



Report



Blessings and Challenges

Dear Friends,

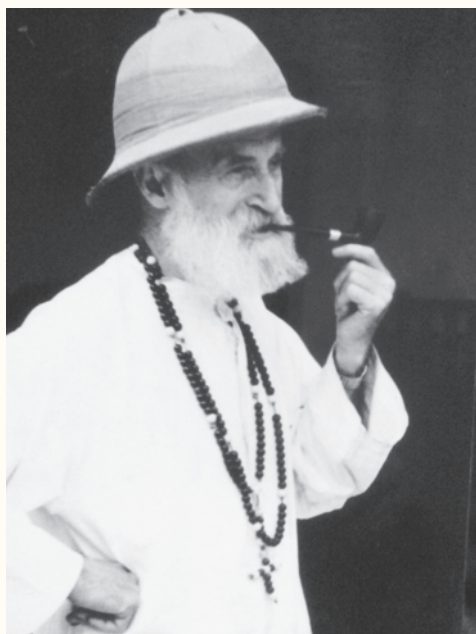
Every year comes with its score of blessings and challenges. We have all grown accustomed to it, year in, year out. As 2017 draws to a close, some of us already await with great anticipation the coming of 2018. However, before the New Year clocks in, many may want to review the year. While some count their blessings, others, on the contrary, will look back with regret to the challenges the year had in store for them. Whatever the scenario, we should never lose sight of its lessons. Similarly, as in many circumstances, our hardest times often lead to the most significant moments of our lives. So, I hope that our challenges will be turned into blessings at the end of the day.

Let me take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support of our ministry across the vast continent of Africa. Your support helped provide clean

water and solar energy, build health facilities for women and children, provide child and adult education, reconcile warring communities, restore hope and dignity to vulnerable populations. These are among others the objectives we achieved in 2017 thanks to your support. Hence, the year ends on a positive note, and we are indebted to all our friends and partners.

As we look forward to 2018, we anticipate another year of blessings. 2018 is the 150th anniversary of our foundation by Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers in Algeria. 150 years (1868-2018) at the service of God's people in Africa deserves a special vote of thanks. May God's grace be upon all of you. Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Fr. Barthelemy Bazemo MAfr
President of the Missionaries of Africa in the USA



Typical Missionary of Africa circa 1950. In 2017, Fr. Paul Reilly, 37, MAfr from California, is serving in Ethiopia. His mission: Encounter: to live the Gospel among the People, taking care of a Youth Center.

Photos: MAfr Africa Report



“Since 1868” ... 150 years and counting!

For all those peoples of Africa, focus of the life of Cardinal Charles Lavigerie (1825-1892): “The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die” (late Edward Kennedy).

So, in Algeria, in 1868, a new archbishop, Charles Lavigerie, dreamed into existence two Religious Institutes, the **Society of the Missionaries of Africa, MAfr**, and the **Missionary Sisters of our Lady of Africa, MSOLA**, whose novitiate opened a year later. His vision was expressed in the rules he laid down for the first missionaries, the priests, Brothers and Sisters: - **You will learn the language and way of life of the people.** - **You will eat their food.** - **You will wear what they wear.**

Those who joined this mission were dressed like contemporary Algerians in a white cotton or woolen robe known as a gandoura and, for winter, a white cape called a burnouse. They could even wear a red fez or chechia under their turban. It was this clothing that led to their being dubbed “the White Fathers” by the Algerians. And the Sisters were known as “the White Sisters!”

The Missionaries of Africa did, however, wear a strong religious symbol: a rosary inspired by Islamic and Oriental prayer beads. These habits survive to this day in limited use, keeping in mind: “You will wear what the people wear.”

In Algeria, their mission would be social: clinics, schools, farming development. As in the Gospels, giving thanks to God, they tried to imitate Jesus, caring for the sick, the old, the women, the workers, the children, the lepers, the soldiers and even the “tax collectors.” Founder Charles Lavigerie, however, was already dreaming bigger. When appointed to Algiers, he wrote to one of his friends: “*Algeria is an open door to the whole continent.*” The interior of this huge continent was then barely known in Europe.

Numbers grew enough to send out a first “caravan” in 1876, bound for Timbuktu. They were slaughtered by the desert nomads, considering them as rivals on their trade routes in the Sahara. Two years later, another caravan of 10 missionaries arrived on the East coast of Africa. After three months of walking, they reached Lake Nyanza (Victoria) and settled in the Kingdom of Buganda in January 1879. Other caravans would follow, often in difficult conditions. The adventure of the “White Fathers” had begun.

At the death of the Founder, in 1892, 278 Missionaries of Africa, of 5 nationalities, were already working in 6 countries known today as Algeria, Tunisia, Uganda, Tanzania, DR Congo and Zambia.

In January 2017, the MAfr were 1232, from 36 different nationalities, living in 215 communities and working in 45 countries, (24 in Africa). The Sisters are 600. More than 550 young men and women are in training. The work goes on, the dream continues, the vision is being enriched.

from Fr. Joseph Perrier MAfr

100 people learn to read and write IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE: LYÉLÉ

In Burkina Faso, West Africa, we are fighting against illiteracy in many ways. In the parish of Zoula, the struggle begun many years ago and will continue until we succeed.

Zoula is a parish of the Diocese of Koudougou. Created in 2002, it serves around **24,000 inhabitants**: Christians, Muslims as well as people of Traditional religion. People are hard-working but not formally educated. More than **40%** of the population is **illiterate**.

Thanks to the Missionaries of Africa **Development Office**, around 100 people will be able to read and write in they own language, Lyélé. Three classes were opened in the villages of Zoula, Goundi and Kameji. The first with 27, the second, 23, and the third one, 40. People are still coming to register. Some never went to school. Others went to school only to learn French, but they did not get further than Primary School. Now they also want to be taught in their own language. The funds given by the Development Office were for 60 women. We know now that more people want to engage in **“adult education.”**

Based on Pope Paul VI words in 1967, the Catholic Church has the mission of contributing to the **“integral human development,”** spiritual, intellectual, health and social development, necessary to human happiness and economic progress. This is the main reason why this project was born. In addition to spiritual food, in the rural villages of our Parish, people need **knowledge** in order to keep hope and open their minds to **a worldwide perspective** on human development.

Teaching **women** is our main goal. According to the old mentality of our ethnic group, **girls** are not sent to school. Do they need formal education for the housewife's chores? The past generations considered that girls who had gone to school were too emancipated and therefore, disobedient to the elders and their husbands. That mentality is changing progressively.

Our expectation at the end of the campaign is to allow women, in their small notebooks, to control their own finances; to read information related to their **health** and that of their children; to read and write in relation with their **own culture and way of life**; to be able to understand by themselves the **Holy Bible** and **prayers in their own language...**

We are very thankful to you and to the Missionaries of Africa. God bless you all!

*Father Athanase K. Bationo
Diocesan Priest of Koudougou
Zoula, October 23, 2017*



**In Zoula, Burkina Faso
West Africa,
more than 100 people
want to engage
in adult education.
“We are very thankful
to those who will help us.
God bless you all!”**

Photos: Fr. Athanase K. Bationo



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