



Refugees Hosted by Bishop Harrington Diocese in Kenya.



Photos by Kevin Burlison



Above: Turkana Family in their humble home.
Below: View of a Turkana village in Lodwar, Kenya. Kakuma Refugee Camp is in Turkana territory.

Above: **Bishop Patrick Harrington, S.M.A.**, is very concerned for the 72,000 Refugees and the dire poverty impacting people in his **Diocese of Lodwar, Kenya.**

The following excerpts come from *Evangeline Munyi of the Catholic Diocese of Lodwar in Kenya*. She writes: Kenya has played a big role of being a host to thousands of refugees drawn from various countries in Africa. There are two main refugee camps in the country:

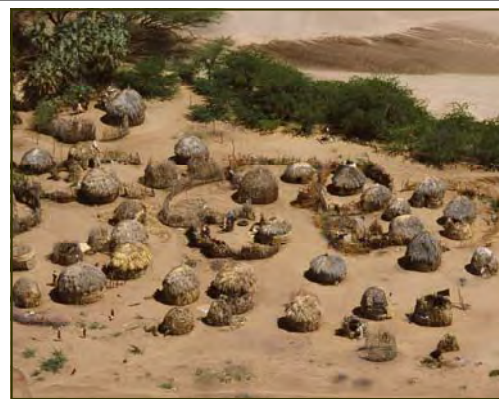
Dadaab Refugee Camp in the northeast and **Kakuma Refugee Camp** in the northwest of Kenya. The former was started in 1991 and the latter in 1992. Kakuma Refugee Camp is the larger camp and last year, before the Repatriation program started, it had 72,000 refugees. Dadaab camp is situated about 50 miles from the border with Somalia while Kakuma is 100

miles from Sudan.

Most of the refugees who had been forced to flee their countries because of internal wars and political instability have found solace in their host country and a home. For many years these refugees have learnt to embrace Kenya as their adopted country, nurse their shattered dreams and hope that one day they will go back to their homes and start life once again.

Some of the refugees came when they were young, while others were born here and they have grown with the dream of going back to their mother countries which is passed on to them from their elders.

Mothungu Moyot, 26 years, and his brothers Kodok Ring, 23 years,



and Bonakok Dutu, 18 years, together with their sister, Notel Shol, 17 years, fled to Kenya from Southern Sudan when their parents were killed in 2003. The sense of hopelessness and the lack of permanent security that persisted in his motherland made it difficult for Moyot and his siblings to return to Sudan, despite the initiation

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A New Day for a young man by Fr. Robert Obro, S.M.A.

Those who visit West Point, Monrovia, Liberia, are struck by the extreme poverty and harsh conditions that exist in such a crowded area. It requires great determination of the human person to survive in this environment. In the midst of this, some significant signs of Hope are: Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Star of the Sea Health Center and the Police station. **Fr. Robert Obro, S.M.A.**, from Nigeria, writes about Phillip Juah, 'once a child of West Point.'

Phillip is known as **Jahru** in the community around **St. Mulumba**, the S.M.A. Parish. This name is a nickname of a musician and it stands for the expression that "you fear no one when you have God (JAH)."

One day, Jahru sat down to tell me his story. He was born into a family of five—four girls and one boy. He is the boy and the eldest. At the age of nine, their mother died. This shock of a loss forced him into the streets and his major place of attraction was around the Catholic Mission in West Point, near his home.

At the Catholic Mission in West Point, he won the compassion of an S.M.A. Lay Missionary, Theresa, who was then working at the Clinic. She offered care and guidance to him, and he was able to follow instructions. From time to time, he would take to the street life of smoking and drinking alcohol. But one highlight was when he learned how to drive and was graded a professional driver by the local authority. After this graduation, he got a job as a driver and could now earn a salary. He became a commercial



Above: (L-R) **Fr. Robert Obro, S.M.A.** and **Phillip Juah**, better known as **Jahru**.

driver but during this period things were tough because it was in the heat of the famous 1996 Monrovia war. It was in the course of such hustlings that he was 'hired' by a rebel group to take its fighters to the battle front. It was on one of these trips that he had an accident where the pick-up somersaulted. He was critically injured and was left to his fate. With no one to come to his aid, he was left to die. But God blessed him when the news of his plight reached 'his mother' Theresa who was visiting Liberia at the time. (S.M.A. had assigned her to serve in the U.S.) She once again came to his rescue and saw that he received good medical care for his injured leg. This saved his foot from being amputated. The scars of the accident are still seen on his leg. All this left him with strong feelings of anger. On the news that Theresa returned to her S.M.A. assignment in the U.S., Jahru said, "the going away of my Ma Theresa made me feel a bad way. I became wicked." This was about the time I met him in the worshipping community of St. Mulumba Parish.

In the beginning, it was tough for me to accept him. More so, his presence started irritating me. Then came this day when a conversion on my part challenged me to see him as a friend, a brother and son who had gone astray. To see him with the heart of one who needed

positive encouragement and guidance in life (Jn.15:12-17). His presence for me became a point of prayer—which I offered to God daily. With constancy in my prayer, we gradually began to understand that we needed each other and our individual roles in the Mission of Christ started unveiling themselves (Matt. 26:30).

I started seeing him as a co-traveler in this journey of life in Christ Jesus (Luke 24:13-35). Then it became clear to me that what he needed was not condemnation but the encouragement of a father and what was expected was the listening heart and ears of a son. From this understanding we forged a common mission, a mission of listeners for Christ Jesus. With this common mission he became seriously interested in the works of God and of the Church. His dedication, commitment and sincerity increased like **the coming of a new day**.

Today, he is an example of **CHANGE** for the sake of Christ Jesus. Since this change, he has invited and encouraged two persons to attend the Adults' Catechetical Instructions Class. He is now the hero of faith in our Parish. He is a marvel of God's intervention in the life of sinners. He is wonderful and very appreciative.



Left: **Phillip Juah** is now a "hero of faith" in St. Mulumba.

Healing the Wounds of War



Above (Left): **Fr. Gary Jenkins, S.M.A.** works with the young boys (former child-soldiers) at the Catholic Mission in Bomi, Liberia. They go to school, do chores and are beginning to flourish under the guidance of Fr. Gary in the new peace that exists in Liberia.

Above (Right): **Mark**, a former child-soldier finds peace and is becoming a good and responsible citizen of Liberia. Fr. Gary is supporting 300 students by the generosity of his friends and benefactors.

Above: Soccer is the favorite sport in Liberia. It is a healthy outlet for the great energy of the youth in Bomi. Fr. Gary encourages his local Team during halftime of a game played against the Catholic Youth Organization (C.Y.O.) from Harbel, Liberia.

Fr. Gary Jenkins, S.M.A. (British Province) is the heart of the amazing **Catholic Mission at Bomi, Liberia**. He has lived through the darkest days of the civil strife with his Liberian brothers and sisters and understands with deep sorrow and compassion, the loss, continuing pain and trauma his parishioners are experiencing. **Everyone has a story to tell.**

With peace reigning in Liberia, a new day is dawning. Fr. Gary shares that there are 90 outstations in 3 counties in the Bomi Deanery. There are 15 full-time Catechists and he has 3 Catechists -in-training. The Schools are up and running, and also a new vocational school sponsored by **Scottish International Relief (S.I.R.)**. Also S.I.R. has established the **Oscar Romero School for the Deaf** serving 40 students. With a Clinic and professional staff, the Catholic mission is providing for the needs of the people.

Fr. Gary has a deep concern

for the young people of Liberia, especially former child-soldiers. The Catholic Mission at Bomi is a center of healing, formation and rehabilitation of hundreds of young students (many former child-soldiers). They heal in time by the love and acceptance they experience, and coming into the awareness of God's healing love, mercy and forgiveness. Through forgiveness, they are encouraged to become the best they can be.

During School time, 750 students are fed. S.I.R. runs a feeding program called **Mary's Meals** to remote villages and schools feeding over 15,000 children and the most vulnerable per month.

Having seen terrible injustice during the years of war, Fr. Gary says *"The Church has to set an example on justice issues."* He says adamantly, *"I will not be passive in the face of justice issues. We must be pro-active."* He will do what he can for the good of the people in his care.

A Long Walk to School by *Fr. Ted Hayden, SMA*

*(from Fr. Ted's Journal,
Oct. 10, 2008)*

Every Wednesday I go to Cape Palmas to offer Mass for the Missionaries of Charity. About five miles outside of the town, I begin to see children on their way to school. They have neat blue and white uniforms. Most have book bags on their backs. Every day they walk for an hour or two to reach their schools. I stop and offer them a ride. They are delighted and grateful. One nine year old girl had a small covered plastic container. She had about twenty homemade cookies inside. She told me that she would sell them to her school mates during recess. The proceeds will amount to about \$3. She will take the money to her mother who will use about \$1 to help buy rice for the daily meal. The remainder she will use to prepare cookies for the following day.

See more of Fr. Ted's journal at
www.smafathers.org

Life After Death



Left: Portrait of **Monsignor Melchior de Marion Bresillac, Founder of the Society of African Missions (S.M.A.).**

This year, 2009, marks the **150th Anniversary of the death of the Founder of the Society of African Missions.** His zeal and wholehearted sacrifice inspires courage and faith. “Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground, it remains but a grain of wheat, but if it falls and dies, then it bears much fruit. . . .”

Please join with the S.M.A. Family in praying for the Canonization of **Bishop Melchior de Marion Bresillac: *Lord God, you called Melchior de Marion Bresillac to serve you. To make you known and loved you sent him to India and then to Africa. For you, he gave everything, even his very life. So that his life and teaching may inspire a missionary commitment in Christians today, we trust that the Church will recognize the holiness of the great servant of mission and that, by his intercession, we will receive the graces of which we have need. (In particular . . .). We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

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of a repatriation program at Kakuma Refugee Camp last year. Moyot says, “Those who agreed to go back have at least something or somebody to return to, but for us, we have nobody. We have no reason to think of going back until there is total peace in Sudan. We nearly got killed before we fled to this country, and I do not think it would be a wise idea to go back to Sudan.” They now wish to apply for Kenyan citizenship.

The Catholic Diocese of Lodwar has continued to play a positive role in giving hope to the refugees. Apart from spiritual nourishment, the mission has a Vocational and Technical Center run by the Salesians of Don Bosco, which offers training to youth in masonry, carpentry, motor vehicle mechanics, plumbing, tailoring, agriculture, typing, electrical installation and computer literacy. The Salesians also run Holy Cross Parish which is situated in the refugee camp. **Poverty Level of Host Community:** Many services have been provided to the Refugees—clean water, food, care for vulnerable groups and education. Yet, the host

community experiences dire poverty caused by drought conditions and scarcity of food resources. The increasing refugee population has competition for the scarce resources, exacerbating poverty among the host community. There have been serious difficulties: Some children have dropped from school, to work at the Refugee Camp for a morsel to eat; young girls have been abused in the name of seeking something to eat from the camp. Most of these cases have gone unreported. One Kakuma resident who asked for anonymity says, “*They do bad things to us, and yet we still have to go back, since we have nothing to eat.*”

In 2002, the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, in conjunction with the World Food Program (WFP), initiated a program to address the conflict between the local people and the refugees through creation of assets for the host community. Early reports show that the program has started to bear fruit, which will drastically reduce tension between the two communities.

What do you know about the first S.M.A. Community on mission in Africa?

In June 1859, Monsignor Melchior de Marion Bresillac had four companions. They formed was a young S.M.A. community full of hope and commitment to their mission in Freetown, Sierra Leone. As the month of June began, the Founder and his companions were about to enter a period of great suffering—physical, spiritual and psychological. His companions began to die one by one from the dreaded Yellow Fever disease: **Fr. Louis Riocreux** on June 2nd; **Fr. Jean-Baptiste Bresson** on June 5th; **Brother Gratien Monnoyeur** on June 13th; **Bishop de Marion Bresillac** on June 25th and **Fr. Louis Reymond** on the 28th. With the death of Fr. Reymond, so ended the missionary lives of the first S.M.A. community on Mission. Their lives were lived fully at the service of the Gospel. (Excerpts from: *Fr. Kieran O'Reilly, S.M.A.*)