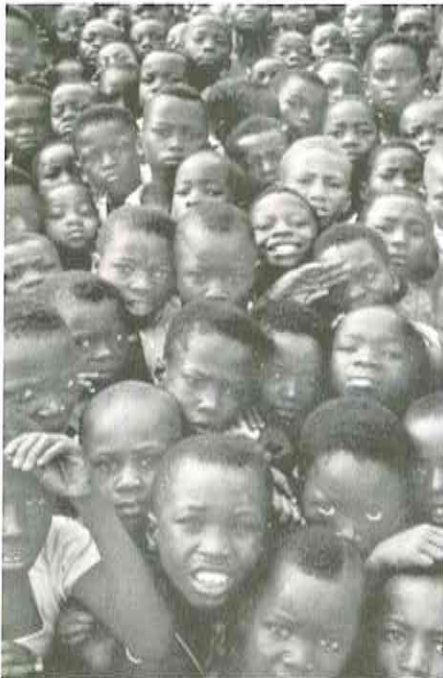
NUMBER 9



“Our devotion to Our Lady has taken good root in Africa and Madagascar.”

The future of Africa and Madagascar

Editorial



Africa is undergoing a period of extraordinary growth.

- Africa is undergoing a period of extraordinary growth.
- With this rapid growth there will be a continuing process of urbanization. Such rapid expansion of urban areas is usually associated with tremendous problems for the poor: slums, unemployment, poverty and disease.
- After the euphoria of independence, many countries have seen crises of leadership and instability of government.
- Since independence, there has usually been a great demand for education, but it is difficult to satisfy these demands.
- There are massive numbers of refugees: in fact nearly half of the world's refugees are found in Africa.
- The 20th century has been a period of extraordinary growth in the Church. At the beginning of the century there were perhaps one million Catholics in the whole of Africa. Today Catholics number 80-85 million.
- Pope John Paul II insists on this a great deal, speaking of it as the "hour of Africa", a period which calls on the Church for a very special effort in the whole of its evangelizing activities.
- Generally speaking, evangelization can be pursued in most African countries with considerable freedom. The exception would be Muslim-dominated countries.
- There are difficulties to be faced, but we accept cheerfully that this is our time, and that it is a very important time for Africa and Madagascar.
- The future of the Church in Africa and Madagascar, and of the Marist Brothers, rests with the people of Africa. The main task of those from other countries and provinces is to facilitate this.

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*Some reflexions about this theme
(Bro. Charles Howard)*



Since 1986 the superiors of the provinces, missions and sectors of Africa and Madagascar have been meeting regularly each year. Most of the time during those meetings has been concerned with the developments at the Centre at Nairobi. However, beginning last year and particularly this year, time has been increasingly given to consideration of the future of Africa and Madagascar. The following is the substance of the conference given by Brother Superior General at the last meeting of the Superiors in August 1990, at Nairobi.

As you know, the Church has called a special African assembly of the Synod of Bishops to study the theme, "The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000". I think it is well for us to look at some of the signs of the times in the present situation in Africa, for there are enormous challenges for those nations, for the Church, and for us as Marist Brothers.

1. Population Growth

*Africa is undergoing a period of **extraordinary growth** which has few, if any, parallels in human history. It is difficult to give accurate figures because experts differ, but all are unanimous in predicting very large increases. For example, it is predicted that the population of Nigeria, at present estimated at about 100 million, will rise to about 300 million by the year 2025. By that year, the population of Africa will be equal to the total of the populations of Europe, the United States, Canada and all of Latin America.*

*With this rapid growth there will be a continuing **process of urbanization**, changing from a figure of 23 % in 1970 to 32 % in 1985, and predicted to reach 58 % in 2025. For example, Lagos is predicted to have a population of 12 million by the year 2010. Such rapid expansion of urban areas is usually associated with more opportunities for the middle class, but with tremendous problems for the poor: slums, unemployment, poverty and disease. These already exist in the large cities.*

2. Socio-Economic-Political Situations

*When we look at the modern history of Africa we can see a first period of colonization with its **injustice and plundering** — a plundering not only of wealth, but even of human beings in the notorious slave trade. This was also a period of **missionary activity** including education, hospital and nursing services. It includes the struggle for independence where some ambiguity is seen in the stance of missionary-educated people, some being on the side of the movement for independence and others supporting the colonial powers. Numbers of the leaders of the independence movements were missionary educated.*

*The post-independence period has often been characterized by a certain **neo-colonialism**. After the euphoria of independence, many*



With great missionary fervour, the Church spread throughout the whole of Africa.

countries have seen **crises of leadership and instability of government**, very evident in the present tensions in regard to One-Party and Multi-Party systems. In certain places there is a continuing power struggle between ethnic groups, struggles that are centuries old.

Most countries suffer from **economic underdevelopment**, with problems of population increase, hunger, disease and lower prices for exports on world markets. Many are also saddled with huge debts. Corruption and mismanagement are common in some countries, and many Africans are raising their voices against this.

Since independence, there has usually been a **great demand for education** (Zimbabwe is a recent example), but it is difficult to satisfy these demands, and — what is more — provide the appropriate education. Sometimes education can develop frustration if job opportunities are lacking, and sometimes education breeds a new elite not interested in their fellow citizens.

There are **massive numbers of refugees** in Africa; although this is little publicized, in fact nearly half of the world's refugees are found in Africa.

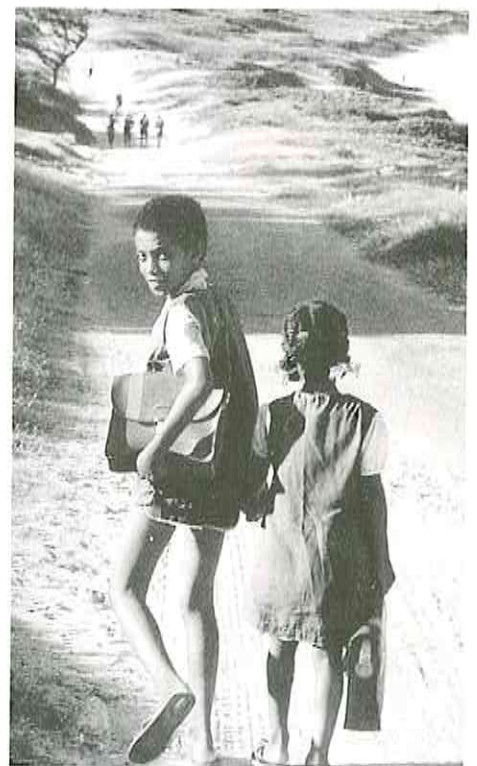
Women occupy an inferior position in African societies. Although the situation varies from place to place, there is general oppression and lack of recognition of the dignity of women. In the opinion of one African woman scholar: "The African woman, in addition to being under her cultural bondage and oppression, also experiences the socio-economic oppression of neo-colonialists in the Church... A few African women are awakening to their dignity as human persons. This awakening brings them to the harsh reality that for centuries they have been excluded from the full dignity of human persons by their culture and by the patriarchal Church" (Sister Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike).

The nations of Africa find themselves in **economic bondage, dependent on outside countries**; they naturally resent this, and there is a certain amount of mistrust. The same can happen at the level of the Church. We are struggling to avoid this mentality among ourselves as Brothers, and it is important that we continue to do this.

3. Religious Situation

The Church has a long and noble history in Africa. Egypt, the first African country to welcome the Gospel, gave to the Church (through Alexandria) a host of great figures whose contribution to the Church is still felt today. With great missionary fervour, the Church spread throughout the whole of North Africa where it flourished for more than a thousand years before its life was cut off by the great Muslim incursions. Evangelization of sub-Saharan Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries was ineffective for many reasons. The Church in Africa today has its roots in 19th century evangelization.

The 20th century has been a period of extraordinary growth probably unparalleled in the history of the Church. At the beginning of the century there were perhaps one million Catholics in the whole of Africa; today Catholics number 80-85 million. Now, at the end of the century,



the Church is entering a new period of evangelization. Pope John Paul II insists on this a great deal, speaking of it as the "hour of Africa", a period which calls on the Church for a very special effort in the whole of its evangelizing activities. We may note some important factors for the present and future situation:

- a) *The colonial period has ended and evangelization is now carried out in the context of independent African countries. To many Africans the Church has been, and still remains, a foreign institution.*
- b) *There are new ecclesial realities. For example, the first African was ordained Bishop in 1939, and there were only a few at the Second Vatican Council. Today 348 of the 481 Bishops are African or Malagache. Another important change is that more and more dioceses are entrusted to the local clergy whereas previously they were confided to specific missionary institutes. The rise in the number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life is remarkable.*
- c) *Generally speaking, evangelization can be pursued in most African countries with considerable freedom. The exception would be Muslim-dominated countries.*
- d) *African traditional religions are usually open to christianity.*
- e) *The presence of Islam, sometimes in an aggressive form, poses a great challenge to the Church in its ideal of Dialogue.*
- f) *The considerable changes in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres call for new strategies of evangelization in all countries, whether in Europe or Africa (OR Australia!).*
- g) *There has been an extraordinary growth in the number of sects in Africa; there are 8,000-10,000 different sects.*

To promote renewed pastoral efforts and activity for the Church in Africa, the Pope has convoked a Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. At present the main themes indicated for study are:

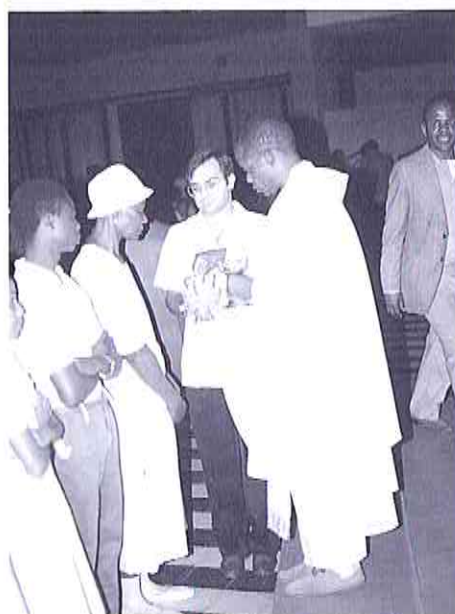
- Evangelization**
- Inculturation**
- Dialogue**
- Justice and Peace**
- Means of Social Communication.**

4. The Marist Brothers in Africa and Madagascar

We can observe the following pattern of our Marist presence:

Year	Total	Foreign	African/M	% African/M
1978	500 (circ)	285	213	42
1986	479	191	288	60
1989	447	146	301	67

The average age of the African/Madagascar Brothers is quite young. There are 19 sectors, provinces or districts involved. Regional Superiors,



together with Provincials, number 32. During the past 12 years, a number of older foreign Brothers have died or have returned to their provinces; thus their numbers have been reduced by almost one half.

There are many vocations for the priesthood and for congregations of women. In some countries the vocation of the Brothers is not sufficiently understood and appreciated. However, it is also a fact that, whereas some regions have put top priority on vocations and have a well organized pastoral plan for this, others have been woefully inadequate in this planning.

Great efforts have been made to reinforce the formation given, especially by rationalization of resources in novitiate and post-novitiate formation, and in the preparation of formators.

5. Three Reflections

- There are difficulties to be faced, but we accept cheerfully that this is our time, and that it is a very important time for Africa and Madagascar. It is a time for making important provisions for the future.
- The future of the Church in Africa and Madagascar, and of the Marist Brothers, rests with the people of Africa and Madagascar. The main task of those from other countries and provinces is to facilitate this.
- There is need for a careful examination of the challenges, and a plan to respond to these. Obviously the situation varies from one country to another, but in our present stage of development there is need for concerted action on some issues.

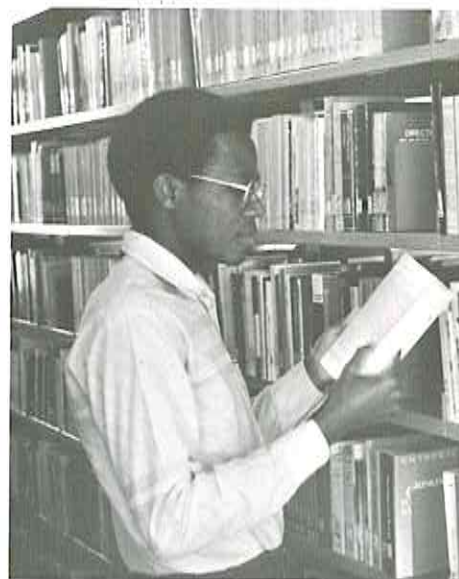
Brother Superior General gave his address to the gathering of Superiors and to the Brothers at the International Centre. After his presentation they divided into groups to reflect on a number of questions:

- How do we best prepare Marist leaders for the future? In what fields do we need these leaders?
- What do we need to do to continue our present collaboration and to extend it?
- Which are the most urgent tasks in your sector/region?
- What are the present educational and catechetical needs? What kind of priority should be given to the education and formation of priests?
- How well integrated are our apostolic efforts in the overall pastoral work of the Church where we work?
- How do we encourage a missionary spirit among our Brothers?
- What are some of the important challenges for the future?
- How does one recognize a Marist Brother in Africa and Madagascar?

*



"Since 1986 the superiors of Africa and Madagascar have been meeting regularly each any."



DIFFERENT THEMES



- *Marist formation and collaboration*
- *Inculturation and Marist work*
- *The future of Marist Brothers in Africa*
- *Our older Brothers*
- *Our young Brothers*
- *Our dead*

MARIST FORMATION AND COLLABORATION

- Formation in Africa and Madagascar has been done for years as it had been traditionally in the Institute, introducing young men to the life of a Marist Brother based on Rules and Constitutions where everything was clearly determined.
- But the weakness of the system became evident when the young Brothers left the protective structure of the community.
- We are fortunate in our Formation Guide: The new approach to formation sees it very much as a personalization and internalization of the values of religious life, the accent on the person, not on the structure.
- It is my growing conviction that the number of Brothers on the continent is going to rise, and we are going to need a very serious vocations discernment, and a very serious method of selection of prospective vocations.
- We will need more and more well qualified formateurs, otherwise we risk falling into mistakes that have been made in the past.
- The challenge of formation is a very serious challenge for us Marist Brothers in the coming years. We are dealing with those who will pass on our charism to generations to come.
- It seems to me that the younger generation of Africa today is becoming more and more internationally minded... International collaboration is called for.
- I would here make a call to the generosity of the Brothers. The serious formation of the young requires dedicated men, and we must ask the Provinces to be ready to make sacrifices, both in personnel and in finance.

Article 95 of our Constitutions stresses that the vitality of the Institute depends on the quality of the formation we give our young Brothers, and adds that this formation be adapted to the personalities and cultures of the Brothers. Vatican II called for a return to our own charism in our formation. Thank God we are beginning to use our own expertise in passing on the charism we have inherited from Fr. Champagnat, and relying less and less on external "masters of the spiritual life".

This new approach has serious consequences for the Institute: formation of personnel, numbers of personnel required, structures and content of programmes, etc. (NOTE: There is no adequate English word for the French "formateur", so in this document we will use the French word as meaning someone who is engaged in the work of formation.)

The word "formation" itself implies that we recognize that a vocation is something to be formed, not something that is there in full flower from the start. Unless there is a definite, clear, wise help for the young Brother to grow in religious and personal maturity, we run the risk that his vocation will not be formed, may even be deformed.

Our formation must be based on our charism, and it seems to me that the charismatic aspect of being a Marist Brother is summed up in the word "brotherhood". This already reveals a whole range of qualities, of approaches, of a way of being. We cherish and we feel that the fact of being a "brother" is very much part of our life. It refers us immediately to our family spirit, to the spirit of the Holy Family at Nazareth, and with this, we have all the aspects

we consider essential elements of being a Marist, i.e. simplicity, humility and modesty, perceived from a theological and spiritual point of view, in a positive, demanding way, as a whole approach to life, to relationships. **Our devotion to Mary,** as we discover through the very rich Mariology which has come to the fore since Vatican II, is a Mariology based on Biblical insights, and based on the essential elements that touched the hearts of Fr. Champagnat and our first Brothers. Our devotedness,



Noviciate in Nyangezi (Zaire, 1988).



The fact of being a "brother is very much part of our life...

our mission to youth, remains at the very heart of our charism. **Our community spirit**—so much stressed in our Rules over the years, and cherished by so many generations of Brothers—, the spirit of work, including the dimension of manual work, **our option for the poor**, the young, the underprivileged, all this is, I believe, an essential part of what we call the Marist charism. We cannot imagine the formation of a Marist Brother where these elements are not stressed, and where the structure of formation does not lead to the developing of these gifts in the hearts of the young Brothers.

Coming to the question of formation in Africa and Madagascar, for years it was done as it had been in the Institute, introducing young men to the life of a Marist Brother based on Rules and Constitutions where everything was clearly determined. The young man was invited to conform and **put spirit into conforming with what was here**. The stress was put on regularity—to be a regular religious was to be a good religious, and the closer the novice learned to follow what was written, the more secure his vocation was. The Catholic society in which our schools and communities were, had a great admiration for this type of life, and were a kind of continuous support for the young man in his fidelity to the Rule. The theology of the religious life behind this formation was based on fidelity to the Rule; great stress was placed also on asceticism and on safeguarding the young Brother from the "world" so the formation was a very protective structure. The Brother passed from the noviciate

into community life, where he absorbed "religious spirit" by a kind of osmosis from the other Brothers. Formation personnel were chosen from the Brothers who gave the best examples of regularity and conformity to the Rules, and, let us not forget, men filled with a keen sense of the presence of God in their lives, and a deep prayer life, men who were a good witness to the values of religious life. These Brothers were important in Africa and Madagascar, even though they were from a different culture, a different world. The weakness of the system became evident when the young Brothers left the protective structure of the community, and were placed in situations where they no longer had this protection and support. The last few years have seen a remarkable development, and very serious efforts have been made to prepare formation personnel who could help the young Brothers through the first years of religious profession, to deepen their religious life, to develop a strong, inner, religious personality, which would carry them through the difficulties of the life they were going to lead afterwards. For years, the Church and the Congregation have been trying to find out what are the criteria, the right type of structures to help the young religious through their formation in this new post-Vatican II situation. **We are fortunate in our Formation Guide**, wherein a great effort has been made to give guidelines and to suggest structures that may help the new approach to formation. However, this Guide has to be seriously studied and rightly interpreted. Formation personnel in Africa today definitely need this kind of help in deepening the understanding of this kind of formation, which is, in my view, a precious gift to the Institute. **The new approach to formation sees it very much as a personalization**, and internalization of the values of religious life—the accent on the person, not on the structure. The personal interview, the personal follow-up become more and more important and demanding.

In Africa and Madagascar in recent years, there has been a burgeoning, a veritable explosion, of vocations, perhaps keeping in line with the growth in population. At the same time, the number of missionary Brothers has been decreasing steadily while the number of local Brothers has been rising. One result is that where we thought that we had solved the question of space and facilities for post-noviciate formation for years to come here in **Nairobi**, we now find that it is insufficient, and we have to start thinking seriously of opening a second Centre. It is my growing conviction that the number of Brothers on the continent is going to rise, and we are going to need a very serious vocations discernment and a very serious method of selection of prospective vocations. We can compare the growth in the number of priests in Africa and Madagascar in the last fifteen years. In the early 70s there were about 3,000; now there are about 10,000. The needs of the continent are so huge and so urgent that we are sure the Blessed Virgin will inspire more and more young people with the call to Marist life. This is a blessing for the Congregation and the Church, but it is also a challenge. To give the proper formation to the numerous vocations the Lord is sending us, we will need more and more well qualified formateurs, otherwise we risk falling into mistakes that have been made in the past.

THE CHALLENGES

From the above, it is clear that the first challenge is the urgent need to prepare vocations personnel. These must be men able to understand and not only to understand; they must be men who have deeply personalized their own vocation, who have solved their own vocation problems. They must be men for whom prayer is a meaningful experience, men whose experience of God, of the persons of Jesus and Mary in their lives, is, as it was for Champagnat, a living experience.

The second challenge is for a system of formation able to instil a true sense of discernment, and to practise this discernment with the young Brothers, the novices, the postulants. Discernment becomes a way in which the guide leads the young man, in a sure way, into that experience of God, of the Marist charism, which makes it possible for the young man to discern the call, and to discover, in a very personal way, the call God is making to him. Discernment has to become a way of life, a habit that helps us to discern continuously, as the Constitutions ask us, with our community and with the Superiors, the mission, the signs of the times, the call to grow, to continue our ongoing formation—in other words, a continuous growth in holiness which leads to an effective and efficient apostolate. If we are to learn from the past, the question of discernment cannot be taken too lightly. The formateur of the year 2000 has to be able to help the young man not only in his conscious desire to be generous, but also in the reality of his life, the faults, the limitations, and, even more, the real reasons, the circumstances that make it difficult for him to grow, to be as generous as he would wish, to reach the ideal set before him.

The challenge of formation is a very serious challenge for us Marist Brothers in the coming years. We are dealing with those who will pass on our charism to generations to come. If we get it wrong at the beginning, it will be dif-

ficult to pass on the precious message, the precious gift that we have received from Fr. Champagnat.

Fr. Champagnat himself told his Brothers: *"the first Brothers must be perfect religious, so as to serve as models for those who will follow them in the future. It is rare that later generations surpass the first Brothers in fervour and virtue. Our future Brother, then, will be what we are, and the example we set will mark a limit that will rarely be crossed."*

COLLABORATION

As the number of sectors, districts, provinces, in Africa and Madagascar increases, we have to take into account all our limitations, and see how much we need to collaborate with one another. There has always been collaboration in the Congregation, as witness the Second Noviciate, or, as it now called, the courses of renewal. However, it has not always been so at the level of the postulancy and the noviciate. Every area has been trying to solve its own problems in formation in what we might call a very informal way. One of the reasons was a lack of personnel, which led in many cases to the closing of a juniorate, a noviciate. The Superiors have now put their heads together and are trying to give an answer to the problem. It is interesting to note that there has always been resistance at various levels to this type of collaboration, always for what seem to be very good reasons. I think that as we move closer together, we should not forget those barriers we may at times be in danger of overlooking. One reason given is that we must not cut off the young Brother from contact with his family and friends, as such contact is essential for his affective growth. This is a problem that we must find an answer for. Another reason, not stated, but subconsciously often there, is a kind of nationalism—it is perhaps natural that we want our own country to benefit from having a centre like, for example, MIC. There

*Noviciate of Kutama
(Zimbabwe, Malawi,
Zambia, Kenya in 1990).*





"It seems to me that the younger generation of Africa today is becoming more and more internationally minded."

is also a fear sometimes of having to own up to deficiencies in the formation we have been giving in our own country. Obviously this is an insufficient reason, but we sometimes find a lack of positive collaboration. The only answer is to ensure that the positive aspects of collaboration are stressed, and we must find a way to overcome the negative aspects.

My second reflection is that we find two different approaches to formation, due perhaps to age. It seems to me that the younger generation of Africa today is becoming more and more internationally minded. Is **international collaboration**, which seems so positive, not more and more the demand of a new generation, a sign of the times? There have been some wonderful examples of collaboration in the past, but usually on a personal basis — I am thinking of Brs. Luke and Nivard in Nigeria, Br. Valentino in Rwanda, and other such cases. We have become aware that the new situation requires a new answer, and the Superiors have faced up to this fact. This is seen, for example in the course at present going on in Rome for Masters of Novices, as also in such a venture as Marist International Centre, Nairobi. These are just two examples of collaboration which one could hardly have imagined even half a dozen years ago! Already we have an international noviciate in Ghana, and inter-provincial postulancies in Central Africa and in Malawi.

I would here make a call to the generosity of the Brothers. The serious formation of the young requires dedicated

men, and we must ask the provinces to be ready to make sacrifices, both in personnel and in finance. We need men of high calibre, men who are capable of undertaking good work in their own provinces. But we have to ask the provinces to release them — to release "accompaniers", to release administrators, to release experts in various branches to give courses. The Constitutions lay on each and every Brother the responsibility for formation, both of himself and of others. We ask them all, individual Brothers, Districts, Provinces, to be generous in their answer to this call.

I wish to end by expressing my sincere gratitude to so many Provinces all over the world who have already helped us by their sacrifice. I thank also the General Council, which has been so ready to do everything possible for us here in Nairobi.

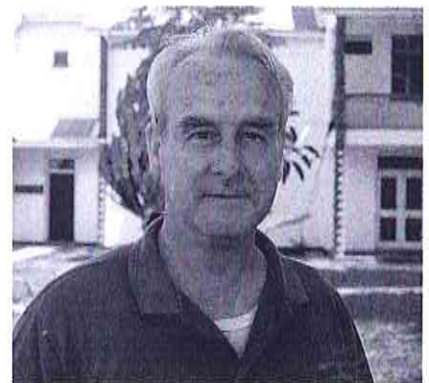
A special word of thanks to our brothers, the Marist Fathers, who have sent us Fr. Bob Barber. He has become part and parcel of our formation team, and has gained the respect and love of all our young men.

To all you Brothers, all over the Institute, to the Rev. Br. Superior General and his Council, and to the Marist Fathers, my heartfelt and sincere thanks.

*Br. Powell Prieur,
with the collaboration
of Br. Luis Sobrado*



*Bro. Luis Sobrado,
Superior of the
M.I.C. of Nairobi.*



Bro. Powell Prieur, C.G.

INCULTURATION AND MARIST WORK

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- **“Inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian life and message in a concrete cultural ambience...”**
 - **There is a certain simplistic way of looking at things which sees Africa as a homogeneous whole. This is a very mistaken notion. Africa offers a great variety of cultures.**
 - **The deep participation of the Brothers in the local realities of Africa is a very important aspect of the inculturation of the Gospel message.**
 - **There is a great number of African Christians today in whom the Gospel message is really incarnated thanks to the Christian education they received from the Brothers.**
 - **In Africa there has been a change of outlook among the Brothers in recent years. More and more both the missionaries from outside and the native Africans have become aware of the crucial importance of the changes which are taking place.**
 - **Teaching of religion and other forms of apostolate nowadays are more in the manner of sharing and exchange than of teaching as such. The general attitude requires an attitude of listening on both sides.**
 - **These values will be the foundations of a new socio-religious balance which will enable the African cultures to recreate themselves in a way which is both faithful to tradition and which will accept Christian values.**
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Among the numerous problems that face the young people of Africa today, one that gives rise to most concern about the future is undoubtedly that of “cultural ambiguity”. The need to find a solution to this problem is felt in many different areas, but particularly in the fields of evangelization and education.

For some time now, the various efforts to do this tend to be brought together under the umbrella term of “inculturation”, a phrase which is bandied about a lot today.

As Marist Brothers, religious educators, we are inevitably deeply involved in the great debate on inculturation, and we are deeply interested in the various ways of analysing it and in the questions that arise in this matter. We must say at the outset that our interest is not simply in order to be up-to-date intellectually on the topic, but so that we

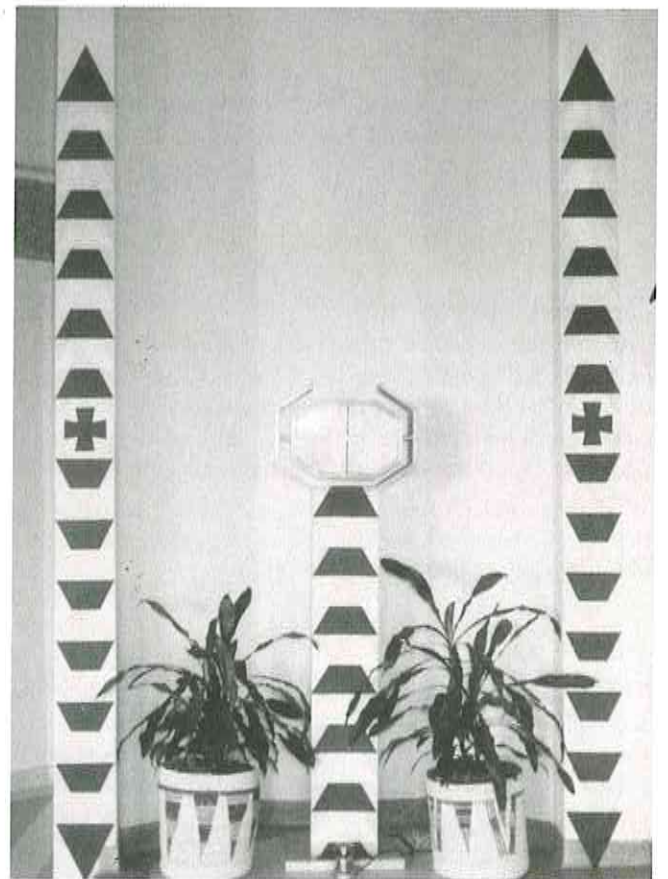
may have a better knowledge and understanding of the cultural realities of the peoples and societies among whom we work.

Before we speak of the work of the Marist Brothers in Africa, let us take a brief look at what we understand by inculturation.

WHAT IS INCULTURATION?

It is very difficult to give a definition of inculturation that will satisfy everyone. This is partly due to the fact that it is a relatively new concept, and that the reality we are trying to define is, to say the least, variable and mobile.

Fr Arrupe, SJ, has given a definition that we think is one of the better ones: *Inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian life and message in a concrete cultural ambience, in such a way that not only does this experience find its expression in the elements that are proper to the culture in question, but it is also transformed into a principle of*



Inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian life and message in a concrete ambience.



We may have a better knowledge and understanding of the cultural realities of the peoples among whom we work.

inspiration, which is at the same time a norm and a unifying force, which transform and re-create this culture, and so it is the origin of a new creation.

This definition is a good response to the expectations of Africa in view of the research on inculturation and also of its dynamic potential. In brief, it takes into account the variety, the transformation, and the need for re-creation which are the major characteristics of the Africa of today.

The attitude of the first Brothers to arrive in Africa was generally a prophetic one. They did take into account the differences they found, but when trying to introduce change and new structures they tended to show a lack of proper perspective. This was a general error in approach.

In order to have a better understanding of the inculturation of the work of the Marist Brothers, let us look at it under the three headings given above:

Variety

There is a certain simplistic way of looking at things which sees Africa as a homogeneous whole. This is very mistaken. Africa offers a great variety of cultures. In ethnic and tribal cultures there are differences which exclude any confusion and above all, any generalization.

Besides these differences in traditional societies, we are now witnesses of a new division, one that is more social. We find it in peoples, in tribes, and more and more even in families.

On the one hand we have the traditional African cultures. They have not died away. The very forces which threatened them with extinction have led to a reaction which gives them more life. These cultures are to be found at their strongest in the milieux termed "traditional", that is, in the rural areas where the way of life and the system of values are still traditional in style.

On the other hand we find what is essentially a new culture in the urban areas. The schools and the media of communication have created more than just a new mentality. In Africa, the town-dwellers make up a category which cannot be ignored; they speak European languages, their mental attitudes are strongly influenced, often completely furnished, by a western view of the world.

However, we must say that the boundary between these two cultures often cuts across the cultural soul of the modern African individual. In Africa, the man, and even the child, of the city, cannot get away completely from the world of his ancestors. The "ancestral spirits" of his village continue to live in his imagination. And his judgments are often marked by the ethnic parameters of his tribe. In addition, the Africa of the villages is more and more influenced by the western style of life. Young people question what seemed in the eyes of their parents to be definitively fixed in the heart of their culture.

In order to understand the child caught up in this ambiguity, the Brothers must try to share in the two cultures.

In many places the Brothers went into the countryside when they arrived. They learned the local language until some at least could communicate in depth with the local population. Certain talented Brothers made translations into the language of the country they were in. Others betook themselves to the music, and discovered this branch of art which reveals the sensitivity of a culture. Many of them immersed themselves in the places they were working in to such a degree that we can say they were truly inculturated therein.

Today they know and share in the local reality. They have learned to appreciate the political and economic organization of the cultures they have adopted. This deep participation of these Brothers in the local realities of Africa is a very important aspect of the inculturation of the Gospel message. It would be an exaggeration to say that it is this that has allowed them to evangelize these cultures. But it has allowed deep conversion at individual level among the local population.

There is a great number of African Christians today in whom the Gospel message is really incarnated thanks to the Christian education they received from the Brothers. We find that many have made the Marist spirituality their own. These people, deeply converted to Christ, who have succeeded in integrating Christian and traditional values in their lives, are the leaven which will bring about a true inculturation of the Gospel on a larger scale, at the level of the culture itself.

However, the Brothers have already realized that this great and good work which they have accomplished is still not enough, that it might be, in the long run, the start of a

mistaken vision of things, if it does not take into account the deep and rapid changes which are characteristic of the Africa of today.

Deep transformations

One of the main obstacles to the inculturation of the Gospel message is the fixed mentality of certain missionaries. There are some among them who think that they have a good knowledge of some African group of today for the simple reason that they have read all about the group in question, in books written by ethnologists at the beginning of the century! It would seem that for these people, time in Africa stopped years ago. For them, Africa is a continent fixed in the structures and schemas of a generation or more ago.

The real facts of the case are that today's **Africa is a continent in a state of transformation**. It is the theatre of many deep and varied crises. And it is in this web of traditional and modern thought and values, of tensions and crises... that inculturation is called on to operate.

In Africa there has been a change of outlook among the Brothers in recent years. More and more both the missionaries from outside and the native Africans have become aware of the crucial importance of the changes which are taking place, and particularly in regard to the cultural and religious identity of the people they are working with.

In this relatively new field, the Brothers are working, for the most part, with young people in school as well as in extracurricular areas. Teaching of religion and other forms of apostolate nowadays are more in the manner of sharing and exchange than of teaching as such. The general attitude requires an **attitude of listening on both sides**.

The Brothers have adopted, or rather, are adopting, a new strategy of spreading the Good News. It consists of recognizing from the very beginning that God is present in those to whom they are sent, of appreciating the values of the latter as expressions of this presence of God, and even of making them their own. In other words, the Brothers are finding out that the inculturation of the Gospel message is in great part the inculturation of persons, the inculturation of themselves.

We notice that his way of acting leads the young, and also the not so young, to question their own selves and their own cultural values in the light of the Gospel. The next step is to be awake oneself and to waken others to the presence of God in them and in their cultures, so that all may say together: "Truly God is here, and we did not know it!"

In this new way of acting, we must state that the apostolate of our presence among the young in the Marial attitude of true humility, simplicity and modesty will do more for a real inculturation than a plethora of academic reflections. In the different places where the Brothers are, their very presence has created and continues to create an attitude of openness to the Gospel message. Once this attitude has taken hold, inculturation has begun. But we must learn how to guide it, and particularly, how to respect the rhythm of the people. Impatience, undue hurry, uncontrolled enthusiasm, even a specious pride in "Africanism", are prejudicial to real inculturation.

Cultural problems find their solutions in a calm and harmonious integration of new elements, and a reformulation of the whole. It is by this capacity for self-renewal, made with openness and fidelity, that the strength of a culture can be measured.

In many places the Brothers went into the countryside when they arrived.



The possibility of re-creation

Faced with Christianity, the African cultures have for a long time found themselves in a deep dilemma. On the one hand they could adopt the new religion and let their culture and their traditional religion die; or, on the other, they could reject the new religion and run the risk of closing themselves in the religion of their ancestors, a religion whose practices were falling more and more into disuse.

Nowadays the opinion is that this was a false dilemma. Every culture has come up against other cultures and religions, and has survived by accepting a balanced synthesis of the old and new forces. We might say, by re-creating and re-formulating themselves. There is reason to think that, for its own salvation, today's Africa will not escape from this rule.

One of the roles of the Brothers in Africa is to help the young people to escape from this "ambiguous adventure"—the dichotomy between Christianity and traditional religion—in which they find themselves. The Brothers have to get down to the problem of helping the young to discover and to integrate the true values of both sides. These values will be the foundations of a new socio-religious balance which will enable the African cultures to recreate themselves in a way which is both faithful to tradition and which will accept Christian values.

There are two important facts which illustrate this attitude of the Brothers. They are the recruitment policy and the setting up of the Marist International Centre. As far as recruitment is concerned, it must be admitted that this was neglected for a long time. But recently it has become a concern and commitment all over the continent. And, a very important point, it is done in a careful, selective manner. The criteria of this selection are serious and are well-respected. The recruiters make use of the Formation Guide, and take care to apply the provisions therein to the real situation in the Provinces, Districts, and Sectors.

As for the Marist Centre in Nairobi, I was going to say that its importance needs no comment. It is a tool in religious and academic formation, of integration of the Good News and of African cultures. Its programmes and courses of study are eloquent on this point.

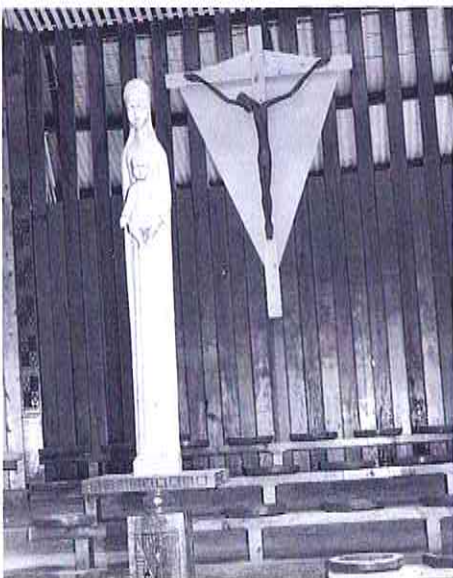
The inculturation of Marist work in Africa is above all a task for the African Brothers themselves. But for that, **it is essential that there are African Brothers**, that they are plentiful on the ground, and that they are well trained. These are the conditions in which the Brothers will think and live the Marist life as Africans, and will make their response to the call in a truly African way.

This is why the good recruiting and good formation that we see in our Provinces, Districts and Sectors today, are a good start, and give us good reason for hope in the inculturation of the Marist work in Africa.

This contribution to the special edition of FMS-MESSAGE on Africa is intended to be an objective look at Marist work in Africa, but it is also a point of view which is deliberately optimistic. Since the arrival of the first Brothers on African soil, many things have happened. To say the very least, the continent has gone through profound changes.

It is a source of great joy that today the Brothers have opted for openness. The Marist work is adapting itself to the places where it is. It is taking into account the transformations in society. And the Brothers are helping the young, the future of the continent, to renew themselves by contact with the values of the Gospel and by integrating these into their own cultures.

Br. Theoneste Kalisa, Zaire



The Gospel message is really incarnated thanks to the Christian education...



Bro. Theoneste Kalisa.

THE FUTURE OF MARIST BROTHERS IN AFRICA

- My principal concern as Superior is to make proper provision for the future of our Marist work in this sector, to ensure that, after we, the missionaries, have gone, the work will be continued and developed by African Brothers.
- Up to the present, we have concentrated on those in school..., but these are only a small fraction of the immense crowd of young people menaced by poverty and delinquency.
- The relevance and appeal of Marcellin's work and spirit in Africa today. My experience has been

that wherever we live an authentic Marist life, people spontaneously come to us, and want to live as we do.

- Africa needs the simple love of God and his Mother that Marcellin taught us, our simplicity of life, our dedication to duty and special concern for the less privileged...
- The rediscovery of the person of Champagnat, whom the young find so attractive...

In reply to a questionnaire, four of the Regional Superiors sent their views on the above. They were *Br. Antonio Rieu* from Zaire, *Br. Michael Oruche* from Ghana, *Br. Jean-Louis Rognon* from the Central African Republic and *Br. Emmanuel Ramaroson* from Madagascar.

We give here the questions and their answers:

1. What is your greatest challenge as Superior?

As Superior I have two concerns uppermost in my mind, and both are so important to me that I cannot choose one from the other. They are 1) a good Marist formation for our young Brothers of this new mission in Ghana; 2) fidelity to our Marist charism in this ever-changing society in which we live.

Br. Michael

My principal concern as Superior is to make proper provision for the future of our Marist work in this sector, to ensure that, after we, the missionaries, have gone,

the work will be continued and developed by the Brothers from Central Africa. To this end, the accompanying of the aspirants and the formation of the Brothers is a long and delicate task which demands a lot of work and a great spirit of faith.

Br. Jean-Louis

At the present time, my two greatest concerns, which are at the same time two great challenges for the District, are: formation in general, and our apostolate among the young. We have already been successful in organizing the various stages of initial formation, and now we must concentrate on ongoing formation. We are engaged in a serious study at Council level of the whole question of our work with the young, the teaching of religion in school, a youth movement with a strong Marist flavour (the AMC - Friends of Marcellin Champagnat), and the promotion of vocations.

Br. Antonio



Bro. Jean Louis Rognon.



Bro. Emmanuel Ramaroson.



Bro. Antonio Rieu.



Bro. Michael Oruche.

I have two: a) the formation of the young Brothers, which has been neglected somewhat in the past, resulting in the loss of some good subjects; b) since 1988 we have not been able to appoint a Brother full time to recruiting, because of the emphasis we were putting on formation; we are going to rectify this in the near future.

Br. Emmanuel

2. What do you think of the development of our Marist charism in our continent?

This is of special necessity for us. Africa needs the simple love of God and his Mother that Marcellin taught us, our simplicity of life, our dedication to duty and special concern for the less privileged, to challenge the extravagant living of its leaders and the lopsided view of wealth by its people, who want to be rich without working for it.

Br. Michael

If we aim at being at the service of all the young, and above all the poor, in Africa, then we will be overwhelmed, we will risk "burn-out". Up to the present, we have concentrated on those in school... but these are only a small fraction of the immense crowd of young people menaced by poverty and delinquency. This is the field where our charism as Christian educators must be developed.

Br. Jean-Louis

The Christian education of youth according to the style taught us by Champagnat is of the greatest importance in our Africa of today, where we have a huge crowd of young people looking for human formation, who are thirsting for spiritual and Christian values. The presence of **Brothers** who can show these young people the face of the God who is Love through their Marial pedagogy has a fundamental role to play in the Church of today.

Br. Antonio

I think that the expatriate missionaries have lived among us and brought us the Marist charism. By the authenticity of their lives they have raised up good vocations in our midst, which are already bearing fruit. Now it is their turn to say: "They must increase and we must decrease".

Br. Emmanuel

3. How do you see our mission as Marists in Africa for the year 2000?

My vision of our mission as Marists in Africa remains that of our Founder: to bring the good news of Jesus to our people, to let them know how much God loves them... to the youth through the school and other less formal means; and to the people by direct evangelization in the villages, collaborating with others, and reaching out to both adults and young people.

Br. Michael

The experts in projection are not very optimistic about the evolution of Africa in the next ten years. As Marists, we will have to share more closely in the life of the poor people to whom we are bringing the Good News. Our religious consecration will demand a greater self-sacrifice of us... which may frighten the "weak", but will induce an enthusiastic response from the "strong".

Br. Jean-Louis

My dream is of communities made up almost entirely of African Brothers, witnesses and messengers carrying the Good News, living out their religious commitment with joy and boldness, in the service of the most needy young of our continent. In a word, **prophets** for the XXIst century, crying out to the youth of Africa!

Br. Antonio

Up to now our work could be regarded as missionary, depending on foreigners. Now it is the turn of the "native" Brothers. The continuity of the work depends on their authentic and deeply committed Marist life. We must have deeply convinced African and Malgache Brothers to carry the work forward into the XXIst century.

Br. Emmanuel

4. What are your thoughts at this present time from the point of view of vocations?

- 1) There are many potential vocations to our way of life;
- 2) there is, however, a crying need for a more effective means of vocations pastoral care;
- 3) formation is improving, but it is necessary that, while we utilize the knowledge and expertise of our Western Brothers, that formation must be African in content and outlook.

Br. Michael

Marist vocations are springing up all over Africa. This is a grace for us, and a challenge! Luckily, we can count on the support of our Superiors in Rome, and on that of our Mother-Provinces... not to mention the collaboration of all the African Marist sectors, such as international noviciates, Marist International Centre, etc.

Br. Jean-Louis

The youth of Africa is searching for the truth and for deep-seated reasons to live life to the full, and is open to the call of God. The opportunity is simply stupendous, and we must be ready to grasp it! The example of enthusiastic Brothers, who will give themselves without counting the cost, and who will be "close" to the young, will be of paramount importance.

Br. Antonio

For the moment, there would seem to be plenty of vocations... but are there? Two points come to mind: A lot of families with numerous children use the juniorate, noviciate, and even a period of temporary vows, as a means of providing for at least one of their children until they become self-sufficient! The Church in Africa is young, and faith is still mixed with a lot of superstition,

even in families which appear to be good Christians. We find this confusion even in those who think they have a religious vocation, with disastrous results. iii. In a developing country, the poor often see the priesthood and religious life as a means of bettering themselves materially. So we must question strongly the motives of those presenting themselves.

Br. Emmanuel

5. What are your greatest reasons for hope?

Among many, I want to state **two**:

- 1) the youthfulness of the Church in Africa;
- 2) the relevance and appeal of Marcellin's work and spirit in Africa today. My experience has been that wherever we live an authentic Marist life, people spontaneously come to us, listen to us, and want to live as we do.

Br. Michael

God is always there! The maternal presence of Mary, who encourages and protects us. The rediscovery of the person of Fr Champagnat, whom the young find so attractive. The multitude of young people who are thirsty for love, thirsty for God!

Br. Antonio

In the first place, our young Brothers, who are fired with zeal for promoting the evangelization of Africa, and for promoting vocations. Their "international" formation helps them to overcome ethnic divisions and to live in the same family spirit. And the older Brothers, whose readiness to make themselves available encourages others to go forward. Above all that, there is our confidence in Her, who, since our beginning, has "done everything for us".

Br. Jean-Louis

In spite of what I have said above, there are many reasons for hope. African and Malgache families are large, and there are many possible good vocations



Perpetual professions in Zaire (1990).

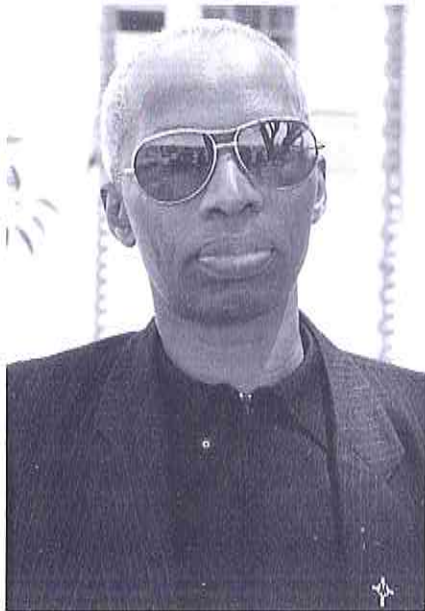
waiting for us to form them. There is a great stress in the Church on the consolidation of a truly Christian family life. There is growing strength in Christian youth movements, a good seedbed for vocations. There is great stress also on the providing of solid formation, for both clergy and religious. And finally, the Church is passing more and more into the hands of local people, who are accepting responsibility for their own affairs. This means that they are more able to pass on their convictions to their own compatriots.

Br. Emmanuel



...a great demand for education.

OUR OLDER BROTHERS



Bro. Pascal Nkurunziza.

I am nearing that end. In other words that I am now in the late afternoon of my life.

Br. Patrick

- My vocation is a marvellous gift from God to me and to my Brothers, a gift which I must welcome and live with joy and gratitude. The confidence and encouragement of my family, my friends, and my former pupils help me to become each day more and more what I should be: an apostle, witness to Jesus Christ.

Br. Pascal

2. What does fidelity mean for you?

- For me, fidelity means my commitment to God. God has loved me with a limitless love, so I must be faithful to my promise to him through fidelity to the Constitutions and to the road that the Founder has mapped out.

Br. Eugene

- To me it means to follow Christ in his footsteps closely, in spite of failures.

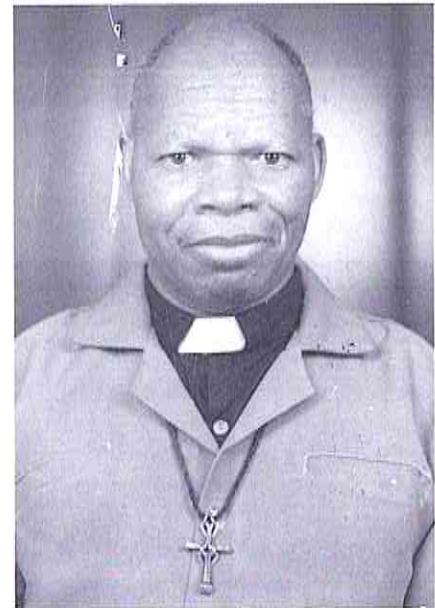
Br. Patrick

- Fidelity is not to doubt myself and the call which I received as a young man. It is to open my mind and heart to the messages which the Lord sends me through events in my life and in the world, for example, in Mary. It is to believe in the power of the Word which nourishes me and enables me to act. It is never to despair of man and to persevere in his service.

Br. Pascal

3. Which aspects of Marist charism strike you most strongly?

- The aspect that strikes me most strongly is the going out to the poorest and most abandoned children. Our Founder was very sensitive to the needs of the young, par-



Bro. Patrick Bwana.

ticularly in the matter of ignorance of the faith.

Br. Eugene

- To accept the burden of teaching willingly, and a strong desire not to give up. To be a Marist, a child of Mary, and wish her to be known in order to bring Christ to the public!

Br. Patrick

- Their attentive presence among the young who need such attention today;

- their care for spreading the Good News;

- the priority they give to the service of the little ones, of the poor and the forgotten in our towns and in the country.

Br. Pascal

4. What are your thoughts on our mission as Marists and the apostolate of the Brothers in Africa?

- In Africa the Marist Brothers play a very dynamic role in the Church by giving a solid education to the

We put five questions on religious life to three of our older African Brothers, *Br. Eugene Utera* of Zaire, *Br. Patrick Bwana* of Malawi, and *Br. Pascal Nkurunziza* of Rwanda. We give here the questions and their answers:

1. How do you see your own vocation and your life journey up to the present?

- My vocation is a gift of God's grace, which I experienced from an early age. My Parish Priest wanted me to be a priest, but when I met the Brothers and learned that their Congregation was consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, I knew that was the one for me. In spite of opposition from both the parish priest and my father, I went to the Noviciate in 1948, and I thank God that he gave me the grace to enter this Congregation.

Br. Eugene

- I see my own vocation as a special boat made for me to reach the other side of the river, and I feel that now

young, particularly in preparation for Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation. This is what our young men are doing now at Kisangani.

Br. Eugene

- Africa is one of the Third World countries... Our mission is to help it to grow fighting against inferiority and superiority complexes which hinder both material and spiritual progress. When there are mixed races... the local Religious should be given the chance to plan for their future religious life. This is a big problem, and we hope it will soon end.

Br. Patrick

- As an African, I see every day the work of the Brothers in my own country and in our continent. It is a demanding mission, urgent, but a beautiful one. We are living through crises which are preparing us for many changes. We must be ready for these. The educational work of the Brothers, and their work of spreading the Good News are of prime importance, and we are conscious of this.

Br. Pascal

5. What message would you offer to the young Brothers and the new generations?

- My message to the young Brothers is that in the first place they become truly men of prayer —without prayer there can be no assurance of perseverance; the man who prays well will live well, and will be faithful to his commitment to follow Christ. They should aim at building up strong convictions and a solid personality.

Br. Eugene

- My message is fivefold:

- be faithful to your personal prayer and multiply occasions for it;
- be faithful to community prayer —these two points are essential;
- be reliable in all that you are expected to do;
- find time to read spiritual books to help you in your meditation;
- make a point to be always happy, firstly to the others in your community... smiles cost nothing, but bring treasure to

those around you, so extend your friendly manner to other people.

Br. Patrick

- I would tell the young Brothers that they are a rich treasure for the Institute, the Church and the world. Let their joy in their vocation and in their service of others be a sign that Jesus is truly the Redeemer and that his Good News is really a message of liberation. That they should not be afraid to proclaim to the people of our time that their thirst can be quenched only by Him who said to the Samaritan woman "Whoever drinks of the water I will give will never thirst again." Most important, that the best way of attracting and fostering vocations, is the witness of their lives, given in the bosom of a loving and praying community.

I would repeat the words of John Paul II on his visit to our country: "*Of your country with a thousand hills and a thousand problems, make a country with a thousand projects and a thousand solutions... Do not be afraid to use the talents God has given you... and above all, do not lose courage.*"

Br. Pascal



Brother Eugene Utera, from Zaire, with a group of children.

OUR YOUNG BROTHERS

- To be a Marist in Africa today will mean accepting to identify with and to help the rapidly increasing number of desperate youths...
- The mere fact of becoming a Marist Brother in Africa violates the African sense of sharing, of life, and of fecundity. This is the challenge and we all have the task to enlighten our people.
- It is an act of faith and of courage: faith in the charism of Champagnat and courage to believe that charism can take root and grow here in Africa.
- That the Marist apostolate be diversified considerably from the school situation to adapt to the changing times and conditions.
- The young have no reason to lose hope. It is their time which is coming.



Bro. Cletus Akamnonu.



Bro. Remy Mbolipasiko.

As with our older Brothers, a number of the young men were also asked to answer a set of questions. We print here the replies from: *Remy Mbolipasiko* of Zaire; *Cletus Akamnonu* of Nigeria; *Nicholas Banda* of Malawi; *Francis Amoako Attah* of Ghana; *Jean Baptiste Tamessuien* of Cameroon; *Christian Gisamonyo* of

Zaire; *Kazindu Antoine* of Zaire; *Jean Louis Yerima* of the Central African Republic; *Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa* of Madagascar; and *Antonio Sana-sana* of Mozambique.

1. The challenge of becoming a Marist Brother in Africa today what does it mean to you?

For me, it is the challenge of formation, a challenge which is qualitative as well as quantitative. Statistics show that Africa is a continent the majority of whose people are young. Hence the need for vocations. The past and the present situation have produced a special type of young person, which leads to the need for an integrated and well-balanced formation for the young Brother to enable him to stand up to the challenge of modern life.

Br. Remy

It is a challenge to be single-minded in his vocation amidst possible economic and moral collapse. It is to be able to earn at least a minimum of resources for his own upkeep. It is to be able to



Bro. Nicholas Banda.



Bro. Francis Amoako Attah.



Bro. Jean-Baptiste Tamessuien.

live and work with or without a seemingly encouraging number of Brothers, but always stimulated by Christ and the signs of the times.

Br. Cletus

I consider these challenges in terms of the **demanding situations** an African Brother is faced with. a) Religious life is still not well understood in Africa; some aspects are seen as foreign, because there has been no tradition in African culture of vowing Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. People that undertake to become Religious must have to embrace this, knowing that it goes against all their tradition. b) To be Marist in Africa today will mean accepting to identify with and to help the rapidly increasing number of desperate youths who no longer hold to the old traditional African values and who feel displaced in the emerging new societies. c) Within the Congregation especially in Africa we are living through a transitional time when the "expatriate age" is giving way to the "indigenous". Changes will be needed in our apostolate and life-style to bring them more into line with our culture and our available means.

Br. Nicholas

The mere fact of becoming a Marist Brother in Africa violates the African sense of sharing, of life, and of fecundity. Therefore the vow of poverty in its strict sense makes the Brother selfish, the chaste nature of the religious life becomes a stumbling block to procreation. This is the

challenge and we all have the task to enlighten our people.

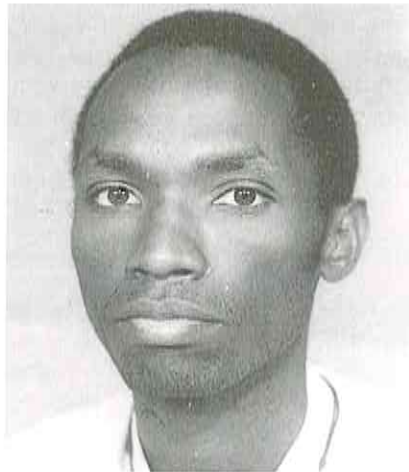
Br. Francis

The challenge facing the Marist Brother in Africa today is to bring the good news to others, to be sensitive to the responsibilities our actions impose on us each day, to ensure a well-integrated knowledge of the young people who have great potential for Africa in the year 2000.

Br. Jean-Baptiste

It is an act of faith and of courage —faith in the charism of Fr. Champagnat and courage to believe that this charism can take root and grow here in Africa.

Br. Christian



Bro. Kazindu Antoine.

The challenge facing the Marist in Africa is:

- To have a disinterested love for young people, above all the least favoured.
- To be ready to collaborate in an active way in the various youth centres and centres of religious formation.
- To be committed to search out solutions for the problems of the young today —delinquency, lack of work, "children of the streets", drop-outs, etc.
- To be a man of faith and of hope, in the face of the problems.

Br. Kazindu

To be FMS in Africa today means to become a bringer of joy and hope in a continent where most of the young are poor and hemmed in by the social

situation, disorientated by the present school and educational system. Can we be capable of finding a solution to this situation and to give the young people a more hopeful view of their future?

Br. Jean-Louis

To become a Marist Brother in Africa today is to be capable of renouncing certain values, such as riches, heritage, love of one person, the joy of founding a home and bringing up one's own children... in order to seek out other value which are more noble, with a view to a lasting happiness. The Brother, in addition, is to point the young towards these values.

Br. Sylvain

Our challenge is to maintain our fidelity to the Founder and to the Marist charism, inspite of difficulties; to promote a well-balanced man through a formation which is human, Christian, biblical, theological, and Marial. This demands a total integration into the diocesan pastoral plan and the use of all possible methods to promote genuine Marist vocations.

Br. Antonio

2. What aspects of the Founder and of the Marist charism strike you most?

His love for young people, particularly the least favoured, which was inseparable from his apostolic zeal ("I cannot see a child without wanting to show him how much Jesus loves him...") his courage in action, but also



Bro. Antônio Sanasana.

his faith, his relying on providence; his love for Mary, in whom he found a Mother, a support, a guide, an Ordinary Resource.

Br. Remy

It is simply the fact of our being Marist —of Mary— and all the implications of that. It is the Marist community life. It is our apostolate to the youth —of incarnating into their world in order to work with them from within.

Br. Cletus

- a) Perseverance even when things are not going well, much more perseverance in prayer. As with Fr. Champagnat this will be achieved when we live more deeply in union with God. Furthermore to discern the signs of the times in God's presence.
- b) Love for the young is the other aspect; as Champagnat used to say, "to bring up a child properly, you must love him."

Br. Nicholas

One of the aspects of the Marist charism that I underline is the "Marian spirit". My love for Mary helps me to embrace this aspect of our life. Our Family spirit also corresponds with the African extended family system which makes me feel at home with the Brothers.

Br. Francis

The interest he had in young people, which shows me my true identity in my commitment. Our community life, which brings me out and brings me

closer to others. Prayer in which I find myself by seeing myself in relation to others.

Br. Jean-Baptiste

What strikes me most in the life of the Founder is his love for his Brothers and for young people. This comes out very strongly in his letters. I am also struck by his solicitude for the most disadvantaged.

Br. Christian

His capacity for standing up to difficulties with faith and confidence in the maternal protection of Our Lady —his sensitiveness to the needs of the young of this time and his actively looking for solutions to their problems.

Br. Kazindu

He was a great man, a great friend of young people. This is why he was so concerned with their problems. He was a man who wanted to stay with them, to listen to them, to get to know them, to understand them, and to love them. This is the inspiration I get from Fr. Champagnat seen as an apostle of the young.

Br. Jean-Louis

"To work with young people" —this is the aspect of Marist life which attracts me. I want to be with young people, wherever they are, in order to be able to help them.

Br. Sylvain

His total confidence in God, his great devotion to Mary, his deep humility, his devotion to the poor, and his apostolic zeal.

Br. Antonio

3. What are your hopes for Marist Africa in the year 2000?

To have more Brothers, with a sound religious and professional formation, who will be full of missionary spirit, capable of answering the needs of these multitudes of young people, of taking responsibility and of making Marist Africa our own.

Br. Remy

That the Marist apostolate be diversified considerably from the school situation to adapt to the changing times and conditions; that more Brothers take up courses traditionally regarded as not for Brothers in so far as they enhance our apostolate and are relevant to it.

Br. Cletus

- a) While we appreciate what the expatriate Brothers have done and are doing for us in Africa, the Africa of 2000 needs African Brothers too to take an active part in planning for an African future. In other words, Africa has to contribute her own values to the Marist world;
- b) I also hope that by the year 2000 Marist Africa would have thought how she can serve her people best. Here I want to refer to the form of apostolate that suits Africa best. For example, teaching in the schools might not be enough. The Brothers need to engage more directly with the youth of both sexes and wherever they are found. The other thing would be the sharing of personnel. That is, for Africans to be missionaries to other African districts and Provinces.

Br. Nicholas

My vision of the year 2000 is that the African Marist will be firmly established in Africa, able to be self supporting in the areas of personnel and probably economically. I expect that the African Marist would be able to keep the fire of Champagnat burning by penetrating into other parts of Africa, with the primary aim of making Jesus Christ known and loved.

Br. Francis

By the year 2000, I hope that Marist Africa will have taken its full place in the Marist world, and will have become a source of support and help



The Marian charism of M. Champagnat.

to the countries that brought us the Good News, and that now are being threatened with dechristianization.

Br. Jean-Baptiste

I look at Marist Africa in 2000 with some trepidation. But I think that the African Marist Brothers will ensure their future by fidelity to the Gospel; to the charism of Fr. Champagnat, and by a true commitment to the needs of the poor. This is the key to the future of Marist Africa.

Br. Christian

My hopes for Marist Africa in the year 2000 are;

- to be models for the young and to be an influence for good to them.
- to make Fr. Champagnat a "Superstar" for our young people!
- to have many and good solid vocations.
- to be able to open our own new missions. (One of my dreams is to open a centre of formation/retreat, etc. for all the members of the Marist Family, so that they can be formed into committed Christians, deeply imbued with Marial spirit and virtues.

Br. Kazindu

The future of Marist Africa in the year 2000 is very promising and this optimism is caused and reinforced by the growth in vocations that we see today in Africa. This gives a great cause for hope to me as a young African Brother.

Br. Jean-Louis

The growth in the number of vocations raises much hope for Marist Africa in the year 2000. The potential of the young people and the efforts being made for their formation reinforce this optimism.

Br. Sylvain

By the year 2000, we will have Brothers who are well prepared and capable of responsibility. Thanks to them, the Congregation will be known and respected throughout Africa. These Brothers will be clothed with Christ, with prayer, reflection, well-integrated formation. Brothers who are always attentive to the signs of the times, and who take part more and more in our central administration.

Br. Antonio



"These young Brothers must put on Christ through prayer."

4. What message would you like to pass on to the young people of your country?

Because of the wind of change —political, social...— which is blowing across Africa today, Zaire finds itself in a state of uncertainty about the future... The young have no reason to lose hope. It is their time which is coming. It is up to them to prepare for it carefully and courageously.

Br. Remy

God loves you. You are important and precious indeed. You are full of life and energy. You can be free to help free others, especially your peers, to embrace genuine love. This is a task that must be done if you are to have any future. You cannot accomplish this by dropping out of school. Don't conform to this trend —proper education is your right, not a privilege. This is the first step towards liberating yourself and others.

Br. Cletus

We can still say "The harvest is great, but the labourers are few". I therefore invite the youth within the secret of their heart to find out what God is calling them to be. When searching, they should seek the advice of wise people. When you have found your own way, "bloom where you are planted", for God will always give you the grace to persevere in whatever he

calls you to be. LASTLY, ALWAYS PRAY EARNESTLY!

Br. Nicholas

The existing cultural beliefs and social structures have imperceptibly infused fear in the youth of Ghana, so my message to them is "Do not be afraid, and have hope in the Lord" for the future of our Christian faith and socio-economic development rest on you.

Br. Francis

In this year when Cameroon celebrates its centenary, my dear young people, look at things with new eyes, with Christian eyes, give a place to the Saviour in your life, and answer his call with open hearts, with open hands.

Br. Jean-Baptiste

Be generous, open, and available. Continue to fight against all forms of egoism which will stop you from following your vocation as men and as Christians. My God bless all your efforts to remain faithful to him.

Br. Christian

Young men of Zaire, reflect well before choosing your models!

Br. Kazindu

As he did to the rich young man, Christ continues to love the young, through his Church and his apostles. The Maria Gorettis, the Kizitos of today, who fight against prostitution



Bro. Jean-Louis Yerima.

and false love, you are they! You are Champagnats and Don Boscos in the fight against the misery of the young. It is you who are the witnesses of the true Happiness which takes hold and spreads like fire. Are you ready to be all these?

Br. Jean-Louis

There are many values in life. But be careful! They are not all the best! Do not be content with pleasure of the present moment and with visible, touchable, values. Go beyond them to the other values, perhaps harder to find, but which will certainly bring you everlasting happiness!

Br. Sylvain

Never lose sight of why you exist, and order your lives on this. Remain docile to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and seek your constant support in Jesus and Mary his Mother. Remain open to the teaching of the Church, remain faithful to the heritage which has been passed down to you!

Br. Antonio



"Young people have no reason to lose hope."

LES FRÈRES MARISTES EN AFRIQUE

(le 24 avril 1991)

PAYS	FRÈRES					
	Aut.	Mis.	Tot.	Perp.	Temp.	Nov.
Afrique du Sud	17	8	25	24	1	0
Algérie	0	3	3	3	0	0
Angola	1	8	9	7	2	1
Cameroun (A + F)	11	14	25	18	7	1
Centrafrique	7	10	17	10	7	0
Côte d'Ivoire	2	11	13	11	2	1
Ghana	7	2	9	6	3	3
Guinée Équatoriale	0	4	4	4	0	0
Kenya	0	16	16	16	0	1
Libéria	0	4	4	4	0	0
Madagascar	57	4	61	41	20	0
Malawi	31	14	45	20	25	24
Mozambique	2	10	12	11	1	0
Nigeria	75	5	80	63	17	0
Rwanda	31	6	37	30	7	2
Zaïre	27	22	49	37	12	8
Zambie	6	12	18	13	5	7
Zimbabwe	6	18	24	21	3	1
TOTAUX	280	171	451	339	112	49

N.B. Les étudiants du MIC (Kenya) ont été répartis selon leur propre nationalité.



Bro. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa.

OUR DEAD

Of the Brothers who have given their life's work to Africa, we give two examples, one a missionary, the other a native born African, both of them examples of what a Marist Brother should be and is.

BR. ALBAN MARY

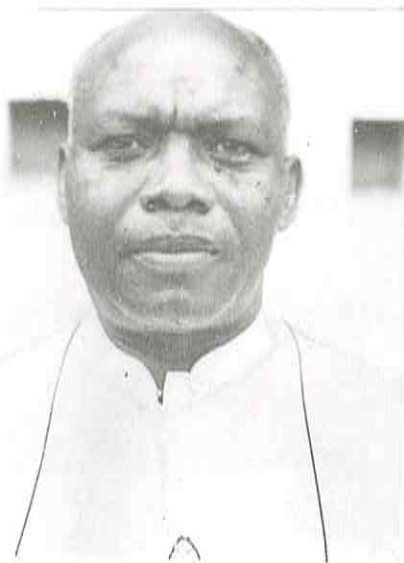
(Gregory Ifedi Okoye)

He was born in 1924 of pagan parents in Dunukofia, in what was to be later the Diocese of Onitsha, Nigeria. His early education was at a mission school, and after he got his First School Leaving Certificate (Primary School) in 1940, he was employed as a teacher in the lowest classes and in teaching catechism. (This was normal at the time—a boy who had completed Primary 6 was considered qualified to teach up to Primary 3.)

While working for the mission, he developed an interest in religious life, and entered the Congregation of St Peter Claver in 1947. This was a Congregation founded in 1943 to train catechists and primary school teachers. On account of the inexperience of the Fathers in the formation of Brothers, Bishop Whelan of Owerri decided to ask the Marist Brothers to take it over, and this happened in 1956. And so Br. Alban became a Marist, and made his Final Profession in 1961.

He had studied in the Training College for his teaching qualification from 1951 to 1953, and was then appointed as Superior of the community of Azaraegbelu, where a community had been set up for Brothers attending Training College. He was later to be on the staff of Holy Ghost Training College, Umuahia, and Superior of the community there.

One of the rare qualities which Br. Alban and the others in his group brought over from St Peter Claver's, was a burning zeal in the teaching of catechism. They were all men of a deep faith which they had received from the early missionaries, and they



Bro. Alban Marie

so cherished it that every breath seemed to urge them to share it with others. These men were a gift with which the Lord welcomed the Marist Congregation through its first Nigerian members. Br. Alban was no stranger to this gift, which made him a dedicated catechist both by work and example to all he met.

He was a man of firm character, talented, who spoke little but did a lot. As community Superior, and later as District Visitor from 1968 to 1974, he had a mother's heart to attend to the Brothers' needs, and the firmness of a good ruler to take a decision and stand by it. His one great fault was being very meticulous about time.

He was one whose talents might have been brought out more if he had had the opportunity for higher education, but he was probably made to hold the fort and to keep the family going while the younger generation received what he had missed, as so often happened in our traditional family.

He was one of the first Marist refugees affected by the Biafra War, driven out with his community from Port Harcourt, and moving from

place to place to find a place of safety.

It was during the war that he was made Visitor of the District. Up to then, the Superior of the District was one of our missionary Brothers, but the war obviously threatened their stay in the country, and they needed a local Brother to take care of the others. It was a hard task given to Br. Alban, at a very hard time, but the Lord's grace was not wanting, and with time and patience, he managed. At the end of his second period of office in 1974, he insisted that his successor must be a Nigerian, not a missionary, who were by this time, quite few in the country.

By the end of 1974, it could be seen that his health was not the best. Only later was it known that he had heart problems which eventually led to his death on 11th August 1979, at the age of 55. The Lord he had served faithfully for so long seems to have prepared him for this with his Annual Retreat, which was in its fifth day when he died surrounded by his confreres, the first of our Nigerian Brothers to die, leaving an example for us all to follow. May he rest in peace!

BR. ALPHIUS *(Richard Devriendt)*

He was born in the town of Leke, in Flanders, in 1892, in a poor working family, which, at that time of poverty and misery, lost a number of its children at a very young age.

As a child, his schooling, like that of most, was very irregular, due to the work on the farm, until, at the age of 11, he entered the Juniorate at Pittem, going on to the noviciate and then the scholasticate, where he gained his teacher's certificate in 1912. One of his brothers followed him into the Marist Brothers, and worked all his life in Belgium.

Br. Alphius taught at Gentbrugge for 11 years. Then the Superiors asked for volunteers for the mission which had started in 1912, and he put his

name forward. And so in 1923 he left his beloved Belgium for what was then known as the Congo.

The number in the school at Buta went from 250 in 1923 to 750 by 1929, and Br. Richard —as he was known in the Congo— threw himself wholeheartedly into the work. He studied Lingala, the local language, and translated schoolbooks into it. He set up his "publishing firm" in Buta! He taught in primary and secondary classes, and did pioneer work in the farm, where he was instrumental in the introduction of European cattle to the country, as well as bringing European vegetables into the garden.

His work was briefly interrupted by the Second Noviciate at Grugliasco, after which he was named Superior at Buta, which he directed till 1946, during which time he also opened a Juniorate there.

Appointed to Nyanguenzi, he brought the Juniors with him, and began the building of a new school, a juniorate, and later a noviciate and scholasticate. In 1951 he was appointed as Visitor to the District, a task which he carried out admirably, though he felt that he was not made for it, and asked to be relieved.

Once again he was in charge of a school, this time in Stanleyville, where he had 3500 pupils, divided among five primary schools in various areas of the town, a second

dary school, a commercial school and a technical school —all of this was under his capable care!

And then illness struck this man who had never been ill in his life, who had escaped all the tropical diseases which had carried off so many of his confreres! His health gave cause for anxiety... the doctors thought it was cancer and sent him to Belgium for treatment. There the specialist used x-ray treatment, and spoke of possible surgery... then changed their minds, and Br. Richard knew it was the end.

He asked to be allowed to return to Stanleyville —"At least I can be of some use there!"— and his wish was granted. His confreres hardly recognized him, his suffering had changed him so much. On the 9th October 1959 he had to stay in bed, and resigned himself to a long and painful agony, which ended on 26th October.

He had worked for 36 years in the vineyard of the Marist mission field. May the Lord grant him the reward due to a prudent and faithful servant!

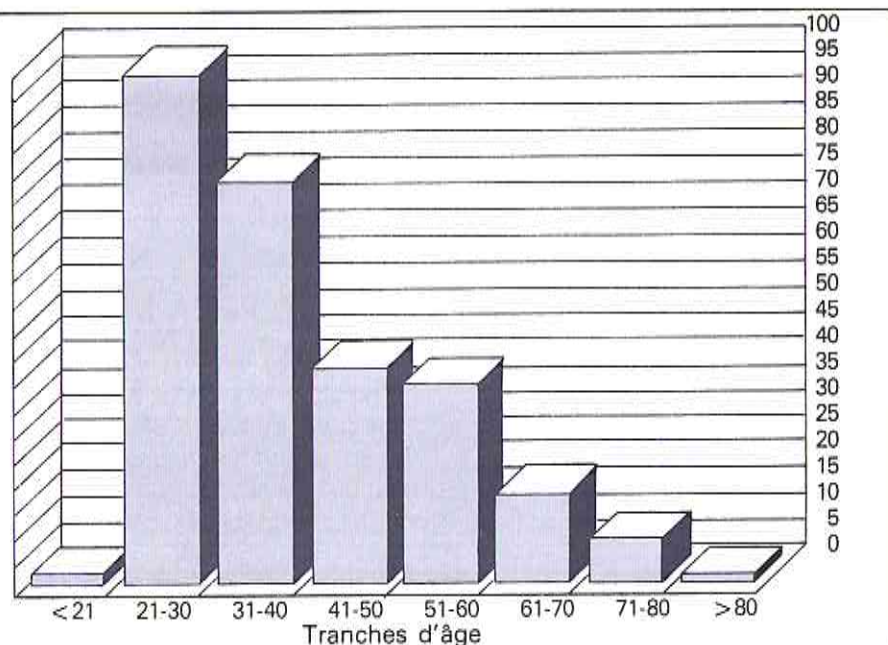


"...the young people's christian education."

**FRÈRES MARISTES
D'AFRIQUE
ET DE
MADAGASCAR**

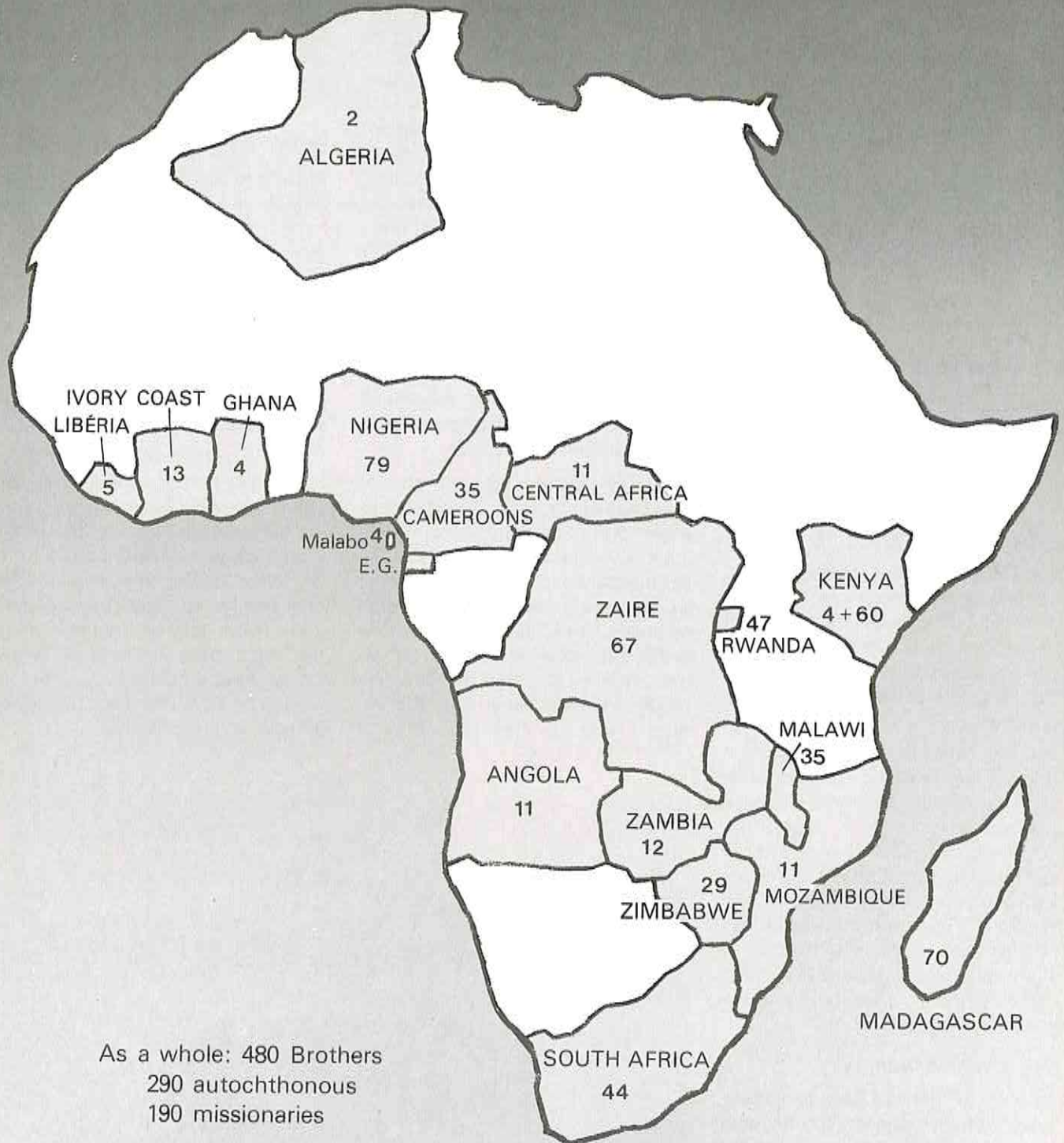
Âge moyen:
39 ans 7 mois

290 Frères recensés



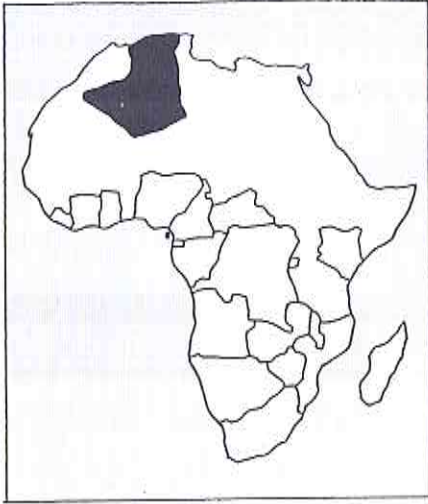
MARIST BROTHERS IN AFRICA

Our missions



As a whole: 480 Brothers
 290 autochthonous
 190 missionaries

ALGERIA



Historical Summary

The first Brothers arrived in Oran in 1891, and set up their community at Mascara. The work grew until there were 18 communities at the beginning of this century, all serving the needs of the European community. Since Algeria was French territory, the Brothers were affected in the same way as those in France by the anti-clerical laws of 1903, and, in order to survive, a number of communities went into secular dress. By the 1940s there were still three communities.

By the time of independence in 1962, there remained one community in the capital, running a diocesan school. After a few years, the predominantly Christian and European school population was replaced by one which was Algerian and Moslem. The community was able to do good work in a climate of dialogue and collaboration until 1976, when the Government nationalized all the schools.

The Brothers work

In order to continue their apostolate, two Brothers requested a contract of service as public school teachers. They were assigned to a small town in the hills, where, as ordinary

teachers, they were able to maintain a Christian presence in a Moslem environment. For twelve years they shared the life of the people, and mutual friendship and esteem was built up. In 1988, the Government refused to renew the contracts, so the Church asked the Brothers to take over the running of the Ben Cheneb House in the capital, where poor, illiterate people were looked after, and helped to claim such rights as pensions, to find a place to live, and so on. A library was set up where one Brother works full-time, helped part-time by the other Brother and two Sisters. Here young Algerians get a place where they can study in peace, albeit in rather cramped quarters—sometimes over 200 of them at once!—and where they can find the books they need for their studies. This provides a much appreciated service.

One of the Brothers is a member of the chaplaincy team which looks after young Christian Africans who are following courses in the Algerian Colleges and Universities—most of these young people are French speaking, and find themselves in a difficult situation living in an atmosphere so strongly Moslem. We might mention here also the requests we get from all sorts of

sources to help with the animation of young Christians in Algeria.

Collaboration

We would be very pleased to have a Brother from one of our African districts come to help us. Already, various religious communities in Algeria—where there is no chance of local recruitment—draw on different countries in Africa and Asia. This gives good witness to the ecclesial aspect of our apostolate. So the challenge is thrown down to you!

WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO

We share in the "charism" of the Church in Algeria, guests in the house of Islam, at a period when there is a strong upsurge in the Moslem world, an upsurge which raises high hopes in the breast of some, and strong fear in others... in any case, a worry for the Church in Africa. It would be interesting to be able to explain how we adapt our way of life to the local situation.

We are a badly-thought-of minority; in the eyes of many we do not even exist, and, what is worse, identified in the eyes of others with all the worst aspects of what comes from the West. Others think of us as decent people who have been misled, and who must be brought back on to the right road, the road of Islam! Under these conditions, we must be careful to avoid the least thing that smacks of proselytism.

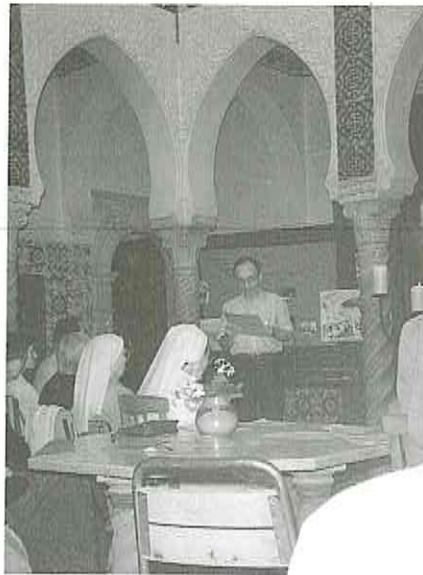


Brothers Henri Vergès and Jesús Marcos.

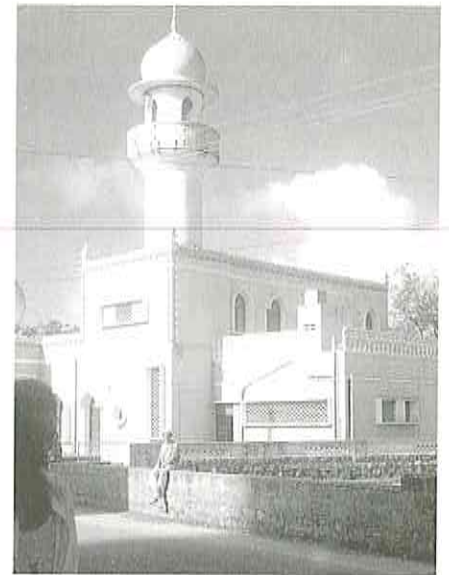
So what can we do? Simply be ourselves, for the length of time that God requires of us; to be a witness of the love of God and of our brethren; to be a question mark through the way we give our life to God and to our fellow men. To this end, we must constantly deepen our intimacy with Jesus Christ under the maternal eye of Mary, in the Holy Spirit... witness to the importance of contemplation... be always humbly at the disposal of everyone, as was Mary at the Visitation... and so we may even arrive at the point where we can share with one or other of our Moslem brothers the wonder of thanksgiving for the mutual discovery of the gift of God at work in every man.

In a Moslem Context

Perhaps this life of ours in an exclusively Moslem environment can be an experience worth sharing with others, a meeting with Islam which



Celebration of Blessed Marcellin Champagnat's feast with people of the parish.



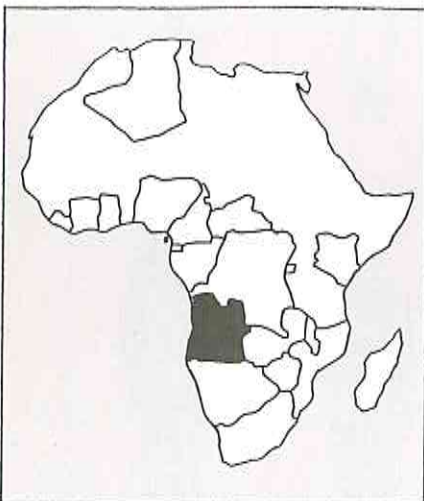
"They managed to maintain a Christian presence in a Moslem area."

each local Church in Africa sees from a different angle. For our part, we do not feel that we are cut off from the mainstream of the Church in Africa,

and feel that what we are doing is an important commitment for the future of the Church in this continent.

Your Brothers in Algeria

ANGOLA



Foundation of the sector

The Angola sector was founded on 1st March 1954 by the Province of North Brazil. The first establishment was at Sa da Bandeira, now known as Huambo, in the Province of Huila.

In 1959 the sectors of Portugal, Angola, and Mozambique were joined together to form one District, under the care of Portugal.

A few figures

a) More than half the population of practically 10 million live from agriculture, though the country is rich in minerals —oil, diamonds, iron, etc.

Portuguese is the main means of communication, although other languages, such as Kimbundu, Lunda, Kikongo, etc. are extensively spoken.

The civil war which ravaged the country for fifteen years had a disastrous effect on the infrastructures, particularly on education.

b) Catholics make up some 70 % of the population, with Protestants accounting for 20 % and animists for the remainder.

c) MARISTS

There are 9 Marist Brothers in the country, including one Angolan, Br. Alfredo Cuto.

They make up four communities: Luanda, Kuito, Lobito, and Ndalatando. Since political independence in 1975, the Brothers are teaching in the seminaries, and in the Universities, where they look after the teaching of religion. In the seminaries, along with candidates for the priesthood, our own aspirants continue their education.



Bro. Abilio Marques, Prov. of Portugal and the Bros. in charge of the Districts of Angola and Mozambique.

Urgent needs!

Need we say it! We need a minimum of six more Brothers to bring our communities up to strength.

All of our Brothers except Br. Alfredo, are finally professed. Br. Alfredo is in his 4th year of Annual vows. The others come from Brazil, Spain, Portugal.

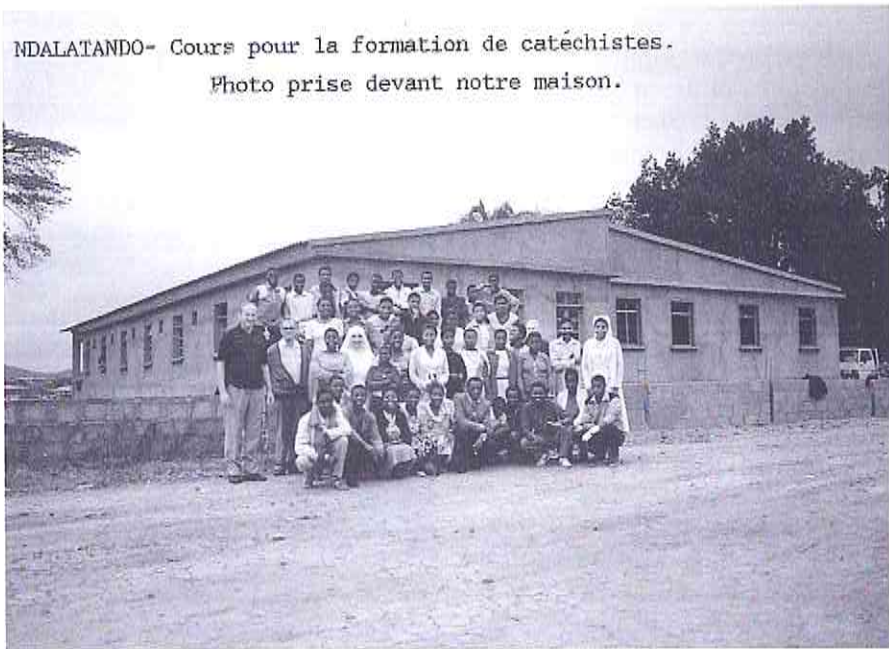
Difficulties

With the small number —2 or three in each house— community life is not easy. The various apostolic activities the Brothers engage in due to the abnormal situation in which they are living, make for frequent absences from community.

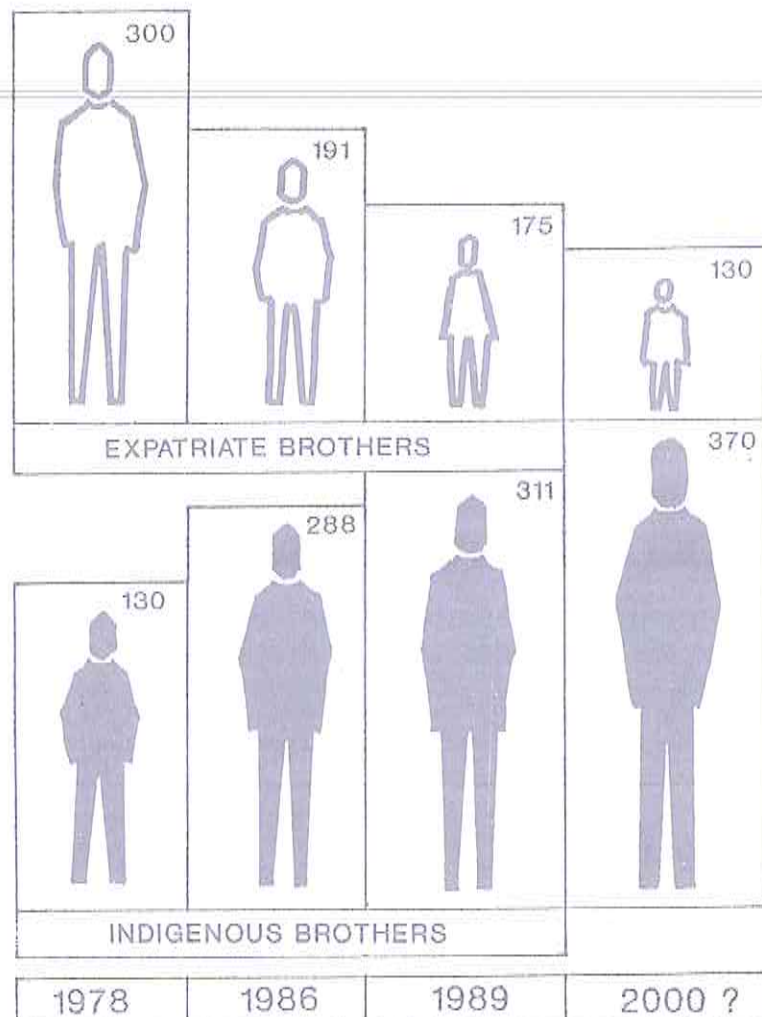
It is difficult to get all the Brothers together. There is a road from Luanda to Ndalatando, but the only way from Kuito and Lobito is by air. And unless one has friends in the right places, this is a doubtful form of transport!

Some of the Brothers have had to live on their own for some years. This is a difficult situation for a man chosen by God to live in community!

Other difficulties? Let us just say that none of the Brothers is fat!

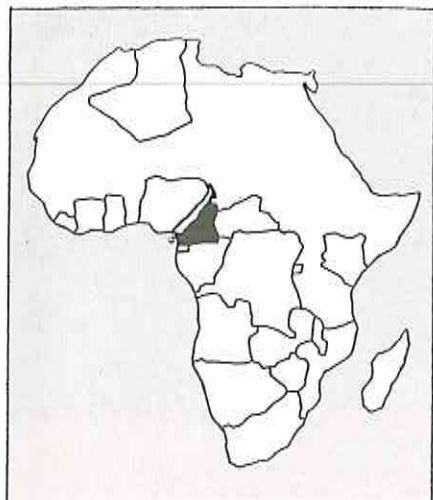


**MARIST BROTHERS
in AFRICA and MADAGASCAR**



Brother Alfredo Cuto, from Ndalatando.

FRENCH-SPEAKING CAMEROUN



Yesterday

In 1958, the Marist Province of Levis (Canada), decided to respond to the appeal of Bishop Verhile of Fort Rousset —now known as Owando— in Congo-Brazzaville. This was the start of the foundation of Makoua, which, on the division of the Province in 1963, passed over to the Province of Desbiens.

Some years later (1965 to be exact), in view of the political changes in the Congo, the Brothers were obliged to leave that country, and they headed north into Cameroun. Archbishop ZOA of Yaounde was only too pleased to welcome six enthusiastic Marist Brothers who were offering their services in the education of the young of the diocese. He soon found work for them to do —two schools were opened at the same time, Akono and Nkolmebanga (Sa'a), both about 75 km from Yaounde, but one to the north and the other to the south.

Approach to Missionary Work

Everything had to start from scratch —ground to be cleared, buildings to be put up and furnished. But nothing could stop these Brothers. Their years of heroic effort were not over yet!

In 1968, Rev. Br. Basilio Rueda, SG, on a visit to Cameroun, promised some much needed help in the way of personnel. Champagnat College, Ombessa, was opened in the diocese of Bafia; this foundation was not without its difficulties, and had to be closed in 1982.

In 1971, Mgr Zoa asked that our schools be mixed, and so the Sisters of the Sacred Heart came to work with us at Nkolmebanga and the Sisters of the Cross of Strasbourg at Akono.

Right from the start, one of the big preoccupations was that of getting personnel to continue the work. After ten years of a Marist presence, there were 26 Brothers working in 3 colleges, a Juniorate at Akono, a vocations centre at Nkolmebanga, and a noviciate and scholasticate in temporary quarters with the Sacred Heart Brothers at Makak. There was also a students hostel at Akono. The future looked bright enough: 6 professed Brothers, 2 scholastics, 3 novices, 4 postulants, all from Cameroun. But alas! only a few remained for more than 3 or 4 years. Still with an eye to replacement, two

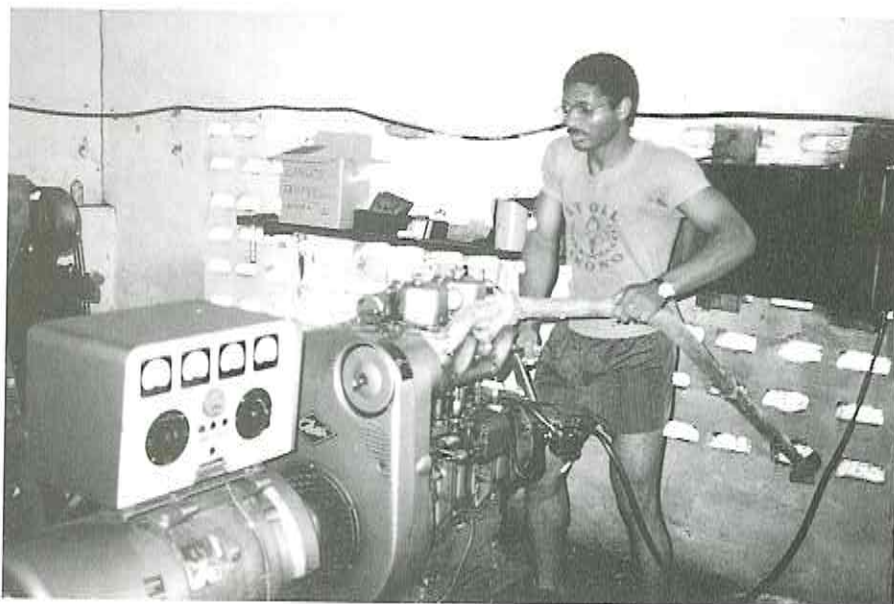


Brothers set up house at Bafoussam, in West Cameroun, in Bamileke country, an area renowned for the number of religious and priestly vocations it had supplied. But a number of problems arose, and the experiment was given up two or three years later.

At the same time, let us not lose sight of the other vocations which have come out of our schools, vocations to the diocesan clergy, to the Marist Fathers, and to a number of Congregations of Sisters.

Today

So here we are in 1990, 25 years since the start. What point have we reached? To be truthful, time has



Brother Benoit Yop sends the generating plant on its way.

passed, "we are not that strength we used to be", sickness and death have thinned the ranks, ...but the work goes on.

At the moment, we are 11 Brothers from various parts of the world: Cameroun (3), Canada (5), Zaire (1), Italy (1), and Belgium (1). We are split between the original two colleges, Akono (700 pupils of whom 427 are boarders) and Nkolmebanga (800 pupils, all day pupils from villages within a 25 km radius of the school.)

Tomorrow: Speaking of vocations

We may be poor in number, but we still look to the future with optimism. Perhaps the reinforcements are slow in coming, but we do not lose hope. We have one novice and two postulants, in addition to an aspirant who is working in the school in Akono.

For the last number of years, during each school holiday period, we organize a Marist Vocations session, when we bring together the young people we are accompanying.

One big handicap in this work of replacement is the way our young people are dispersed. Both our colleges offer only the first cycle in



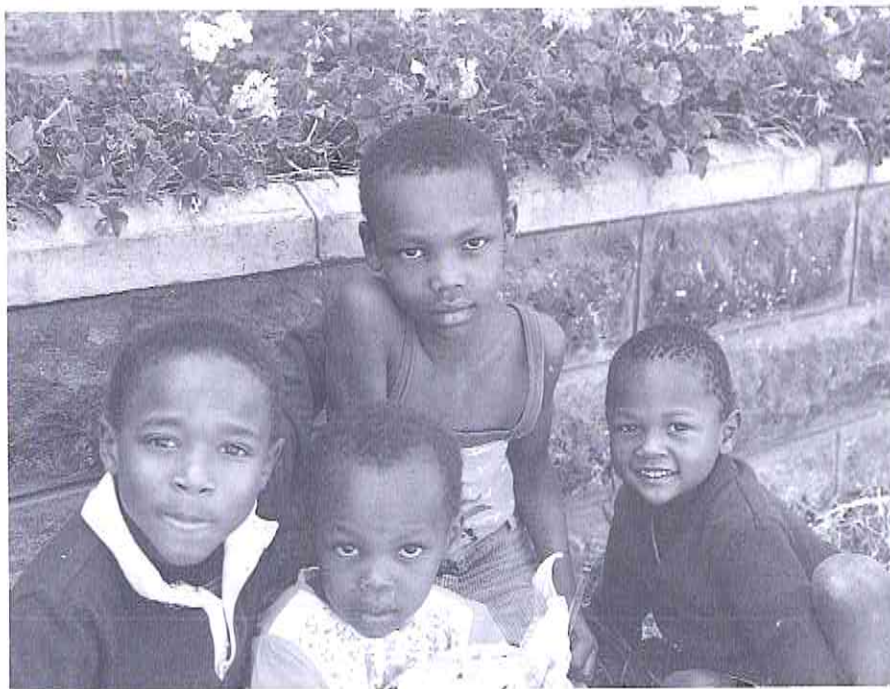
College choir of the Saa.

secondary education. Once the pupils have their BEPC, they scatter all over Cameroun to find a place in a school where they can get their baccalaureat. Some show no further sign of life, and lose all communication with their accompaniers, which makes it impossible to continue pointing them towards religious life. The only hope is to develop the second cycle in our schools, so that we can accompany these young people more easily, but...

In addition, we could do with more missionary co-operation in our schools. Would it not be possible to develop this missionary vocation among the young people of Europe and America?

We end by reminding all Marist Brothers from wherever in the world, that all manifestations of missionary goodwill will be received with open arms. We are waiting for you!

Br. Edgar Isserentat

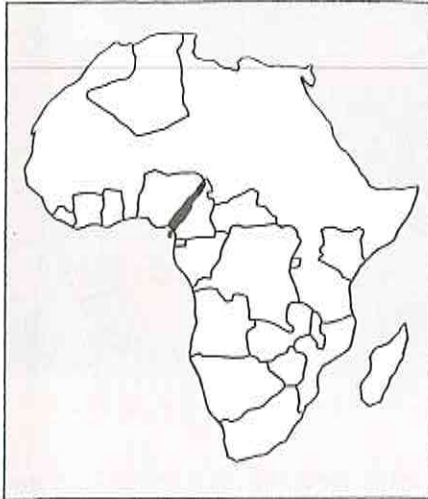


Education starts with children.



*Brother Edgar Isserentat,
Superior of Cameroon,
and Brother Maurice.*

ENGLISH-SPEAKING CAMEROON



Historical Background

Before independence, Cameroon was in two parts, one governed by France and the other by Britain, hence the modern division into English- and French-speaking Cameroon.

The Church first came to Cameroon in 1890, in the shape of 2 Holy Ghost Fathers and 6 Brothers. In that year the Catholic population is given as 4. In 1965, the year the Marist Brothers arrived, the Catholics numbered 990,953 out of a total population of four and a half million, native priests being to the number of 177. By 1987—the last year for which we have official statistics, the Catholics are given as numbering 2,880,068, out of a population of 10,985,000. African priests now number 396, and African Brothers 43, while African Sisters are up to 551. There are still 452 expatriate priests, 146 expatriate Brothers and 766 expatriate Sisters in the country.

Opening of the Mission

In 1965, Bishop Peeters, of the English-speaking area, having seen the work of the Marist Brothers in Nigeria, asked them to come over to help him, and in that year, the Brothers arrived to take over the direction of the recently founded Sacred Heart College, Bamenda. The Bishop had in mind, of course, getting native

Brothers into his diocese, and it was not long before the first aspirants were sent to Nigeria to make their noviciate in Uturu. Two of these early recruits are now the doyens of the Cameroon sectors, Br. Anthony Tanyi in Tatum, and Br. Denis Ngo doing sterling work in St Augustine's Secondary School, Kumbo.

The Brothers' task

In addition to their work in schools, the Brothers have also gone into various apostolates with young people in the parishes, outside of the school situation, and in particular, are aiming at those who have not gone on to post-primary education. There is now a flourishing branch of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family centred on the Tatum area...

Br. Denis, mentioned above as one of our pioneer African Brothers, has begun a vocations contact programme, aimed at boys in the secondary schools, with a view to their going on to the noviciate on completion of their studies. This initiative has already begun to bear fruit, and we pray for its continuing success. The Brothers also take part in catechetical



After the mass of the Renewal of the vows.

work in the parishes, and are to the fore in the liturgical music ministry.

The problem of vocations

There are two major problems facing the sector, problems which are common to all of the "mission" countries. The first is the question of the continuation of personnel. The expatriate Brothers are becoming older, and the possibilities of replacing them with younger men are becoming more and more remote, given the difficulties of the home Provinces. So an urgent priority is the formation of local vocations. A start has already been made

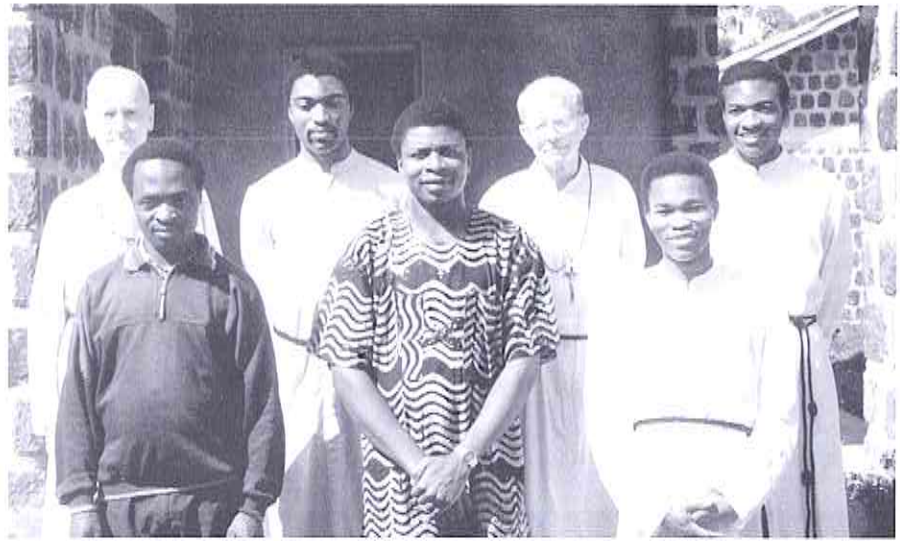


Brother Denis receives the "Bene Merente" medal. On the left, Brother Julian Harrison, Superior of English-speaking Cameroon.

on this, and it is hoped that the number of vocations will continue to increase in the future. In the sector there are now 6 expatriate Brothers and 12 local, with one novice and two postulants, figures which give some hope for the future. In Cameroon, as in so many African countries, the vocation of the Brother is little known and less understood; the idea of the religious life, so unique to the Christian religion, is so removed from the experience and traditions of the ordinary man that a lot of education is required to have it fully accepted. This, of course, is not done in a day, but a start has been made, and with God's help and blessing, it is hoped that this will be a transient problem.

The young Brothers' training

The other question is that of formation. Already in the late 70's Br. Martin Palmer was asked by the Provincial to come from Nigeria to set up the noviciate in Tatum, where he has been working ever since. Aspirants are not now accepted to the Noviciate until they have gained their School Cer-



The last taking of the vows in Tatum —The noviciate is now in Ghana.

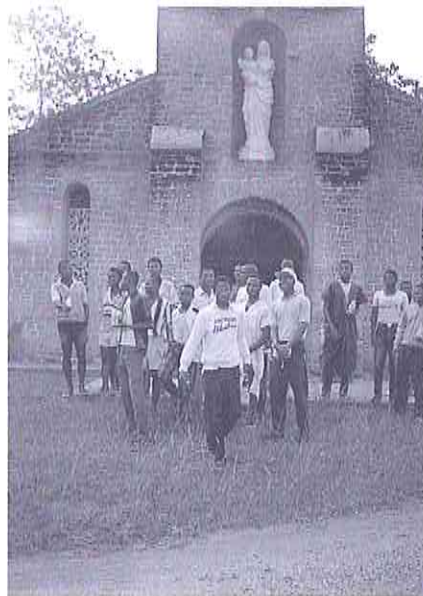
tificate at the end of the secondary course. This year Cameroon has joined with the other West African countries in the International Noviciate in Ghana. Three Brothers are following the courses in the International Marist Centre in Nairobi, a venture which will, it is hoped, bring forth much fruit...

English-speaking Cameroon, then,

can be looked upon as still in its infancy in Marist terms, and still has a period of "growing pains" to go through. But a stormy adolescence often leads to a full and mature adult life, and it is this that we look forward to for this sector of the Institute, and entrust it to Mary our Mother, for it is her work, not ours, and we have full confidence in her.



CENTRAL AFRICA



Many hopeful signs are evident: Christian communities, catechists really committed...

HISTORY

The Church came to this small landlocked country which straddles the savannah and the tropical forest, in 1894. After almost a century, out of a population of about three million, about one third are Christian, divided almost equally between Catholic

and non-Catholic. There are 7 dioceses in the country, with 2 African Bishops and some 80 African priests. Vocations have shown a sharp increase in the past ten years, but are still insufficient to balance the fall in the number of missionaries. The growth in the number of Catholics in the last thirty years has led to a great need for evangelization, particularly in the country areas. There are many hopeful signs: growth in the number of Basic Christian Communities, led by responsible lay people; committed catechists; development of movements such as JEC, Legion of Mary, Prayer Groups, Bible study Groups, and so on.

But in order to succeed, it is necessary that those directing all these initiatives be well educated in the faith. This education is one of the main preoccupations of the Church, and it is one where the Marist Brothers can take a full part.

THE MARIST BROTHERS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

The Brothers first came here in 1958, from St Genis-Laval. The Bishops asked them to undertake the training and follow-up of primary school teachers in the area. More recently they went into secondary education, opening one school in Berberati, and taking over the school in Bangui from the Marianists.

In 1963, the schools were nationalized. The Brothers were able to remain in both directing the schools and teaching in them, but under the direct control of the State, which also assured their salaries. From 1970 on, they gradually gave up the direction, and later, the teaching in the schools, and concentrated on teaching in the seminaries—in 1984 they took over the complete running of the Junior Seminary. At the same time, the Brothers in Bangui extended their apostolate: catechetical work in the parishes, literacy projects, organization of the JEC, and so forth. Two of the Brothers in Berberati live among the people and continue to work in the high school. There has been long and deep discernment in the communities on how best to respond to the needs of the times. The Brothers have also been heartened by the arrival of a number of candidates for the life of a Brother.

A Juniorate was opened at Berberati in the early years, which at first promised well, but after a lot of disappointments, the project went into abeyance for a long time. Some Brothers continued working towards attracting vocations, but their efforts did not bear fruit. During the 80's, this has become the major preoccupation of the Province, and every Brother is involved in the "Champagnat Groups", groups of vocations awareness.

The noviciate is run in common with other Marist sectors in French-speaking Africa at Save (Rwanda), and at Nyangezi (Zaire). For the scholasticate, the Brothers go to the International Centre at Nairobi.

PRESENT MARIST SITUATION

At the moment there are 19 Brothers in the sector, 14 belonging to the three communities, and the other 5 at present outside of the country.

At **Bangui** the community is in charge of the postulancy, as well as working with vocational groups in the parish, running a library for the schoolchildren, giving courses in Bible study; one Brother is secretary to the Archbishop.

At **Berberati** 3 of the Brothers are in charge of the Junior Seminary, with some 60 young people in their care, while another is in charge of the carpentry work of the Mission.

At **Carnot** 3 Brothers are in charge of training catechists for the diocese, bringing in 17 catechists at a time, with their families, for courses lasting for five months at a time.

Br. Bernard Regis is Master of Novices in the noviciate at Nyangezi, and there are four Brothers pursuing their studies in the Marist International Centre in Nairobi.

12 of the Brothers are expatriates, and their average age is about 55; 7 are local vocations, with an average age of 26. There is no novice at the moment, but we have one postulant from Central Africa, and two from Cameroon. After the noviciate, the young Brothers spend at least one year in their own country before going to the International Scholasticate. This gives them the chance of experiencing at first hand the apostolic and community realities they will face in later life.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Our priority in the sector is to ensure that the work in the service of the local Church continues. Hence the

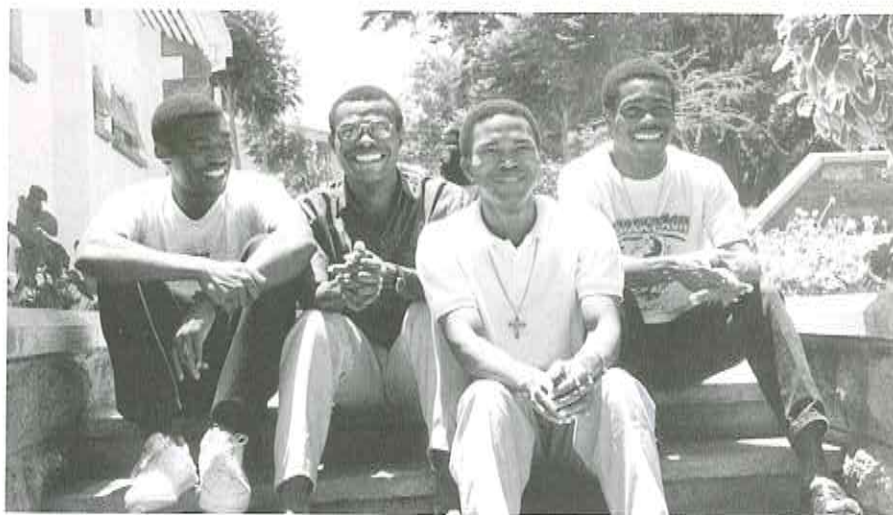
emphasis on keeping up our present apostolates, and above all, of fostering vocations.

At Bangui and Berberati, the Champagnat groups bring together young boys from the secondary schools. The Brothers guide them in meetings, termly retreats, annual camp, etc. We encourage the older ones to take charge of smaller groups, to recruit new members, and thus stimulate them to generosity in Christian and apostolic life.

We have one problem to which we have not yet found a satisfactory answer. We get a number of applicants whose education is not of a high level, or has been purely technical, and who do not seem to be able to reach a sufficiently high standard of English to profit from the formation given in the International Centre at Nairobi. The question is, do we turn these young men away, even if they seem to be of the right stuff to be apostles in marginalized areas? We have not yet found the answer.

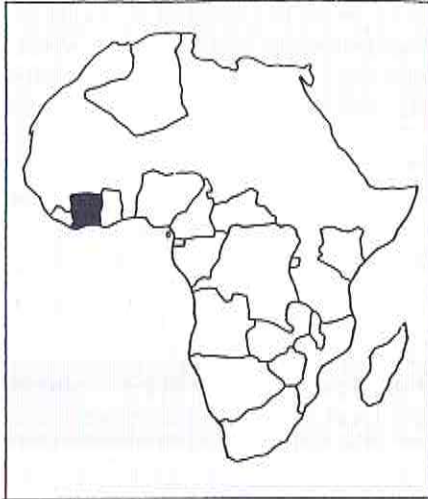
It is our sincere wish to reinforce our collaboration with neighbouring Marist sectors, with whom we have a lot in common—Cameroon, Zaire, Rwanda. The French-speaking noviciate is in Rwanda; we collaborate with Cameroon for the postulancy, for the study of English. The strengthening OF OUR LINKS WITH Marist Africa would lead to a lessening of our dependence, very strong at the moment, on the mother Province of Beaucamps-St Genis-Laval.

Br. Jean Louis Rognon, Bangui



Bros. Bugalama, Yerima, Balifio and Dafo in the M.I.C.

IVORY COAST



Apostolate

The first Brothers were sent to Bouaké and to Dimbokro in 1969. The 70's witnessed an expanding variety of apostolic efforts. The Brothers are teachers and educators in the high schools, and are active in Centres where leaders are prepared for the training of catechumens and for catechetics. The diversity of the work with youth includes retreats, encounters and other forms of training. During the longer school holidays each year, leadership camps are held for seminarians. Nearly 150 youths attend them. Weekends of prayer at the Benedictine convents also contribute to our apostolate.

The creation of MARIST VOCATION GROUPS multiplied the Brothers' activities. Besides, the Brothers contribute their share of the mission's pastoral work both in the town and in the villages. And they are planning to undertake a programme of literacy in Bouaké.

On the 25th of September 1972, a community was opened in Toumodi where the Brothers have succeeded



Baptisms at the lepers' village of Chretienkro.

in doing excellent work in the parish, in the villages and the schools. The members of that community were therefore very sad when it was closed on the 2nd of July 1985.

The Community of Korhogo. In September 1974, we came to Korhogo. As in Bouaké, Dimbokro and Toumodi, a great missionary effort is realized in the schools, in the parishes of the town and of the villages. Between 1985 and 1990, startling new projects were inaugurated, for example the construction of a co-educational school, Marcellin Champagnat College.

Future Outlook: Ground for Hope

A study of the situation in Ivory Coast reveals doubtful prospects for the future of the country. But the aim

Origins

Brother Basilio Rueda, then Superior General, launched a missionary endeavour among the Provinces, inviting those Provincials who were not involved in any mission to pay a visit to a specific country. Hence the trip of Brother David Sebastian, our Provincial, to Ivory Coast in 1967. A first contact with the Archbishop of Abidjan led the Brothers to the diocese of Bouaké.



Seminarians living at the Brothers' house in Bouake.



Catechists with Brother Romero.

of our work is precise, whatever happens.

There is such a diversity of religious affiliations in the country that our responsibility is clear: to work towards the diffusion of the true message of the Good News. A crisis of customs is spreading to religious values. A form of syncretism: religion becomes a vague principle which can yield a spiritual profit but without a firm commitment, without a definite option.

A sense of communal Christian life must be deepened. Basic communities in neighbourhoods and in villages are the most efficient means of attaining this.

Twenty years of labour in the Ivory Coast are already bearing fruit. We now have three local Brothers, one Novice and numerous Postulants. And we must keep in mind that the future is theirs. "Local Brothers are to be given the training they need, and are to be encouraged to assume

gradually the full responsibility for their Province or District..." (*Constitutions 91*).

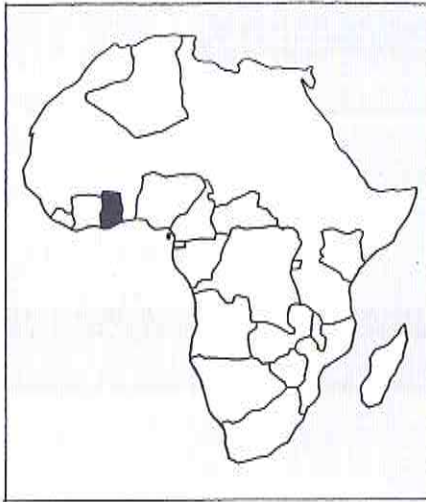
There is still much to be done. The Ivory Coast could absorb much more help in teaching, socio-cultural leadership, catechetics and professional training.

We pray that our work in Ivory Coast be blessed by God and Our Lady, so as to become a shining pearl in Marist Africa's crown.



Brother Jean Pierre N'guessan's profession.

GHANA

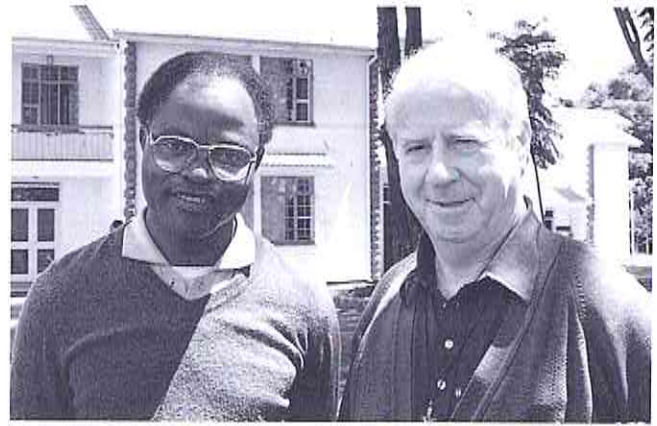


GHANA

The Church in this land celebrated the centenary of its presence in 1980. Religiously Ghana is predominantly animist. There are over forty different Christian sects here, with only 12% Catholics. The Ghanaian Church is seeing a rapid development in the number and activities of various Religious Institutes as it faces the challenges of incarnating the church in the land as it looks forward to the year 2000. We have come into the scene at this crucial period, and like true sons of Fr. Champagnat, we are facing the challenges before us with vision, boldness, and optimism.



First vows.



Brother Michael Oruche, Superior of Ghana with Brother Superior General.

Historic background of the Marist mission in Ghana

In 1977 the Brothers of Nigeria voted to start a mission in another West African country. Shortly afterwards, Bishop Serpong of Kumasi in Ghana asked for Brothers, and an agreement was reached. He was to send aspirants for formation, and when they were ready they would return with some Nigerian Brothers to start a community in Ghana. And so in August 1979 a set of four Ghanaian aspirants went to Nigeria for their Noviciate training. They were later joined by others.

On March 10th 1983, the first community was opened in Kumasi diocese, the first two pioneers being Br. Michael Oruche and Br. Edmund Nwankwor. They were in turn joined by two others, one of whom was one of the set of four Ghanaian Brothers. Later, more Brothers came from Nigeria, and two, Brs. Rafael Álvarez Santana and Sergio Vásquez, from the Province of Western Mexico, arrived to consolidate the mission.

Arriving in Ghana, we found that the ground for vocations had been prepared in the diocese. This consequently led to beginning the mission with organizing and forming vocations, an approach that is yielding fruit. Presently there are five professed Ghanaian Brothers, and three communities. Sad to say, however, the first set of four left the Congregation.

Our pioneers, in addition to formation, embarked on school apostolate as a witness to our charism. The complete incarnation, consolidation and expansion of the mission, however, will depend to a greater degree on the fidelity of the Ghanaian Brothers.

Incarnation/inculturation

In general the Ghanaians are great lovers and promoters of African culture. This manifests itself very clearly almost in almost every aspect of the daily life of the Ghanaian. The Church is trying to incarnate the Christian religion, up to now called "imported religion", into all the different aspects of life with this cultural heritage.

The Akans of Ghana, among whom we find ourselves at present, are traditionally Monarchic. Even with the modern political system of government, the vestiges of the monarchy remain, if not in practical aspects, at least in ceremonial ones. So the Akan sees God as the "Great King", who rides in state. In the liturgical celebrations, specially on major occasions, heavy traditional palace drums are used, with dances for the "God-King". At Corpus Christi processions, for example, the Blessed Sacrament is carried on a palanquin, symbolizing the king going through his kingdom, amidst heavy drumming.

For reception into the noviciate, we adopted a religious initiation format prepared by Br Pius, an indigenous SVD Brother. In this scheme such values as the initiation into new life, training for life's challenges, purity, nearness to the ancestors, and personal identity, are strongly highlighted. So we have invocation to the Ancestors and eating of bitter herbs, part of the ceremony being performed outside and the use of traditional "family cloth" being among the features.

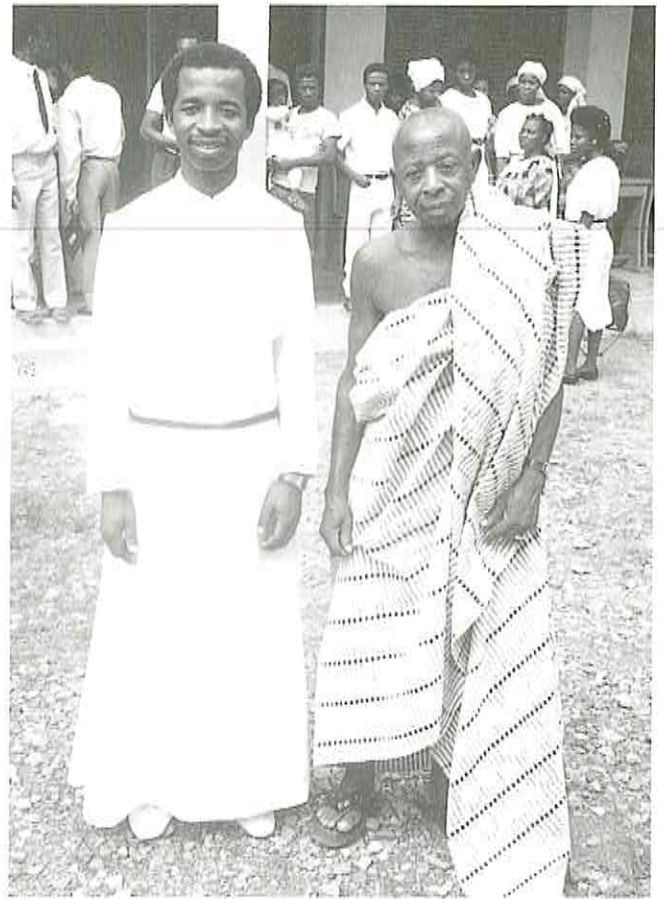
Probably the greatest challenge facing the Brothers is in putting across the ideal of Religious Life in a culture where chastity and celibacy are not understood, and where the demands of the extended family are at variance with the vow of poverty and its obligations.

Vocation/formation

In Kumasi diocese where we are, none of the four Noviciates has less than four novices, ours having four, the smallest number. The Brothers of the Immaculate Conception (FIC) have two noviciates in Ghana to separate the first and second year novices, and for other possible reasons. The Bishops of Southern Ghana started another Major Seminary three years ago, to separate the Philosophy students from the Theology students, and so to decongest the existing seminary. Moreover, many Religious Institutes are starting their own formation houses. This is the situation in many African countries.



Br. Philip Ninfaasie and his family on the day of his profession.



Brother Francis Attah on profession day.

In spite of the vocation flow, the Ghanaian Church still feels great inadequacy in the number of vocations to meet the fast growing population and diversity of missions. To augment the number, there is close collaboration between the diocesan clergy and the Religious Institutes and also between the different Religious Institutes themselves in vocations ministry. Hence vocation congresses are organized together; today a national vocation brochure that will cover the life and activities of all the different Institutes and the diocesan clergy, is under way.

One of the great difficulties we, the Marist Brothers, have been experiencing in our short time in Ghana, is the lack of knowledge of who we are. There are relatively few Brothers in the country. As a consequence, many have never seen a Brother. Our first goal in vocation ministry is to break down this ignorance and the belief that the Brother is merely "an ecclesiastical cheap labour" for the minor physical needs of the dioceses and the parishes, or someone who could not go through the academic rigours of the Seminary. As a matter of policy therefore, the Brothers "go and meet the young people personally". The Vocations Director tries to involve all the Brothers, both in the planning and the execution of the vocations apostolate.

In our vocation/formation approaches we have become convinced of the great merit of live-in experience for

aspirants. In the programme, the aspirant lives with us for a determined period of time, depending on his needs, before being admitted to the postulancy. In this way, the young man gets closer to us, and we to him.

The small number in our noviciates in Africa has led to new approaches. This year a common noviciate for four regions —Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and Ghana— was started here. It is an experience which the collaborating regions look forward to with great optimism. In the formation process we keep an eye on the apostolic priorities of our four regions.

Our mission

Since the very beginning of our presence in Ghana, our main apostolic thrust has been first to raise local vocations to augment the small number of Brothers coming from Nigeria, who are involved in school work, both at primary and secondary levels. We have always worked hand in hand with lay teachers in what would be called “joint schools», i.e. schools with the collaboration of both Church and Government. Meanwhile the diocese is in the process of building a school which will be managed by us.

Now in Ghana a strong emphasis is placed on technical and vocational training, so our school will lay heavy emphasis on these areas.

Moreover, now one of our Brothers is involved in the chaplaincy for non-Catholic schools, in a team which includes also a priest and a layman.

Challenges

- a) *Cultural shock.* The traditional values and structures are threatened by the invasion of standards and criteria coming from both the East and the West. For example, the foundations of family life in this country are being rocked to the point of collapse; materialism and secularism are becoming the order of the day.
- b) *Social Injustice.* The country is trying to re-activate its economy after the great drought and mismanagement. But the common people suffer the consequences of the system; low wages, no jobs, relatively high cost of living, etc. We need to be realistic, bold and creative in order to find ways of becoming self-supporting, and educating the people in the realities of their social struc-

ture, a need we are already making some positive attempts to meet through rural development advice and support.

- c) *Education.* Ghana is in the process of introducing some reforms in its educational system that will separate the vocational students from the purely academic. These reforms are still not clear. In order to fall in line with the new policy, we have had to change our policy a number of times.
- d) *Evangelization.* Catholics are a minority in Ghana -12% —and the faith needs to be incarnated into the local cultures. The family and youth are fields that call for more attention, and that urgently. The mass media also need to be evangelized and used more extensively.

Hopes

Ghana, as hinted above, seems to be a fertile soil for vocations. There is very close collaboration within the Church as well as with other non-Catholic churches. These are our assets in our planning.

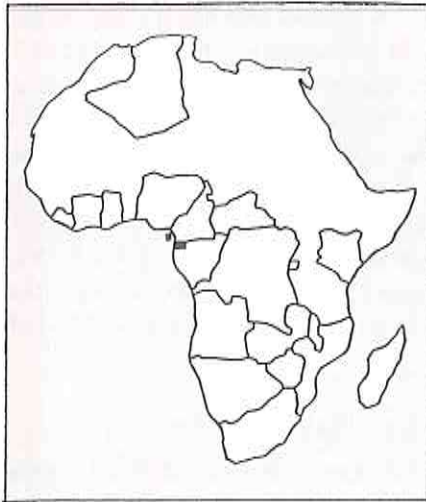
Above all, Marcellin remains our model and inspiration in going boldly into these new areas.

Br Christian Mbam



*Bros. John Arthur, John Kusi
and Daniel Kwadwo in the M.I.C.*

Equatorial Guinea: MALABO



Opening of the Malabo Mission

One of our recent Marist missionary foundations was in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The province of Norte had undertaken other missionary ventures in the past, specifically in Venezuela, which "came of age" and became first a district, and then a province.

That fact, plus the urgent needs of the Church in Africa, which is today on the threshold of a splendid period of expansion, but also faces the inevitable problems connected with growth and adaptation, had a profound effect on this province in northern Spain. The result today is the mission in Malabo, and soon, if Providence allows and assists us, a new field of work will be established in one of the most tormented regions of Africa: Chad.

Some Historical Background on Equatorial Guinea

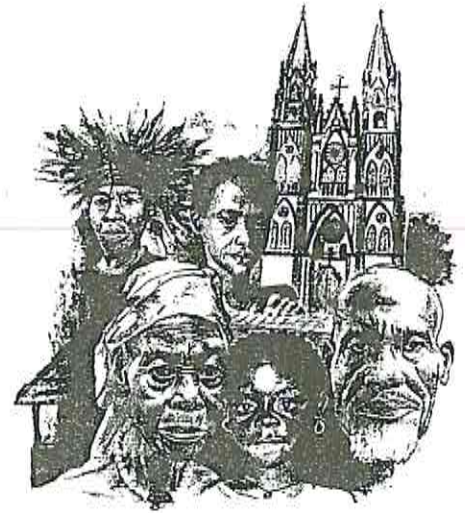
The region was conquered toward the end of the 15th century by the Portuguese, Fernando Poo, who took possession of the island which bore his name; its present name is Bioco. The capital, Malabo (named after the last Bubi king) has some 50 000 in-

habitants. The total population of Guinea is about a half million; the population density is 14.79 per square kilometer, and the rate of growth is 2%, which is below average for Africa.

On 21st October 1778, the islands and the mainland territory became Spanish possessions. Towards the end of the colonial period, the Church's missionary activity became intense and fruitful. The work of the Claretian congregation in particular deserves special acclaim. Today, Guinea has the highest percentage of Catholics in Africa: 76.32%.

The country gained its independence on 12th October 1968. At that time, its economy was one of the best in Africa. However, as in so many other cases on that suffering continent, once independence was achieved, its future was in the hands of a real dictator, whose incompetence and repressive measures led the country to its ruin.

The new administration is trying to raise its economic and cultural standing. On the cultural level, building on its Christian foundation, the church of Spain, and specifically



*Different ethnical groups.
The cathedral of Malabo.*

the FERE (Federation of Teaching Religious) has multiplied its efforts towards cultural improvement and Christian formation. Marist involvement in this country is directed towards the same objectives.

Professional Center

The bishop of Malabo asked the Marist Brothers for assistance, and knocked on the door of the province of Norte. His request brought a prompt and positive answer. Our specific field of action will be the organization and direction of a professional center for agricultural education. This is an area of growing importance, given the well-known fact that Africa must improve its technology and take advantage of



National Agricultura school.



The founders of the mission: Bro. Julián Inchusta, Bro. Alfredo Olalde, and Arturo Barberena.

the advances made in various sciences, in order to develop its great productive potential.

In Equatorial Guinea, that potential lies in the basic elements of its economy: its agriculture and its great forest wealth. The governments of Madrid and Malabo will collaborate in these areas. Both are sponsoring, to some extent, the institution entrusted to the Brothers, which is named after the current president, Obiang N'Guema.

The mission became a reality

The Provincial Chapter enthusiastically seconded the proposal of

the Bro. Provincial, Antonio Martínez Fernández, and his council. After a preliminary visit to the future mission, it soon became a reality. In the spring of 1988, Bros. Julian Inchusta, superior of the new community, Alfredo Olalde, and a young engineer, a former student of our school in Pamplona, arrived in Malabo.

The first months were devoted to adaptation and groundwork, so that the new undertaking would be of the greatest possible benefit to the young people who will be trained at the center. Alongside the center for technical formation a residence has

been set up, to accommodate the majority of the registered students, who come from far distant and separated parts of the country.

As always happens, problems were not slow to arise, but they helped to maintain and increase the community's enthusiasm, which presently includes four brothers: Julian Inchusta, Alfredo Olalde, Francisco Hierro, and Enrique Foncea. Bro. Julian wrote to his former students in Zalla, Spain, telling them that, "Now we are pouring all our energy into this country, as we collaborate with these people who are simple and poor, but full of life and very likeable".

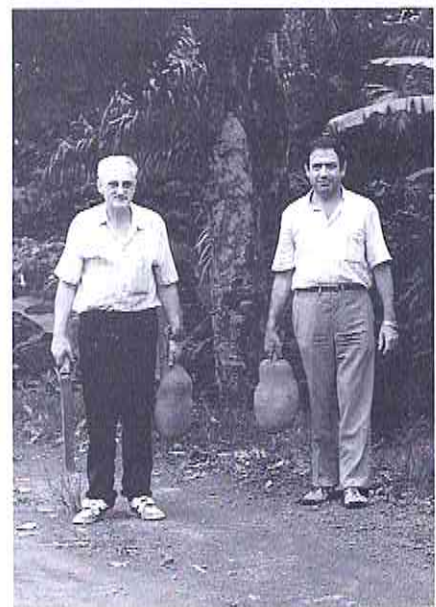
The Missionary work

We must carefully study the integration of the Marist Brothers in the missionary work being carried out on the island. There is close collaboration among the various religious communities in the diocese.

The foundation has been laid and the beginnings have drawn from the brothers a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and work. This would seem to indicate a great future for our work of evangelization in this recent Marist mission in Africa. May God and Mary make it fruitful!

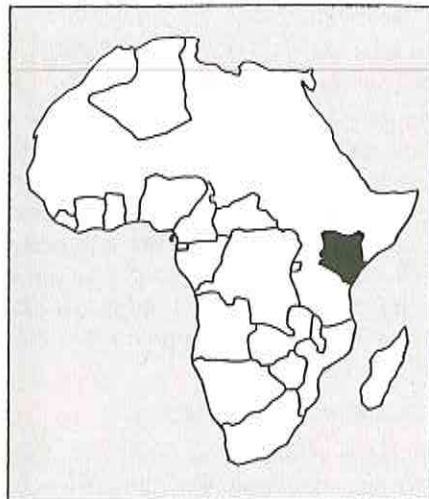


"The involvement of the Brothers in every missionary endeavour, even outside the Agricultural School, must be stressed."



Hoping that the missionary work will be as fruitful.

KENYA



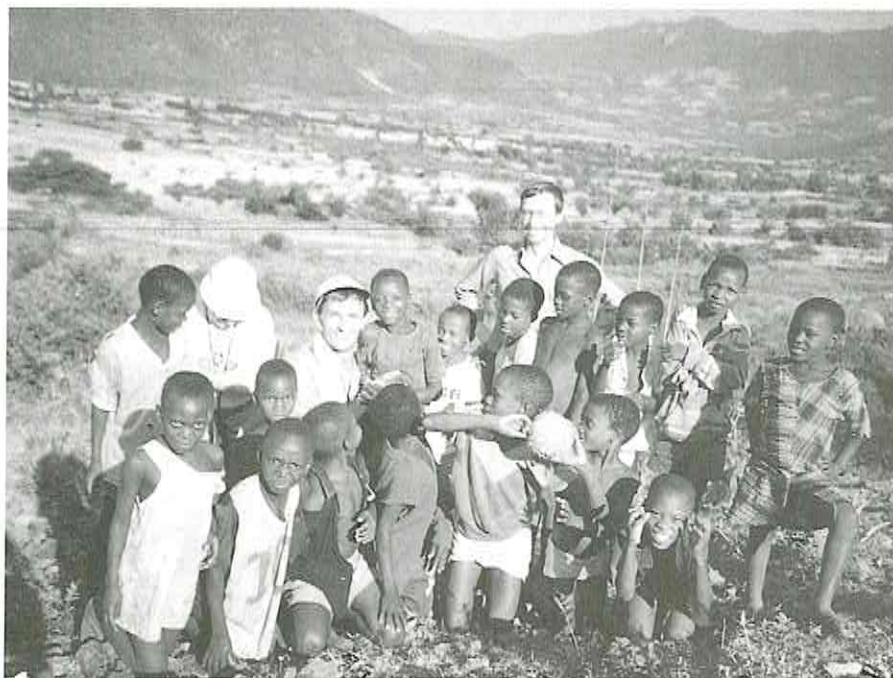
Geographical position

Green mountains circle a plain on the shores of Lake Victoria in Louland; this is Roo, a small village of fishermen where the Marist Brothers came to set up a first community six years ago. Five kilometres from this impoverished area, a crossroads of muddy streets takes the name of Sindo. This stronghold of Seventh Day Adventists is the only real neighbouring village.

The Brothers' work

In the middle of the plain, the Brothers look after a boarding school for 140 young men aged from 16 to 25, in collaboration with the local headmaster and other staff members. There the students carry on their studies for four years, having completed their eight-year programme of Kenyan primary school. An essential step in the progress of the school is the advancement and expansion in the field of agriculture. It prepares the students for life in a country where approximately 90% of the population depends on agriculture.

The school, named after the Bishop of Kisii, depends on this diocese, although the mission is under the effective control of the Marist Province of Germany. Three German Brothers are assisted by one Irish Brother and one Canadian Brother. Occasionally some Irish Brothers come to give a helping hand, specially to replace the



"We would like many young Kenyans to join us in our ideal..."

Brothers going on leave during their regular holidays.

Material organization aims above all at satisfying the basic needs such as: adequate water supply, use of solar energy to give light to the many rooms and buildings, expansion of gardens to improve the diet and move nearer to self-reliance. More hygienic dormitories have been built, and the paths and roads have been raised with stones and lined with trees, so that moving from one place to another on a muddy path and under the burning sun

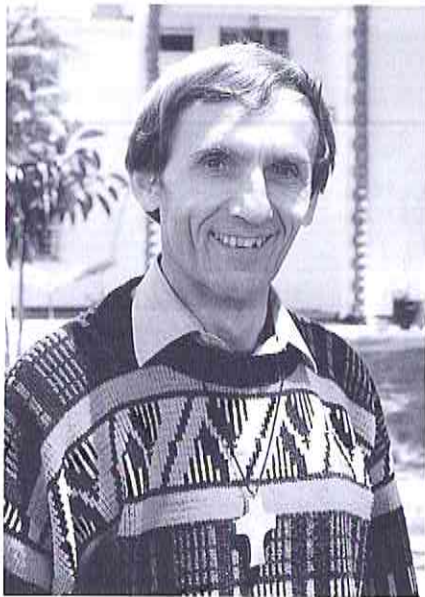
is now a thing of the past. Furthermore, a modest experimental farm is organized on the school premises.

Christian training of youth

Nevertheless, material achievements are not the most outstanding features of our mission centre. The school tries to emphasize self-promotion of the students by giving a greater importance to work and co-operation. The selection and formation of local staff members, as well as the preparation of the youths to receive the Sacraments



Brother Gottfried with his pupils.



*Brother Hans Scubert,
Superior of Kenya.*

and their commitment to Christian life are our priorities to ensure the continuity of our work, even if these objectives can hardly be measured in terms of time and success.

Encouraging signs allow for cautious optimism. We have two young Kenyan Brothers at the noviciate in Kutama in Zimbabwe. Gradually a plan for a pre-noviciate house is taking shape, and a few young men are showing interest in our life. We lay great stress on our commitment to the poor; that is why we have selected a remote area rather than an urban centre to set up our first school in Kenya. In this way we share the dream of Fr. Champagnat, who

wanted to bring the light of the Gospel to all the hamlets in France. Our place offers tremendous possibilities from where our care for the poor can radiate.

Collaboration with other communities

In order to give greater scope to our commitment, we find it necessary to rediscover our original and common Marist vision, whereby co-operation between Marist Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters becomes essential to achieve real collective development for the needy. For instance, the formation of young girls, in such fields as basic hygiene, infant care, literacy, home-keeping—all of this calls for the presence of female missionaries to ensure collective promotion. Spiritual life should be grounded on sacramental life, which can only be made possible by the presence of a priest in the community. That is to say that we foresee the future of our mission as a collective project where the contribution of Fathers, Sisters and Brothers would operate like a leaven in this needy area of Africa, to initiate collective and complete development, without trying to form elites who will leave their homes to go and work in the cities.

We would like to see many Kenyans share our ideal. We also hope that the young Brothers, especially those coming to us from the MIC for their apostolic and teacher training experience, will take part in this project.

They will find here an opportunity of repeating Fr. Champagnat's experience "that led him to found our Institute for the Christian education of the young, especially those most in need" (*Const. no. 2*).

In addition, our centre is by no means inward-looking, but takes part in many projects of development with our neighbours—for example, the building of a modest health centre, a grinding mill for locally produced maize, assistance to nearby primary schools in their development. All these show our readiness and our availability to help people to improve their living conditions.

Commitments for the future

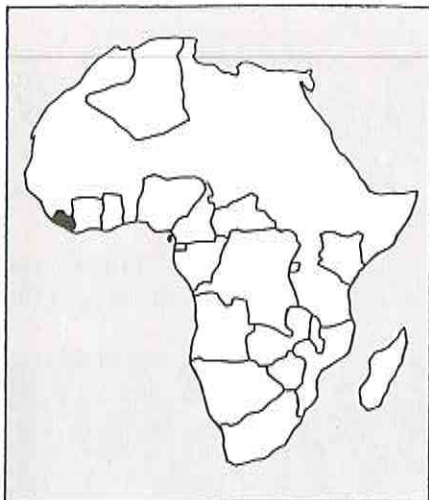
Besides, if we could build our own dreams, we would like our project in education to aim more at the formation of educated farmers, than at the training of bureaucrats (Wabenzi). We also take to heart the formation of dedicated young Christians who will readily work in the Church, perhaps as priests or religious, but mainly as active lay people who will not use Christianity as an asset for personal promotion, as so often happens.

Bearing all this in mind, we are well aware that the change in mentality will not occur overnight, and that we should deserve such a change by the conversion of our own heart. That is why, with patience, we count on God's grace, on our common resources, on your kind interest, so that Charity may prevail in everything.



A day of celebration.

LIBERIA



1986 saw the centenary of the start of Marist work in the United States, and to mark the occasion, it was decided to send out men to a new mission. The mission chosen was Liberia, on the west coast of Africa.

The origins of this as a country go back to the abolition of slavery in the US, when a number of freed slaves went back to their country of origin, with the help of wellwishers in America, and since then, there has been considerable American interest and influence in the country. One sign of this is found in the place names —one example is that the Brothers found themselves in Maryland County, near the town of Harper!

Beginning of the Marist work

The town where the Brothers set up is called Pleebo, and it is about 500 miles from the capital, Monrovia, and some 5 miles from the border with the neighbouring Ivory Coast.

The Brothers initially were given charge of a diocesan school covering all ages from kindergarten to high school. They were also in charge of training teachers, mainly through in-service courses and holiday courses leading to a Government-recognized qualification.

The civil war and its results

Everything seemed to be going well, with a basic community of five Brothers, until fighting started in the capital on Christmas Day 1989. Though the actual fighting did not affect Pleebo, the effects of the war were not long in making their mark. All supplies, usually obtained from Monrovia, were cut off, and soon the local people were feeling the effects of hunger. By July 1990, a large number of deserters from the army found their way to the area, and looting and pillaging caused panic locally. The schools had to be closed. One priest, a Ghanaian working in Liberia, was killed. The Bishop advised the Brothers to leave the country for their own safety. The Ivory Coast closed its borders and no supplies could be brought in from that side. The community decided that two Brothers should remain, and the others made their way across the river by canoe into Ivory Coast.

By the month of September, the rebels had control of the area, and while the situation remained tense, some semblance of order returned. The two remaining Brothers were devoting themselves to trying to get supplies of food for the local population, and with the easing of tension, the border was re-opened. With the help of Catholic International Relief, they have been able to bring in hundreds of tons of much needed rice to ease the food shortage, but the shortage is still there.

Br. Leo Shea, Principal of the school and local Superior, and Sister Leonora, Diocesan Superintendent



Brother Leo Shea, Superior of Liberia.

of Education, are at the moment examining the situation with a view to re-starting the school system, but until the political situation is stabilized, there is little hope of any positive endeavour.

Future of the Marist work

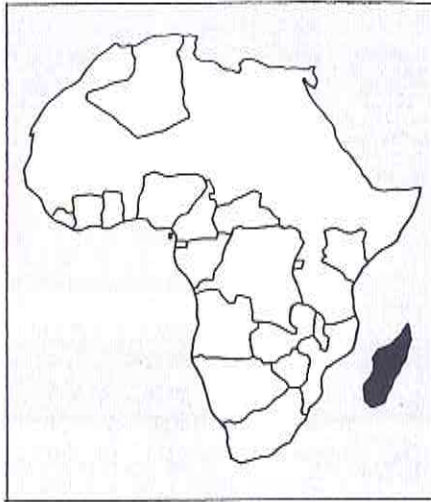
As far as prospects for the future are concerned, everything depends on the political situation, so it is impossible to make any guesses. The Church is relatively weak in Liberia, particularly since the foundation of the country was under the auspices of mainly non-Catholic bodies, and local vocations up to the present are thin on the ground. One young teacher has expressed an interest in Marist life, and is at present in the postulanship in Ghana.

All the Brothers can do is to ask for the prayers of our readers for this mission, started with such high hopes, dashed by events. May their present Gethsemane be the precursor of a glorious Easter.



Bro. Leo Shea and Nyema Dalieh, bishop of Cape Palmas.

MADAGASCAR



History

The Brothers first came to Madagascar in 1912, when Brs. André-Frédéric and Marie Gamaliel opened a school at Betafo, an old town, quite small, 23 km from Antsirabe. This school was finally closed in 1974, due to falling numbers, the Government having opened schools all over the place.

1913 saw the arrival of Br. Briec Marie, who was to labour in Madagascar till his death in 1954 at the age of 82. In 1920, another five Brothers were sent out by the General Administration, one of whom, Br. Joseph Bonus, was the real organizer of the district until 1948. He was Headmaster of a school, Master of Novices, District Econome, and finally District Visitor. He is remembered for his building work, and for his ability to solve problems as they arose in spite of difficulties arising from lack of easy contact with the Superiors.

In 1933 he supervised the construction of the house of formation at Antsirabe, which now forms part of our St Joseph's College.

1937 saw the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the mission.

The war again interrupted communication with headquarters, and it was not till 1946 that the island was visited by Br. Jean Emile, AG, who brought with him from the Province of Beauamps Br. Joseph Léon Diogène Dumortier, who laboured in Madagascar till his recent return to France for health reasons.

In 1948, the Brothers bought the property at Soamahatamana, now the site of our Juniorate and of an agricultural school which we are trying to make more productive, to which end we have been asking for help from anywhere we can get it. Br. Jean François Rama, who is

in charge of the project will be pleased to receive whatever help in material or expertise that is offered!

In 1949 Br. Callixte was appointed Visitor, a post he was to hold for fifteen years till he retirement in 1976!

Local vocations

The early Brothers began to recruit local vocations from 1917. The first postulant, Rene Prosper, was sent to make his noviciate in Bairo, Italy, but the harsh northern climate was too much for him, and he died there. Br. Bonus insisted on a noviciate in Madagascar, and, opened in 1920, it has never closed its doors.

Until 1965, the District was part of the Province of Varennes-Orient. It was then taken under the wing of the



Brother Norbert with youths in training.

General Council, and in 1979, became an autonomous district. The Province now counts 70 Brothers, only three of whom are from overseas. Financially the Province is completely dependent on the Generalate and on what charitable help we receive from outside.

Our greatest preoccupation at the moment is assuring an adequate formation for our young Brothers, but we look to the future with a certain calm serenity.



Malagasy Juniors (1990).

Political, economic, and social aspects

Madagascar was under French domination for over 60 years, and the whole system was based on that of France. The Malgaches were all French citizens, and most people, in the towns at least, spoke French. In 1960 with independence, the new regime was the Social Democratic Party—a transitional period, since the country remained part of the French community.

In May 1972, a military coup overthrew the Government, then three years later a new Republic was proclaimed, which was to be Socialist, Leninist, Scientific. Instead of looking towards the West, eyes turned to the East, and to Russia. But now, after 15 years our eyes are again turning to the West. Nationalized industries are being returned to private ownership, and the hunt is on for new investors to help with the national economy.

Education suffered badly during these fifteen years. On paper it was well organized, but not in practice. The state schools were full of pupils, but there were no teachers. The people became dispirited, corruption is rife, there is a strong exodus from the countryside because of insecurity, with all the problems this entails.

The church and the schools

From the beginning, the Church has had its own schools. In the countryside, it had a number of small primary schools, where, in addition to their catechism, the children learned to read and write. In the towns, there were the big secondary schools run by various teaching Congregations.

Between 1972 and 1982, our schools looked as if they were emptying, because the Government was opening up free schools. But now people are again turning to the Catholic schools, and thousands of applicants are turned away each year, simply because we have no places for them.

After being in the country for some 200 years, the Church now has 17 dioceses, all except three led by Malgache Bishops. There are four Major Seminaries, and each year there are at least a score of ordinations.

There are some 60 Congregations of women and between 25 and 30 of men. Each year the noviciates are full. The way in which young people are flocking to the seminaries and noviciates is a source of joy but also of preoccupation.

The greatest event in the history of the country, one might say, was the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1989. It was fully covered in newspapers, radio and TV, and the whole population seemed to turn to the Church as something solid and sure. Ecumenism is very strong in the country, and the encouragement given by the Pope was listened to and put into practice. One result is an ecumenical translation of the Bible into Malgache, and work has begun on a common Malgache theology.

The Marist province

Our Province's first priority is the formation of our young Brothers. We note that the rate of perseverance is fairly low, and that one of the causes of this is lack of adequate



Young Malagasy Brothers at the M.I.C., Nairobi.

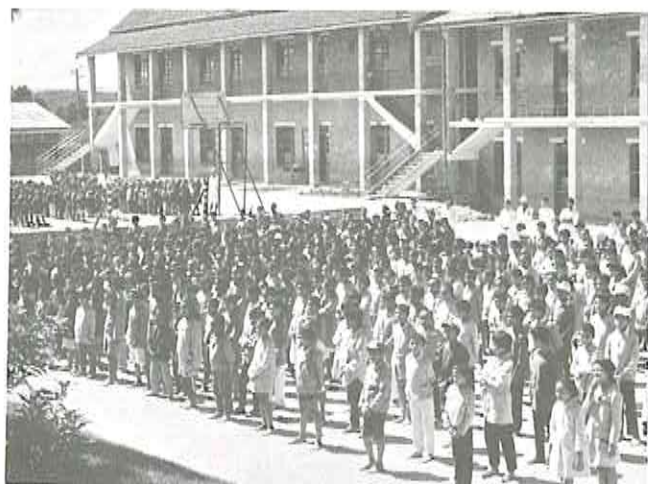
formation. After 75 years in the country, there are still only 67 local Brothers. There has been too much emphasis on professional formation, and not enough on religious. There is no lack of work, and the Brothers are overloaded with it, to the detriment of their religious life.

Having said that, we must say also that our houses of formation are full, so full, in fact, that we are in need of the resources to keep them going. We mentioned above that at the Juniorate there is an agricultural school. We want to procure a tractor and a dozen milk-cows for it. This would help us to keep the Juniors, the young Brothers, and the old retired men, as well as helping us to help the schools in financial hard straits.

If this project gets under way successfully, we intend to go out into the country where there are children more or less left to their own resources. Already the formation given at Nairobi is preparing our Brothers for this mission. May our Lord Jesus Christ, Mary our good Mother, and Bl. Marcellin help us to go out into the bush to reach out a helping hand to these young people who have been waiting so long for us.

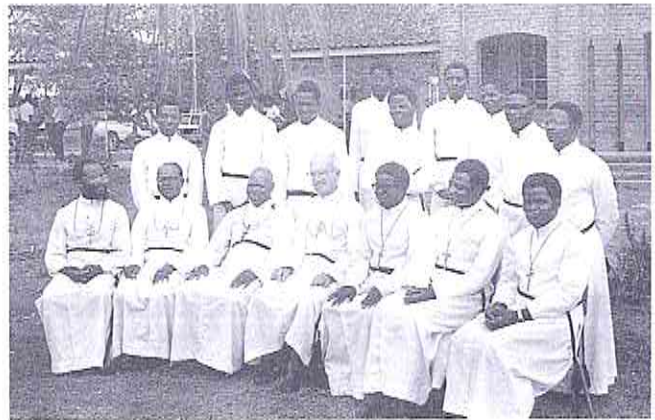
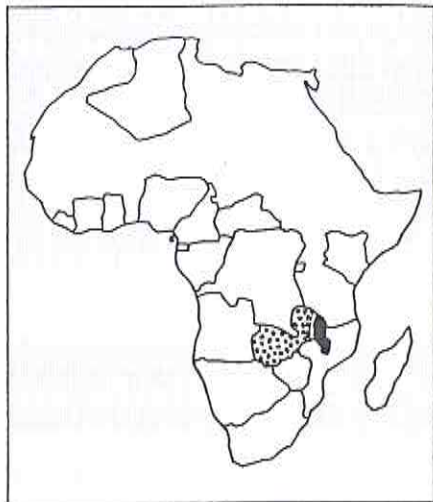
To this end, we count on the help and support of our benefactors, and we thank them all in advance.

Br. Provincial of Madagascar



St Joseph's school, Antsirabe.

MALAWI-ZAMBIA



"In the early 80's we decided to offer at the Novitiate."

History

Detached from Iberville in 1943, the Province of Lévis answered a call from the Likuni Vicariate in Nyasaland Protectorate.

Four Brothers chosen from the list of volunteers left Quebec in 1946 to take over Mtendere Station School, which they developed into a full secondary School.

The good name of this first Marist school in the Protectorate spread rapidly and before long requests for more Brothers followed. Eventually the Brothers took over the direction of what is now Likuni Boys' Sec. School (1949), Zomba Catholic Sec. School (1952), and Chassa Station in Zambia (1954).

In the meantime, as young boys expressed interest in the life of the Brothers, a Juniorate was opened at Mtendere in 1950 and now has an enrolment of 120 boys.

The four secondary schools have a total of 325 boarders. With advancing age, the missionary Brothers begin feeling the weight of these institutions. However, they remain very optimistic as they see the generations of young Malawian Brothers coming up to take over from them.

Schools and apostolate

The four secondary schools the Brothers direct in Malawi and Eastern Zambia are grant-aided, i.e. they were built and run with limited grants from the government, like most secondary schools in these countries.

In return, the Ministry of Education reserves to itself the right to select pupils for these schools. As a result, Catholics in the schools are no more than 25%.

Teachers, apart from the Brothers are also appointed by the Ministry. Nevertheless the Brothers are convinced that their presence is a positive one as it helps to maintain a Christian atmosphere and impart sound Christian principles to the youth.

In all schools, periods are set aside for the teaching of religion, and in general, pastors of different religious traditions use these times to meet pupils of their own faith. There are also opportunities to work with various Christian youth movements, give instruction to catechumens, and occasional weekend retreats.

From the academic point of view, our four schools, as well as the Juniorate, rank among the best in the country, and many of the past pupils occupy positions of influence in society.

For many years, the teaching of religion in primary schools left much to be desired. To remedy this, the Bishops asked the Brothers for help, and for ten years now, two Brothers, one each in the dioceses of Lilongwe and Dedza, have been devoting all their time, without remuneration, to that important apostolate. Their visits to hundreds of primary schools, their weekend and holi-



Postulants setting off to the Novitiate (1988).

day session and their producing of books for teachers and pupils, all these have helped to convince lay teachers that the teaching of religion can be made interesting and that everyone can get involved in it.

Obviously this is a good beginning, but many Brothers feel that more could be done if we were involved directly in primary school education. We hope that within the next few years, as our young Brothers return from the Marist International Centre, we will be able to make our presence felt at that level in more schools than one.

Outside the regular school situation, the Brothers have been trying all along to improve the lot of the less fortunate in many ways. Thus, with limited means, and during his spare time only, one managed to set up a multi-purpose workshop in Mtendere in which he trained dozens of mechanics, plumbers, carpenters, electricians... who now make an honest living out of the work of their hands. Another Brother, also in his spare time, managed to organize, both in Malawi and in Zambia, well-planned agricultural production units that have proved very helpful to schools and villages around. Thanks to his exceptional ability in obtaining funds for development projects, a third one keeps helping a number of less fortunate schools and clinics in the surrounding area, all in view of improving human conditions in a true Christian spirit.

The survival of the Congregation in this part of Africa has been a priority of the Brothers all along. That is why they lost no time in opening a Juniorate for which candidates are recruited from among primary school leavers.

While all the Brothers feel responsible for helping the youth in their own schools to be aware of the Lord's call, they feel that a larger population has to be reached. Accordingly, one Brother visits most secondary schools in the country at least once a year, and then remains in contact with those who have manifested some interest in the Marist way of life, inviting school leavers among them to attend short holiday discernment periods. The method has proved successful, and for the past few years the postulancy, of one year's duration, has been full to near capacity.

In order to assure both adequate personnel and the best conditions possible for the noviciate, it was decided already in the early 80's to pool our resources together with other sectors. At present, the regional noviciate of Kutama, Zimbabwe, catering to the needs of Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Kenya, has a population of over 30 novices.



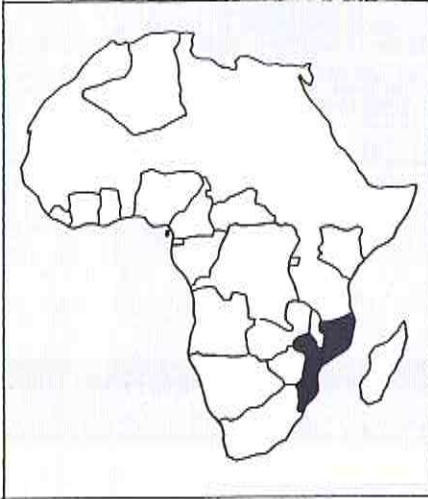
Brother Fournier, Superior of Malawi.

With the three year post noviciate programme offered by Marist International Centre in Nairobi, we are now assured of a sound initial formation programme. The seven Malawian Brothers who have now completed those six years of formation have taken their mission as Marist Brothers very seriously. Together with their predecessors, who did not have the same opportunities, they form a solid foundation for a future full of hope and promise at the service of the youth of the country according to the charism of our Founder, Blessed Marcellin Champagnat.



Young Brothers after their profession.

MOZAMBIQUE



Forty years of mission and adventure

"They lived and slept in huts, in the depths of the tropical forest. A gun lay beside their beds, to protect themselves from attacks by lions during the night."

In September 1948 four Brothers arrived from Brazil to begin the Marist mission in Mozambique. The mission grew and developed; then everything crumbled, everything was wiped out, nothing left but ruins. The unreal, utopian dreams of Marxist-Leninism, during the fifteen years of the regime, left a legacy of aborted experiments, of destruction, of rubble.

Br. Moises, one of the four pioneers, is still in the front line, after 42 years. Now at the age of 65, he is still strong, ready to fight for the reconstruction of the Marist mission in this country.

After building up the Marist congregation for twenty three years, Marcellin Champagnat died peacefully, surrounded by 280 Brothers, and with great hopes for the future. Here in Mozambique, after 42 years of sweat and toil, we have no more than two Brothers born in this country. From the human angle, it has been a failure. We can explain it by pointing to accidents of history, to Marxist-Leninism,



*Brother Justinho Hartmann,
Superior of Mozambique.*

to the lack of a clear and solid initial formation. It looks as if all the efforts were in vain. But Champagnat started with two young men; we also are restarting with two young men, Brs. Cristiano, aged 46, and Antonio Sana-sana, aged 35.

The Government of Brazil honoured Br. Moises for his missionary endeavours by presenting him with the Order of Knighthood of Rio Branco on 11th November 1988.

Vocation training

In February 1990, after fifteen years of exile, we re-opened a little house of formation at Beira. There is a community of four Brothers and two young aspirants.

In each community there is a Brother in charge of fostering vocations; he accompanies the young people, organizes weekly meetings, retreats, periods of leisure in the hills or at the seaside.

Today as in colonial times, the Church is looked upon as an authority to be taken into account in working towards the reconstruction of the country and the transition from war to peace. As

Marists, we have our own place in this Church. For the people of Mozambique, the future has already started.

Signs of hope for the future

We have learned a lot in these last 42 years. There are many widely-differing cultures, and these must be taken into account. The future holds out challenges and complications we cannot see at the moment. But we do have clear signs of promise for the Church:

1. **The experience of the past.** Once the road had been marked out, everything seemed to go well for us. Everything flourished, as if a fairy had waved a magic wand over our path. Then came the Marxist revolution, bringing nationalization, confiscation, destruction, dispersal. That passed, and now the flowers are showing their heads once more, as at the start.
2. **Renewal in the Church.** All the Congregations are opening houses of formation. There is an explosion of vocations. We have high hopes for the Marist Brothers. And, above all, there is a great awakening of a missionary conscience.



In honour of Brother Moisés Flores.



Brother Charles with Brothers and young postulants in Zambezia (1989).

3. **The Brothers in the country**, expatriate or local, are fully committed, and are accepting the challenge offered by generosity in vocations.
4. **The Province of Portugal**, on which our district depends, is engaged in a period of intense renewal. Priority is being given to the work of vocations and formation. The Superiors are giving us their full support. Missionary Congregations are getting plenty of vocations.
5. **Visits of Superiors.** Br. Charles, SG, Br. Powell Prieur, CG, and Br. Provincial, have stirred up our enthusiasm and fervour in confronting the problems of vocations and ongoing formation.
6. We have noted that **help from outside** is diminishing, and that we must shortly become self-sufficient. This means that we have to look seriously at our future.
7. We hope in the near future for a **lasting peace**, which will enable us to move freely inside the country as well as in and out.
8. **Collaboration at regional level** in southern Africa, encourages us and our young people, particular-

ly in initial formation, in learning English, and in the noviciate.

9. **The work of the Brothers** in catechism in the parishes, in working with children and young people, in seminaries and in training colleges, should produce in the near future a good source of aspirants coming from these spheres of influence.
10. **Our communities** are trying to extend the space in our houses so as to be able to bring in young people and to accompany them in discernment of their vocation.

These are some of the signs on which we base our hopes.

Apostolic priorities

The pressure the Church has been labouring under brings new needs for religious:

- * The need of great communion and collaboration between congregations;
- * Deep involvement in the local Church and in the lives of the people;
- * Solid and systematic promotion of vocations.

The Church has only 26 diocesan priests in a Catholic population of a million and a half. Since 1542, the

Jesuits have been expelled three times, but they always came back. And like them, we also must start from scratch.

Our priorities

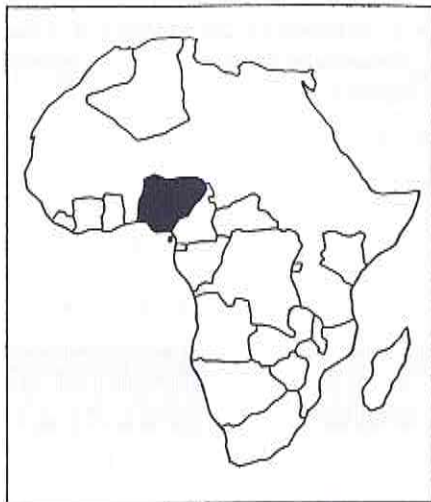
- * Formation of catechists and other bearers of the Good News at parish and outstation level;
- * Formation of the Brothers in the area of catechism, pastoral work, and education;
- * Collaboration in the formation of diocesan clergy. This was a strong recommendation of Br. Superior General during his visit. We already have three Brothers working in the seminaries.
- * Organization of courses of biblical formation;
- * Encouragement of Christian families, the seedbeds of priestly and religious vocations;
- * Help in the work of training teachers, in collaboration with the State in Training Colleges. One Brother is already working at this;
- * All the Brothers, on top of their work in teaching in the state schools, give up their weekends to teaching religion in the parishes; they prepare the children and others for Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation.

Br. Justino Hartmann



Brother Antônio Sanasana taking his first vows.

NIGERIA



Stages of the Missionary work

In 1935, Bishop Heerey, Vicar Apostolic of Eastern Nigeria, asked for Brothers to help in his mission. None were available at the time, and it was not until 1949 that Bishop Whelan, Vicar Apostolic of Owerri, newly broken off from Onitsha, prevailed on the Superiors to send out two Brothers to take over a secondary school. Each year they were joined by another, then in 1956, the local Congregation of St. Peter Claver was amalgamated with the Marist Brothers, adding over a dozen men to the number already there. In 1965, some of the Brothers went from Nigeria to open a new mission in Cameroon.

By the outbreak of the Civil War, the Brothers were directing some thirteen Primary and two Secondary schools. The war had two great effects: the nationalization of all schools, and the expulsion of most of the expatriates. Some of the expatriate Brothers remained, particularly in Hopeville, set up for those mutilated in the fighting. Another postwar apostolate was the setting up of Nike Centre for cured lepers.

The second result was that the District Superior from now on was a Nigerian. Recruiting was continuing,

and by 1979, the Nigerian Brothers were able to take over all the work, and the last of the expatriates left the country.

In 1983, Nigeria became a District dependent on the General Administration, and in the same year, sent out its own missionaries in response to a call from Ghana. In 1986, it became a Vice-Province, counting over 80 Brothers.

Apostolates

The Civil War took most of the Brothers out of the schools, but since then, a number have gone back in again, particularly in the secondary schools.

At Uturu, the Hopeville venture led to the setting up of a primary school and later of a secondary school, and many of the former pupils of the other schools send their children there to be educated by the Brothers.

The Brothers are also responsible for the running of the Diocesan Press, which, in addition to the Diocesan newspaper, publishes such things as calendars, brochures, leaflets, etc.

The Brothers are also heavily engaged in catechetical work in the parishes, and there are very good

relationships between them and the local clergy and hierarchy. We may say that they are very well integrated into the local Church.

Priorities

As with all Provinces, our first priority is to ensure a supply of good, well-formed vocations. So far, we thank God that we seem to be succeeding. We have a successful Juniorate and Noviciate. At the moment, we are collaborating with other countries of West Africa in the running of the International Noviciate, at present housed in Ghana. Nigeria is blessed with the number of vocations to both clerical and religious life. The major seminary at Enugu is thought to be the biggest in the world. The three Apostolic Vicariates in existence in South East Nigeria when the Brothers arrived now form thirteen dioceses, all with African Bishops, who count among their number two Cardinals and two Archbishops. The Brothers profit from this extraordinary flowering in vocations, and pray that it may continue.

We still have difficulty in obtaining posts in schools, but it is hoped that with the increased facilities in obtaining high qualifications offered by the



Brother Charles with the Superiors of Nigeria and Ghana and the Nigerian Brothers of Nairobi.

International Centre, Nairobi, this situation may be eased.

We cannot finish this brief survey of Nigeria without mentioning our Past Pupils' Associations. The Past Pupils are a very faithful and wonderful crowd of men, who are proud to be Marists, and are not slow to show it. (There can be seen a Marist Engineers, a Marist Pharmacy, and even, a Marist Supermarket in various places!) They form a close, loyal family, and are always ready to help one another, and to help the Brothers. They have done a lot in furnishing such amenities as libraries, scholarships and so on in the schools where the Brothers work. Many of them men who have reached the top of their profession are only too ready to use their talents to help, such as the architect who gave his services free for the construction of the Provincial House. We thank God for these men, and pray that Our Blessed Lady, whose name they are proud to bear, will continue to bless them and their families.

Renewal of the vows.



*Clement Okere,
Superior of the Nigeria District.*

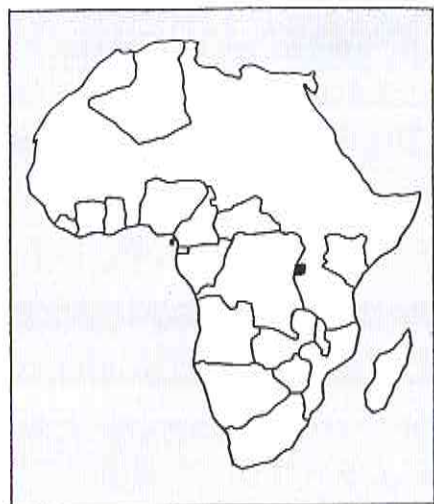


Juniors and their leaders.



*Brothers from Nigeria
and Ghana in
Nairobi (M.I.C.).*

RWANDA



Historical Outline

The Marist Brothers arrived in Rwanda in 1952, at Byimana near Kabgayi, seat of the Apostolic Vicariate. There were four Brothers, three Belgians and one from Zaire. They came in from Zaire, where two of them already had long African experience. They were put in charge of a Training College for primary teachers. The following year they sent their first twenty aspirants to the juniorate at Nyangezi. This small seed planted at the beginning was to germinate, and more and more apostolates were confided to the Brothers. The preparation and the celebration of the Champagnat Year of 1988-89 was a good opportunity to spread the knowledge and love of the person and work of our Founder, and to put new life into our Former Pupils' Association, not to mention our vocations work, which is beginning to bear fruit.

On 8th December 1985, Rwanda was made a District dependent on the General Administration.

The present situation

The apostolic work of the Brothers has not been without fruit, and now in the District there are 35 Brothers, 2 novices, 14 postulants, and 13 aspirants who are receiving an intensive preparation for entry to the Postulantship.

We direct four secondary schools and a Technical School. We are established in four dioceses, and are continually having to turn down requests from other dioceses, as we have not yet the numbers to take on any more educational work, due to a scarcity of suitably qualified Brothers.

Our work is helped by an educational agreement between the Church and state, which enables us to offer free educa-

tion in the schools. Relationships between Church and State are good. There are a good number of Protestants in the schools, as also Seventh Day Adventists and Moslems, all of whom practice their religion freely and have their own chaplains.

Apostolic work of the Brothers

The Brothers' main work is in the schools confided to them, and their main preoccupation is the quality of the religious teaching. The majority of the boys are boarders, and there is a good number of girls, all of them day pupils. We have close links with local primary schools, which are also used as practice areas for the teachers in training. We are committed to working closely in the teaching of religion with the local parishes and dioceses.

Apostolic priorities

There are two I would draw attention to:

a) *Post-primary education of those not at school*

Only a small part of the primary pupils continue on to secondary school, which leaves thousands who do not have the chance of any professional qualification. The Brothers are trying to respond to the appeals of the authorities, of the parents, and of the children by looking for some solution to this problem. One answer is what we have done at Rwabuye, starting in 1988, when we opened a Formation Centre where boys and girls come to learn a trade. Our aim is to gain experience which will help us to increase the number of such centres, which we are convinced is one of the best ways of helping these youngsters to gain a living and to be of service to their country. But it needs a change of mentality among the Brothers, who are not used to this form of apostolate, and it requires also professional training to be able to work in them, not to mention the materials required to set them up and keep them going. Our recruiting, the formation of our aspirants and



Brother Charles with Brother Pascal Nkurunziza, Superior of Rwanda.

the animation of our communities is geared towards this type of work, whose importance and urgency need careful thought throughout Marist Africa.

- b) More and more private schools are being set up by Parents' Associations encouraged by the State, and this demands from the Church an effort to ensure a supply of teachers of religion for these schools, most of which are directed by Former Pupils. This is an area where the Brothers have a lot to offer, and where their presence is being asked for.

Our adequate response to these two priorities will come from the way we face up to the five challenges we see which will keep us faithful to the charism of our Founder:

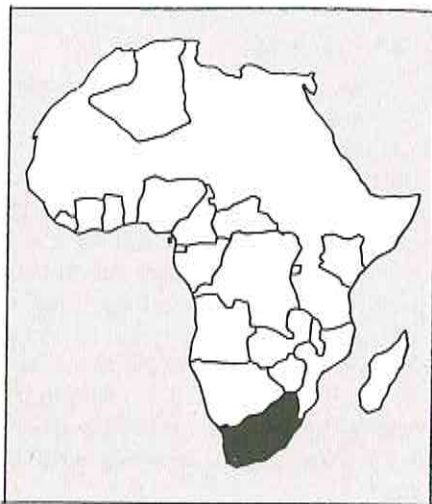
1. Vocations work;
2. Our Founder;
3. The Marist Apostolate;
4. Prayer and a deep spiritual foundation;
5. Obedience and fidelity to the Gospel values.

Br. Pascal Nkurunziza,
District Superior



Bro. Innocent Hategekimana.

SOUTH AFRICA

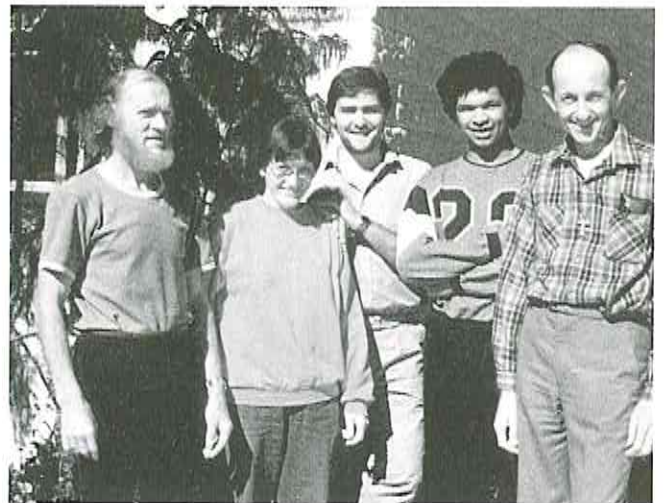


Historical Summary

The Marist Brothers came to South Africa in 1867 at the request of the Apostolic Vicar of the Cape of Good Hope, Bishop Grimley. Having heard of the good work the Brothers were doing in Ireland, he approached the Superiors at St Genis-Laval for Brothers to teach the Catholic children of the settlers at the Cape. So five Brothers — Br. Chumald (French) as Director, Br. Sulpice (Belgian), Br. Faust (English), Br. Anthony (Irish), and Br.

Anatolie (French)— set sail from Toulon on the 12th February 1867 and arrived at the Cape on 18th April. Twelve years later, in 1879, at the request of the Apostolic Vicar of the Eastern Cape, Bishop Richards, the Brothers established schools in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. In 1889 the Brothers went to the dusty mining camp of Johannesburg to open the first boys' school there. Since then the Brothers have taught in Natal at Pietermaritzburg and Durban and in several other parts of South Africa.

Just as the founding Brothers of the Province came from different countries, so the Province has always been international in character. Apart from South Africa



The community of Slough — Brothers Richard, Mark and Mario.



Brother Felim to work among the poor in Cape Town.

itself, Brothers have come from France, England, Ireland, Belgium, Scotland, Germany, Spain, Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Mexico. A lot of these joined the Province as young Brothers, while some have come at a later stage of life for short periods of time. All of them have done wonderful work in South Africa.

For the first 41 years, South Africa came under the General Administration as a vice-province. In 1908 the Province of South Africa came into existence with Br. Frederick as the first Provincial; he had been the first Superior in Johannesburg, and lived to three weeks short of his hundredth birthday.

Until 1975, most of the Brothers' work was done in white schools for boys. To a large extent, this was due to the system of apartheid. However, the Brothers had worked also in Black areas such as Lesotho (1908-1939), in Bochabelo, Bloemfontein (1934-1939), in Kaaba, Uitenhage (1933-1937), and at Orlando in Soweto (1946-1957). From 1961 till the present day, the Brothers have been running St. Owen's in Retreat, Cape Town, for boys of mixed races. In 1975 the Church, together with other Christian denominations, took a stand against apartheid in education, and Marist schools, as did other Catholic schools, opened their doors to pupils of all races. After strong opposition initially from the Govern-



"The Marist schools opened their doors to pupils of all races..."

ment, the non-racial policy of these schools based on Gospel values has now been accepted. Fifteen years on, issues such as curriculum development to integrate the cultures of all the pupils and bridging classes to assist pupils from weaker educational backgrounds, are being tackled by open schools.

Since 1980, the Brothers have become involved in co-education in co-operation with the Ursuline Sisters, the Holy Family Sisters, and the Dominican Sisters. Three of our open schools and the schools in which we work at Slough and in Soweto have boys and girls.

Our Schools

As our schools receive only minimal financial support from the Government, they are all fee-paying schools. This prevents the really poor from attending them. Therefore when the Province considered its apostolic priorities at its 1980 Provincial Chapter, it decided on a two-way thrust: the open schools and the option for the poor. So today, the Brothers work on a daily basis in three open schools while the other three that we own are completely under lay administration. All our open schools have lay administrative boards, with the Provincial an ex-officio member of each, to ensure the Catholic, Marist spirit. In response to the option for the poor, Brothers live and work at Slough, a re-settlement area about 580 km west of Johannesburg, in Soweto near Johannesburg, and at St. Owen's. In addition, two elderly retired Brothers do magnificent social work among the poor who live in squatter camps near Cape Town. Finally, the Brothers have a Marist Co-workers Movement in their open schools to encourage and involve those parents, teachers, and pupils, who wish to share in our Marist spirituality and respond to the poor.

Speaking of Vocations

At present we have 33 Brothers living and working in the Province. Of these, four belong to other Provinces, two from Ireland, and one each from Quebec and Iberville. There are two temporally professed Brothers. We have no novices, and we have one postulant. We have a Brother involved full-time in recruiting and he is supported by a vocations/formation commission which meets regularly. The commission has a representative of each community of the Province on it. As we believe that the charism of Marcellin Champagnat has great relevance in South Africa, we are confident that young men will come forward to continue the wonderful Marist work of the many Brothers who have gone before them.

Signs of hope for the local church

The Church has just launched a Pastoral Plan which has as its objective the development of the Church into a "community serving humanity" —the state-controlled television service attempted to discredit this Plan as being "subversive"!

80% of the seminarians are black; 50% of the hierarchy are black, and 70% of the Bishops are South African born. These figures are significant because 80% of the Catholic population is black.

The Church has always spoken out and acted against the injustices of the apartheid system, and has been at the forefront of the struggle for non-racial education according to Gospel values. Men such as Br. Jude and Br. Neil have been and are prominent in this struggle not only in the Church but also for all the peoples of South Africa.

Towards 2000 A.D.: Key challenges for F.M.S.

1. Recruiting and formation. The Marist Brothers came to South Africa in 1867. For various reasons, numbers in the Province grew to a peak of 120 in the 1960s and have now dwindled to 39. We believe that Marcellin Champagnat's charism is relevant for South Africa today and in the future. So our greatest apostolic challenge rests in inviting young men to join us and then forming them so that we may move with the Church, which started as a "settlers' Church" became a "missionary Church", and now moves into the 21st Century as a "prophetic Church".
2. Inculturation. This is our second apostolic challenge. In our country, there are groups of languages and cultures. We cannot respond to all of them. However, we need to choose one and commit ourselves to learning the language and appreciating the culture of

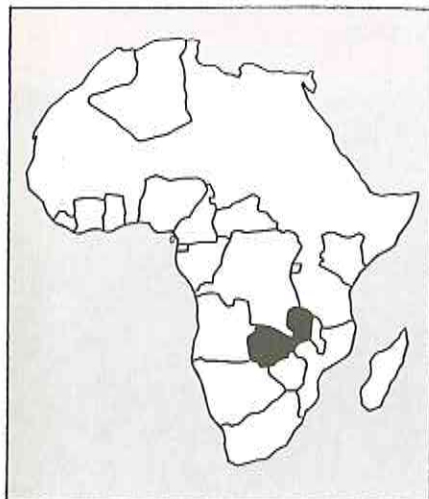


The clinic built by Bro. Anthony.

one of these groups. This will strengthen and enhance our mission with the poor and oppressed in rural areas and even in urban areas.

3. Promoting the role of the laity in our Marist "open" schools, in Catholic schools generally, and in our co-worker movement, so that we can work with lay people in sustaining the prophetic role of Catholic education.

ZAMBIA



Young people have been transplanted—or uprooted as some would say—from their traditional way of life into modern life. Some have failed to fit into a life that demands money and a certain lifestyle. For this you need education, but there is so much competition in education. The school system is what we might term a "squeeze-out system". The education reforms have proved ineffective, and there has been too much emphasis on providing new buildings without providing also the books, desks, teachers, and other things that are needed to make the school run efficiently.

The people are basically still very religious. Traditional religion (animism) accounts for 62% of the population, with Catholics making up some 25%, but recently there has been an upsurge in sects, fundamentalism and independent churches. Islam also is making great progress in the country.

The winds of change that have struck the Eastern countries have struck Zambia also. The words of Kaunda, the President of Zambia, seem to confirm this. In the near future there will be a referendum to see whether people still want the present one-party system of government or a multi-party system. Per-

After twenty six years of independence, Zambia remains a peaceful country, but it is true that several changes have taken place in the social, political and religious aspects of the people, some for good and some for ill.

Modernity has brought about mass urbanization with all the problems it brings: inadequate housing, high crime rate, unemployment, changes in family life.

Brothers of the Sector.





Brother Abilio with youths of a village.

haps Zambia could set an example of democracy in action in Africa. We shall have to wait and see!

Population and education

(The figures given are for 1987, the last year for which we have statistics.)

The total population of the country is just under 8 million, about 38% living in the towns, and the remaining 62% in the rural areas.

55% of the population is under 20 years of age, and the "old" —over 50!— make up only 8%.

Only 24% of primary school pupils go on to secondary school, which



Brother Raimundo Puente, Superior of the Sector.

leaves over threequarters of the population destined for a life of hard work and low income.

The church

Zambia is divided into nine dioceses; only two of the Bishops come from outside the country. There are an estimated 527 priests, 787 Sisters, and 160 Brothers of various Congregations.

Vocation and formation

The Spanish Province of Castille took over the country from the Canadian Brothers in 1973. During the first number of years, they were too busy with learning the language and teaching and administering the big St. Paul's School to be able to do anything else. However, in the early 80's there was a big emphasis on vocations. A Brother was appointed full-time to the work of formation, and another part-time to recruitment. The Postulancy-Noviciate was begun at Mulungushi in 1981, with four postulants. (The one remaining, Br. Mumba Cheyeka, will shortly make his Perpetual Profession.) In 1983, the District of Malawi began sending their own novices to join ours., and later, Mozambique and Zimbabwe joined in sending their novices to the common noviciate. By



Brother Paul, the founder of St. Paul's

1988 the accommodation at Kabwe was too small for all the novices —even though the postulancy had been separated— and the noviciate was moved to Kutama in Zimbabwe. The numbers from the four areas sharing the noviciate is 34 in 1990.

There is great hope that the flow of vocations will continue, and even increase.



Brother Felipe among his friends.

ZAIRE

The Republic of Zaire, situated in the centre of Africa, is the third biggest state in the continent. The population is about 33 million. It extends from the tropical forest along the river to the high plateaux of the east. Always a subsistence economy, the problems have been aggravated by the exodus from the country areas to the towns, with consequent mass unemployment and all the troubles that leads to.

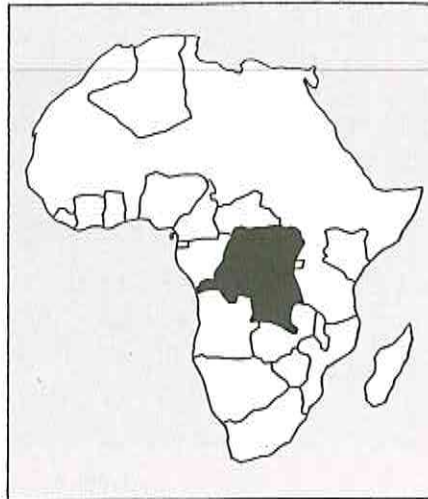
Stages of the Marist Work

The Brothers came to Zaire in 1911, at the request of the Belgian government, and opened a school in Stanleyville, now Kisangani. The original foundation was from Beaucamps, but in 1934, when Belgium became a Province, it undertook the work in the Congo, as it was then called. In 1962 the sector of Zaire and Ruanda was detached from Belgium, and became an independent Province, with some 115 Brothers. The political troubles during the period of gaining independence did not leave the Brothers unscathed —the first Provincial, Br. Christian Ettinger, and Br. Lucien Vandamme were both killed in the troubles of 1964.

The next important step was the splitting up into the two districts of Zaire and Ruanda in 1985, which left eight communities in Zaire itself. The shortage of personnel was already evident, and since the 60's appeals had been made to the Marist world for help. The first to respond was the Province of Italy, which sent six Brothers. This was followed by help from Canada and France, and finally we must acknowledge the generosity of the Provinces of Madrid and Leon, who have sent ten sorely needed men to help us.

As in the past, the work of the Brothers is basically aimed at the Christian education of young people, mainly in school. So we direct primary schools, and secondary schools covering general, technical and professional education, as well as the formation of future teachers.

ZAIRE



A group of novices at Nyangezi.

Youth Training

We feel that, with the rapid expansion in population in the country, the greatest service we can render to the young people is an integrated formation of their whole person, and that this formation is best given in the schools, where human and Christian development go hand in hand.

Among the various extra-curricular activities, we would like to draw attention to the AMC Movement (Amis de Marcellin Champagnat), a movement for young Christians with a strong em-

phasis on Marist and African. This was started at the beginning of 1990, and is going from strength to strength, with branches in all our schools.

The Problem of Vocations

One of our biggest preoccupations is, as in many other Provinces, the question of personnel. The Province numbers at the moment 64 Brothers, ten of whom are outside Zaire for various reasons —health, studies, home leave, etc. Of these Brothers 15 are over 60 years of age. The Brothers



Nyangezi Novitiate (novices and their leaders on a day of relaxation.

started to recruit local vocations as far back as 1932, but their efforts were hindered by the insistence of the hierarchy on setting up local Congregations rather than bringing local vocations into European Congregations. So it was not till after the Second World War that it was possible to set up a Noviciate, at Nyangezi, in 1949. Transferred for ten years in 1955 to Save, in Ruanda, it was rehoused in Nyangezi in 1988 as an international noviciate for French-speaking Africa. The scholasticate also, long situated at Nyangezi to be near the secondary school to help with the possibility of teaching practice, has now been replaced, since 1986, by the Marist International Centre at Nairobi in Kenya.



Outdoor activities with the pupils.



Pupils from Kisangani's school.

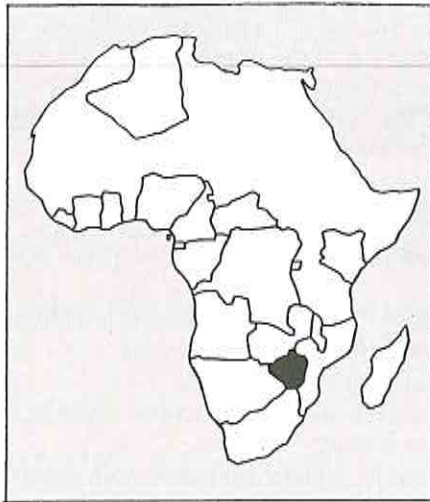


Brothers Emery and Henry with a group of "Marcellin Champagnat's Friends".



Brother Gatete leads a GEN group in Nyangezi.

ZIMBABWE



Brother James Langlois, Superior of Zimbabwe.

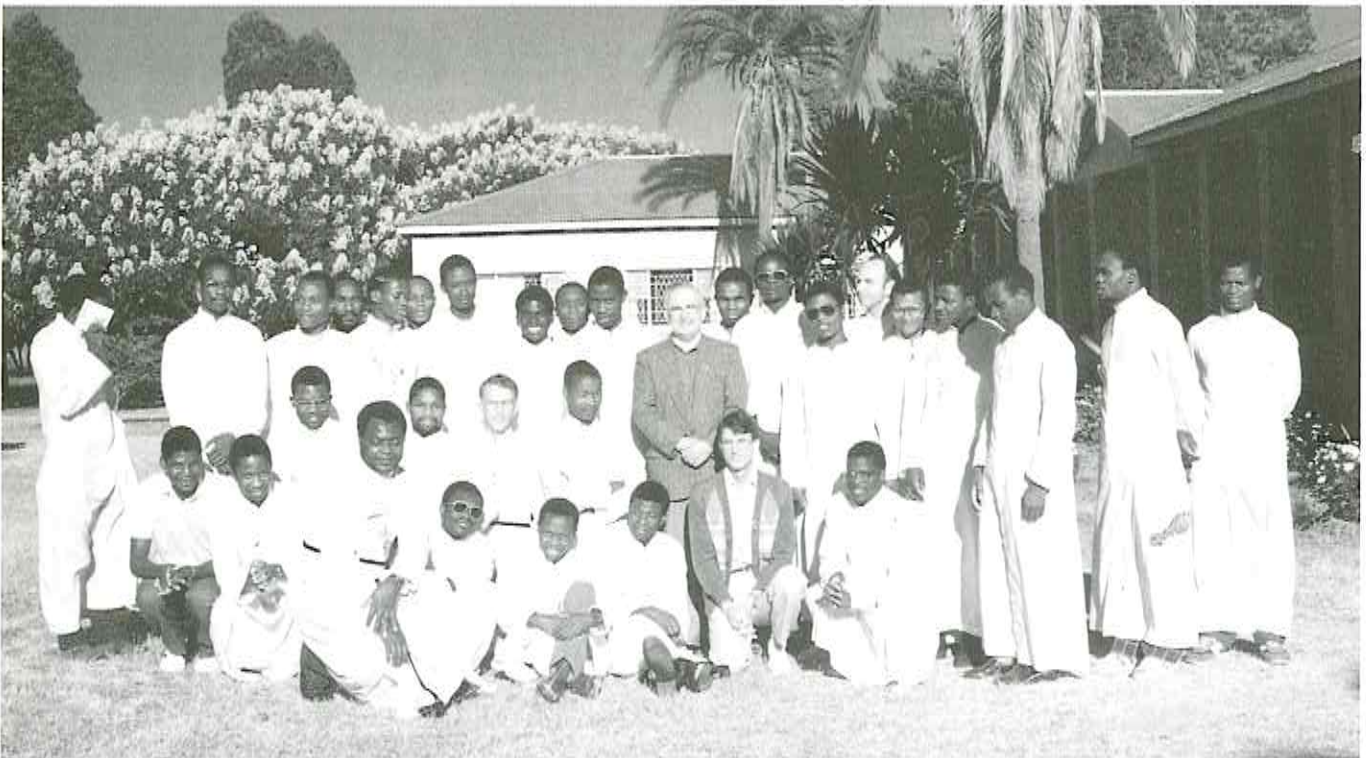
1. A Brief history

In 1939 the Canadian Province opened its first mission at Kutama in what was then Southern Rhodesia. We then took over from the Jesuits the only Catholic teacher training school in the country at the time.

For many years our main apostolate was the formation of Catholic teachers who afterwards staffed the village primary schools run by the Church. In the next thirty years we helped in the setting up and supervision of

roughly twenty of these schools. Each one was a Mass centre and instructed pupils in the faith, with the result that many became Catholics.

In 1945 Kutama opened the second secondary school for black pupils in the country. The idea was still so new that the ministry of African education has as yet produced no syllabuses and no exams. We then followed a South African programme.



Novices at the local Novitiate.



Children from poor families at "Marist Camp".

Spreading for Our Work

The fifties saw considerable expansion, thanks largely to the manpower sent by the Province of Iberville. We then built a juniorate at Rothwell, a short distance from Kutama. We also opened a school for pupils of mixed race near Kwekwe, admitting Asian pupils to boost the enrolment. At the very end of the decade we opened two new schools, one at Nyanga in the east and one near Kabwe in Zambia. These establishments, like the previous ones, were for boarders only, and most of the teachers were Brothers.

The sixties was a period of consolidation. There was a fairly constant building programme going on, which allowed for greater enrolment. The number of our men also went up. We then built a much larger juniorate, this time at Nyanga.

The seventies brought quite a few changes. Early on we began sending Brothers out to Catholic institutions with staff problems. Because of the closing of the border with Zambia it became necessary to hand over Kabwe to the Castille Province, and in '72 we opened a school near Dete, the first Catholic secondary school in the north-western Diocese of Hwange. This school, which was built with substantial help from Misereor, offers a programme that is both academic and vocational. We made Kwekwe multi-racial, and this in defiance of the racial laws of the time. Later on we closed our Juniorate as well as the teacher training department at Kutama. And as the struggle for independence intensified, we had to abandon three of our four schools. In each case we ran classes in nearby towns where we could.

Soon after independence in April 1980 we returned to Dete, Kutama and Nyanga, the latter requiring much repair. In '83 we started a small community at Nembudzia Mission helping in schools nearby. Our aim was to be nearer the people. We kept a community there for five years, as long as manpower allowed. In '86 we withdrew our Brothers from the school at Kwekwe, being unable to staff it. It is now run by the Diocese of Gweru. Two years later the regional novitiate was transferred from Zambia to Rothwell, the premises here

being more spacious. The centre caters for Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. There are now thirty novices.

We suffered a dramatic decrease in numbers in the late seventies when the struggle for independence intensified, a trend that continued well into the eighties. The manpower situation has now stabilised. We have roughly one third of the men we had twenty years ago. In the eyes of the government we are still what is called here "the responsible authority". Each school, however, is run by a lay headmaster.

Our priorities

Our main emphasis these past few years has therefore been:

- to support and encourage the headmasters and their deputies;
- to motivate the lay staff;
- to preserve as best as we can the Marist spirit of these schools;
- to provide a basic programme of religious education for all our pupils;
- to cater at the same time for our Catholic pupils so as to strengthen them in their faith, ensuring also that there is adequate preparation for baptism, confirmation and first communion.

Besides their regular teaching and extra-curricular activities, the Brothers animate apostolic groups like Christian Life Groups, the Legion of Mary, prayer meetings and vocation clubs. Some run the farms that keep our schools supplied with meat and milk.

The present situation

Our government calls itself socialist and Marxist. All the same it has allowed the churches to keep their schools and hospitals.

In the last decade it made tremendous efforts to spread the benefits of education. The number of primary schools nearly doubled in that period, while that of secondary schools has increased more than eightfold. Many of these new secondary schools, however, are very poorly run with the result that the percentage of passes is extremely low.

The parents who can afford it therefore try to get their children into the church and state schools with a good standing. The demand for places in our own schools is so heavy that we can admit only a fraction of those who apply. At the same time, though, Catholic schools are not what they used to be when they were staffed almost entirely by religious. At the moment only a few of our teachers are Catholics and fewer still are practising. This poses a serious problem.

The general trend since independence has been towards more government control, especially after the Education Act of 1987. This has been felt very much in the area of staffing. We are no longer allowed to recruit our own staff. Were it not for the understanding of local ministry personnel, we would have more serious problems in this area. Another source of tension has been that of the curriculum. While some of the changes have been praiseworthy, the Church has resented efforts to impose Marxist ideology, first in political economy, a

version of current affairs, and of late in history. As some of the Marxist jargon has been dropped, it takes a keen observer to realise what is actually offered to the school population.

Being so few on the staff of each school, we have had to change our approach. We still exert considerable influence over the pupils. They are quick to recognise our degree of commitment. At the same time we work on the lay staff, as I said earlier. Obviously things are far from perfect. Some problems get on our nerves at times. Just the same we are agents of change for the better. In the eyes of God we are probably bearing much more fruit than we realise.

The vocation scene

Our efforts in this area began in the late forties. The first professions were in 1955. There was an irregular trickle in the years that followed, until the slightly greater number of the early seventies.

Of the sixteen trained in that period only one has remained. Little did we know at the time that our formation programme was too short. The strictly religious training lasted but one year. It had worked elsewhere previously, but then there had been additional years of formation at scholastic level, which we could not offer. Our young Brothers could not cope with the social, political, moral and religious problems that they had to face in secular institutions in a period of great turmoil.

Our vocation promotion efforts began producing results once more some time after independence. We still have few vocations, but they are promising. And thanks to our deeper understanding of the task of formation and our greater regional collaboration we are now in a position to provide six and a half years of formation that is specifically Marist, a programme that offers more hope for the future.

The challenges ahead of us

1. The escalating cost of living makes our schools less and less accessible to low wage earners and peasant farmers. Being in remote rural areas, they cannot be

turned into day schools, which would reduce the cost of operation. There is no solution in sight for this problem, unless we hand them over to lay boards and shift to service elsewhere, so it seems to us now.

2. Our struggle to pass on our understanding of the ethos of a Catholic school is taken up elsewhere. Of particular interest is the effort of the new national Catholic education secretary to raise the awareness of the staff in Catholic schools through workshops. We will continue to do what we can to improve the quality of Catholic education in Zimbabwe.
3. We are fewer than we used to be, and we are ageing. So far we have been able to maintain a meaningful presence in each of our three schools, but we cannot do it forever. The time has now come to look at the future and see what should be our policy, a decision with far-reaching consequences.

At the present rate the intake of Zimbabwean Brothers is not sufficient to replace the expatriate Brothers. So what should we do? Call for the help of another Province to keep our present apostolate going until local replacements can be found? Or else give more and more responsibility to the boards of governors of Kutama and Nyanga so that eventually one or both can take over the direction of these schools?

We cannot take a decision on the future apostolate of the local Brothers, in the sense that it will be up to them later on to determine what their apostolic involvement will be. All the same the decisions that we are about to take on our priorities have a bearing on this future. The handing over of Marist schools may close the door to their witnessing as Marist communities, unless new openings are found for the exercise of our charism. It is a very grave responsibility, and so we see the need for humble dependence on God's guidance when our District Chapter establishes priorities for the next three years in a few months'time.

Bro. James Langlois

*Kutama alumni.
Amongst them, the
President Mugabe.*



FATHER CHAMPAGNAT AND THE POOR

For Father Champagnat, it was not only a question of helping the poor: he insisted that the Brothers should have an attitude of respect and love for the poor: he believed that the poor brought with them a special blessing. You will remember what he said in regard to this throughout his life, and understand why our Constitutions link our fidelity to the Founder with our love of the poor:

"In being true to Christ and to our Founder, we love the poor. They are God's blessed ones; they draw down His gifts upon us and evangelize us" (art. 34).

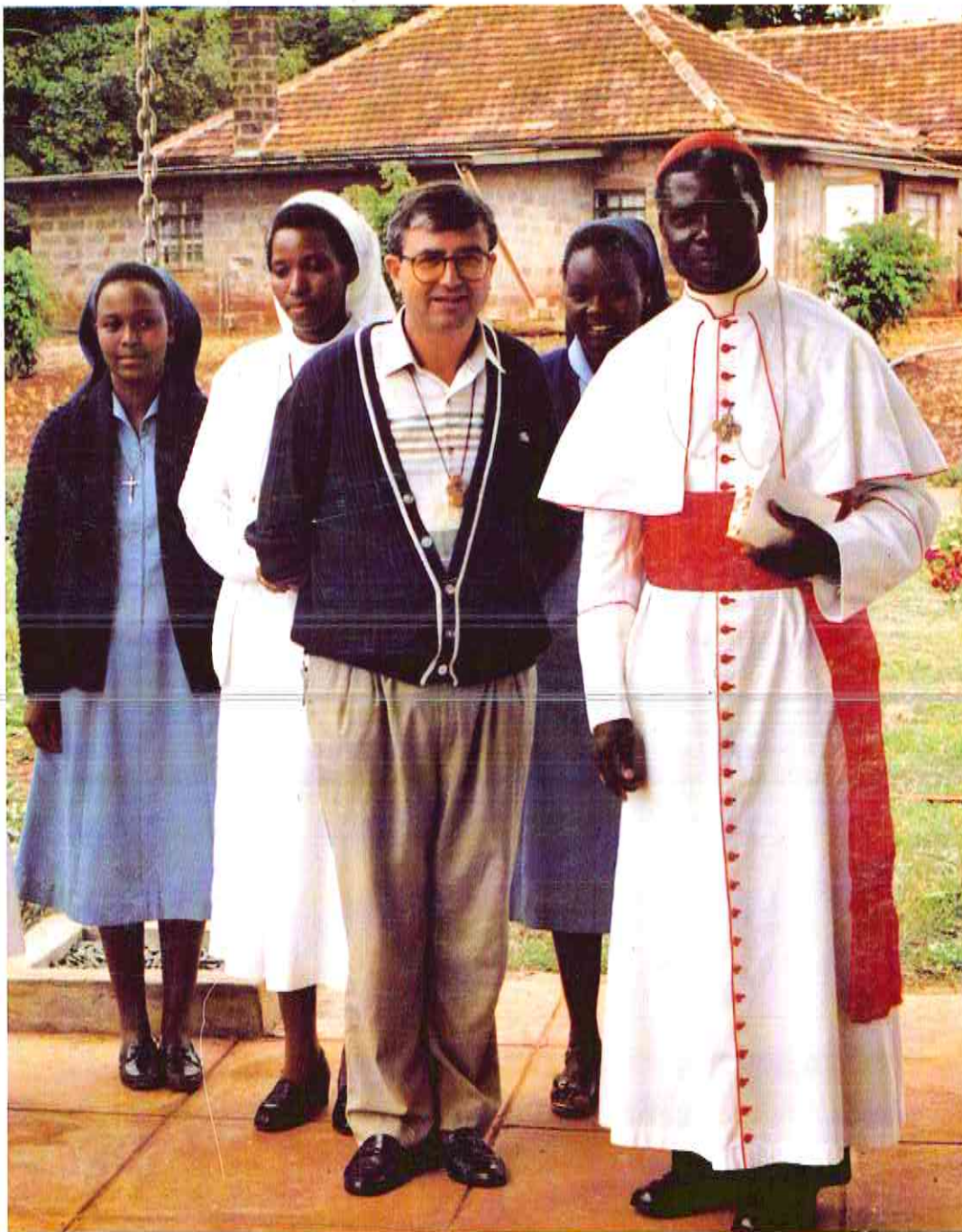
These words can leave some of us rather skeptical. They point to an aspect of the mystery of Christ which we can fully understand only through contact with the poor. It is not a question of romanticising their lives, but rather that our meetings with the poor can be a privileged meeting with the Lord. In my own personal experience, I have often witnessed this in the lives of Brothers who have had a long contact with the poor.



Group of children in the school at Ihosy (Madagascar).



1. *"The heart of our charism: the needs of the poor."*
2. *"Living with young people, as Fr. Champagnat."*
3. *"It's time for the native Brothers to take over."*



“Working with the Church and other religious congregations.”