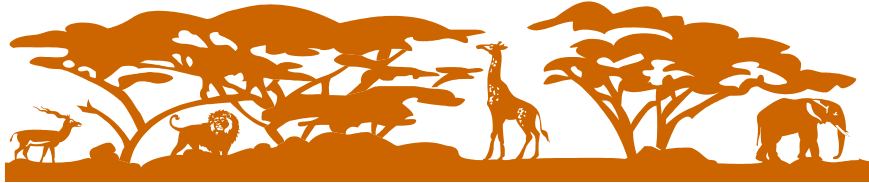


MARYKNOLL FATHERS & BROTHERS

AFRICA REGION



August 2004

Short Term Volunteers & Missionaries in Africa

The theme of this issue can be called “an idea whose time has come.” As Maryknoll focuses more and more on facilitating others in mission, short term experiences and opportunities in overseas mission are becoming more important. This is a growing priority in all the branches of the Maryknoll Family. In Africa we see three programs emerging:

1. Exposure trips. There have been a variety of groups and individuals who have visited Africa with the help of Maryknoll. Three examples are the teams from St. Cloud Diocese in Minnesota who have visited Homa Bay Diocese in Kenya (that has been called “A New Way of Mission”), delegations from the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and the two cross-cultural immersion trips to Kenya coordinated by Friends Across Borders. At points these people have gotten a hands-on experience of pastoral and social work in Africa.

2. Study Programs. Maryknoll helps to facilitate various academic study programs and student exchange programs in Africa. The Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS) Program in Nairobi, Kenya teaches, systematically, contemporary cultures and religion of East Africa in such a way that students begin to appropriate and articulate an African perspective on these realities. Recently Maryknoll seminarians and formation staff personnel from the Maryknoll Society Initial Formation Program in Chicago have studied in MIAS. There are also short term learning programs such as a one week module at MIAS in collaboration with the University of Notre Dame.

3. Service/Action. Many people from the USA and other parts of the world have joined Maryknollers in Africa as short term volunteers in a broad sense and short term missionaries in a more strict sense. These include doctors, nurses, pastoral caregivers, social workers, builders, farmers, teachers of English as a second language, computer experts, etc.

An exciting development is that when these short term volunteers and missionaries return to USA and other parts of the world, they become active in reverse mission in their home countries. This can mean promoting a missionary spirit in one’s parish or local community, participating in the Maryknoll Affiliate Program, joining a local Justice and Peace Group, setting up parish and Small Christian Community (SCC) twinning programs, etc.

Where is the Holy Spirit leading Maryknoll in Africa? Come and see and participate!

Please send change of
address information to:

Rev. David A. Smith, MM
P.O. Box 11246
Mwanza, Tanzania

Or by Email to:

DASmith@Maryknoll.org

Lay Workers *Before* Lay Missioners

By Dan Ohmann

Yosephu, an Arab merchant in Tanzania, was killed when the tractor he was riding hit a bump. He fell off and the rear tire passed over him.

I visited his wife to express condolences. "Whatever happened to your three children who attended the Ndoleleji Mission Primary School?" I asked her. "Two are in Saudi Arabia and one is in Muscat," she said. "They are doing well and making lots of money." Their success was due to a solid background in English and Mathematics taught by four U.S. Peace Corp people whom Father Tom Keefe invited to teach at the school.

These four were the first of many lay people to work in Shinyanga Diocese. By 1965 Father Keefe had also accepted Frans Van de Laack (Dutch) and Joseph Rott (German), sponsored by Misereor in Germany.

At the same time an attempt was made in Musoma Diocese to have lay people working in mission. Father Ace Murray had contacted a couple, sponsored by the Christian Family Movement (CFM), to inaugurate a similar program in the Diocese of Musoma. It was disastrous! The couple was very anti-clerical. One of their children lost an eye. They went home bitter. It set back the whole lay missionary program for years. Ten years later only did the Regional Assembly vote in favor of a lay missionary program. But contracting Marie France to research Luo culture and the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Musoma Diocese was very successful.

In Shinyanga the first two were followed by more Misereor people, Jergen and Dose Feldhans. Jergen continued the Agricultural Program and Rosa began a Woman's Development Program. Mike Duffy began the Shinyanga Diocese Agricultural Program. He contacted John Lange to recruit young farmer volunteers. From this project came Dave Ramsey and Charlie Wortman to Musoma and Jerry Hansen, Tom Borer, Al Hagen and Barbara Bechtoll to Shinyanga. Barbara was a problem for the bishop. Providentially Connie Kreiss, a Ratcliffe College graduate sponsored by the World Council of Churches, found her way to Shinyanga and teamed up with Barbara in Women's Development.

Bishop McGurkin had his doubts. "Let's admit we made a mistake," he told me one day. "We'll give them a trip through the Serengeti and a ticket home. "It's no mistake, Bishop!" I told him. We're on the way to something big."

This paved the way to the Lay Missioner Program and MMAF.



Short Term Volunteers in East Africa

By John Lange



For many years, I have been involved with volunteers from the USA and more lately with dentists from Germany who have set up a dental unit at the Little Sisters of St. Francis Dispensary here at Kasarani in Nairobi, Kenya where I reside.

Prodded by Dan Ohmann, I recruited Jerry Hansen, Al Hagan, and Tom Borer and helped them get to the Shinyanga Diocese. I was on Mission Promotion in Minneapolis, Minnesota at this time in 1972-73. According to Paul Fagan, Jerry Hansen did extremely well with his home for handicapped boys. I remember Jerry telling me of one of the fights between the boys. "If I had legs, I'd get up and come over and kick you." The other responded, "If I had hands, I'd punch you." I think Al Hagen and Tom Borer did well too. At least their experience made a life long, indelible impression on them. I personally brought 18-year-old Barbara Bechtold from St. Cloud, Minnesota to Ndoleleji when I returned to Africa in 1974. According to Dan Ohmann she did very well during her three years there. Her mother was manager of the Liturgical Press of St. John's Abbey in Minnesota. All of these people came before the Maryknoll lay missioner program began.

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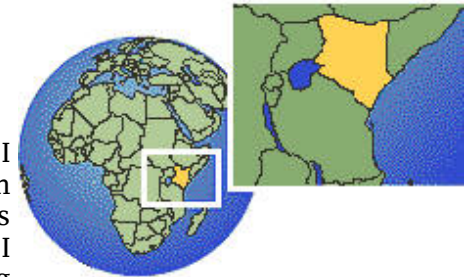
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Through the years, I have hosted young men and women for periods of a few days or a few weeks. We had young adults from St. Olaf Parish in Minneapolis here in Kenya twice. They spent a lot of time and energy in the slums and with groups like the Brothers of Charles Lwanga who run a street boys hostel in Ruai, Kenya, about 15 miles from Nairobi. They have raised at least \$200,000 for various programs in the slums and similar works. They gave considerable help to Kibagare Good News Center where Kevin Mestrich was the Headmaster of the Secondary School. Several of the young men from the St. Olaf group later joined the seminary in St. Paul. I can't say whether they persevered.

I have enjoyed my time with several young men who were considered prospects for the Maryknoll Priests or Brothers. I gave them experience in the slums. One of them accompanied me in ferrying a corpse from St. Mary's Hospital to the City Mortuary. That corpse was very decomposed. It dripped water and the stench was almost too much even for a veteran like me. The prospect could not eat for the rest of the day and refused to eat meat for a few days. I keep in contact with at least one of these. He is a junior at Loyola University in New Orleans. I find one at a time rather enjoyable. Bigger groups take more energy. But I feel that if we are to get future priest and brothers candidates, it will be from men who experience our overseas mission reality.

My Journey to Mombasa

By Barbara Bosley



A great sense of uncertainty filled my family in Australia when I unexpectedly announced my intention to fly to Mombasa in Kenya in June, 2003. It was a time when world terrorism was a constant focus in the news and non-essential travel was not being recommended. I was to join the Maryknoll Mission family for two months doing whatever I was needed to do. Strangely for me I only felt first excitement, then a marvelous sense of calm as I realized that this was a dream I always believed I was meant to do. I was not really equipped with any professional skills other than administrative, but my heart's desire was to be involved in pastoral caring, not administration. Brother Frank was to be my mentor and advisor and he patiently answered all my pre-visit questions and gave me great encouragement and an understanding that I would be able to help. My fellow parishioners and Rotary colleagues at home warmly supported me spiritually. These groups also kindly donated towards the cost of my airfares.

On arriving in Mombasa I quickly settled into the every day way of life. This was mostly due to the warm welcome I received from the Maryknoll mission family. This was as much a new experience for Brother Frank as it was for me, as he had not hosted a short-term lay missionary before so we were both using the experience as a trial exercise. After a couple of days rest I was restless to begin my work in earnest. At the start I was a little shy and uncertain of how useful I could be. However, after reassurance that even just my presence traveling about and visiting the people would be of benefit, my confidence quickly grew as did my love and respect of the peoples of Kenya. I was initially concerned about the challenge for me to adjust to a life where everything was so very different, culture, language and lifestyle. These concerns paled into insignificance when I saw the challenges that these people faced each day.

My first reaction of despair at the level of sickness and poverty was soon replaced with awe and admiration for the physical and mental strength of the people I met. The dedication and commitment of the staff that administer the projects of the mission are very inspiring as is the incredible show of faith in God and His ability to lead and support them in their personal effort to improve the quality of life and strengthen the spirituality of the people they serve.

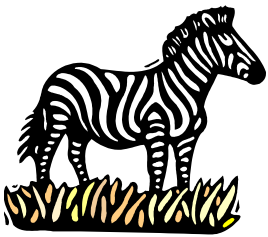
I participated in the Eucharistic Mass in many churches while in Kenya and I was so humbled, not only by the numbers in attendance, but also the absolute devotion to their faith. Their trust that "all things are possible with God" even in the face of such difficult challenges is remarkable and they remain steadfast in their love of our Lord and the belief that His love is with them constantly. The singing and dancing during the mass were so uplifting.

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During my stay in Mombasa I was surprised when meeting many young children. They had rarely seen, or never before met, a white person and their reaction ranged from shy curiosity to stark terror. This terror however soon turned to smiles when sweets (candy) were produced. Such a small pleasure, but it gave them so much happiness. There was much laughter and excitement when they were offered the opportunity to touch my hair and skin. This they seemed to enjoy enormously. The times I spent among the children gave me my greatest joy.

I was fortunate to go on safari "up country" traveling through Nairobi to Kisumu and as far as Busia, near the Ugandan border with Grace who is a Kenyan and also works at the mission. We stayed with various members of Grace's family. I found it wonderful to experience the lifestyle of rural Kenyans and was very warmly welcomed.



I also visited Tsavo in Taita Hills for an overnight stay just prior to returning home to Australia and was fortunate to see great herds of elephants, zebra, gazelles and many other animals in their natural environment.

It was extremely encouraging for me to witness first hand the incredible work being accomplished by the Maryknoll Missioners in Mombasa. Under the caring direction of Brother Frank there are continuous educational and encouragement programs for children, medical, financial and spiritual support to families, orphans and street children, and most of all, the availability of a safe and welcoming environment for many of the young people of Mombasa. I am proud to have been even just a small part of this work. The memories and experiences I will carry with me always. With God's blessing I hope to return next year and be again in a place and among people where the belief is "All things are possible with God."

My thanks to all the Maryknoll Missioners in Mombasa for your love and support during my all too short stay.

Scalpel / Knife — a Universal Language

By Liz Mach

Medical volunteers are sometimes the easiest volunteers to accommodate and acculturate quickly into a mission site. It does not take a lot of effort to dress the visiting surgeon in the operating room greens and to hand him or her a scalpel. They get into the work quickly and with great confidence.

It does take more effort to help them reflect on what it means to volunteer and to process all of the new sights and sounds. I am happy to be able to offer this experience to so many for the past eight years here at Bugando Medical Center in Mwanza, Tanzania.

Our health volunteer program began many years ago when we realized the tremendous contribution visiting surgeons, doctors, and medical students could make here in Tanzania. Not only do they offer their expertise, but also their teaching, their consultancy and most often are hooked by the warm friendliness of the Tanzanian students and medical staff. Many return numerous times — each time increasing their own effectiveness as they grow in understanding and comfortableness.

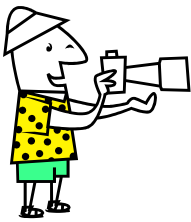
While the volunteers stay at the guesthouse next door to my house, we gather each evening to share our meal together. This offers the volunteers a designated time to ask me questions, for me to help them process the day and sometimes to offer some cultural advice. I enjoy watching them move through the stages of comfortableness here in Tanzania as well as challenging the volunteers to really become more involved in Bugando Medical Center.

I have hosted a wide variety of surgeons, internists, pediatricians and anesthesiologists. They come from a variety of places in the USA — New York, Wisconsin, Colorado, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Minnesota — as well as from England, Ireland, Germany, and Australia. Some are from hospital work, others in private practice, and many others have retired and still feel that they have lots to share in their expertise. All of these specialists are still critically needed at BMC as we expand and grow. I

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have moved away from hosting medical students mostly due to the fact that I am busy enough with doctors and surgeons.



The game parks and the sights and sounds of Mwanza lure many of our volunteers. We are lucky to have such a great hook as the Serengeti National Park on our backdoor step — this is a real draw for volunteers. And, it seems that one trip is never enough for them. This means that they will be returning for another round of volunteering!

I see great value in hosting this program for BMC. One of the side benefits is that it gets the Maryknoll name and our value of hospitality stamped on their hearts. I guess that once a person does promotion work for Maryknoll we never lose that perspective!

Volunteering in Mozambique

By Ken Thesing

In July, 1998 Patti Copeland, then the Music Director at Maryknoll, New York and her son Doug visited me at the Maryknoll mission in Mozambique. After Patti and Doug were introduced at the end of mass the first Sunday, one of the more forthright women stood up and said: “Ok Music Director, sing for us!” And as ready as she always was at Maryknoll for whatever unplanned occurrence might happen, Patti did stand up and sing the *Ave Maria*. And then after mass some 60 women and men, young people and kids stayed on and there was a sing around for an hour... English... Nyanja... Portuguese. And a common “language” had been established. Communication was no longer an unbridgeable chasm.

That was the beginning of Patti's “volunteering.” Since then she has come back to Metangula every year, sometimes more than once. She trained a group of women and some young men in the fundamentals of “pre-school” teaching and education. That led to the foundation of a pre-school at the parish and then preparations for pre-schools (“Escolinhas” in Portuguese) in other villages as people began to see the value. And in the afternoons there came to be in an informal/formal way a “learning center.” Literacy, music, arts and creative writing figure prominently. Up to 60, 80 and even more some days, kids, young people and adults began coming to participate in various kinds of games, drawing, puzzles, brain teasers — all planned activities and things to create in the participants interest, creativity and enhance their latent possibilities. Parish projects such as an

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What You Miss When Out Of Africa

By Lou Quinn

No clock in the church or rectory; no life-support system in the health centers; shameless jacaranda; night watchmen armed with bow and arrows; homemade tobacco; charcoal powered flat irons; aroma of first rain pelting months-old dust; room temperature beer and fruit; freedom from doorbell, telephone, email; absence of exhaust fumes and bathroom odors inside the house; pleasant smell of wood smoke; people with ramrod-straight backs carrying 40 pound loads atop their heads; gnawing “rubber” chicken at the outstation; barefoot lectors and acolytes; sun-dried clothes; children’s skip ropes woven from crabgrass tendrils; alfresco sick calls; peanut butter without additives; roosters crowing anytime night or day; pleasant smell coming from clothes being ironed; offertory gifts of laundry soap, live chicken, matches, soda, kerosene, corn, rice, chairs, lumber, paint, peanuts; babies lifted up and lugged by their biceps.

Anything to add to this nostalgic litany...

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initial sewing group, the first book of Metangula and Parish Photo Directory were direct offshoots. To have so many people around, it makes the parish center "alive" for sure at those times.

And other ideas arose too, not just here but back in New York when Patti returned and talked of her experiences. And others said "Could I come?" And that too has come to pass as Carol Swanson, a Peekskill woman who had previous experience going to Tanzania through her parish, after a year of talking about how to focus her designing and seamstress skills, came to spend almost six weeks. She worked with and through a young tailor here who knows English and they have a quilting process going on that continues also with the help of one of our parish Brazilian Sisters, Aparecida. Carol will return later this year to continue the teaching and strengthen the skills of the eight women who have continued working with compensation during these interim months. The hope is that they can be the foundation of a small, but sustaining business.

Last December, as I passed through Cobue, our northern center some 100 kilometers from Metangula that we are rehabilitating after it was destroyed during the independence and civil wars and which the bishop hopes can again become a parish separate from Metangula, I ran into a Marianist Brother, Peter Daino. He had stayed on a day when he found out I was coming to visit our northern outstations before Christmas. He works at Chaminade Secondary School in Karonga, Malawi. But he had come to perhaps begin a trade school type project at Likoma Island in Lake Niassa just about three kilometers from Cobue. Likoma did not work out, but he had received a warm welcome from the government officials and our local outstation leader in Cobue, and asked if I thought a masonry course for 30 young men and women would be possible and is it needed? I said it sure is needed, since almost all the bricklayers who build our chapels come from Tanzania or Malawi. So I offered the buildings we have and help in organizing local staff and during April we had a very successful course. Another will be offered in December, 2004 and a carpentry course is planned for next April, 2005. Brother Peter has another American Marianist Brother who will accompany him this coming December and has invited his Portuguese and Spanish speaking Marianist colleagues to join in sponsoring a possible Trade School in Cobue. Who knows, it could eventually become a Secondary School that has already been asked for by the local government and people.

My experience with "volunteers" is a wonderfully positive one. It takes some time, it takes some interest and it "costs" as everything does, but I have found it to be a very enriching experience for the volunteers, for me and for the parish. The important criterion of volunteer or part-time mission is plugging into existing parish needs. So far, most of the funding for the volunteers has been generated by themselves through the people they know and who are interested in what they do. We have not had any health problems to speak of, nor other major difficulties that we could not handle. Requests to come are not only constant but diverse, from the pastor of a local Episcopal Church to

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Happy Birthday to You!

Edward Phillips	Sept. 1	George Cotter	Nov. 22
Ramon McCabe	Sept. 15	James Conard	Nov. 27
John Frangenberg	Sept. 15	Kenneth Sullivan	Dec. 13
Donald Larmore	Sept. 20	Michael Kirwen	Dec. 15
Richard Quinn	Sept. 27	James Eble	Dec. 17
William Daley	Oct. 4		
Mark Gruenke	Oct. 16		
Paul Fagan	Oct. 24		
Edward Hayes	Nov. 13		



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Dominican Sisters to students between high school and college years. Maybe our problem will be that the experience will generate a desire for more people to want to come than we can handle well. But at least that is a positive problem. Community groups such as Rotary Clubs and parishes who desire a hands-on "twinning" experience expand the Maryknoll base of human and financial resources.

"Friends Across Borders" Visits Maryknoll in Kenya

By Vicki Simon, MMAF

"Tears at touchdown. I'm finally really here, AFRICA! Whispering bushes — I can visualize giraffes walking among them...flowering flame trees and storks nesting in treetops...everyone on foot...black belching clouds of exhaust... skies dark with pollution... MAJOR traffic in somewhat roundabouts..."

And so begins Susan Porrovecchio's account of her first impressions of Nairobi, as she and 12 other participants began Friends Across Borders (FAB)'s most recent short-term encounter with Kenya. Arriving on 8 March, 2004, this year's FAB group was accompanied by lay missionaries Mary Mallahan Hicken and Vicki Simon, and welcomed into the world of Maryknoll Kenya for 14 days. Our point of arrival and "home base" was the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Society House which became for all an oasis amidst the hustle and bustle of our everyday outings.

The visitors' schedule was a full one — beginning each day with prayer in the chapel and breakfast before the outing of the day! The focus of these outings was seeing (albeit briefly), meeting and learning from Kenyans and hearing their stories. The itinerary included several visits to Maryknoll and other mission sites including Kibagare Good News Centre, St. Mary's Mission Hospital, Ukweli Home of Hope for street boys, a rural parish and school in the Kikuyu highlands of Gatitu, a visit to Nyumbani, a liturgy at Don Bosco (Upper Hill). Most of these visits were preceded by presentations preparing the group for what we would see — providing them background and context. So many Maryknoll members helped inform and welcome us: Christine Bodewes and Russ Brine and Fathers Joe Healey, John Conway and Bill Fryda. Since no trip to Kenya would be complete without viewing some of its incredible natural beauty, we also visited the Rift Valley and the Masai Mara.

As many who met these guests remarked, "They are a beautiful faith-filled group and not a complainer amongst them!" I think Susan summarized it best for all when she wrote:

I cannot imagine a regular tour...with no opportunity to know the people. 'We have not met unless we have shared tea together', as the Maasai taught us. So impressed by the leadership and thought and effort that went into this experience of making my dream of Africa a reality... I have

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Remembering our Maryknoll Ancestors

September

Fr. Joseph Glynn	Sept. 13, 1990
Br. Fidelis Deichelbohrer	Sept. 23, 1983

October

Fr. Alan Smidlein	Oct. 2, 1988
Fr. James Lenihan	Oct. 2, 1998
Fr. Phillip McCue	Oct. 20, 1998

November

Fr. Daniel O'Brien	Nov. 11, 1991
Fr. Edward Baskerville	Nov. 13, 1975
Fr. John Bergwall	Nov. 14, 1996
Fr. John Graser	Nov. 15, 1992
Fr. Michael Duffy	Nov. 16, 1999
Fr. Edward James	Nov. 18, 1987
Fr. Thomas Quirk	Nov. 23, 1979

December

Fr. Gerard J. Grondin	Dec. 3, 1966
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been standing on holy ground...I take the faces and images of this beautiful land and people with me in my heart. My prayer is surprisingly hopeful... and I have this image of hands joined in friendship from across the far corners of the world... we are brothers and sisters... we have made a connection that has been transforming! May God continue to bless each of us and our work of mission in the world.



Amen! And we, the Maryknoll family who came to know you and laugh along with you, felt honored and grateful for the opportunity to have walked with you on this pilgrimage! Karibuni Kenya tena!

Learning from the Master

By Paul Brown

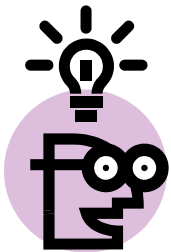
NOTE: Along with the wide variety of short term volunteers and missionaries who work with Maryknoll priests, Brothers, Sisters and lay people in Africa, relatives and personal friends of Maryknollers come for safaris, learning experiences and even help out in local projects occasionally. Their stories are very interesting too. Here is true story written by Paul Brown in Mugumu, Tanzania (published in *Once Upon a Time in Africa: Stories of Wisdom and Joy*. Compiled by Joseph G. Healey. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004).

The Tanzanian villagers had invited me to a welcome celebration three days hence. As the honored guest, I would have the privilege of killing the cow for the feast. My brother, a missionary familiar with local customs, told the villagers I would be honored to do so. But I protested, "I can't kill a cow!"

During the next two nights of my three-week visit to Tanzania, I had bad dreams. In one I was holding a screaming, pecking chicken while trying to chop off its head with a rusty axe. In another I was chasing a big, spotted cow. In both dreams the villagers were laughing at me. Yes, I was truly scared. I had never killed a cow, a goat, or even a chicken. I was afraid that the village people would see me as a coward. If only I could start with a chicken.

The dreaded day came. While driving down the long, bumpy dirt road, I had only one thought in mind: "How do I get out of this." As we approached the village, several people ran alongside the truck, cheering and yelling. I met the chief, who said many things to me, none of which I understood. The translator explained that the chief was very privileged to have a brave and strong white person to celebrate with him. The chief then asked me to choose the cow that most appealed to me. I picked a scrawny black one that looked almost dead anyway. As the cow was held down by five men, the chief offered me a rusty old twelve-inch knife.

At that moment, I had a flash of inspiration. Turning to the translator, I said, "I am honored, but I would much rather learn from the master." That made the chief's day — and mine!



Call for Articles for Our Next Issue

Date: December, 2004

Theme: Promoting Missionary Parishes in Africa

Material to Editor by: 1 October 2004

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).