

The newsletter from MISSIO Scotland.

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Farewell to Margaret after 30 Years

In December MISSIO Scotland bid farewell to Margaret McGowan who had administered the charity for thirty years. In all that time Margaret was the anchor and contact point for MISSIO. We wish her "All the best." in her well deserved retirement.

Good Shepherd Seminary



The New Intake at Good Shepherd

On our recent mission visit to Nigeria Fr. Pat McGuire, National Director of MISSIO Scotland and I, Joe McGrath, were able to call in to the seminary in Kaduna. It was an opportunity for Fr. Pat to catch up with the staff and students again and for me to have a first look at the place. We arrived at the end of the morning's lectures and were able to meet the new students, just into their first year.

The seminary is still under construction and as the number of students grows the building programme becomes more urgent. We lunched with the staff in the main building, a building without windows. The walls are made of vent bricks to allow a flow of air through but the hot sun is kept out. The electricity had gone off again so we had lunch by torchlight.



Fr. Matthias

Later in our trip, in Kontagora in the west, we met two young priests who had been students in Good Shepherd Seminary. Both were making valuable contributions to the work of the Church.

Fr. Matthias is based in the cathedral in Kontagora and spends his time celebrating mass there and in the outstations as well as devoting a great deal of time working with the youth.



Fr. Francis

Fr. Francis is also based at the cathedral but his work is very different. He is the Co-ordinator of the Justice and Peace Committee for the Vicariate. His work in Justice and Peace involves protecting the rights of the poor in a country where the police and those in authority often bring spurious

charges against the people. This may be because they have not been paid and need to be bribed so they can take money home.

Fr. Francis organises workshops to teach people their rights and organises legal help for those who have to go to court. This began as a service to Christians who are a minority there but things have changed. Fr. Francis organised a rally to celebrate World Peace Day. He was able to do this by involving all the local people in the organising committee. Christians, Muslims and people of no recognised faith all took a part. The day was a great success. It laid the foundations for closer relations.

Now the Justice and Peace Committee is being approached by people of all religions and none. They are taking up the causes of people from all sections of the community. Now religion is not being seen as a barrier between groups. Religion has become a bridge and people are beginning to realise they have much in common.

Without Fr. Francis this would not have happened. The area would still be one of deep divisions, not the community that is building bonds between all the groups. Without the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle and our faithful benefactors in Scotland Francis would not have been ordained because Good Shepherd Seminary would not be funded.

Scotland can be rightly proud of the work that is proceeding in Nigeria and our small, but essential part in it.

Hear Fr. Francis tell his own story on our website:

www.missioscotland.org.uk and click on the VIDEO link.

Mission Prayer Groups

Please continue to pray for our missionaries and for the Church in the mission areas. The Vatican's Fides agency reported that 20 missionaries includes an archbishop, several priests and religious were killed in 2008.

This list, compiled by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, includes the names of missionaries as well as all pastoral workers who died violent deaths, sacrificing their lives as a result of hatred of the faith or other reasons. The list avoids using the term "martyrs," leaving this judgment of merit to the Church.

Nonetheless, Fides affirmed the need to recall and pray for the deceased who, "without any false heroism or solemn proclamations, [...] were not afraid to risk their own lives on a daily basis, often in situations of suffering, poverty and tensions, so as to offer all those around them the vital force of Christian hope."

Are You a Missionary Yet?

You can take on your mission in various ways. You ;

- can be a missionary through prayer. The Mission Rosary enables individuals and groups to support our missionaries in their darkest times. Supplies are available, free, from our office.
- could become your parish mission organiser. We can help you.
- can donate to MISSIO at any time.
- can provide for Missionaries through a legacy when you no longer need money.

Contact our office for further details.

Extra copies of this newsletter can be found in our website under 'Parish Resources'.