



Société des Missions Africaines

S.M.A.

Society of African Missions



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S.M.A. Vocation Office

Priests, Associate Priests,
and Lay Missionaries

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Not by Bread Alone . . .

In his encyclical letter, Mission of the Redeemer (Redemptoris Missio), Saint Pope John Paul II wrote: "I express gratitude to the missionaries who, by their loving presence and humble service to people, are working for the integral development of individuals and of society through schools, health care centers, leprosaria, homes for the handicapped and elderly, projects for the promotion of women, and other similar apostolates." He goes on to say that "it is in fact these 'works of charity' that reveal the soul of all missionary activity: love, which has been and remains the driving force of mission."

However, he adds that "it is not right to give an incomplete picture of missionary activity, as if it consisted principally in helping the poor, contributing to the liberation of the oppressed, promoting development or defending human rights. The missionary church is certainly involved on these fronts but her primary task lies elsewhere: the poor are hungry for God, not just for bread and freedom. Missionary activity
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Serving God in Sierra Leone

We remember the nightmare and terror that came with the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014. Many NGO's, Churches, Religious Groups, individuals and foreign Governments responded. Specially we remember our S.M.A. priests who served in the midst of the Ebola outbreak, risking everything to bring God's healing and love to those in most need. **Fr. Francis Patrikson, S.M.A.** writes: *I reached Sierra Leone by mid-May 2014. I enjoyed the beauty of the country with lots of palm trees and the wonderful flora and fauna that was very familiar to me. It was the season of mangos, which cheered me up. In the Archdiocese of Freetown there was a beautiful practice of all the priests coming together on the last Sunday of every month to one of the parishes for a get-together and a meal. This practice died off as the Ebola became severe and movements and gatherings were restricted by the Government.*

On April 6, 2014, we had the Annual Lenten Pilgrimage. About five thousand people walked five kilometers, led by the Archbishop. They reflected on the Stations of the Cross on their way. The pilgrimage ended with a Mass where the Archbishop presided. At the end of Mass, there

was an announcement by the Ministry of Health, about the threat of Ebola and the real possibility of it reaching Sierra Leone. The message was so encouraging saying that the sickness had not entered the country; do not believe the rumors; and don't eat bush meat. Though the Government was telling them that there was nothing to fear, the people were spreading rumors that the sickness was in some parts of Sierra Leone.

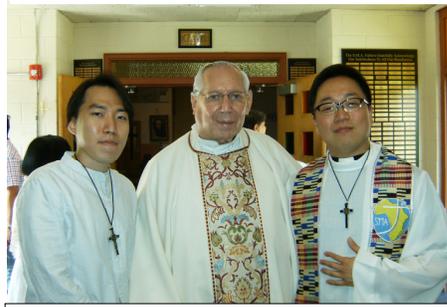
*By the end of May and the beginning of June, there were cases of Ebola identified in the Eastern part of the country. The country was not well-equipped to handle the situation. It was a new thing to all. The need for isolating the sick was known to the health workers; but we did not have the proper infra-structure to cope with the situation. By July and August, the sickness spread so fast in the southern and eastern parts of the country. In those days, I thought of going to one of my brother priests, Fr. George from the Diocese of
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S.M.A. Commissioning

Love One Another

As you know, one of Jesus's commandments is "Love one another." Before I decided to do missionary volunteer work, I always thought about my future—getting married and getting a job. And I never allowed that commandment to guide my life. At that time in my life, I had no room for GOD. Last year, when I stayed in Tanzania for a month, I visited the school which is called Albino School. There were some Albino and disabled students who were blind and deaf. I watched three students play with a soccer ball. One was blind and the others were deaf and albino. I thought that they would not be able to play a game together, because a blind student could not see the ball. But, they were having a happy time and were helping each other. They were the happiest people I had ever met. I was so impressed! I realized that happiness wasn't difficult to find in my life. It was always near me, but I wasn't looking for it. So, I'd like to dedicate the next two years of my life to serve and love God by being their neighbor. Also, if I get a chance, I will share my major which is *Electronic Engineering* with the Tanzanian people. I hope that loving one another will be the goal of my life.

by Paul Song, S.M.A. Lay Missionary



Above: (L-R) Paul Song, Fr. James McConnell, S.M.A. and Fr. Francisco Kim following the Commissioning Mass on June 18th. Fr. James serves as the Councilor on the Provincial Council.

Below: (L-R) Paul, Fr. Anbu Kumar, S.M.A., and Fr. Kim stand for a photo in the S.M.A. African Museum.



On June 18, 2017, in Tenafly, NJ, at the Noon Mass in the main S.M.A. Chapel, Fr. Francisco Kim was commissioned as an S.M.A. Associate Priest and Paul Song was commissioned as an S.M.A. Lay Missionary. They left for their mission assignment in Tanzania on June 20, 2017. They will join up with Fr. Daniel Lee, S.M.A. Associate Priest, who has been serving in Tanzania since June 2015. May God bless our new S.M.A. missionaries in their mission assignments. S.M.A. is very happy and grateful to God for our S.M.A. Missionaries from Korea. The first task in mission will be learning the language. In August, they will both attend Kiswahili Language School in Musoma, Tanzania.

(Mission Sunday 2016) Pope Francis invites us "to consider the *missio ad gentes* – the mission to the world – as a great, immense work of mercy, both spiritual and material." World Mission Sunday, he continued, calls us "to 'go out' as missionary disciples, each generously offering their talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the entire human family." He reminded us that "By virtue of the missionary mandate, the Church cares for those who do not know the Gospel, because she wants everyone to be saved and to experience the Lord's love."

Pope Francis said, "All peoples and cultures have the right to receive the message of salvation which is God's gift to every person." Jesus' command to preach the Gospel to all nations has not ceased, he concluded: "rather this command commits all of us, in the current landscape with all its challenges, to hear the call to a renewed missionary 'impulse'."

From S.M.A. Laws and Constitutions: Our Missionary Vocation

1. We are a community of Christ's disciples, bonded together by our common response to his command to proclaim the Kingdom of God: "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mk 16:15).
2. Our aim is to be an effective response to the missionary vocation of the Church, chiefly among Africans and people of African origin.

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 Kenema, to assist him during this time of crisis, but I was concerned about the implications and complications involved in going there. In those days, there were few cases in other parts, but the Isolation Center was available only in the East. The patients were taken to those centers by ambulance. In many cases the patients reached the center in very bad condition or dead. The transport was disinfected with chlorine once the patients were taken from the vehicle.

By September, the sickness had spread to all parts of the country, including Freetown, the Capital. When someone in a family is found Ebola Positive, the whole family and all those who were in contact with that individual were quarantined. They are not allowed to mix with other people in the village. Sometimes the whole village would be quarantined. At those times, the Government through the World Food Program should provide enough food for them. Normally it does happen. These houses are guarded by the army and police. It was brought to our attention, that many of the quarantined houses were not given food or water. It was like caging someone without food. Having my motto: "Ever ready to respond to the needs of the times," I could not resist doing something to remedy the situation. I discussed the dire needs with **Fr. Valery Aguh, S.M.A.**, my S.M.A. Team member and we agreed to use our monthly



allocation to get at least some water to the people in difficult conditions. We started to give packaged water. On arrival at the village, we saw the pathetic situation of the people—starving, so we bought bags of rice to give them. Meanwhile, one of my friends in Jesus Youth, in India, donated more than his one month salary to help feed the quarantined hungry. This inspired me to appeal to our friends all over the world on Facebook. The response was great! The S.M.A. Gulf of Guinea Unite appealed to all her members and sent their support to us through Rome. Then we appealed to all the units. We are very grateful to the Units and their positive response. The continuous encouragement of the S.M.A., O.L.A., Friends of S.M.A., Jesus Youth, Parishes and our friends and families made us do more in the time of crisis.

We kept a close watch on the Ebola outbreaks in our area. Where there was a delay in providing food, we would go to those places and give food. We would find sick people in the houses. Up to November 2014, Ebola Management was not organized. There were not enough ambulances to respond to the crisis situation. This moved us to another level in our Ebola Response. We came forward to take the patients to the



Above: (R-L) Fr. Julien Esse, S.M.A. Vocation Director, with his classmate Fr. Valery Aguh, S.M.A., who serves in Kwama, Sierra Leone. Both priests are from Togo.

Ebola Treatment Centers. We took precautions, disinfecting the truck after each run, with 0.5% Strength Chlorine solution. When we took the patients to the Ebola Centers, we were often rejected due to lack of space. We would move from one center to another to find a place for the patients. As we got to know the Centers, we would call ahead to check if they had a bed. This made the process much easier. We also assisted with food and five beds to the local Center.

One day, we met 4-year old Mabiniti at the Ebola Center. Her parents died of Ebola. She was sick and was taken to the Center. Fortunately, she was Ebola-negative, but those in the Center did not know where to send her. There was no family to take her to. Even the extended family was not ready to take her. We came forward to take her to our house. Even now, she is with us. We are planning a 'Home' for the children who were orphaned due to Ebola.

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Not by Bread Alone (Continued)



(Continued from Page 1) must first of all bear witness to and proclaim salvation in Christ, and establish local churches which then become means of liberation in every sense.”

He adds that “it is not the church’s mission to work directly on economic, technical or political levels, or to contribute materially to development. Rather, her mission consists essentially in offering people an opportunity not to “have more” but to “be more” by awakening their consciences through the Gospel.

Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical, *God Is Love (Deus Caritas Est)*, writes that the Church’s charitable activity must “not become just another form of social assistance.” He adds that “while professional competence is a primary, fundamental requirement, it is not of itself sufficient. We are dealing with human beings, and human beings always need something more than technically proper care. They need humanity. They need heartfelt concern.”

For Benedict XVI, love expressed in the Christian tradition must always be rooted in Christ. He writes in his encyclical on love that “practical activity will always be insufficient, unless it visibly expressed a love for man (humanity), a love nourished by an encounter with Christ.” Repeating the words of St. Paul in his Second Letter to the Corinthians (5:14), Benedict writes that in all our charitable activities “the love of Christ urges us on.”

In speaking more specifically to

missionaries in *God and the World*, Pope Benedict XVI writes that “as long as we only send money or know-how, we are giving too little. In that sense the missionaries were an example for us, by giving God, by making love believable for them; their gift to people was a new way of life; they gave themselves wholly and entirely.”

To illustrate what this Christian charitable activity looks like, Benedict offers a little story told by the German poet, Rainer Maria Rilke. He writes, “The poet tells how, in Paris, he used always to pass a woman into whose hat someone had thrown a coin. The beggar woman was always quite unmoved by this, as if she had no feelings at all. One day, Rilke gives her a rose. And in that moment her face glows. He sees for the first time that she does have feelings. She smiles, and then for a week she is no longer begging, because someone has given her something that is more than money.”

Pope Benedict, commenting on this story says, “I think that it is such a lovely little incident, in which you can see that sometimes a rose, a little act of giving, of affection, of acceptance of the other person, can be more than many coins or other material gifts.”



Above: A recent photo of the seven children who were orphaned by Ebola and now live at ‘Bethany’ their new home.

Serving God in Sierra Leone

(Continued from Page 3) The youth in the community came to help us on their own, expressing their desire to do their part in the fight against Ebola. We sought the support of **Kwama Community Development Program (KCDP)** to carry out a seminar for the youth and encouraged them to go to 34 villages and do house-to-house sensitization. One hundred and three youth joined this venture.

In view of responding to the need for more beds for the Ebola patients, in collaboration with the Shepherd’s Hospice, we planned and established a Community-based Ebola Care Center. We enjoyed a great support from the Archbishop, Caritas-Freetown, Salesians, Xaverians and the local community. We ran the Center with 20 trained nurses and 34 voluntary health workers. We operated the center for one month. As the number of cases decreased, and many Centers were without patients, we decided to close our Ebola Care Center but to plan for responding to other health issues.

With the help of our Community Chairman Mr. Clement Kanu, we opened a Home for the Children who lost their parents to Ebola. We took only the most abandoned. When there are some relatives, we encourage them to cater to the children. With the help of friends, we are assisting them with education, food and other necessities. We have a wonderful couple in our Home who are taking care of the 7 orphans ranging from 4 to 14 years of age. We call the Home Bethany. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Fr. Francis Patrikson, S.M.A.