



African MISSIONARY



No. 14 | Autumn/Winter 2009

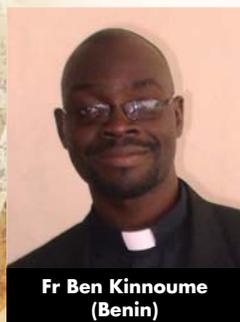
Life and Growth

The May – July period was a very busy time in the different units of the Society of African Missions.

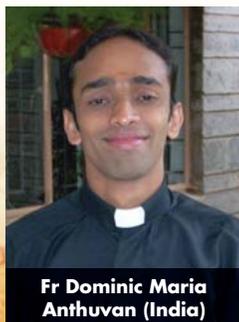
In June, SMAs gathered with the local Church at Sierra Leone, to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the untimely deaths of the SMA founder, Bishop Melchior de Marion Brésillac, and four of his companions only weeks

after they arrived in Freetown to begin their mission there in 1859.

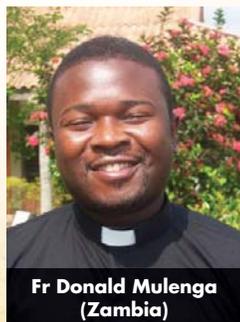
Elsewhere some eighteen SMA students were ordained as Deacons - and will, God willing, be ordained priests in 2010. Meanwhile new birth in the Society was celebrated in America, India, Nigeria, Benin, Zambia and Kenya with twelve young men from these countries having been ordained as SMA priests.



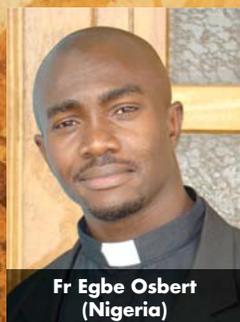
Fr Ben Kinnoume
(Benin)



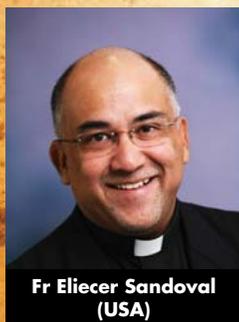
Fr Dominic Maria
Anthuvan (India)



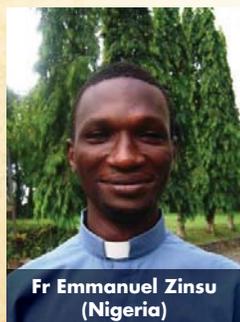
Fr Donald Mulenga
(Zambia)



Fr Egbe Osbert
(Nigeria)



Fr Eliecer Sandoval
(USA)



Fr Emmanuel Zinsu
(Nigeria)



Fr Gabriel Zhampier
(India)



Fr Guvvala Joseph
Kumar (India)



Fr Henry Obiora
(Nigeria)



Fr Lawrence
N. Ongoma (Kenya)



Fr Maria Joseph
Papamandam (India)



Fr Subramani
Annardurai (India)

In many parts of Africa large numbers of young men wish to be priests with the SMA. On 20 June, in Lagos, Nigeria, more than 2,000 people attended the Ordination ceremony in St Joseph's SMA Parish during which Cardinal Anthony O. Okogie ordained three young Nigerians as SMA priests; Fathers Chukwuemeka Henry Obiora, Osbert Idaka Egbe and Emmanuel Nunayon Zinsu.

In words of appreciation for those involved in his formation, Fr Romanus Onyekuru SMA, said that "for some years now God has blessed us with loving and unflagging benefactors... We are deeply grateful to you for the many ways you have brought joy in our life and vocation. We are conscious of the fact that you make sacrifices to support our studies in the Major Seminary, keep good food on our table, update our library with current books and provide us with some sports facilities. May God bless you and your families".

Fr Tim Cullinane, (Kerry), Regional Leader for southern Nigeria told the congregation that the first priest to celebrate Mass in Lagos was Fr Francesco Borghero SMA (from Italy) in 1862. From that first Mass the Archdiocese of Lagos today has grown to 82 parishes and 153 'outstations' or Mass centres, which will be parishes in their own right one day. These are served by 117 Nigerian diocesan priests and 123 from religious congregations – ten of whom are SMA priests – 8 Irish and 2 Nigerian. We thank God who has given this hundredfold increase and also our dedicated supporters throughout Ireland and beyond, who have played their part – through prayer and financial support - in making this miracle happen.

THE SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSIONS (SMA)

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REGISTERED CHARITY No: CHY 4696

National Novena to Saint Therese of Lisieux, (23rd September - 1st October)

Each year from September 23rd to October 1st a National Novena is conducted at our houses in Blackrock Road, Cork and in Dromantine, Newry, Co Down, seeking the intercession of the Little Flower on the missionary work of the Church. During this Novena missionaries are remembered, some of whom work in the most dangerous places on earth. Prayer is made too that young men and women would hear the call of Christ, encounter him as Therese did, and then make him known in whatever circumstances they find themselves. Lastly, large numbers, remembering her dying promise "I will spend my heaven doing good on earth", seek her intercession in their own moments of need.

We invite readers to join with us in the Novena to the Little Flower from September 23rd to October 1st, 2009.

All offerings made in honour of St Therese aid considerably the mission of the SMA. We are truly grateful to all who contribute to our work by participating in our novenas and praying that our missionaries remain faithful to the command of Christ: "Go make disciples of all nations..."



"Great deeds are forbidden me. The only way I can prove my love is by scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least actions for love."

St Therese of Lisieux, (the Little Flower), the youngest of nine children, was born at Alencon, about 100 miles west of Paris, on 2nd January 1873, and died as a Carmelite nun in 1879. She was just twenty-four years old at the time of her death. From the time she entered the Convent at the age of fifteen years she never left it again.

The young Therese entertained lofty thoughts of being a missionary - of going out from France and conquering the world for Christ. Instead, poor health forced her never to be able to leave her cloister. Then she had a profound insight - she could still be a missionary by praying and offering her sufferings for the success of the missionary enterprise. And so for the whole of her short life she prayed often until she was weary for the ones who went out in God's name and for the ones who would hear their proclamation.

After her death it was discovered that Therese, who desired to be nothing more than a little flower in God's garden, lived her life in intense communion with Christ. Today, the one, who had little formal education bears the title 'Doctor of the Church' and the one who never left her convent has been proclaimed the 'Universal Patroness of the Missions'.

The parents of St Therese, Louis and Marie Zélie, were beatified in 2008. Therese said of her parents: "God gave me a father and mother more worthy of Heaven than of earth."

150th Anniversary Of The “Disaster” Of Freetown

On 15th June, 2009, the Sierra Leone capital, Freetown, west Africa, gave a warm welcome to SMA members who came there to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the death of Bishop Melchior de Marion Bresillac and his four companions who died tragically shortly after arriving in Freetown in 1856 to begin their mission to the people of the west coast of Africa. They all died of yellow fever which was a raging epidemic in the city in June 1859.

The 150th Anniversary was marked by special ceremonies and celebrations which recalled the sacrifice of these early SMAs which in some special way marked the beginning of the Church in Sierra Leone. Prayers were recited at the quayside wharf where the first missionaries landed in November 1858 and May 1859. Mass was celebrated in the Church of St Anthony, Brookfields and a monument was blessed and dedicated over the place where these missionaries are buried.

The splendid rituals were attended by civic and political leaders and by many of the Catholic

faithful of Sierra Leone who are the beneficiaries of the Good News brought by the missionaries down the years. They were led by the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Antonysamy, and many of the bishops of Sierra Leone, Archbishop Edward T. Charles, (Freetown and Bo), Bishop Giorgio Biguzzi, (Bishop of Makeni), Bishop Patrick D. Koroma, (Bishop of Kenema), Archbishop Joseph H. Ganda, (Emeritus, Freetown and Bo). Also present were Bishop Jean Bonfils SMA, emeritus Bishop of Nice, the SMA Superior General, Fr Kieran O’Reilly SMA and the Irish Provincial Leader, Fr Fachtna O’Driscoll SMA along with a large presence of diocesan priests.



Superior General, Fr Kieran O’Reilly SMA, (3rd from left), and Irish Provincial Leader, Fr Fachtna O’Driscoll SMA, (4th from left), pose for picture with SMAs from other countries who assembled in Free Town, in June, to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the death of SMA Founder, Bishop Melchior de Marion Bré-sillac.

Mission Sunday (18th October, 2009)

In his message for World Mission Sunday, (October, 18th), Pope Benedict XVI reminds each member of the Christian community of the Gospel imperative of illuminating all nations with the Gospel of Christ – an imperative binding on all who have received the gift of Christian faith. He pleaded with the older Churches in Europe and America to continue their assistance to the young Churches in developing countries: “... especially in these times of crisis affecting all humanity”. In the conclusion of his message, Pope Benedict affirms that evangelisation is primarily the work of the Spirit and therefore calls on all Catholics to pray that the Holy Spirit will intensify the Church’s passion for mission.

Irish Missionary Union events for October – Mission Month

2nd October at Wynn’s Hotel, Dublin, at 6pm, Bishop Hyacinth Egbebo, Bishop of Bomadi, Nigeria will address a gathering of IMU members, missionaries and friends. All welcome. Admission free.

5th October at St Peter’s Church, Phibsboro, Dublin, at 2.15pm. Bishop Egbebo will celebrate the Eucharist. Immigrants of African origin are especially invited. An exhibition by faith based volunteering organisations will be opened on that day at St Peter’s and will remain open to the public until the 26th October.

7th October, at Dalgan Park, Navan, at 7.30pm. the Columban Missionaries will host a series of lectures to celebrate 90 years of Columban Mission. The first lecture will be by Fr Sean McDonagh titled: ‘The Destruction of Biodiversity’.

8th -10th October, at ‘Cois Tine’, St Mary’s, Pope’s Quay, Cork, (9.30am to 4.30pm). Cois Tine hosts a photographic exhibition featuring the stories of asylum seekers in Ireland.

10th October at SMA, Blackrock Road, Cork, at 8.00pm. Cois Tine Multicultural Choir will present a story on how music reaches across culture and is capable of promoting unity and peaceful coexistence.

A Safari in Kenya

Fr Seán Hayes SMA, (Limerick), worked for over thirty five years in Africa, mostly in northern Nigeria but also in Liberia. Very familiar himself with frugal living and isolation, Seán pens some notes of a visit to SMAs in Kenya earlier in the year.



Fr Seán Hayes SMA along with some children he met during his visit to Lodwar, Kenya.

These notes catch a glimpse of a day in the life of missionaries and are unbounded in admiration for fellow 'frontier men' working in east Africa despite the hardship of their surroundings.

Trail Finder Vouchers bring me to Lokichokia
A fistful of 'Trail Finder' Vouchers, a present for my Golden Jubilee, saw me heading for Kenya on Dec.29th 2008. On the 30th I was flying from Nairobi to Lokichokia, a little airstrip, near the borders of Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda. When I was getting my ticket in Nairobi and asked for a window seat on this one and a half hour flight, I hadn't realised it was all window seats, 6 each side on this 12 seater Cessna.

At Lokichokia I was met by Bishop Patrick Harrington's driver, we guessed one another, and headed south for 30 miles to catch up with Bishop Patrick, who was blessing and opening a new Clinic. It was worth seeing – the joy of the people, the enthusiasm of the nuns and priests, and a Bishop who was enjoying what he was doing. Already, I had begun to feel the heat, the dryness, the poverty, but above all the great work being done.



Fr Seán Hayes SMA and Fr Con Murphy SMA, pray at the grave of Fr John Hannon, murdered in Kenya in 2004

Furry Black Hunting Spider

I visited the convent of the Medical Missionaries of Mary where Sr Rosetta Furlong, from Wexford, in April, 2007, had been bitten on the toe by the deadly spider and died within days. God rest her soul. For the rest of my time in Kenya, I kept watching my back, and I was alert to every movement anywhere, putting my shoes up on a chair at night and giving them a good shake before putting them on in the morning. I wasn't ready yet for the black spider. I did come across a wee brown mouse scurrying around the room in Fr Ollie Noonan's Mission, and as I failed to come to terms with

it, I reported its presence next morning.

At Bishop Harrington's House

Bishop Harrington put me up for a few nights, and here I saw, perhaps one of our greatest Generals at work, living and loving this harsh, dried up, hungry place. His doesn't have a fan or air-conditioner. His immediate concern was helping the displaced from recent ethnic violence, setting-up schools and clinics and feeding centres. There was great organization, thanks to Mr Tony Woods, the Chancellor, Brother Paddy Dowd and Fr Ollie Noonan and numerous others. All seem happy, full of spirit and are inspiring self-effacing workers

Here in Lodwar was my first time experiencing culture shock and realized what my visitors felt, years ago, in northern Nigeria. One even signed my Visitor's Book: "Lord it is good to be here, but for one night only".

Reason for the visit

I came to Lodwar to see the work and the workers and experience first-hand all that was happening so as to help inspire me to continue the FVC work I was doing with families in the Dublin area. It certainly did that – it freshened my memories as I made comparisons. I will now have first hand stories to share with the groups in the house Masses – how it is all worthwhile.

A story about Ollie Noonan SMA finding the only spot outside his mission where a signal could be picked up on a cellular phone. From the same spot he could sit out with his laptop, to send an email, unperturbed by the flies and moths and the other insects that seem to chase one away from trespassing on their patch at night. The sponsors will hear what they are part of, and making possible - where their contributions are going; and how their prayers are heard.

Back in Nairobi

I flew back to Nairobi by a smaller plane than the Cessna and was touched by the Captain praying publically before take-off. I spent the remaining four days in Nairobi visiting confreres there. I was really

impressed by Fr James Clesham SMA and his complete devotion to his work as hospital Chaplain. I spent 'good' time with Fr Pádraig Devine and with Con Murphy who hosted me at Kevin McGarry's Bulbul. I got to visit the grave of Fr John Hannon SMA, (brutally murdered in 2004), and also the grave of Edel Quinn of Legion of Mary fame. There we prayed for her canonization.

SMA House of Formation

The highlight of my trip was the visit to our House of Formation in Nairobi for SMA students. To see so many seminarians full of enthusiasm, coming and going, would do your heart good. Fr Michael McCabe who lives with the students is a man who doesn't just talk 'Mission,' but does it. He is there teaching, and living with them - an inspiration and an example. Words fail to laud such a wonderful confrere - 'Top of the range' they would say in the shops.

Our Future Assured

Our future, having priests ordained every year, is assured, if we can keep supplying the funding and the prayers. Many young Africans are already ordained and work impressively alongside the missionaries from Ireland. I met many of them in Kenya and am proud to be part of this progression. Arriving back home in early January, just after two weeks in Kenya - Dublin looked different.

SMA Donations On-Line

The Society of African Missions, (SMA), now provides an opportunity for those who wish to be associated with our work to make donations on-line. Simply go to the SMA home-page and click on 'Donate on line'. A number of options open up for you to indicate where you wish your contributions to be directed.

The options include:

- i) Evangelisation,
- ii) Retired Priests' upkeep,
- iii) Training of SMA students for the priesthood.

In the area of human development you have the option of directing your contributions to any of the following:

- i) emergency relief,
- ii) provision of water/sanitation,
- iii) education, etc.

All contributions go directly as stipulated.



Boys and girls who attended 'Dromanteen Camp' during the summer months. Once again large numbers of boys and girls enjoyed a week away from it all in the beautiful grounds of Dromantine, Newry, Co Down.



Diamond Jubilees

Celebrations for Diamond Jubilee at Wilton

On Friday, 15th May, 2009, the SMA Community at Wilton, Cork, celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of Br Jim Redmond's profession as an SMA Brother in 1949. The celebration began with a Mass of Thanksgiving for Brother Jim's life and ministry and concluded with a special meal and presentation to Br Jim for his long years of faithful service as an SMA Brother. Present at the meal was Br Jim's sister, Mrs Ellen Cusack, from Hammersmith in London, along with a number of Jim's friends.

Br Jim Redmond from Rathnure, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, has placed his faith, genius and talents at the service of the SMA and the African people since 1949. In that time

he has been involved in journalism in Nigeria and promotions work in Ireland. Jim is also an accomplished organist and helps out at SMA Parish Church in Wilton. We wish Br Jim health and peace in the years God has left to him.



Brother Jim Redmond cuts the Jubilee cake, with the assistance of his sister, Mrs Ellen Cusack, at his Diamond Jubilee celebration at Wilton, in May, 2009.

Celebrations for Diamond Jubilees at Blackrock Road

"The Eucharist is ended, the Eucharist begins" Fr Tony Butler concluded the Mass on 14th June, the Feast of Corpus Christi. He had reminded the gathering of SMA priests and brothers during the homily that the work of a missionary priest was to bring the Eucharist to new places and that our lives were a living out of the Eucharist in imitation of Jesus who gave everything out of love for us.

The occasion was the celebration by three SMA priests of their ordination Diamond Jubilee, sixty years of missionary work in the service of Africa and its peoples. Fr Paddy Jennings from Co Down and Fr Jimmy Higgins and Fr Eugene Connolly both from Co Sligo were ordained in Newry in June 1949 along with six other classmates who have since gone to their eternal reward.



(L to R) Frs Jim Higgins SMA, (Sligo), Eugene Connolly SMA, (Sligo) and Paddy Jennings, (Down), after celebrating a Mass of Thanksgiving on the occasion of their Diamond Jubilee, at Blackrock Road, in June, 2009.

Fr Jimmy is still on active assignment in Asaba in Nigeria where he has spent all his missionary life. Fr Paddy spent many years also in Nigeria in both the Archdioceses of Ibadan and Lagos as well as working in the service of the SMA in Ireland. Fr Eugene worked in the Diocese of Ondo in Nigeria and in SMA service in Ireland and in Luton, England. Both are now happily retired at SMA House, Blackrock Road Cork.

The Jubilee Mass was concelebrated by many SMA confreres. Fr Joe Maguire from Dublin and ordained sixty-two years ago proclaimed the Gospel. The singing was accompanied by Fr Edmund Hogan at the organ. A very enjoyable meal and cutting of the Jubilee cake followed. The House Leader, Fr Colm O'Shea, paid tribute to the work of the jubilarians and made an appropriate presentation on behalf of the Society to each of them. Each of the jubilarians made a short speech giving thanks to God for what was made possible through them and expressing appreciation for the comradeship they found in the SMA. Ad Multos Annos!

Fr Tom Curran SMA

Fr Seán Rafferty SMA 1924 - 2009

Fr Seán Rafferty SMA passed to the Lord in the evening of Thursday, 16th July 2009 in St Joseph's Nursing Home, Warrenpoint, Co Down. He had been in failing health for some time and transferred to St Joseph's Nursing Home in 2006. He was 85 years of age and had celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of his ordination in 2008.

Seán was a native of Barr, Co Down, not far from SMA House Dromantine, in the Parish of Donaghmore in the Diocese of Dromore. He was the third child in a family of two girls and two boys, children of the late John and Elizabeth Rafferty. He was born on 10 July 1924.

In 1929 he began his primary education in Barr Primary School where his teacher, Mr Peter Conlan (father of the late Fr Fergus Conlan SMA) had a profound influence on him. He received his secondary education with the Christian Brothers at the Abbey CBS, Newry 1936-1941. He then decided to become a missionary priest and came to the SMA, studying first at SMA House, Cloughballymore, in Co Galway and then at SMA College, Dromantine in his native parish. He was ordained to the priesthood in St Colman's Cathedral, Newry on 13 June 1948. After ordination he pursued further education at University College Cork where he graduated in 1951. He continued further studies in education in London 1951-53.

In 1953 he was appointed to Nigeria to work in the Archdiocese of Kaduna with his first assignment to St John's College, Kaduna where he was a teacher until 1965. In 1965 he was appointed as Supervisor of Schools, a post he held until 1970. He then enrolled at Fordham University, New York where he graduated with a Masters degree, MA, in Religious Studies.

In 1972 he returned to Nigeria and took up an appointment at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria as a member of staff and as Chaplain. He retired from education in 1990 having completed thirty-five years in education. He then took on full-time pastoral work among the Hausa people in rural areas of Kano State and continued in this until 1998 when ill-health forced him to retire from work in Africa. He was appointed to SMA House Dromantine and helped in Loughbrickland Parish in the Diocese of Dromore until he retired in 2002.



Sr Eugene Mary Herron OLA 1926 - 2009

After a long illness, Sr. Eugene Mary Herron, (Lifford, Co Donegal), with a disarming smile, took leave of us on Sunday 10th May, 2009 and went to her eternal reward - her span of eighty three years of life was over.

Very conscious of the divine spark in her she felt called as a young woman to do great things for God. She answered the call to a vowed, consecrated life for mission in Africa. After graduating with a B. SC degree from UCC, Sr Eugene taught in numerous OLA secondary Schools in Africa. Her first appointment was to OLA Secondary school in Ho, Ghana. After a number of years she moved to the Republic of Nigeria where she gave herself unstintingly to the promotion of education; firstly, at St. Theresa's College, Ibadan, then at OLA Secondary school, Ijebu-Ode, in Ogun State and finally at Queen of Apostles College, Kakuri near Kaduna. In each place she left her mark as an excellent teacher.

In 1968 she returned to Ireland where she involved herself again in teaching at Ardfoyle Secondary School, at the Mercy Convent, Cappoquin, in a Vocational School in Donegal and in Scoil Bríd, Clondalkin.

The divine spark was prompting something more. She took up Scripture Study in Milltown. To her great joy and

satisfaction her write-ups on the Sunday Liturgies were sometimes published in the Irish Scripture Annual. This very satisfying time urged her to want more, and so she went to Rome for advanced Scripture and Theology. She had a scientific and enquiring mind, and loved her studies. It would seem that she could have happily settled for a life among books.

But, I am forgetting a precious chapter in Eugene's ministry - her years of service in Ardfoyle as Receptionist. Gracious and welcoming, she gave herself generously, pulling out all the stops as she looked after guests and callers.

In the early 1990s Eugene got a stroke. Sadly this started a long, lonely, tedious desert experience for her as she tried to cope with the resulting limitations and diminishment. Sr Eugene Mary passed away on the 10th May. She had fought the good fight to the finish. We pray now that Sr Eugene has entered a new phase of existence where released from all that diminished her in this life she will be forever enthralled in the mystery that God is.



Sr Clare Fitzgerald OLA

A Reflection on Dromantine Family Fun Day

Early morning it seems like Dromantine is waiting and watching in anticipation for what the day might bring. The swans cut their same pattern across the lake, the birds greet themselves in their dawn chorus. Today will be different as anxious eyes look to the skies hoping for sunshine. It is not long before the first cars arrive with the staff and helpers efficiently preparing for Dromantine Family Fun Day.

The lane to the football pitch transforms into a 'Jones' Road' as an array of football jerseys with carnival colours make their way to our Croke Park. There, the titans of twelve year olds will become Steve McDonnells, Benny Coulters and Brian Doohers with no shortage of advisors on the sideline.

The space gives parents an opportunity to wander the stalls and inspect the display of donated presents or some ones handcraft while the farmers and mechanically minded will gravitate towards the display of vintage tractors carrying memories back to childhood when they drove their first tractors. Memories are also revived for an old lady who climbs onto the horse drawn cart for a trip through the grounds, surrounded by children, she might be one herself on the way to Sunday Mass.

Meanwhile the teenagers are screaming for dear life as the novelty of the fair hurls them into space. Twenty eight and more artists have given their time and talent to entertaining the 'country and western' fans. Seats surrounding the stage are at a high premium for there is non-stop music for the afternoon. Dressed with the flamboyance of cheer leaders, the marching band parade before the stately home of Dromantine. No one goes

hungry for there is every form of chip-van - and for the more genteel there is strawberry and cream and buns with the afternoon tea.

There is a library of books to be perused. The raffle has been drawn, ice creams have been licked and now it is close to bed time. If I have forgotten anything, you will



Children connect with the past as they take a mystery-tour through the grounds of Dromantine during Dromantine Family Fun Day 2009.



Fr Noel O'Leary SMA, (Cork), (2nd from right, [back]), House leader at Dromantine, meets supporters who came for Family Fun Day, in June, 2009.

hear it from the birds as they chatter about the day that was in aid of our missions

Fr Gerry Murray SMA

Sr. Ephrem (Julia) Hodgson OLA 1919 - 2009

Sr Ephrem (Julia) Hodgson passed away peacefully at OLA, Ardfoy, Cork on the evening of 28th June, 2009, at the age of ninety years. Born in Belfast in 1919, Julia learnt of other young women from her locality giving their lives for the cause of Christ in Africa and she too wished to be part of that story. In 1938, at the age of nineteen years, Julia made the long journey south to join the missionary Congregation of Our Lady of Apostles, (OLA), in Cork.

After some years of formation Julia committed herself for life as an OLA sister, taking the religious name Ephrem. Assigned to Nigeria, Sr Ephrem, along with six others, set sail on her first missionary journey in 1943, at the height of World War II. It was an eventful journey, as her ship was torpedoed after some days at sea and Ephrem and her companions had to hurriedly abandon ship and transfer to life-boats. A companion, Sr Columcille, helped row the life-boat to safer waters and await rescue.

In Nigeria, her first posting was to the north of the country, to the city of Jos. There she taught needlework and cookery. Sr Ephrem was very resourceful and when she discovered the cooking facilities in the school were limited, she approached the army and asked for their help to make ovens out of kerosene tins. They obliged and these makeshift ovens helped her greatly with her cookery classes.

During the next thirty eight years, Sr Ephrem moved around the vast country taking on different assignments in places such as Kaduna, Ubiaja, Topo Island, Zawan, Iwo and Ibadan. The isolated and largely uninhabited

island of Topo, off the Lagos coast, had a special place in Ephrem's heart - she enjoyed the expanse of the sea and loved listening to the sound of the waves at night. She found Zawan, in the north of Nigeria, a big contrast to Topo and was in awe of the cactus hedges there. She often remarked that after the huge expanse of sea in Topo the cactus hedges in Zawan made her think of the song "Don't fence me in" which she continually hummed around the compound .

Here in Ireland and in England, Ephrem lived out the OLA Missionary Spirit in her own unique way in the ministries in which she served. We remember her for her warm smiling presence, her love and her graciousness to everyone she met on life's journey.

Perhaps some of our fondest memories of Ephrem are about the many escapades she had while travelling around Ireland and beyond. She loved to get out and about and was always willing to get on any bus, going anywhere to enjoy a day out. We will miss her adventurous spirit.

Sr. Ephrem died at the age of 90, nearly 70 of those years were spent as an OLA professed Sister. As we reflect on her long life and commitment to God we are struck by the depth of her faith and her love. May her gentle soul rest in peace.



Sr Margaret Cummins OLA. 1939 - 2009

Sister Margaret, (Coldwood, Co Galway), finished her earthly journey, on the 8th April 2009, (Holy Week). Her brief and unexpected illness left her family, her OLA Sisters, and her many friends in deep shock and disbelief. When it became obvious that her illness was terminal, and that medically there was no cure, Margaret embraced it with faith in God, and in spite of her own pain and distress showed a beautiful and touching gratitude to all around her for the smallest help or assistance. The true essence of Margaret, her deep faith in God and Our Lady, shone out constantly during those three weeks.

Margaret was a Galway woman through and through. She loved her native county and especially her family and friends. With them she had strong, loyal and enduring bonds which were an important part of her identity.

Having trained as a nurse, Margaret spent many years in various hospitals in Nigeria where her skills and her cheerful presence brought healing and joy. She was outgoing and optimistic and believed that only her very best was good enough for the God she daily met in the sick, the poor and the

marginalized. This same care was given by Margaret to the elderly, sick, and dying patients that she nursed in the Hospice in Lancaster and in the nursing home in Castlemacgarrett and in Ardfoy.

Her ministry in recent years, collecting mission boxes along the west coast of Ireland, brought Margaret into contact with numerous families, and their joys and sorrows were close to her heart and prayers. She entered in a special way into the mystery of their lives, and this seems to have led her more deeply into the mystery of her own life.

We all have our own very special memories of Margaret, all precious and sacred and a source of great comfort to us in our loss. We celebrate the mystery of her life and God's life in her.



Sr Eileen Healy OLA

Family Vocations Crusade, (FVC), at 50

This year the SMA Family Vocations Crusade (FVC) is fifty years old. Started in Dromantine in 1959 by Fr Andy Anglin, the late Johnny Lappin, Tommy McKenna and some others, it aimed at involving the people of Ireland in the fostering of vocations for the Society of African Missions. Those who joined the FVC, organized under a local leader, committed themselves to praying for and financially supporting students who embarked on a journey to the SMA priesthood. At the end of that journey, when the students were ordained, FVC members were invited to one of the first masses celebrated by the newly ordained. Initially this commitment was for seven years, the duration of the journey, and then moved to eight when the period of formation was extended by one year.



Fr Michael Cahill SMA meets up with family members and FVC supporters from Galway at SMA pilgrimage to Knock in May, 2009

But for many FVC supporters all over Ireland, they began the journey over and over again supporting by prayers and financial assistance many classes of SMA priests. When vocations dried up in the 1990s with no longer any Irishmen for ordination, they adjusted to the new situation and were very happy to support the large numbers of SMA vocations from Africa, India and Poland. The front cover shows the flowering of this initiative with twelve having reached priestly ordination in 2009.

The Society of African Missions is truly grateful for that support given freely and generously over many years. It is particularly grateful for those who assumed the title of Leader or 'Head Sponsor', bringing and keeping families together, collecting the annual donation and liaising with the Family Vocations Directors in the different provinces. We pray that all who have worked promoting the FVC over the past fifty years will reap the eternal reward promised to those who build up the Kingdom of God here on earth.

We pray too that the Family Vocations Movement will continue to attract members from this generation of Irish Catholics. May their prayers and 'giving' for young men in distant Churches set the seeds for a new springtime in the Irish Church.

Fr James Harrold SMA 1917 - 2009

Fr James Harrold SMA passed away peacefully at SMA House, Blackrock Road, Cork in the evening of Sunday, 30 August, 2009. His health had been deteriorating for some time. He was aged 91 years.

Fr Jim was born in Kilmeedy, Co. Limerick, on 5 December 1917, the fourth born of five children to Dan and Mary, (nee Flynn). He attended the local national school and at the age of fourteen years attended SMA Sacred Heart College, Ballinacorney, Co Mayo, for his secondary education.

Having two maternal uncles missionaries, one an SMA and the other a Holy Ghost Father, Jim too desired to become a missionary and made enquiries to both congregations. He settled for the SMA - the first to reply to his request for information. He was ordained to the SMA priesthood on 19th December 1942.

His first appointment was to the teaching staff of Ballinacorney, where he had received his secondary education. He remained on the staff there until 1947 when he was sent, along with a number of others, to help establish the Society of African Missions in the USA. For the first two years in the USA Jim served in a number of 'black race' parishes in the Atlanta and Savannah areas of Georgia, championing racial equality, at a time when it was very unpopular and even dangerous to do so. From 1949 until 1952 he was assigned to teach at the SMA Seminary at Washington. Upon completion of that assignment Jim returned south to teach at St. Pius X High School, Savannah, Georgia for another year.

From 1953 to 1968 Jim began his work of raising funds and promoting the SMA in earnest. In those years he trod the

streets of the big American cities where the Irish had settled, enlisting their support for the SMA mission in Africa. Warm, generous and with an endearing smile, Jim wooed large numbers to the cause and everywhere found generous helpers to assist him.

In 1968 Jim finally got his way and headed for Africa, (Liberia), where he had always wanted to be. Liberia at the time was considered one of the toughest missions. Here the climate took its toll and Jim was forced to return to USA in 1971. For the next five years he took up again what he was expert in doing, raising funds and promoting the Missions. In 1976 he returned again to Liberia and began a new ministry there, but again health problems forced him home after two years. From 1978 until 1982 he resumed again, for the third time, his promotion work across America. In poor health in 1982 he retired to his own place, Limerick, and until 2004, he lived with his sister and her husband while assisting in various ministries in and around Limerick city. In 2004 he retired to the SMA in Cork. He aged there gracefully, fulfilling different apostolates, hearing confessions, writing, praying, enthralled all with his stories. He peacefully awaited death and it came slowly on 30th August, 2009.



Ar dheis lámh Dé go raibh a anam.

Fr James O'Connell SMA 1937 - 2009

Fr James (Jimmy) O'Connell SMA passed away peacefully in his sleep at 1.10 on the morning of Tuesday 4 August 2009 at SMA House, Blackrock Road, Cork. He had been in very poor health for some time but his death was unexpected. He was aged 72 years.

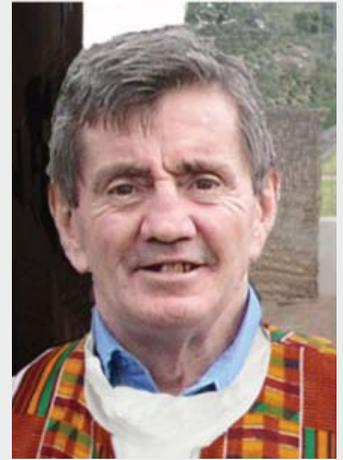
Jimmy was born 23 March 1937, at Clontarf, Dublin. He came from a family of seven, five sons and two daughters, of the late Seán and Helena (nee Sandross) O'Connell. He received his early education at Clontarf National School and his Secondary education from the Christian Brothers at O'Connell School. While there his prowess as a sportsman emerged and he played in goal for the school hurling team and also played minor hurling for Dublin.

In 1955 Jimmy decided to commit his life to missionary priesthood and began his studies towards that end at the SMA novitiate at Cloughballymore, Kilcolgan, Co Galway. Upon completion of novitiate he began his studies in earnest at UCC from where he graduated with a BA in 1959. His theological studies were undertaken at the SMA Major Seminary, Dromantine, Newry, Co Down and he was ordained to the priesthood at St Colman's Cathedral, Newry, Co Down on 21 December 1962.

Following the completion of his studies, Jimmy was appointed to Nigeria to work in the Archdiocese of Lagos where he was to remain on missionary assignments until 1991. He spent many of these years in education as a teacher and chaplain in St Finbarr's College, Akoka and Nazareth College, Ibonwon but it was at St Gregory's College, Lagos that he was most renowned. Ever the sportsman, he was involved in promoting and coaching the college's cricket, football and athletics teams. A talented singer,

under his direction the students presented major musical productions like Jesus Christ, Superstar and the famous South African musical Ipi Tombi.

He was appointed Deputy Society Superior of the SMA in the Archdiocese 1987-1989. When he retired from teaching he undertook pastoral assignments most notably in Ajilete, a remote rural area of Ogun State. Here his fluency in the local languages, Yoruba and Egba, were a great help in this work. Illness, later diagnosed as Parkinson's Disease, forced Jimmy to return to Ireland in 1991. From 1991 to 1997 he was assigned to SMA House, Maynooth, as Director of the formation programme for students preparing for SMA missionary priesthood. As the illness became more debilitating Jimmy moved to SMA House, Blackrock Road, Cork in 1997. Here his condition continued to deteriorate. But Jimmy never surrendered and for the remainder of his life he attempted to keep things normal, even to the extent of trying to play a round of golf. In the last months of his life he did all he could to remain on his feet. It was sad, (and inspiring), to witness a 'youthful', athletic mind struggle fiercely against an illness that was overpowering him. On Tuesday 4th August, the Feast of St John Vianney, the Patron Saint of Priests, Jimmy was liberated from his earthly chains. May he now spend his eternity absorbed in the mystery of God.



SMA Calendar 2010

The SMA Calendar 2010 is now ready for circulation among supporters of the SMA. Like our newsletter, our calendar attempts to keep a missionary consciousness alive in the people of Ireland and enlist support for the mission of the SMA.

One way our many supporters in Ireland could keep this consciousness alive, as well as helping to defray costs of production, would be for them to ensure that our calendar reaches as many homes as possible. These calendars could be sent to relations, friends and neighbours, along with or in place of Christmas cards. In that way the name of the Society of African Missions would have some type of profile in homes during 2010.

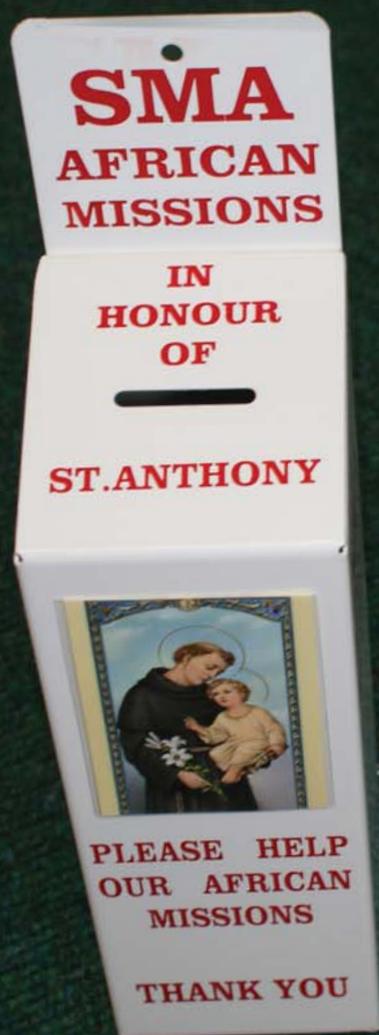
Anyone who wishes to help us in this way should write, requesting further copies, to: The Editor, African Missionary, Blackrock Road, Cork. (Singles copies can be obtained for the sum of Five Euro. Two or more copies are available at Three Euro each) (Envelopes are provided with each Calendar).



Let Your Goodness Live On After You (Have Inserted Into Your Will)

"I will, devise and bequeath, the sum of to the Provincial Superior of the Society of African Missions, Blackrock Road, Cork, to be applied by him in his absolute discretion for the charitable purposes of the said Society.

SMA Mite Boxes



The coins placed in SMA mite-boxes, found in shops, bars and restaurants all over Ireland continue to provide significant revenue for the missionary work of the Society of African Missions. By displaying St Anthony prominently on the mite boxes the SMA from the beginning sought the intercession of St Anthony to oversee the success of this particular mission project. St Anthony has done his work well for the small coins of benefactors have made possible numerous projects for the SMA in Africa.

We are grateful to those who continue to display our mite-boxes in strategic places when it is often inconvenient to do so. They too, like our front line missionaries, are part

of the great effort of proclaiming the Gospel in Africa. For them we ask God's blessings. We are particularly grateful to those who collect and forward the proceeds from these mite-boxes - not a very glamorous work but a very essential one nevertheless.

The SMA team coordinating the mite-box project in Ireland are Fr John Clancy and Mr Pat Gaughan in Munster, Fr Martin Costello in Connaught, Mr Pat Curran and Mr Paul Skelly in Dublin. In Ulster Fr Mossie Kelleher and his SMALA group, a group of men and women who assist the missionary work of the SMA, help in emptying the mite boxes across the province.



CHRIST'S CALL TO SERVE... TO PROCLAIM... TO BRING GOOD NEWS...

**"TO BE MISSIONARY FROM THE
BOTTOM OF MY HEART"**

- Bishop Melchior de Marion Brésillac, Founder of SMA

**AFRICA STILL NEEDS TO HEAR
GOD'S WORD. WHY NOT JOIN
US IN THE LORD'S SERVICE AS A
MISSIONARY?**

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