Southern Sudan: Mission in a difficult terrain

Also

- AMSP Charity Outreach
- Ten MSP Priests Celebrate Silver Jubilee
Their jubilee...Our joy

So soon, it seems, twenty five years have come and gone. The MSP ordination class of 1986 is in a jubilant mood as they mark the Silver Jubilee of their ordination to the priesthood. With their anniversary it means that the Missionary Society of St Paul can also now celebrate a quarter century of missionary activity. That year, nine of those ordained were sent to three missions in Cameroon, Liberia, and the United States. Twenty five years later the mission of the MSP has spread to three continents and about 15 countries throughout the world. That little mustard seed has blossomed into a mighty oak tree spreading the love and goodness of the message of Christ. One of the heroes of the 1986 class is Fr Gabriel Akemu who was one of the pioneer missionaries to Liberia. He worked tirelessly for and with the people. When the internecine civil war broke out in Liberia, he refused to abandon his flock. He accompanied them even as they became refugees in neighbouring Ivory Coast. After the labours and hardship, his health nosedived. He passed away while on treatment in the United States in 2003. He is laid to rest in the cemetery of Sacred Heart Church, Raywood, Texas.

Another hero is Fr Ambrose Udeze who in his first year as priest traversed the length and breadth of Nigeria as a member of the promotion and vocations team. A truly strong man, no height seemed too high for him to conquer as he went to villages and cities seeking out young men desirous of joining the MSP. It was that same boundless energy he carried over to Cameroon where he undertook primary evangelization in the dioceses of Mamfe and Buea. Now, this strong man is weakened as he battles chronic renal failure. He needs our support. He needs our prayers.

Other members of the class have distinguished themselves in the various apostolates they have been called upon to undertake. Though space constraints make it impossible to recount their noble deeds in the service of the gospel, let them know that they are appreciated and honoured for keeping faith these 25 years. Thank you for giving us a cause to celebrate, Ad Multos Annos!

Fr. Paul Asoh recounts his unforgettable trip to Southern Sudan to visit the MSP missionaries who minister there. His account reminds all of us that the call to be a missionary is not tea party. It demands SACRIFICE, spelled in bold letters. Blessed Pope John II! Yes, that's what he now is, and it is official. The city of Rome and men and women of goodwill all over the world went agog on May 1, as Pope Benedict XVI officially pronounced his predecessor Blessed. This is a major step towards his final canonization. We have a story and pictures of that event. There are many other interesting articles and reports which have been specially put together for your reading delight. As you savour this edition, do not forget to renew your subscription and take one up for a friend. God bless you.
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My Trip to Southern Sudan

By Paul Asoh, MSP

My safari to Southern Sudan began with a trip to Nakuru. This city is about two hours’ drive from Nairobi where I was based at the time of my trip. From there, I headed to Eldoret deeper into the famous rift valley where I saw some Nigerian sisters of the Handmaid of the Holy Child Jesus. I eventually went on to Kitale for the Thanksgiving mass a newly ordained SPS priest, Fr. Godfrey Kisabuli. From Kitale I took an hour and a half flight on a twelve-seater plane to Lodwar in the North of the country and survived the deadly Huntington spider which tried to break through a hole in my mosquito net before it was seen and killed.

The next day saw me travelling for three hours to Lokichoko which is the border town between Kenya and Sudan where Fr. Faustinus was waiting to pick me up with the driver/mechanic. We passed the night there, and left early in the morning to cross the border and begin our journey to Namuropose where our mission was deep in the South of the country.

As we crossed the border into Sudan, I was struck at the level of militarization of the area. First, was the spectre of the Kenyan army seeking to prevent cattle rustlers from the Toposa tribe in Southern Sudan from crossing into Kenya to raid for cattle. There was also the Southern Sudanese army policing their borders. Secondly, as we drove through the bush in our four wheel land cruiser (one of the few vehicles able to do so), I observed on the road and in the villages, that most men, (and even teenagers!) were armed with the Russian AK 47 or G 6 automatic rifles. This is a by-product of the culture of cattle rustling, and the decades of civil war between the Arab Muslim North and Black Animist and Christian South.

The vegetation as we drove on tracks created by other vehicles was semi-arid and we felt secure knowing that our vehicle was armed with tent, food, water and firewood to last us for days on the road if need be. Unfortunately, our vehicle broke down in the middle of nowhere by 1.00pm due to a broken shock U bolt as we drove over some bare rocks. As Elijah our driver who was also a mechanic began to fix it, we were initially greeted by a lot of the semi-nude native women passing by. Our tension increased when we were surrounded by some of the men with their AK 47s looking into our vehicles. In spite of our driver’s translation seeking to explain our mission, the men became increasingly abusive. To
appease them, we had to share some of our provisions with them such as biscuits. It took us about three hours to fix our vehicle. During that whole time, only one other vehicle passed us by. The delay added three hours to the nine hours journey, and we arrived by 7.00pm to Namuropose. I observed that the parish administration comprises the two or three priests in the mission, the catechists, and the medical nurse for primary health to the natives and the teachers for the mission school. Those working within the mission area buy all they need for the next three months during their two weeks break in Kenya as help may always be nine hours away. The people of the mission area are poor. Though they have livestock, they hardly sold them for money. A man's wealth is often determined by the number of cattle he has. To sell any would diminish such wealth. The people are often supported by aid from the Church, different NGOs and the United Nations. These groups also provide education, primary health and some infrastructures.

I stayed in Southern Sudan for a week during which I helped the brothers in sharing sorghum from the World Food Program (WFP) to the aged, infirm and vulnerable in the community. In this mission area, the priest is a pastor, educationist, social and developmental worker. His apostolate is in a very difficult terrain without electric power, roads and mobile network.

Communication is usually by text on their satellite phones or 'bushmail'. The MSP priests work side by side with people from the Carter Centre for Guinea Worm Eradication. They also collaborate with the WFP in distribution of food to the people. The celebration of the Eucharist is often by 9.00pm. Late as it may seem, that is when the people who are semi-nomadic, would have returned from looking after their livestock. The Eucharist was celebrated in Toposa language and I enjoyed the singing. I was delighted that the catechist was able to translate my homily from English into the local language.

I saw some hope for the future when I visited the primary school run by our priests and spoke to the teachers. The children who are the future of the country enjoy free boarding and are provided with food and clothes, but it remains difficult to keep them in school as their parents try to take them out of school to look after their livestock or marry off the girls once they reach puberty.

I ended my trip by visiting the St. Patrick's missionaries in their mission in Nayagacho. I finally made the three hour trip back to Namuropose but our vehicle was caught in the mud for two hours, making the journey last five hours.

The journey back to Kenya was even rougher. I left Namuropose at 2.00am on a Wednesday morning hoping to make it to the Kenya border at 6.00 before the immigration staff closed for the day. That was not to be. Our vehicle due to the rains was caught in the mud three times and despite our mechanic's ability, it took us three hours to get out of each of them. This was only possible because we met another traveling party and we all agreed to travel together so the two vehicles could pull each other out of the mud when stuck. Needless to say in spite of everything a journey of 9 hours eventually took us 36 hours! My visit increased my admiration for the generation of MSP priests who have worked in Southern Sudan such as Frs. Daniel Ihunia, Idara Otu, and our present superior Very Rev. Fr. Anslem Umoren. The present group of Christian Unachukwu and Faustinus Okeyikam have continued the tradition of missionary sacrifice which makes the mission in Southern Sudan the jewel in the crown of all MSP missionary activity.

Fr. Asoh is with the Formation Team at MSP Formation House in Iperu Remo, Nigeria.
Lessons of the Second Synod for Africa

By Cletus Obijiaku, MSP

In the evening of his life, Blessed Pope John Paul II, on November 13, 2004, announced his intention to convocate a second special synod for Africa. But he died in April 2005, less than six months after the announcement. Fortunately, his successor, Benedict XVI, kept alive the intention of his predecessor. On June 22, 2005, he included the intended synod as one of the first major decisions of his pontificate. It was held in Rome between October 04 and 26, 2009, fifteen years after the first special synod in 1994.

The theme for the synod was: “The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace”. The synod bishops deliberated on many issues affecting Africa. “They took a serious look at issues ranging from challenges for family, to resource exploitation, trade imbalances, debt, climate change, women in Africa, conflicts, poor governance, migration, corruption, globalization, health challenges, and insufficient media coverage of the real Africa with all its lights and shadows”. The synod explored also how these issues affect the Church in Africa. Since synod is never a closed issue but something always ongoing, as the name implies, I think that it is necessary that we join in the reflection, especially with regard to how these issues affect us here in Nigeria, both in the civil society and in the Church.

Synod is from two Greek words, syn (with, together) and hodos (way, journey). It means “being together on the way”, in other words, “journeying together”. As we await the papal document based on the deliberations of the synod, which will come out in November 2011, we continue to reflect on the issues raised at the synod. The Apostolic Exhortation, Ecclesia in Africa, the fruit of the first special synod for Africa, remains a valuable document that calls upon the Church in Africa and beyond to see herself as a family of God.

While the first synod was called a synod of resurrection and hope, this second one was termed a synod of a new Pentecost. The Synod Fathers “prayed that the Spirit of Pentecost may renew our apostolic commitment to making reconciliation, justice and peace prevail in Africa and the rest of the world.” The leading biblical text for the synod and her propositions was: “You are the salt of the earth ...You are the light of the world” (Mt5: 13, 14). We are all called to make a difference in the world, like salt and light, on the issues of justice, peace and reconciliation.

At the end of the synod, the Holy Father authorized the bishops to publish the summary of their discussions and proposals. The document contains 57 propositions. This article focuses and comments on some of those proposals. The document only serves as a basis for our own reflection on issues of justice, peace and reconciliation, especially in Nigeria.

To be continued

Fr. Obijiaku teaches Scriptures at the MSP Seminary, Gwagwalada, Abuja.
The AMSP in Savannah, Georgia

By Fr. Christian A. Alimaji, MSP

The Associate Missionaries of St. Paul (AMSP) was founded in St. Benedict the Moor Catholic Church in the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia State, in November 2008. With the pamphlets I already obtained from the Mission Development Office in Houston, Texas sufficient materials to acquaint the five members regarding the activities of the AMSP were quite handy at the first meeting. We agreed to meet on the first Tuesday of every month. Intensifying the drive for AMSP was included in my pastoral report at the MSP meeting of April 2009 as part of the efforts in my parish to mark the “Year of St. Paul”. Our first anniversary was moved up to January 24, 2010, Sunday of the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, our Patron Saint, and in union with “Motherland” AMSP that celebrate in Iperu-Remo on the last weekend of January each year. The membership rose to 17 on that occasion. It was very remarkable and as a testimony to the ingenuity and initiative of the group, in order to identify with the members world-wide in some ways, they quickly sewed stoles for each of us, very close to the uniform of the AMSP (photo 1). It was my pleasure to allow that thoughtfulness so as to encourage the group to come up with their own creativities.

From the very beginning there has been great enthusiasm in the group regarding various things in the AMSP, especially after reading the Ambassador Magazines. They quickly realized they could be themselves while belonging to this apostolate. We have therefore come up with various proposals of what we can do as Associate Missionaries of Paul, including undertaking the Apostolate of the Pen on behalf the parish to publish parish activities, recruitment of new members from the deanery parishes and from other parishes where MSP priests are serving, praying and caring for priests, encouraging vocations, and some form of evangelization. My goal is the formation of an AMSP zone in the Diocese of Savannah. These efforts are now at advanced stage, because our group has published our existence in the diocesan newspaper “The Southern Cross”, sent circular to the parishes, while I have spoken of the AMSP in our deanery priests meeting this March 2011.

The AMSP rose to great heights when at our second anniversary this January 2011 we launched the AMSP uniform at Mass. The membership had risen to eighteen, but we lost one to death last June at age 91 (God rest her motherly soul) and another relocated to New Mexico, bringing the number down to 16. When I received the materials for uniform, in one accord they combined the materials, did the sewing themselves, and all sixteen got their uniforms sewed from the insufficient quantity, and had something left over. The priest was not left out in the sharing of the materials. The whole parish was again invited to the Feast of St. Paul attended by about a hundred persons in the parish hall, with meal entertainment and anniversary cake to ice it all.
On March 26, 2011, the Associate Missionaries of St. Paul in Houston, TX organized her 2nd annual “Walk 4 the Mission” walk-a-thon to raise funds for educationally disadvantaged youth. Many children walk long distances to get to school every day. When they get to school, they need writing materials and dedicated teachers. Our walk here is in solidarity with them. Picture shows a cross-section of volunteers at the walk.

Report by Fr. Felix I. Osasona, MSP

Good Friday 2011 was special for Associate Missionaries of St. Paul Lagos Zone. The day was even more special for the poor and marginalized inhabitants of Ebute and Amowi Odofin slums in Bariga hinterland of the sprawling city of Lagos Nigeria. In the spirit of the Lenten season these AMSP's carried out some acts of charity for the benefit of these deprived persons.

That day, the Associate missionaries had converged at St. Denis Catholic Church, Akoka Bariga where the Acting Promotions Director, Fr. Bernard Oleru, MSP, received and welcomed them before their departure to the communities.

The joy of the people in the communities visited knew no bounds as the AMSP's distributed food items, clothes and toiletries to everyone irrespective of their religious affiliations.

For the recipients of this largesse, the timing was perfect as it alleviated their anxieties on how to provide for their families during the Easter celebration. The physically challenged were not left out, as they too received gifts.

The Associate members on their part were glad to be able to show the compassion of Jesus to those they visited following the biblical injunction “whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me”.

Report by Alex Akalifu
The Choir and The Mass

By Felix Sola Alabi, CssR

There is nothing as wonderful as the liturgical celebration known as Mass which God has blessed us with. In celebrating the Mass, the presiding minister who is the priest and the congregation play their respective roles in this Holy celebration. According to the General Instruction on the Roman Missal, it is therefore of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass that is, the Lord’s Supper be so arranged that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it according to the proper state of each, may derive from it more abundantly those fruits for the sake of which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood and entrusted it to the Church, his beloved Bride, as the memorial of his Passion and Resurrection.

Each according to his part

The priest presides, reads the prayer, and preaches the homily. The congregation does its part by giving appropriate responses to the prayers and listening to the homily. But adding beauty to this liturgical celebration is the responsibility of those who have volunteered to do what the angels do constantly in the presence of God - the Choir. The Choir plays a significant role in the celebration of the Mass. Definitely Mass can be celebrated without a choir but imagine how heavenly it would be when the choir sings different parts of the Mass well.

The Choir

The Choir sings the following parts of the Mass: Entrance, Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus the Agnus Dei. Many choirs and even the faithful sing this part of the Mass without knowing the reason why the Church included it in the liturgical celebration of the Mass. There are also situations whereby the choir sings new compositions for these parts of the Mass. It is very important for the choir to have an idea of these settings of the Mass. Thus the choir should be careful in the way they choose new compositions that will not let these parts of the Mass lose its meaning.
Gregorian Chant
The General Instruction on the Roman Missal is very clear on the role of the Gregorian Chant in the liturgy: All other things being equal, Gregorian chant holds pride of place because it is proper to the Roman Liturgy. Other types of sacred music, in particular polyphony, are in no way excluded, provided that they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful. First the choir needs to realize that by singing the mass, they are singing the Liturgy which is work being done on behalf of the other person. So singing the mass is not for entertainment, show or to win an award. It is a sacred duty which calls for attention on the part of the Choir. Let us look at each time the choir needs to sing and what should be put into consideration.

Kyrie
The Kyrie Eleison is Greek and means Lord have mercy. It alludes to the antiquity of the act of begging God for mercy; it links the present singers with the whole of history of the Church which dates back to New Testament times. In this way the choir as they sing asks for God's mercy on the congregation.

Gloria
After asking God for mercy, it is now time to sing his praises. The Gloria is a hymn of praise. The first line is a direct quotation from the Nativity story of the gospel of Luke 2: 14 “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will”. In addition, this hymn of praise also addresses God the Father, the Son and finally the Holy Spirit.

Credo
This is a continuous affirmation of the Catholic faith. It consists of a series of propositions concerning the Father, the Son, then the Holy Spirit and finally the Church, the sacraments and the last things. Thus the creed should be sung not like any other song but sung with a profession of one's belief in God.

Sanctus
The Sanctus refers back to the vision of Isaiah when the Seraphim crying each to the other in three-fold acclamation, “Holy Holy Holy” (Is 6:3). At this point we sing with the host of angels Holy Holy Holy which means we acknowledge that the most high is holy.

Agnus Dei
The Agnus Dei like the Kyrie consists of three petitions, the first two ending with Have Mercy on Us, and the third Grant us Peace. This petition is so expressive that the third leads us to a conclusion which in turn prepares us to receive communion.

Conclusion
Thus in singing the Mass, the Choir ought to realize that their mission is a ministry which when performed well lifts the soul towards the Creator at Mass. That is why preparation and familiarization with the text is necessary in singing the Mass. The Choir should always have it in mind that the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a reenactment of what the Lord Jesus told us to do. Thus when the choir participate actively in the liturgy, then they indeed are performing their duty in memory of Christ.

Fr. Alabi, a Redemptorist priest, is a student of Music at the Musical Society of Nigeria School of Music, Lagos, Nigeria.
Pope Benedict XVI has bestowed the status of "Blessed" on his predecessor, the late John Paul the II. The event took place in St. Peter's square which was filled to the brim as more than one million people took part in the solemn mass on May 1, 2011.

The jubilant pilgrims cheered as Benedict pronounced the formula of beatification for John Paul and a giant banner bearing the Polish pontiff's portrait was unveiled over the façade of Saint Peter's Basilica. Catholics worldwide celebrated the beatification with the faithful jamming churches to pray cherishing John Paul's mementoes and witnessing on television screens the Vatican ceremony that brought him one step closer to possible sainthood.

From Mexico to Australia, bells peals in the churches and cathedrals and people erupted in applause and tears to celebrate the greatest honours to polish-born Karol Wojtyla, who visited 129 countries in his 27 year papacy to become the most-traveled Pope ever. In the Philippines, where many adore John Paul II with rock-star intensity, people flocked to see mementoes: a piece of his cassock believed to have healing powers and a set of plate, spoon and fork still unwashed after he used them 16 years ago during a visit to the country. The popular pontiff has a wide following in the Philippines, Asia's largest predominantly Roman Catholic nation where authorities foiled a terrorist plot to assassinate him during a visit in 1995. Nearly 10,000 babies where named after him after his visits as Pope, according to a news report. In John Paul's native Poland tens of thousands of people gathered in rain in a major sanctuary in Krakow and in Wadowice, where the pontiff was born in 1920. Prime Minister Donald Tusk and his wife Malgorzata watched the ceremony together with Wadowice residents.

Live coverage of the ceremonies in Rome was broadcast on a giant screen in the cathedral's forecourt, with food stalls selling treats and music groups performing. Thousands of Mexicans held a prayer vigil in Mexico's City's Virgin of Guadalupe Basilica at the weekend while two large screens inside the church projected the celebrations in Rome. On Saturday night, dozens of mainly young people gathered at the Basilica to wait overnight for the culmination of John Paul II's beatification. Michelle Lopez, 19, said she first saw John Paul II from a distance as a girl during his 1999 visit and he has been an important figure in her life ever since.
From far away Savannah Georgia in the United States the parishioners of St Benedict the Moor Catholic Church under the leadership of their pastor MSP Fr. Chris Alimaji, have bought into the vision of the MSP. Gaily dressed in the uniform of the Associate Members, their presence at Iperu Remo for the Open-Day of 2012 should not be a surprise. The signs are already there!

Crown of achievement...Blessing Ugwuanyi flanked by her mother and sister during her recent graduation from the University of Agriculture Abeokuta Nigeria, with a First Class Honours in Agricultural Economics. Her late father Theophilus Ugwuanyi was for many years a utility staff at the MSP House in Iperu-Remo.

Cynthia Igbinigie, flanked by family and friends celebrates her graduation as a member of Louisville Girls High School Ijebu-Itele Class of 2011. For those who dare to dream, the future can only be bright.
Women and children scramble for used items of clothing at Ebute - a festering slum in Lagos Nigeria during a charity visit by Associate Missionaries of St Paul on Good Friday 2011. The team led by the Acting Director of Promotions Fr. Bernard Oleru, say they were inspired to carry out their walk in response to Jesus’ command of love of neighbour as proof of love of Him. Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers....

The journey by road to Southern Sudan is not for the fainthearted. The traveler must create his own paths often filled with thorns and thistles. In the above scene MSP priest Paul Asoh records one of those tense moments when a hitherto dry stream turns into a bustling river unexpectedly changing the entire course of a trip.
A

midst tight security and
doubts as to whether the
ceremony would hold or
not, the new Archbishop of the
Archdiocese of Benin City, Nigeria,
Most Rev. Dr. Augustine Obiora
Akubeze was installed as the third
archbishop of the Metropolitan See.

The event, which took place on
Thursday, the 28th of April, 2011 at St
Paul's Catholic Church Airport
Road Benin City was witnessed by
dignitaries from the Church and
State, and Catholic lay faithful from
all over Nigeria. At least there were
more than thirty bishops and
archbishops, one Cardinal and
hundreds of priests and consecrated
men and women. The Papal Nuncio
to Nigeria, Augustine Kasujja, who
represented Pope Benedict XVI,
performed the installation
ceremony. He enjoined the new
Archbishop to see his appointment
as the "promotion of renewed
evangelisation, promotion of the
Catholic Church, and more

necessarily to revive the
faith of our Christ savior
and rediscover the
theological teachings
of the Catholic Church".

The former Administrator
of the Archdiocese,
Bishop Gbuji, apologized
for the turbulence caused
by those he described as
"a handful of dissident
members of an
unorganized and unrecognized
group in the church in Benin City."

According to him, the members,
who he said wanted to halt the
installation of the new Archbishop,
had caused a lot of embarrassment
to the Catholic Church in Nigeria
and the Holy See. Bishop Gbuji,
who was apparently referring to the
litigation instituted by the Benin
Liturgical Group, however,
commended Catholic lawyers,
Knights of the Church, who came
together to enforce law and order
and promote justice, to ensure the
installation took place. It
would be recalled that on
the 19th of April 2011, the
Benin Liturgical Group led
by one V.N.E Osakue had
secured a court injunction
halting the proposed
installation ceremony. In a
ruling given by Justice R. I.
Amaize, their prayers had
been granted. However the
Archdiocese through her

lawyers instituted another suit in the
same court on 27th of April urging the
court to vacate the previous order.

In another ruling given by the same
Justice Amaize, he admitted that the
Edo Liturgical Group wrongly
secured the previous order made in
their favour. He affirmed that the
group had no locus standi, and
described them as meddlesome
interlopers and their suit a litigating
nuisance. The judge therefore ruled
that the installation should go ahead
as scheduled. After the ruling,
members of the Catholic Women
Organisation who were present in
the court broke into wild jubilation.
In his comments, the newly installed
Archbishop Akubeze, who thanked
the Pope for appointing him, said:
"This is an honour and I accept it
with my whole heart and I pray for
the grace of God to discharge my
duty, as is worthy of this office."

Reports and photos by
Patrick E. Akekpe
Doctor, there are three patients waiting, and that your troublesome customer said she must see you even though I told her you were very busy she insists on waiting.” “Thanks Vivian, it's okay I'll see them.” It's after 4 o’clock in the afternoon, where did the time go? I have to finish up at work, pick up the kids from school and go home to prepare dinner for the family; I wish I could clone myself so that I can do more than one thing at a time. Well, thank God it's Friday! I say to myself, “this weekend is for me to rest, no stress for me, how sweet!”

Today is Saturday, once I finish the washing and cleaning, I'll go to the market to get some foodstuffs, then I'll make some stew and soup and take time to relax.
“Hey, is that time correct or has the clock stopped? It can't possibly be 6:30 pm, I'm still cooking and the day is nearly over!” “Well, I'll rest tomorrow when we come back from church.” “Now we're back from church, I'll just prepare lunch and afterwards have my rest.” Really? Son calls: “Mom I have homework and I need your help!” Husband calls: “honey, remember we have to pay a visit to the couple that had new baby, we won't stay long we'll be back shortly” “Okay honey let's go, Junior we'll do your assignment when I come back.” Assignment done, dinner is served. “Are we prepared for school tomorrow? Oh junior, you didn't tell me you lost a button in your school uniform shirt? I'll just fix that now. ”Honey, is that Newsline on TV? Oh is it 9:00 pm already? Well, I think it's time for bed, tomorrow is Monday.”

The scenario I have sought to paint above represents in some way the life of the average career wife and Mother. Well, it does represent my own experience as a young career wife and mother. The pattern is familiar. Most young women who seek to combine making a home and building a career face innumerable challenges. On their young tender shoulders are placed Great Expectations from family, friends and society. They are expected to play the delicate balancing act and still stay on top of the game. Many young career mothers can snap under the pressure-becoming restless and disillusioned. I believe a woman can find the strength to cope with a strong faith in God. The challenges may be overwhelming, but they are surmountable. I have often found my strength in the abiding words of scripture. God, for me, is the centre of the universe. Everything revolves round him and only through him can one find strength.

In times of stress, I have found some scriptural verses very comforting. I recall the words of Jesus in Matt 19:26 “With man most things are impossible, but with God all things are possible.” My all time favourite is: “I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil 4:13). There are numerous others such as John 15:15; Matt 6:33; and Psalm 24:1.

I have also found great strength in the sacraments of the Church. Visiting the Blessed Sacrament helps me to relate to Jesus as a friend and brother who understands all my worries and before whom I can cast all my burdens.

Our Mother Mary remains an unfailing example and help in times of difficulties. I ask her for the grace to build a Holy Family. So all you busy wives and mothers, in your ever busy schedule, in the 24 hour time frame of everyday, find time to stop and relate with God in prayer and you'll see the rest of your day straighten out. Find time to laugh out loud too with your family as often as you can. It's medicine that's good for the soul, and then it's free! Never forget to remember that even this phase of life will come to pass. It is well.

Dr. Isabona is an Optometrist. She and her family attend Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Pro-Cathedral, Garki, Abuja. They make their home in Abuja, Nigeria.
Happy Birthday to our MSP priests, associates (AMSP) and friends born in the following months. We offer Masses for these individuals on their birthdays.

**JUNE**
- Fr. Justin Nnaji, MSP (1)
- Rita Stout (1)
- Mr. Jesse Thomas (1)
- Fr. Desmond Ohankwere, MSP (3)
- Winston Watkins (3)
- Sarah Cloppa (4)
- Fr. Aloysius Nzekwe, MSP (5)
- Fr. Edward Obi, MSP (5)
- Fr. James Yakubu, MSP (6)
- Robert Giltner (6)
- Chundra Gates (6)
- Fr. Donatus Mgbeajuo, MSP (7)
- Fr. Leonard Okoli, MSP (7)
- Laura Omvig (7)
- Mrs. Pat Crepeau (8)
- Roberta Ney (8)
- Elizabeth Pollard (8)
- Fr. Samuel Igbeafe, MSP (9)
- Marion Patterson (10)
- Julie Cowan (11)
- Jerome Daniel (11)
- Kevin Muhlkenkamp (11)
- Carol Tyson (11)
- Fr. Cyprian Nnamani, MSP (12)
- Mary Clare Cullen (13)
- Granite Omvig (13)
- Fr. Augustus Essien, MSP (15)
- Albert Choquette (15)
- Victor Ruiz (15)
- Silas Shannell (15)
- Agustin Alvarado (16)
- Richard Sienko (16)
- Christina Stevens (16)
- Judson Wilson (16)
- Fr. Alfred Umagu, MSP (17)
- Fr. Joseph Kandeor, MSP (21)
- Alex Anyikam (20)
- Dennis Duffy (20)
- Fr. Christian Alimaji, MSP (21)
- Fred Foster (21)
- Margaret O’Keefe (22)
- Iris Ruiz (22)
- Fr. Innocent Odiaka, MSP (23)
- Rodney Broussard (23)
- Sharon Nelson (26)
- Anthony Silveira (26)
- Fr. Anthony Ita Bassey, MSP (27)
- Fr. Livinus Torty, MSP (29)
- Josh Edwards (30)
- Libby Newman (30)
- Delores Thomas (30)
- Gail Davis (30)

**AUGUST**
- Eunice Patterson (1)
- Fr Camillus Ogaraku, MSP (2)
- Carol Lemay (2)
- Mrs. Joaen Thomas (3)
- Patricia Tonatore (3)
- Fr. Alphonsus Chukwunweye, MSP (4)
- Jennifer Paquette (4)

**JULY**
- Devon Nowlin (1)
- Fr. Chikezie I. Onuoha, MSP (2)
- Fr. Eusebius Obasi, MSP (2)
- Bob Bradwish (3)
- Fr. Innocent Abonyi, MSP (4)
- Rosemary Runyan (4)
- Fr. Augustus Umanah, MSP (5)
- Fr. Augustine Franklin, MSP (6)
- Mona Richard (6)
- Julia Daniel (7)
- Fr. Eraling Laarsen (7)
- Mr. Dale Evers (8)
- Mr. Eldridge Smith (9)
- Susan Anthony (10)
- Edward Bourgeois (10)
- John Fitzgerald (10)
- Mary C. Freeman (10)
- Fr. Francis Olaseni, MSP (11)
- Mrs. Josephine Anyikam (12)
- Jane Spivey (12)
- Fr. Christian Unachukwu, MSP (13)
- Clarence Matthews (13)
- Thomas Yokoyama (13)
- Marie Weber (14)
- Fr. Eliseus Ibeh, MSP (15)
- Fr. Paul Ofoha, MSP (15)
- Fr. Patrick Okon, MSP (15)
- Fr. Henry Nkop, MSP (17)
- Beverly Flannel (17)
- Cynthia Gaccione (18)
- Theresa Miller (19)
- Fr. Gordon Iwuji, MSP (20)
- Fr. Emmanuel Adinye, MSP (20)
- Maria Sienko (20)
- Dr. Robert Allen (21)
- Fr. Emmanuel Adinye, MSP (20)
- Maria Sienko (20)
- Dr. Robert Allen (21)
- Christopher Murphy (21)
- Dorothy Gallow (23)
- Fr. Julius Otoaye, MSP (24)
- Joyce Evers (24)
- Fr. Peter Ekwenuya, MSP (25)
- Fr. Ifiok Inyang, MSP (26)
- Fr. Francis Anzie, MSP (27)
- Fr. Moses Iyogwoya, MSP (28)
- Fr. Cajethan Amaku, MSP (28)
- Gloria Gautheraux (28)
- Fr. Bernard Oleru, MSP (30)
- Stanley Coelho (30)
- Geraldine Daniel (30)
- Fr. Raphael Igbaoyinbo, MSP (31)
- Joseph Kerlegon (31)

**SEPTEMBER**
- Arturo Monterrubio (1)
- Mr. Rogers Rossigion (1)
- Fr. Mark Odion, MSP (2)
- Anna Brooks (2)
- Manda Gates (2)
- Connie Heilman (2)
- Mary Jo Zepeda (2)
- Fr. Emmanuel Etim, MSP (4)
- Fr. Lawrence Ebuk, MSP (5)
- Fr. Casimir Dike, MSP (5)
- Ruby Broussard (5)
- Linda Sacco (5)
- Steven Bailey (6)
- Mila Corpin (6)
- Mrs. Leslie Hanson (6)
- John Sullivan (6)
- Beverly Benson (7)
- Tim Cullen (8)
- Ms. Tony Kokotovitch (8)
- Fr. Peter Oyenugba, MSP (9)
- Fr. Georginus Ejiotor Ugwu, MSP (9)
- Warren Alex (9)
- Fr. Augustine Inwang, MSP (10)
- Sonya Landry (11)
- Fr. Joseph Udoh, MSP (12)
- Kent Mitchell (12)
- Mrs. Iyabode Janet Fashoro (13)
- Fr. Polycarp Ojingwa, MSP (14)
- Mrs. Shyrel Barrett (14)
- Fr. Chris Edebianga, MSP (15)
- Fr. Patrick Etuk, MSP (15)
- Dorothy Essex (15)
- George Miller (15)
- Barbara Green (16)
- Preston Reed (16)
- Fr. Ekpedeme Ekpe, MSP (17)
- Shelia Carr (17)
- Laura Biggs (18)
- Mrs. Magdalene Gradney (18)
- Fr. Joseph Amunie, MSP (19)
- Reola Bellard-Reed (19)
- Ms. Elsa Kokotovich (19)
- Fr. Emmanuel Akpainedu, MSP (21)
- Fr. Alphonsus Enelichi, MSP (23)
- Fr. Patrick Akpeke, MSP (23)
- Fr. Bernard Ngwu, MSP (24)
- Fr. Paul Dadson, MSP (24)
- Fr. Paul Dadson, MSP (25)
- Sharon Bezek (25)
- Mrs. Blessing Ezeude (25)
- Chet Martin (25)
- Elaine Rimel (27)
- Fr. Oliver Obele, MSP (28)
- Fr. Emmanuel Adinu, MSP (28)
- Faye Chenevert (28)
- Fr. Felix Ilesanmi Osasona, MSP (30)
- Fr. Jerome Eruoohorere, MSP (30)
- Dr. Michael Ukwade (30)
Daily Prayer for MSP

Heavenly Father, you created us and you care for us: We thank you for taking the Missionary Society of St. Paul into your care. We ask you to continue to watch over us. Fill us with your love, and help us to build a family where each member irrespective of tribe, feels at home with other members and is encouraged to give his best in the missionary work.

Lord Jesus, you died for us and you call us to be your witnesses to the ends of the earth; we thank you for enabling us to participate in this your saving work among people of every race. Fill us with zeal and a sense of commitment like St. Paul, to bear witness to your love and reconciliation. Help us with a lifestyle that will make us proclaim your Word with power and conviction. Send us your grace to make good whatever is lacking in us as individuals and as a Society.

O Holy Spirit, you enlightened the hearts of the apostles, we beseech you now to continue to enlighten us and consecrate us in the truth. May each of us realize how invaluable our contributions can be, and thus invest our energies towards the success of our missionary endeavours. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.


(To be said daily by all MSP and AMSP)

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The Catholic Ambassador Magazine
P.M.B. 2011, Iperu-Remo 12100
Ogun State, Nigeria.
E-mail: ambassadorpublications@yahoo.com
OR
The Director
Office of Mission Development
Missionary Society of St Paul
3607 Meriburr Lane,
P. O. Box 300145
Houston, Texas 77230-0145
☎: 713-747-1722
E-mail: mspusa@yahoo.com
Websites: www.mspusa.org; www.mspfathers.org
Ten MSP Priests Celebrate Silver Jubilee

How They Looked 25 years ago

1. Fr. Emmanuel Afangide
2. Fr. Iboro Paul Udoh
3. FR. Andrew K. Toyinbo
4. Fr. Francis Ibanga
5. Fr. Ambrose Udeze
6. Fr. Felix Elosi
7. Fr. Emmanuel Isi
8. Fr. Anthony Umoren
9. Fr. Stephen Achi
10. Fr. Vincent Inametti

FACT FILE

• **Date of Ordination**
  28th June, 1986

• **Ordaining Prelate**
  Bishop G. G. Ganaka

• **Venue:**
  Our Lady Pro Cathedral, Garki Abuja

Fr. Gabriel Akenu, MSP R.I.P.
ow time flies! On a hot blistering day in 1986 eleven MSP priests were ordained. That was on Saturday June 28. The ordaining prelate was Bishop Gabriel G. Ganaka then Bishop of Jos and President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria. The venue was Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Church, Garki, Abuja. Those ordained that day were immediately assigned to the Missions by Cardinal Dominic Ekandem then Ordinary of the Society. What a great event it was. It signaled in a very symbolic way that the Missionary Society of St Paul had come to stay. Those ordained that day and their mission assignments were as follows: Rev Frs. Andrew Toyinbo (Diocese of Buea, Cameroun), Iboro Paul Udoh (Cameroun), Emmanuel Isi (Cameroun), Stephen Achi (Liberia), Gabriel Akemu (Liberia), Francis Ibanga (Liberia). Others were Rev. Frs. Anthony Afangide (USA), Vincent Inametti (USA), Felix Elosi (USA), Ambrose Udeze, (Promotions Vocations Office, Iperu Remo, Nigeria), Anthony Umoren (Formation House, Iperu Remo, Nigeria).

At that time, the ordination was the most significant catholic event to take place in the new Federal Capital Territory. Visitors came from all over Nigeria and beyond. Assisting Bishop Ganaka were Bishop Brian Usanga of Calabar and Bishop Anthony Sanusi of Ijebu Ode. Fr. James Boyle, MHM and Fr. Etiene Kumba travelled from Cameroun to represent Bishop Awa of Buea in whose diocese three of the newly ordained were to minister.

Twenty five years is a long time, and some of the key actors during that beautiful event have passed on to their eternal reward. Cardinal Ekandem, Bishops Ganaka, Usanga and Sanusi have gone to be with the Lord. So also has Monsignor Akpan, then Acting Superior when the ordination took place. Fr. Gabriel Akemu one of the eleven ordained has also died. Some members of the MSP Class of 1986 present below brief reflections on their twenty five years in the ministry.
I could say without fear of contradiction that God's grace of ordination to me has not been ineffective (cf. 1Cor.15:10). By God's grace, within twenty five years of my ordination to the missionary priesthood, I have been able to go through four cycles of missionary journeys.

My first missionary journey was as an assistant promotion and Vocation Director and later, full Vocation Director. My second missionary journey was the experience of primary evangelization ministry in two dioceses, Mamfe and Buea all in Republic of Cameroon. My third missionary cycle was participation in the new era of evangelization, inaugurated by Pope John Paul II of blessed memory. My fourth missionary is which I am currently undergoing, is Salvifici Dolores, if I may borrow the words of Blessed John Paul II. In my fourth missionary journey I suffer from chronic renal failure. I live now on twelve hours dialysis every day, all for the glory of God.

All these four cycles of my missionary journey are exciting, challenging and fulfilling. Of all the missionary journeys, the most remarkable and memorable is my primary evangelization ministry in Cameroon. My primary evangelization ministry in Cameroon helped me to appreciate the experiences of the missionary journeys of St. Paul. It put me through what the early missionaries did for us in Africa.

At the end of the day, I am very happy that I was given the opportunity for primary evangelization ministry. The highlights of my primary evangelization ministry are published in my memoir. “An Outlook on Primary Evangelization”. It is a mission unforgettable.

The most challenging of all my four cycles of missionary journeys is my five years traversing highways, rural and path roads of Nigeria. For five years, I drove past all the thirty six states of Nigeria. I drove from Lagos in the far west to Calabar in the far south east. I drove from Port Harcourt in the extreme south to Sokoto, Kano and Maiduguri in northwest, central north and northeast. In all the journeys, I literally saw God's power behind me. It is not surprising that at a point in time, the vehicle that took me to all these journeys gave up by burning to ashes. That was a way of saying to me, “Enough is enough!”

Rev Fr Ambrose Udeze, MSP
I was born in Osumenyi in Anambra State of Nigeria in 1942. My parents were Ezeani Elosi-muo and Francesca Elosi of Umu-nwabuzo of Umu-Umeojiaku family. I attended the following schools for my primary education: St. Anthony's Catholic School Osumenyi; St. Theresa's Catholic School Abakaliki and Corpus Christi School Nkalagu. My initial desire to go to the Seminary did not materialize due to a number of factors including economics. This led me into learning and engaging in various trades until 1967. I started my High School education at Marist Brothers' Juniorate Uturu in 1967. This was terminated by the Nigeria/Biafra war until 1970.


My Seminary training came to an end in 1986 with my ordination to the priesthood. I was ordained for the missions then on the 28 of June 1986. My first mission assignment as a priest was to the United States of America. While in the U.S.A. I ministered as Assistant Pastor, Pastor and Administrator in the following Archdioceses/Dioceses; viz, Galveston/Houston, TX. New Orleans La., Lafayette La., and Beaumont TX. During my pastoral ministry in Beaumont TX, I provided pastoral care to the inmates of various prisons in the area including the high security prisons. I did my graduate studies at Loyola University New Orleans La.

I was later elected the Superior General of the Missionary Society of St. Paul during the First General Chapter of the Society in 1995. This leadership position afforded me an opportunity to meet and interact with people of various cultures in different countries of Europe, The Caribbean, the U.S.A., and Africa.

The priests of the Missionary Society of St. Paul do mission work in Europe, the U.S.A, Canada, Caribbean Islands and Africa including Nigeria. I took a sabbatical leave in 2002 which I spent in the U.S.A.

After my leave, I was assigned to St. Joseph's Catholic Church Okofia Nnewi in Anambra State Nigeria. There I became the parish priest. That is where I earned the title “Father Papa”. It is wonderful to look back at twenty five years to see God's protection and guidance. I invoke God's blessing on all whom I have ministered to and who have ministered to me. May God bless you all.

Fr Felix Elosi, MSP
Reflection on the above scripture reveals to us the place Truth has in the mind of God. Repeatedly we see in the Gospels, the efforts of our Divine Lord to clarify for us this great reality. Before he died, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to live in our hearts. “When Spirit of truth comes, who reveals the truth about God; he will lead you into all truth (Jn 16:13)"

**Those False Beliefs**

Why then those false beliefs that cause so much unhappiness among men and women, young and old? One thing that Bible is meant to teach us about the Love of God; how much he truly loves us and how we can show our love for him, keeping his commandments, loving one another. The Bible is not meant to teach us scientific or gynecological facts. The writers of scriptures made the many laws contained in Leviticus and other parts of the Bible, in order to help people and society in general. But they made them in accordance with the scientific and to some extent the social understanding of the people of their times. In the latter case one thinks of St. Paul; teaching people to be good to their slaves (Col. 4:); but later he himself freed a slave who had been given to him (Philemon 10-24).

When our understanding of science and society deepens, God intends us to use newly deepens, God intends us to use newly acquired scientific facts for the good of people. We should not be bogged down by practicing false beliefs that actually hurt people and society. There are many people who know the true facts and yet still adhere to wrong teaching, either for their own selfish purposes or out of carelessness. In either case they are guilty because they make people suffer. Never forget that the Devil is ‘the father of lies’.

**The Burden of Falsehood**

In many parts of the country, people are doing much free men and women from the burden of false beliefs. It is the Spirit of God that empowers them. In the last forty years it is remarkable to see how much has changed for good in this regard. We must do our best to continue this apostolate. So much more needs to be done to spread true facts that can free people from unhappiness and even danger. And on top of former dangers there is now that of HIV/AIDs. For this reason in the next few issues I hope to remind readers of many false beliefs, about which people have expressed much gratitude on hearing the truth. In this issue only the problem of Menopause is considered.

**False Belief about Menopause**

A false belief that does much harm is about the Menopause, the time when a woman’s menses have ceased, and it is due to a wrong understanding of the Bible. Some people wrongly think that women after menopause should not have sex with their own husbands. The continuation of this falsehood is the work of Satan who does not like fidelity. The fear about sex after menopause often leads to unfaithfulness and can easily result to course this is wrong and without a grain of truth. Fibroids have nothing to do with having sex. In the next issue some false beliefs that disturb youths will be discussed and if any reader knows of a particular problem and would like it brought to people’s attention, I will gladly include it.
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For Further Information Contact
The Director, MSP Mission
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