

# MARYKNOLL FATHERS & BROTHERS

## AFRICA REGION



AUGUST 2003

### Collaborating with Other Mission Groups

During my ministry with the Mission Awareness Committee (MAC) of the Religious Superiors' Association of Tanzania (RSAT) I have been privileged to work closely with representatives of five exclusively missionary-oriented congregations and societies: Apostles of Jesus (AJ), Apostolic Life Community of Priests (ALCP) in the Work of the Holy Spirit – Opus Spiritus Sancti (OSS), Consolata Missionaries (IMC), Missionaries of Africa (MAfr), and Spiritans – East African Province (CSSp). The past chairperson of MAC is Father Leo Bagenda, a Ugandan Consolata priest. The present chairperson of MAC is Father Jude Shayo, a Tanzanian Apostle of Jesus. While the Maryknoll Society does not accept African members, I have been equally privileged to participate in MAC Teams that have coordinated Mission Awareness Seminars at seminaries and institutes of missionary congregations and societies in Arusha, Morogoro and Moshi.

Many Maryknollers have collaborated with, and accompanied, African Priests, Brothers, Sisters and lay people in mission. This is stated very clearly in the Working Paper of the Maryknoll 11<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in October, 2002 called *Promoting Missionary Involvement by Local Churches, Including the Church in the United States*. Several key texts are: "The Society is collaborating and partnering with other groups and individuals committed to mission, both in the United States and overseas." "The Society reaffirms its commitment to helping local churches place missionary involvement at the center of their way of being Church." "Many local churches lack the capability to participate fully in the overseas missionary activity of the Universal Church. The Society is willing to put its resources and expertise at their service to facilitate their participation."

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The importance of changes in our mission words was discussed during the chapter. For example, when Maryknoll helps Africans serve as missionaries in the Caribbean, West Indies (such as the Mombasa Fidei Donum priests serving in Jamaica), and helps Asians to be missionaries in Africa (such as the Filipino lay missionaries who came to Tanzania and Kenya and the priest Paul Kam from Hong Kong who arrived in Tanzania at the end of July, 2003) “we are operating *inter gentes* as well as *ad gentes*” (see document *On Being a Small, Vital Mission Society*).

Bishop Joseph Zen, SDB. Bishop of Hong Kong, exhortation’s during the “Mission Sending Ceremony” for Fr. Kam at St. John the Baptist Parish, Kwun Tong, Hong Kong on 21 June, 2003 stated:

Your associate parish priest, Fr. Paul Kam, after prayerful reflection and discernment, has asked permission to engage for a period of three years in the overseas missionary work of the Church in Africa, in the country of Tanzania. This is the first time that a priest of the Diocese of Hong Kong would formally participate in the ‘mission *ad gentes*,’ that is, to be sent forth from his home community to a foreign land to preach the Gospel to those who have yet to know Christ. It is a time of great happiness and fulfillment for us of the Church in Hong Kong to begin sending missionaries overseas. It is true that we have many needs here at home, but it is a sign of growth and hope that we are willing to forego some of our own needs to help others more in need. Up until now we have been a ‘receiving’ Church, having missionaries assist our development and we are so thankful for their help and witness. Knowing only too well the importance of the missionary in the development of the Church, we rejoice to be able to send one of our priests to work in a foreign land.

The chapter documents specifically refer to the importance of the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS) in Nairobi, Kenya as a mission formation center and the Africa Region’s relationship with the Yarumal and Guadalupe missionaries (in Kenya and Ethiopia).

In addition, the *Africa Region Report to Eleventh General Chapter Mid-Chapter Consultation Moment* (June, 2002) listed six concrete collaborative ways that this Chapter Recommendation can be carried out:

- Diocese twinning.
- Help African dioceses to send Fidei Donum priests to overseas missions.
- Coordinate exposure trips.
- Accompany other missionary societies
- Encourage missiology courses/seminars in local seminaries/institutes.
- Help connect a U.S. parish or diocese with an African parish or diocese.

How this collaboration and partnership is happening in Africa is described in various articles and examples below.

Joe Healey – Editor



## COLLABORATING

**Sharing the Maryknoll Spirit in Sudan***By Tom Tiscornia*

Our recent 2002 General Chapter document *On Being a Small, Vital Mission Society* states in the section on "Changes In the Ways We Do Mission: "We recognize the need to accept invitations from areas where we are not in control of what we are allowed to do. While we probably will not be leaving the 'Maryknoll stamp' on places and people, we can still share the 'Maryknoll spirit.'"

At the invitation of Bishop Macram Max Gassis of the Diocese of El Obeid, Sudan I found myself living and working side by side with Fr. Solomon Ewot, a Sudanese member of the Apostles of Jesus Missionary Congregation. We were together for three years in the disputed area of Sudan known as the Nuba Mountains. Solomon was a young priest having had one other assignment prior to the Nuba Mountains. I went there with 20+ years of experience as a missionary as compared to his five years. My whole reasoning was to be present with the people in their suffering as well as to accompany my fellow missionaries in the process of evangelization in a war torn situation.

What I encountered there was a church that for many years had been functioning under the leadership of lay catechists, some of whom were openly referred to as "Abuna" (Father). When we came upon the scene there was some open resentment. All the power and status that had once been theirs was taken away. Yet for many of the Christians they still were the Abuna and we somehow were the invaders.

It was good to be with Solomon dealing with these situations, he being a Sudanese himself and able to appreciate some of the deep feelings and history that were involved. There were times when Solomon himself was the victim of not being wanted since he too was an outsider being from the South and not a Nuba. It was interesting seeing his reaction to this sometime reality of being a missionary in his own country, something that we might experience in our missionary careers.

Our purpose of doing mission in Nuba was basically the same yet our ways varied but complemented one another. It was not a 'Maryknoll' mission but I am certain that the 'Maryknoll spirit' was left behind.



## COLLABORATING

**Persons, Pesa and Lived Pneumatikos***By John Conway*

On Friday, 23 May, 2003 in Nairobi, Kenya I attended the graduation and degree-granting ceremony for a group of philosophers and theologians of the Apostles of Jesus Missionary Congregation (the first African religious missionary institute). They are former students. The ceremony took place in their social hall financed by the Maryknoll Society, built at the initiative of Jack Quinn and designed by John Walsh. For me the occasion was both joyful and reminiscent of the Society's long-term association in mission and missionary preparedness in Africa and around the globe. Within sight of the social hall is the library. The library was established by Artie Brown, enriched by Orbis Books, other Maryknoll gifts of books and periodicals and a remarkably generous mission gift through Joe Healey.

Retirement offers many opportunities not the least of which is to rejoice in the good one has received and in which one has participated. As a lecturer at the Apostles of Jesus Major Seminary in Nairobi, I lived the inheritance of the missionary spirit of Tom McDonald, Mike Duffy, Robert Vujs, Water Gleason and Jack Quinn. For over 20 years of the 35 years

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since the foundation of the Apostles of Jesus, Maryknoll has provided lectures, spiritual directors, companions and models in mission.

Since their foundation in 1968, the Apostles have enjoyed a remarkable growth. Founded in Uganda by Comboni Missionaries Bishop Sisto Mazzoldi and Father John Marengoni, they have spread their missionary wings in Africa, the United States and Europe. I have priest (and a small number of Brother) friends active in mission in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania and in parishes in Okalahoma, New York and Allentown, Pennsylvania.



Over the past 10 years, the Society has contributed money on an annual basis for formation and missionary training. The present level of funding is \$10,000 annually reflecting the Society's financial picture and the increasingly successful efforts by the Apostles of Jesus to raise their own funds through mission education and sponsors. They have established a tax-free status in the United States and have a regular program of church dates and appeals. Maryknoll's Mission Promotion Department has provided guidance and accompaniment in these efforts. In imitation of Maryknoll, the scholastics publish, biannually, a mission magazine, *Fields Afar!*

In his book, *The Holy Longing*, Ronald Rolheiser has some very refreshing insights into spirit and spirit. According to Rolheiser, the function of spirit and Holy Spirit is to give us energy and fire so that we do not lose our vitality, and all sense of beauty and joy of living. Its other task is to keep us glued together, integrated, so that we do not fall apart. So let us take satisfaction and rejoice that as Maryknoll, over their years and ours, has energized and sustained the Apostles of Jesus through our persons, pesa and lived pneumatikos.

## COLLABORATING

### Mutual Exchange Between the Dioceses of St. Cloud and Homa Bay

By Dan Ohmann

What if the rich man would have invited Lazarus to come and eat with him? What would you have? You would have the beginning of the Kingdom of God! I have now accompanied three delegations from my home diocese of St. Cloud, Minnesota, USA to Homa Bay Diocese in western Kenya. "Out of this experience," I told the St. Cloud delegation, "you should have a taste of the Kingdom of God."

What began mainly as a project-visiting tour, a people-gazing tour, an animal-gazing tour has quickly turned into a mutual sharing experience, with the St. Cloud side getting the better of the exchange. They soon saw themselves as the Lazarus, the poor man, being invited by the Homa Bay Catholics, rich in spirit, to share the meal with them. I think I can truthfully say that, to the very last person of the St. Cloud delegations, this was a taste of the Kingdom of God. They could not imagine enjoying a two hour liturgy nor imagine finding joy and hope in a life situation devastated by AIDS (40 percent of the adult population in Homa Bay Diocese we were told). This diocese to diocese program began under the sponsorship of the Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Bishop John Kinney initiated it in the Diocese of St. Cloud. He was fortunate to have Father Bill Vos and a good Mission Office Staff to organize manage and motivate the delegates.

Why do I accompany them? Several reasons:

1. Since Vatican II the world doesn't have any "mission territories" anymore as we knew them under the "Propagation of Faith". All the territories of the world are under some diocese. The responsibility of mission rests with the local diocese, the local bishop. Where

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does that leave mission societies like Maryknoll? Somehow we have to fit into this new *structure* of the church. I think just being a missionary with the group, not managing, not *organizing*, just accompanying them, already puts a focus into the program that it would not otherwise have. It helps focus on mission rather than it becoming a sight-seeing trip or another social work program.

2. Maryknoll, under Fathers Walsh and Price, grew out of an American, diocesan, pastoral church structure. Maryknoll's roots are in the U.S. Catholic Church. I believe, as the U.S. Catholic Church goes, so does Maryknoll, and, vice versa, to a much lesser degree because we are so small and few. If the mission responsibility is under a diocese, I should and want to be in on it. Maryknoll is in a natural position for such a U.S. Church program for mission.

3. I accompany the delegates because I think that such a program of the U.S. Church needs Maryknoll or else they will have to invent something similar. Not every diocese can set up all the logistics that make such a program work for the long run. It will collapse as soon as this bishop or that director goes.

4. The possibilities for mission work in such a diocese to diocese approach are immense, unlimited.



## COLLABORATING

### Maryknoll "Intentional" Community in Mombasa

(Report by the Maryknoll Family in Mombasa: Father Don Donovan, M.M., Brother John Mullen, M.M., Chris Ozar, MMAF, Coralie Salvador, MMAF, and Brother Frank TenHoopen, M.M)

Since arriving in Mombasa in 1996 Brother John Mullen has been involved in collaborative ministry with several elements of the local ecclesial reality. Over time these collaborative relationships have deepened and expanded. The Sisters of St. Joseph and the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (formerly the White Sisters) have been deeply involved in his "Archdiocese of Mombasa CBHC and AIDS Relief Project" that is now present in six parishes. Brother Loren Beaudry also worked collaboratively in partnership with the Sisters of St. Joseph running "The Grandsons of Abraham" Street Children Project. Father Donovan serves the local Congregation "Mary Mother of God Sisters" as part-time confessor, chaplain, and advisor. Finally Brother Frank TenHoopen, as youth minister for Mombasa Archdiocese, must necessarily collaborate with the parish priests of the archdiocese as well as many religious sisters whose work intersects with his work. Being immersed in the local church we necessarily are cooperating and collaborating with many, many, pastoral agents.

However, there has been much Maryknoll General Chapter discussion about collaboration within the Maryknoll family. Unfortunately there are no longer Maryknoll Sisters in Mombasa. The last Sister left in 1980. However, in early 2000 Melissa Lepiane, MMAF, chose Mombasa as the site of her pastoral ministry and quickly teamed with Brother Loren where she has served as a social worker with the Grandsons of Abraham for the last three years. She finished her contract in March, 2003. In 2001 Coralie Salvador, MMAF, came to take over an AIDS Orphan's Project started by an elderly MSOLA Sister and closely linked to Brother John's AIDS Relief program. Finally in 2002 Chris Ozar, MMAF came to help local groups with income generation projects as well as to assist Brother Frank with some of Diocesan Youth Ministry tasks.

Each month we meet as Maryknollers to discuss issues of mutual concern as well as to socialize. We see each other often as we all live on Mombasa Island. We work together in various projects. We are making an effort to be what Brother Frank refers to as an "intentional" community. We make a commitment of sorts to each other to meet at least once a month and to be community to each other.

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Of significance in the evolution of this "intentional" community was a joint meeting held early in 2002 between the MMAF/Kenya members (Kevin, Russ, Marge, Christine, Coralie, Melissa and Chris) and the Society where we as Mombasa District talked about our current good working relationships and the possibility of improving on the good situation. At that time we agreed on monthly meetings and MMAF proceeded to make Mombasa a "priority" placement site. We hope more MMAF members will choose Mombasa.

## COLLABORATING

### PTR (Pastoral Theological Reflection) in the Nairobi District

By John Lange

Somewhere Jesus said: "Blessed are you little flock" and "Where two or three are gathered there am I in your midst." These are encouraging words for our Maryknoll PTR (Pastoral Theological Reflection) group in Nairobi, Kenya that indeed is a small flock and we do believe that Jesus is in our midst.

The three regulars have been Sr. Claudette LaVerdiere, M.M., John Conway, M.M. and Russ Brine of MMAF. Yours truly joined some time ago and attends the meetings if he doesn't forget. Other members have been Sr. Nancy Lyons, M.M. and Kevin Mestrich, MMAF. Past members were: Vicky Simon, MMAF, and Maryknoll Sisters Mary Ellen Manz, Marilyn Norris, and Ruth Greble. The topics vary according to the person preparing the meeting. This year I chose the topic of our response to the recent elections in Kenya -what would be expected of us now that we have a government that claims to want to serve the people rather than enriching itself? John Conway led the last meeting and the topic was: "What is the meaning of Christ's Resurrection for us today"?



My reason for joining is that I believe in community. The community brings strength and life that we cannot have on our own. I can't say that I have garnered any great, world-shaking nuggets, but many years ago I did receive a great nugget that has helped me immensely many times. Sister Eleanor McNally of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania told me: "Just because people are lepers (or very poor in similar ways), that does not give them a right to abuse you" (meaning that the poor do not have a right to be obnoxious in their attempt to extort help). Believe me! This has helped me greatly in dealing with the very poor.

## Happy Birthday to You!

Edward Phillips	September 1	Mark Huntington	October 20
James Kuhn	September 2	Paul Fagan	October 24
Ramon McCabe	September 15	Edward Hayes	November 13
John Frangenberg	September 15	George Cotter	November 22
Donald Larmore	September 20	James Conard	November 27
Richard Quinn	September 27	Loren Beaudry	December 7
John Wohead	September 28	Kenneth Sullivan	December 13
William Daley	October 4	Michael Kirwen	December 15
Mark Gruenke	October 16	James Eble	December 17
Richard Hochwalt	October 18		



## Brother John Wohead Retires

By Dan Ohmann

During World War II Brother John Wohead was a bomb loader based in England for planes bombing Germany. Towards the end he flew along to see for himself what was happening from the work he was doing. Out of this war experience grew his vocation to be a Maryknoll Brother. For nearly 50 years John worked in Shinyanga and Musoma Dioceses, Tanzania in construction and maintenance work. He has now taken a final look at all he has helped bring about. John has retired to begin a new phase of his life that he so often has summed up as "doing the will of God."

John will be remembered in Shinyanga by all who knew him: the corners had to be square, the circles had to be round. This was the way God wanted a corner to be and a circle to be. To John it was that simple.

One episode we will all remember in Shinyanga is when three robbers came into the compound in Buhangija armed with high powered automatic rifles. They fired their rifles and the bullet holes are still there as proof. John Wohead made his way through the compound to a position near the driveway. Then he pinned the robbers down in the Diocesan Treasurer's Office with his 22 rifle. John was 81 years old then. What will he be doing when he is 100 like his mother was?



John, welcome back for a visit to Shinyanga and the Africa Region.

## President Nyerere Disguises Himself as a Beggar

By Don Sybertz

In 1974 Tanzania had a serious famine. The government provided famine relief, but the food was not getting to the people who complained to the authorities. The President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, heard about the complaints and decided to visit all the storehouses of the National Milling Company (NMC) where the food was being kept.



One day Nyerere visited the NMC in Shinyanga. He disguised himself as a beggar wearing worn out clothes and an old hat. When he arrived at the gate of the NMC no one recognized him. He passed through the gate without permission and went straight to the office of the manager. He knocked on the door and yelled out, "Hey, you people in there. Help me. I don't have any food." The manager answered, "Stop bothering us, old man. We don't have any food here. Go to the market and buy some for yourself." As the African proverb says: *A satisfied person does not know the hungry person.*

Nyerere continued to cry out, but no one paid any attention. The manager and his assistants were busy with some local business men who were buying the famine relief food that was supposed to go to the Tanzanian people. Finally Nyerere opened the door and walked into the office. He immediately took off his hat and made himself known. Needless to say, the manager was speechless.

After President Nyerere returned to Dar es Salaam, it was announced that the manager of the NMC in Shinyanga had been fired together with some of his assistants.

**NOTE:** Issues of this *Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers Africa Region Newsletter* are now available by email as a File Attachment (either PDF format or Microsoft Publisher format). Please send a request to Dave Smith. Also there is an online version on the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers Africa Website at: [www.MaryknollAfrica.org/ComNewsletters.htm](http://www.MaryknollAfrica.org/ComNewsletters.htm)

# Expanding to the Frontiers of God's Big Toe

*By Don Larmore (somewhere between Mtoni and the Platte River)*



Laboratories,  
 hidden away on a remote island  
 somewhere in the unknown of the planet  
     surrounded and enveloped by prayer of thanks for mission ancestors,  
 a small group of mission scientists, dressed in technicolor coats  
     surrounded by ancient maps  
     smiled upon by a 1000 pictures of children  
     of every country  
     of every religion  
     of every age.

Plot the passionate love of a wild Creating God for the least  
     the broken  
     the imprisoned  
     you and I  
     the anawim,



as expressed thru prophetesses, following the mighty Bakhita,  
 thru marginalized pioneers of mission frontiers  
     thru zero-eyed prophets  
     thru totally unprofitable schemes  
     thru absolutely ridiculous and light-hearted strategies  
     thru unarmored passion in the face of annihilation.

Their delightful creation of the most absurd  
     the most singable  
     the most miraculous plans, implanted just under the  
 spiritual epidermis of grand-parents and popes  
     infants and theologians  
     elders and teens,  
 brings the peace of crucified and laughing being  
 the miracle of love without ownership  
 missions' explosive expanding to the frontiers of God's big toe.



## Call for Articles for Our Next Issue

**Date:** December, 2003

**Theme:** Youth in Urban/Rural Africa

**Material to Editor by:** 1 October 2003

Please send material to the Editor, Joe Healey, by Email to:

JGHealey@aol.com or by paper mail to: Maryknoll Society House,  
 P.O. Box 867, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (for scanning into a computer).