

**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
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**THE MISSION OF THE WHITE FATHERS IN KENYA WITH  
SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI  
1968 – 2008**

**SUPERVISOR**

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Arts Degree in Theology

**NAIROBI 2017**

## **STUDENT’S DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this Thesis is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection.

It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Theology. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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Name of Supervisor: Rev. Dr. Joseph Ngulu Mpala

Date:.....

## **DEDICATION**

To all the Missionaries of Africa who have worked and continue to  
work in Kenya

## **EPIGRAPH**

Sent by God, the Father,  
We “The Missionaries of Africa  
Want to reveal his Love,  
Deeply-rooted in Christ,  
In small international and intercultural communities,  
To the heart of the local Churches  
As brothers or priests  
In dialogue with  
Other cultures, and especially with the Africans,  
Other religions and particularly Islam  
For the promotion of all humanity,  
We commit ourselves for and with the poor, as initiators  
and agents of unity and reconciliation.  
Commitment for Justice, Peace and the safeguard of the Creation.  
We want to be bearers of hope  
On the road of Liberation.

[From the Website of the White Fathers:  
[http://vocations.ca/communities\\_dioceses/brothers/white\\_fathers/](http://vocations.ca/communities_dioceses/brothers/white_fathers/) (accessed 2/3/17)]

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AG	Ad Gentes
Bp.	Bishop
CCL	Code of Canon Law
Cor	Corinthians (the first letter of St. Paul)
CUEA	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
Fr.	Father
LG	Lumen Gentium
MAfr.	Missionary of Africa
Msg.	Monsignor
OLQP	Our Lady Queen of Peace
SCCs	Small Christian Communities
STE	St. Teresa's Eastleigh
TUC	Tangaza University College
TUSA	Tushirikiane Africa
UoN	University of Nairobi
W. F.	White Father (s)

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, stresses the truth that dominated the Synod of Bishops of 1973 that Jesus “was the very first and greatest evangelizer” (*EN*, 7). First of all, that Christ proclaimed the Kingdom of God (Lk 4:43), the Good News of God (Mk 1:1, Rom 1:1-3), and salvation and liberation of God (Lk 4:18). Consequently, all those who gathered around him, who believed in him and followed him were called to participate in his evangelizing mission, “to seek together the Kingdom of God, build it up and live it” (*EN*, 13).

Thus, “the Church is born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the twelve” (*EN*, 15); “the beginning of the journey of the pilgrim Church” (*RM*, 26) starts right here. The Church understands evangelization as “bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new” (*EN*, 18).

Therefore, in striving to obey the command of her founder (Mt 28:19 ff), the Church considers herself to be divinely sent and hence “missionary by her very nature” (*AG*, 2). The mission of the Church is, therefore, fulfilled by this very activity; that is, spreading the faith and salvation of Jesus Christ. This duty, inherited from the apostles, is to be fulfilled by all the ‘people of God’<sup>1</sup> everywhere who are

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<sup>1</sup> In the Old Testament, the Israelites are called “the People of God” (Judges 20:2; 2Sam 14:13; Ex 6:7; Jer 31:31-34). In the New Testament, the expression “People of God” and its equivalent is found in Heb 4:9; Rev 21:3; 2Cor 6:16; 1Pt 1:23; Jn 3:5-6; 1Pt 2:9-10; 1Cor

“called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfil in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each” (CCL, 204). The people of God are invited to bring God’s hope and salvation to the world; and to be a sign of the love of God who calls all to relationship with him. Mission, therefore, can be said to be all those undertakings that are aimed at “carrying out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among people or groups who do not yet believe in Christ” (AG 6). In their missionary activities, all missionary congregations in the Catholic Church are bound by this mandate of Christ.

In Africa, south of the Sahara, the first missions took place under the Portuguese Royal Patronage system, ‘*Padroado*’<sup>2</sup>. This is because Africa fell under their territory and they had control over Church affairs in all their territories. In Kenya, the earliest efforts of evangelization by the Portuguese missionaries began in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They built the first chapel in East Africa in Mombasa. Unfortunately, when the *padroado* system failed the missionary activities failed as well. The 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, saw the coming of different Catholic Missionary congregations in Kenya. The first groups to arrive were the Holy Ghost Fathers, also called Spiritans (1889), the Consolata Missionaries (1902) and the Mill Hill Fathers (1903) respectively. Later, other missionary groups also arrived. Among them were the Missionaries of Africa in early 1960’s. They are “also known as “White Fathers”

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11:25. This term “People of God” (in Latin, *Populus Dei*) was also used by Church Fathers like St. Augustine (in *De civitate Dei*), Popes like John XXIII (in his apostolic letter *Singulari studio*) and the Vatican II Fathers (in the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*). According to *Lumen Gentium* the new People of God refer to the Jews and Gentiles, “to whom the testament and the promises were given, and from whom Christ was born according to flesh” (LG 16). The 1983 Code of Canon Law describes people of God as “Christian faithful who have been incorporated in Christ through baptism and made sharers in their own way in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and royal function...” (Can 204).

<sup>2</sup>*Padroado*, Portuguese word for ‘Patronage’ refers to the support, encouragement, and financial help given to another by an individual or an organization. Portuguese Patronage/*Padroado* system was an arrangement between the Holy See and the kingdom of Portugal by which the kings on Portugal were given the administration of the local churches. With this power, therefore, the Portuguese kings ordered the construction of churches, nominated pastors/priests and bishops and provided aid like funds for the mission work.

because at the time when all priests wore a black cassock, the Missionaries of Africa wore a kind of white dress called *gandourah* in North Africa where they were founded.”<sup>3</sup>In fact, the two names will be used interchangeably in this essay to refer to the same group of missionaries. The Spiritans were also called “Black Fathers” because of their robes.<sup>4</sup>This thesis is aimed at studying the mission of the White Fathers in Kenya, 40 years since their arrival (1968 – 2008).

The area of study is the Archdiocese of Nairobi. It is chosen because this is the only place where the White Fathers have been working since their arrival to date. The areas of interest targeted are pastoral, education/teaching and social work.

The study is organized in four chapters. Chapter one will set a general introduction and a historical background for the details that follow. Chapter two will consider the congregation of the White Fathers. Chapter three will concentrate on the activities and approaches of the White Fathers. Chapter four will offer the analysis of the data, recommendations and a general conclusion. Finally, there will be appendices with some important dates in the mission of the White Fathers in Kenya, maps, pictures and other illustrations.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://mafrone.org/about-us/who-we-are/>

<sup>4</sup>Cf. C. GOGAN, H.G.M., *Spiritans in Nairobi 1899 – 1999*, 16.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

# **A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE EVANGELIZATION OF KENYA**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter briefly describes the geographical background of Nairobi city and a short input on the social, cultural, political and religious life of the people before the coming of the missionaries. This is followed by a presentation on the Archdiocese of Nairobi where this study was done. Then we will look at the early efforts of evangelization of Kenya by the Portuguese, the Augustinian missionaries and later the Holy Ghost Fathers, the Consolata Missionaries and the Mill Hill Fathers. Studying this chapter will help us to begin appreciating the foundations of Christian faith particularly Catholicism in Kenya. Let us now begin with a brief description of the geographical background Nairobi city.

### **1.1 Brief Geographical Background of Nairobi City**

Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya, a sovereign state found in East Africa with a coastline on the Indian Ocean. The name comes from the Maasai phrase

*Enkare Nyirobi* which translates as “the place of cool waters”. Nairobi is a cosmopolitan city with all kinds of people, giving it a multicultural composition. With these qualities and many others, many people come to the city searching for job opportunities. Majority of this population live in the slums.

## **1.2 Nairobi Before the arrival of the Missionaries: The Social, Political, Cultural and Religious life of the People**

Before the coming of the missionaries and the advent of Christianity, Nairobi was a central place where people from three tribes; Kamba, Maasai and Kikuyu used to meet and have exchanges in trade, culture and religion. Barter trade was practiced. For example, the Kamba businessmen and women from the east would bring in items like salt, bangles and cloths from coastal Swahili and Arab peoples to the Maasai who would happily exchange some of their animals for bangles and cloth<sup>5</sup>. Again, the people commonly shared the belief of a supreme and supernatural being who is the source of everything in the world and who controls everything because he has power over both the living and the dead. There was also the belief in the spirits existing in a hierarchy and placed between man and God. These spirits are necessary for ensuring a good relationship between man and God/the divine.

## **1.3 Archdiocese of Nairobi**

This study was carried out in the archdiocese of Nairobi in Kenya. As we have seen in chapter one, the Archdiocese of Nairobi finds its roots in the Prefecture of Zanzibar which extended along the Indian Ocean. The Archdiocese was created

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<sup>5</sup>L. M. NJOROGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 51.

25<sup>th</sup> March 1953<sup>6</sup>. Kenya is divided in 43 administrative regions called Counties. The Archdiocese of Nairobi covers two of these counties: Nairobi and Kiambu<sup>7</sup>. It serves an estimated population of over 4 million people where 1.6 million are Catholics. The population is highly cosmopolitan with people coming from all communities in Kenya and the world at large. Today, His Eminence, John Cardinal Njue is the ordinary of the Archdiocese assisted by Rt. Rev. David Kamau Ngang'a.<sup>8</sup>

The Archdiocese has 10 deaneries and 110 parishes not counting the chaplaincies. Currently, the diocese is served by approximately 200 diocesan clergy and many religious men and women. Out of these are the White Fathers worked in St Teresa of Avila Parish in Eastleigh, commonly known as *St. Teresa's Eastleigh* (STE) and Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Parish in South B. Today they are found only in OLQP parish. This study intends to examine their missionary endeavour in the Archdiocese of Nairobi for the first 40 years since their arrival, that is, 1968 – 2008.

#### **1.4 Early Efforts of Evangelization of Kenya**

In this section, we shall present a survey of the early efforts of evangelization of Kenya. The time under investigation is the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the coming of the modern missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus we shall look at the Portuguese at the Kenyan Coast, the Augustinian Missionaries, the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans) the Consolata Missionaries and the Mill Hill Missionaries. Let us now begin by examining the efforts of evangelization of the Kenyan coast by the Portuguese.

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<sup>6</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholic\\_Archdiocese\\_of\\_Nairobi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Nairobi) (accessed 21/2/17).

<sup>7</sup><https://archdioceseofnairobi.org/about-us> (accessed 21/2/17).

<sup>8</sup><https://archdioceseofnairobi.org/about-us> (accessed 21/2/17).

## 1.5 Portuguese at the Kenyan Coast 1500 – 1700 AD

The kingdoms of Portugal and Spain (later republic of Portugal and Spain) were the two super powers of the time. These countries were always struggling for dominance over the other. Besides Spain, Portugal, a country with a strong catholic background, was also being threatened by the Arabs who had expanded their territory so fast by conquering many countries in Europe and Northern Africa and spreading Islamic religion. This struggle for dominance and political rivalry continued for a long time. In order to safeguard her territories and all her activities, Portugal entered an agreement with the Pope. And on January 8, 1455, Pope<sup>9</sup> Nicholas V granted all African territories to King Alfonso V (1432 - 1481) of Portugal through the bull<sup>10</sup> *Romanus Pontifex*<sup>11</sup>. The bull read, in part:

...the right of conquest which in the course of these letters we declare to be extended from the capes of Bojador and of Nãõ, as far as through all Guinea, and

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<sup>9</sup> The Pope was to issue the bull because he is considered the spiritual leader of the universal Church on earth. And as such, he possesses and freely exercises supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church (CCL, 331). Now, with this theory that the Pope was an arbitrator between nations, the two kingdoms of Spain and Portugal sought to obtain Papal bulls at various times on the ground that their activities were aimed at spreading Christianity. And indeed the *Romanus Pontifex* is an example indicating this Papal claim to be the spiritual leader of the whole Church.

<sup>10</sup> A bull is a formal/official proclamation (letter, charter, or document) issued by the Pope and is sealed with a metal seal. The name is derived from the lead seal called *bullæ* which was traditionally affixed at the end of such documents to authenticate them. The term "*bullæ*" derives from Latin "*bullire*", meaning "to boil". It indicates that the metal used to make the seal (wax, lead or gold) was first melted to soften it so that it can make effect on the document when used. Papal bulls have been in use since 6<sup>th</sup> century but the term became much used by end of 13<sup>th</sup> century. From the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Papal bulls carry a lead seal with the heads of apostles Peter and Paul on one side and the reigning pope's name on the other. Since 18<sup>th</sup> century this lead seal has been replaced with a red ink stamp of Saints Peter and Paul with the name of the reigning pope. Today any document containing this seal is called a bull. The bull is the only written communication in which the Pope begins with his name followed by the Papal title *episcopus servus servorum Dei*, meaning, 'bishop, servant of the servants of God.' Subjects treated in the Papal bulls include excommunications (e.g. *Decret Romanum Pontificem*, of Pope Leo X, Jan 3, 1521 excommunicating Martin Luther), canonizations (e.g. *Mira Mira Nos* of Pope Gregory IX for canonization of St. Francis of Assisi), and convocations (e.g. *Humanae salutis*, "Of human salvation" of Pope John XXIII, Dec 25, 1961 summoning Vatican II). The most recent bull is *Misericordiae Vultus*, "The Face of Mercy" of Pope Francis, April 11, 2016, indicating the Extraordinary Year of Mercy 2015 – 2016.

<sup>11</sup> *Romanus Pontifex* is Latin for "The Roman Pontiff". It is a Papal bull written in 1454 by Pope Nicholas V to King Alfonso V of Portugal. The bull confirmed the Crown of Portugal dominion over all lands in Africa.

beyond toward that southern shore, has belonged and pertained, and forever of right belongs and pertains, to the said King Alfonso, his successors, and... not to any others... We grant among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid King Alfonso -- to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ... and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit...<sup>12</sup>

Anyone who disrespected the orders of the bull would be punished. The punishment was even prescribed in the bull itself:

...if they be single persons, they shall incur the sentence of excommunication; if a community or corporation of a city, castle, village, or place, that city, castle, village, or place shall be thereby subject to the interdict; and we decree further that transgressors, collectively or individually, shall not be absolved from the sentence of excommunication, nor be able to obtain the relaxation of this interdict...<sup>13</sup>

As we can see, this Papal bull granted the Portuguese “a monopoly of all rule, trade and religion in the continent.”<sup>14</sup> Focusing on religion, John Baur, in his book *200 Years of Christianity in Africa* writes that “early Christianity south of the Sahara is a by-product of the Portuguese maritime trade empire, build up in the so called Age of Discoveries, when Christopher Columbus discovered America (1492) and Vasco da Gama the sea route to India (1498)”.<sup>15</sup>

Expeditions to Africa began with “Dom Henrique, third son of King João I of Portugal, who came to be known as Henry the Navigator (1394 – 1460)”.<sup>16</sup> He had plans to expand the kingdom, his geographical knowledge and his country’s trade. Vasco da Gama was part of this great plan. So on April 7, 1498, he arrived in Mombasa near the place where Fort Jesus stands today. As a way of counteracting Islam and spread the Christian faith in Africa, Vasco da Gama “erected a mable

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<sup>12</sup><http://www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/indig-romanus-pontifex.html> (accessed 8/9/16).

<sup>13</sup><http://www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/indig-romanus-pontifex.html> (accessed 8/9/16).

<sup>14</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 15.

<sup>15</sup>J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, 43.

<sup>16</sup>J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, 44.

pillar at Malindi to commemorate the friendly treaty<sup>17</sup> that was concluded between Malindi and Portugal.”<sup>18</sup> The pillar had two functions: it “was a symbol of the sovereignty of Portugal on the East Coast and also a symbol of Christianity”.<sup>19</sup>

It is also said that the Portuguese, in the name of Vasco da Gama, were “looking for an ally in the person of ‘Pester John’<sup>20</sup>, reportedly a Christian monarch ruling Ethiopia”<sup>21</sup> with intention to join efforts to “oust Moslems from Africa.”<sup>22</sup> In 1599, Vasco da Gama reported that the church in Mombasa was nearly completed and that evangelization was in progress. The reports indicate that by 1600 there had been 1,200 baptisms and that there was a Christian community of 4000 souls<sup>23</sup>.

By 1624, there seems to have been 4 established places of worship in Mombasa: “The Augustinian Cathedral, the *Misericordia* church, the church inside the walled town called *igreja matriz* (mother church) and a chapel inside Fort Jesus”.<sup>24</sup> Fort Jesus, “a great monument designed by an Italian chief engineer of India, Giobanni Battista Cairati,”<sup>25</sup> was completed in 1595.

As the Portuguese mission and influence continued to thrive, their struggle for dominance and political rivalry with the Arabs continued for a long time.

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<sup>17</sup> By this friendly treaty it meant that Malindi was to remain a vital supporter and collaborator of the Portuguese occupation, which was surrounded by hostile Islamic forces who were the enemies of Portugal.

<sup>18</sup>J. GRAY, *Early Portuguese Missionaries in East Africa*, 3.

<sup>19</sup>Z. NTHAMBURI, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya: A Survey”, 30/8/16.

<sup>20</sup> Prester John was an African legendary King of whom people in Europe had heard and spoke much about in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was said of him that he was a powerful Christian King ruling a strong Christian kingdom in Africa with a lot of wisdom and justice. Portuguese went out in search for this King so as to make an alliance with him. They thought that such an alliance with a powerful Christian King in Africa would be very helpful in their struggle against the expansion of Muslims in Africa.

<sup>21</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 17.

<sup>22</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 17.

<sup>23</sup>Z. NTHAMBURI, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya: A Survey”, 30/8/16.

<sup>24</sup>Z. NTHAMBURI, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya: A Survey”, 30/8/16.

<sup>25</sup>Z. NTHAMBURI, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya: A Survey”, 30/8/16.

Unfortunately, the *Padroado* system which depended on the Portuguese government failed and so were the missionary activities. There was also inadequacy of finances and personnel for the missions. Again, the Portuguese missionaries failed in their mission of preaching the message of Christ of salvation and liberation. Instead they joined “their Arab rivals in trading in human misery”<sup>26</sup> causing more harm than good to the local population through slave trade which took place from the 15<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is because of these, among other factors, that the powerful Portuguese slowly began weakening. This became an advantage to their rivals, the Arabs, whose influence and control of the East African coast increased. In 1696, over three thousand Islamic men besieged Fort Jesus for thirty three months and in 1698, Fort Jesus fell.<sup>27</sup>

Many Portuguese were killed and their “flag was lowered for the last time”<sup>28</sup> by the Arabs as a sign of total defeat and end of the Portuguese rule. By the end of the seventeenth century the Portuguese had been completely expelled from the East African Coast. After the Arabs regained control of the Coast, they spread the Islamic faith and culture with such vigour and zeal. For them, to be Christian is to be Portuguese. And because of their hatred for Portuguese, they destroyed anything Christian to the point that when the first modern missionaries arrived in the nineteenth century there was no trace of Christianity at the East African Coast.

## **1.6 Augustinian Missionaries/Friars**

One of the instructions in the *Romanus Pontifex* said that King Alfonso may:

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<sup>26</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 26.

<sup>27</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 22.

<sup>28</sup>Z. NTHAMBURI, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya: A Survey”, 30/8/16.

...send any ecclesiastical persons whatsoever, as volunteers, both seculars, and regulars of any of the mendicant orders (with license, however, from their superiors), and that those persons may abide there as long as they shall live, and hear confessions of all who live in the said parts...and give due absolution...and administer the ecclesiastical sacraments freely and lawfully...<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, since East African coast was under the Portuguese, they invited the Augustinian Friars who founded a mission in Mombasa in 1597.<sup>30</sup> However, because Islam was present at the coast long before Christianity and had taken root these Augustinian Friars found few non-Muslims to convert and consequently little work to do. They resulted to being “chaplains to their compatriots who were locked in battle with the Moslems”.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, they did not make any efforts to venture into the interior of Kenya. The Arabs ejected these Augustinian Friars together with the Portuguese. There was no Christianity at the Kenyan Coast until the arrival of the Holy Ghost Fathers in the so called Missionary Period of the nineteenth century.

### **1.7 Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans)**

The congregation was founded in 1703. In 1885, a Spiritan priest, Fr. Alexandre Le Roy was sent to Mombasa by his superior. He lived there for five months after which he submitted a report to his superior that a catholic mission should be established there. This was because he had found a few Catholics who had recently arrived from Bangalore (to work in the Railway) and a few Africans from the inland, who, he thought, might be sympathetic to the Christian cause since they were non-Muslims.<sup>32</sup> The report was positively received and in 1891 the Holy Ghost

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<sup>29</sup><http://www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/indig-romanus-pontifex.html> (accessed 8/9/16).

<sup>30</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 24.

<sup>31</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 25.

<sup>32</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 46.

Fathers established a station in Mombasa. This decision set the beginning of a new trend and period of Christian evangelization of East Coast and the interior of Kenya.

When the construction of the Uganda Railway reached Nairobi it turned out to be a great help to the task of spreading the gospel in what is today Kenya. Msg. Emile Auguste Allgeyer, Vicar Apostolic of Zanzibar<sup>33</sup>, and two priests of the Holy Ghost Fathers; Fr. Alain Héméry (who became the superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers' mission in Nairobi) and Fr. Blanchard boarded a train from Bura and arrived in Nairobi in May 1899. These three were the first Catholic Missionaries to arrive in Nairobi – the interior of Kenya.

Once in Nairobi, they began the task of founding a mission. The local people who frequented Nairobi at the time were Kamba, Maasai and Kikuyu, and the Goan Catholics working in the railway company<sup>34</sup>. Two weeks after their arrival, Fr. Blanchard visited a wealthy and powerful chief Kinyanjui of the Kikuyu asking for a place they could put up. On December 26, 1899, a land deal between Kinyanjui and the Spiritans was concluded for which five bags of rice were given in the exchange<sup>35</sup>. On this plot was built St. Austin, the first Catholic Church in the interior of Kenya. Apart from the mission, the Spiritans founded (on this plot) a Christian village modelled on 'Bagamoyo Christian village'<sup>36</sup> "with local converts and ex-slave Christians they had brought with them from the coast"<sup>37</sup>. They kept animals like cows and also practiced agriculture to support the people in this Christian village. They had over a thousand acres of coffee plantation. They started in 1899

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<sup>33</sup> The vicariate of Zanzibar was founded in 1883. It stretched from coastal areas of Somalia, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania to Mt. Kilimanjaro. This area was entrusted to the care of the Holy Ghost Fathers.

<sup>34</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 50 – 51.

<sup>35</sup>C. GOGAN, H.G.M., *Spiritans in Nairobi 1899 – 1999*, 29.

<sup>36</sup>C. GOGAN, H.G.M., *Spiritans in Nairobi 1899 – 1999*, 27.

<sup>37</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 58.

with 100 seedlings and grew up to 15,000 seedlings in 1910<sup>38</sup>. From this, therefore, we can deduce the fact that they did not limit themselves only to religious training but also sought to bring transformation at all levels by training people in agriculture, animal keeping and different life skills.

The movement of the Spiritans from the coastal area to the main land took a process: Mombasa to Bura (1892), Bura to Nairobi (1899). From Nairobi, the Spiritans extended their missionary activities to eastern and central Kenya. They opened stations in Riara/Kiambu (1904), Mang'u (1906) and Riruta (1909).<sup>39</sup> Another most significant group in the evangelization of Kenya are the Consolata Missionaries for whom we now turn to.

## 1.8 Consolata Missionaries

Consolata Missionaries were founded “by Canons Giuseppe Allamano and Giacomo Camisassa”<sup>40</sup> in Turin, Italy in 1901 with intention to start their work among the ‘Galla people’<sup>41</sup>. The first expedition of the Consolata Missionaries to Kenya consisted of two priests – Tommaso Gays, 31, as superior, and Filippo Perlo, 29, as administrator; and two lay brothers – Luigi Falda, 19, and Celeste Lusso, 18<sup>42</sup> who arrived in East Africa in May 1902. They were warmly received by Bp.

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<sup>38</sup>Cf. C. GOGAN, H.G.M., *Spiritans in Nairobi 1899 – 1999*, 24.

<sup>39</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 63.

<sup>40</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 81.

<sup>41</sup>The Galla people were traditionalists found in Ethiopia. Fr. Allamano had been influenced by the conversation he had with a Capuchin missionary to Ethiopia, Bp. Guglielmo Massaia, during their meeting at Don Bosco Oratory school in Italy. Massaia was made bishop in 1846 and sent to Ethiopia as apostolic vicar to the Galla people. After a short time he experienced opposition from the Coptic Church and the government leaders. He was imprisoned and expelled to Italy in 1864. While in Italy he stayed at Don Bosco Oratory school where Fr. Allamano happened to meet him. Their meeting impressed Allamano who was inspired to form a missionary group to continue the work left by Bp. Massaia.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World (1901 – 2001)*, 31.

Allgeyer in Zanzibar Island. Soon after their arrival they boarded a train to Nairobi together with Bp. Allgeyer. Thanks to the Uganda Railway for facilitating this fast movement. In Nairobi they were welcomed by the Holy Ghost Fathers who had been here for almost three years (1899 – 1902). Not long after their arrival in Nairobi, “the governor of Italian Somaliland bordering on Ethiopia, Commander Emilio Dulio, advised the Consolata against trying to reach southern Ethiopia”<sup>43</sup> due to the unstable political conditions that made it very dangerous to travel by caravan.

The superior of the Consolata Missionaries, Fr. Giuseppe Allamano, wrote to the superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers, Msg. Le Roy, to allow temporarily the Consolata Missionaries to stay and work in the Kikuyu land.<sup>44</sup> This was because “the Kikuyu territory was a British protectorate, a concession of the East Africa Company and a mission of the Holy Ghost Fathers, from the island of Zanzibar to Uganda”.<sup>45</sup> The request was granted. So the Consolata Missionaries, were given the central region of Kenya to work among the Kikuyu people. They were greatly assisted by Bp. Allgeyer to establish their first mission in Tuthu. These ‘Italian missionaries’ from the diocese of Turin exhibited their strong spirit and dynamic character in their missionary work. They arrived in central Kenya in 1902 and by 1904 (a period of two years) they had opened eleven stations in different places. That is, in 1902 they founded Tuthu, Limuru, Fort Hall, Gaichanjiru, Gatanga and Ichagaki. In 1903 they founded Tetu, Mugoiri and Gikondi in Nyeri. And in 1904 they founded Karima near Nyeri.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 82.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World (1901 – 2001)*, 31.

<sup>45</sup>G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World (1901 – 2001)*, 31.

<sup>46</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 84.

In 1906 they opened a catechist school, an orphanage and an agricultural institute in Nyeri. They requested for religious sisters from Turin to come and work with them. The first Consolata sisters arrived in 1913<sup>47</sup>. In September 14, 1905, “Propaganda Fide created the Province of Kenya as an independent mission confined to the Consolata Institute.”<sup>48</sup> It comprised “the districts of Murang’a (then known as Fort Hall), Nyeri, Nyandarua (then Aberdare), Embu, Meru and in all the vicinity around Mt Kenya”.<sup>49</sup> It should be noted, however, that this territory is not the same as that of the present day Kenya. Indeed, the Consolata Missionaries did a tremendous work especially in central Kenya.

At this point we now turn to yet another missionary group, the Mill Hill Missionaries, who also had a remarkable contribution to the beginnings of Christianity in Kenya especially in the Western region.

### **1.9 Mill Hill Missionaries**

The first Catholic Missionaries in Uganda, ‘the French speaking’ White Fathers, invited the English speaking Mill Hill Missionaries “to show that their religion was not just a French religion.”<sup>50</sup> Having accepted the invitation, Bishop Hanlon, of the Mill Hill Missionaries, “asked their headquarters at Algiers for advice”<sup>51</sup> on how to organize a caravan. This is because the White Fathers were well experienced after having sent several caravans to Uganda. After receiving this report, Bp. Hanlon studied it carefully and immediately started organizing his

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<sup>47</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 85.

<sup>48</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 85.

<sup>49</sup>L. M. NJORGE, *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*, 85.

<sup>50</sup>H. BURGMAN, *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, 7.

<sup>51</sup>H. BURGMAN, *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, 8.

companions for this great expedition to Africa. On May 12<sup>th</sup> 1895, the first Mill Hill Missionaries led by Bishop Hanlon left Europe by boat and arrived in Zanzibar May 31<sup>st</sup> and in Mombasa on June 9<sup>th</sup> 1895 respectively<sup>52</sup>. They were received by the Holy Ghost Fathers in Mombasa.

On Saturday June 22, 1895, the Mill Hill Missionaries set off on "...a two month's trek with 200 strangers through an unknown land with no maps..."<sup>53</sup> to Uganda. They finally arrived in Kampala on September 6, 1895 and established themselves on Nsambya Hill, a mission inherited from the White Fathers with 400 Catechumens<sup>54</sup>. They then opened up other missions like Naggalama (1896), Nkokonjeru (1897) and Bukaleba (1899).

More groups of Mill Hill Missionaries continued to come and by 1892 it was expected that missions "would be opened to the East of the Lake, in what was to be called Kenya later on."<sup>55</sup> Stations were established in different places: Mumias, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kisii, Eldoret and Nandi region, Nakuru and Naivasha.

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<sup>52</sup>H. BURGMAN, *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, 10.

<sup>53</sup>H. BURGMAN, *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, 13.

<sup>54</sup>H. BURGMAN, *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, 23.

<sup>55</sup>H. BURGMAN, *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, 24-25.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE COMING OF THE WHITE FATHERS

#### 2.0 Introduction

*Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28: 18-20).*

The entire mission of the church throughout the world lies in the accomplishing of the purpose of God on earth. Christ, the risen Lord, commissions and sends the eleven to continue his ministry: to make disciples, baptise and teach/preach the Gospel to all nations (Mt 28:18-20). Francis stresses this point in *Evangelii Gaudium* when he says that the risen Lord "sent his followers to preach the Gospel in every time and place, so that faith in him might spread to every corner of the earth" (EG, 19). To become a disciple of Jesus is to become in some sense an evangelist with a mission. It is like the labourers in the vineyard in the gospel of Matthew (Mt 20:1-7).

In *Christifideles Laici* Pope St. John Paul II says that this Lord's vineyard (all nations) is vast "and the multitude of persons, both women and men are called

and sent forth by him to labour in it” (CL,1).When evangelization permeates all cultures, it brings about a radical change which characterizes the people of God.

In chapter one, we have seen how the continent of Africa, especially south of the Sahara started undergoing change politically, socially, culturally and religiously. This religious transformation brought about by the Christian message has several personalities behind it. Missionaries belonging to different congregations preached came to Africa guided by the dreams and inspirations of different personalities, for example, Francis (Jacob) Libermann of the Holy Ghost Fathers, Joseph Allamano of the Consolata Missionaries, and Bishop Hanlon of the Mill Hill Missionaries. These people gave their life, talents, energy and whole self to the cause of evangelization of Africa.

Now, chapter two is devoted to the study of one personality in the name of Cardinal Charles Lavigerie; the founder of the Society of White Fathers (1868) and the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (1869). Lavigerie’s generosity inspired many others from Europe to offer themselves to the same noble cause of preaching the Gospel to the people in Africa. Pope Francis remarks in his Encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, that “when our hearts are authentically open to universal communion, this sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one” (LS, 92). In this chapter we shall also examine Lavigerie’s dream for Africa, the foundation of the Society of White Fathers and their coming to Kenya.

## 2.1 Cardinal Charles Lavigerie

Lavigerie is “perhaps one of the least known yet surely one of the most distinguished”<sup>56</sup> and “outstanding man in all walks of life.”<sup>57</sup> Among the persons in the religious field in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lavigerie is considered the “greater and humbler than many of them...”<sup>58</sup> He was born on October 31, 1825 at Bayonne, south of France to a “fairly prosperous, middle-class parents...”<sup>59</sup>. At twenty nine years, his father, Léon-Philippe, married his mother Louise Laure Latrihle. They had four children, three boys and a girl; Lavigerie being the eldest<sup>60</sup>. Lavigerie excelled in his studies at the minor seminary of St. Nicholas-du-Chardonnet which he joined at the age of sixteen<sup>61</sup>. Later on he joined St. Sulpice senior seminary in Issy near Paris to study philosophy and theology. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1849. In 1850 he finished his doctorate studies in ecclesiastical history, specializing in “the early history of the Church, Patristics in particular.”<sup>62</sup> Soon (in 1853) he became a brilliant professor in Ecclesiastical History at the Sorbonne University.

However, being a lecturer did not satisfy Lavigerie. Instead, he felt “as a deeply pastoral priest.”<sup>63</sup> So it happened that a director for a new society, *Oeuvre des Ecoles d’Orient*<sup>64</sup> was needed. Fr de Ravignan S.J., Lavigerie’s spiritual director and one of the most outstanding priests in Paris, influenced him to accept the

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<sup>56</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 35.

<sup>57</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 35.

<sup>58</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 35-36.

<sup>59</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 36.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. F. RENAULT, *Cardinal Lavigerie: Churchman, Prophet and Missionary*, trans., 5.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. F. RENAULT, *Cardinal Lavigerie: Churchman, Prophet and Missionary*, trans., 8.

<sup>62</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 5.

<sup>63</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 5.

<sup>64</sup>*Oeuvre des Ecoles d’Orient*, was a charitable organization whose aim was to promote education and welfare work in the Middle East; and also to promote unity between the Eastern Churches with the Roman Catholic Church. It was set up in 1854 by a group of leading French Catholics to support religious communities working in Middle East (Cf. F. RENAULT, *Cardinal Lavigerie: Churchman, Prophet and Missionary*, trans., 28).

position<sup>65</sup>. Lavigerie accepted this position in 1857. But he continued to teach at the Sorbonne until 1860 when a turning point in his life came. It happened that fanatical Druses rose against the Christians of Syria and massacred them<sup>66</sup>. They destroyed towns and villages and killed over 200,000 people over a short time, while others escaped from their homes.

Following this, Lavigerie decided to quit teaching and devoted himself exclusively to his new responsibility. Immediately he began to organize a relief mission to deal with the refugee problem. It is as if Jesus had looked at him and loved him (Mk 10:21) and called him to follow him in a more radical way. He travelled all over France asking for charity to help the victims of the massacres. He collected funds, food items and other basic necessities of life to distribute to these people.

Lavigerie personally travelled to Syria himself in order to see to it that the task was properly and thoroughly done<sup>67</sup>. While there “he witnessed horrifying scenes of mutilation, diseases, famine, and destitution. He showed deep pity for the distressed, expressed in charity and respect for them.”<sup>68</sup> This became his first missionary experience which he says taught him that his true vocation was to be an apostle and missionary to the outcast, the suffering and the heathen. It also helped him to discover more of his abilities, for example, “the power of press campaigns, an able organizer, his instinctive awareness of details, his alertness in accumulating personal experience and the art of making contacts.”<sup>69</sup> It is also during this visit to Syria that he encountered the Muslims for the first time. It happened in the years later that these were the people amongst whom he lived and worked in Algeria.

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<sup>65</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 7.

<sup>66</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 36.

<sup>67</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 7.

<sup>68</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 8.

<sup>69</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 7.

In 1861, Lavigerie was appointed as Auditor of the Roman Rota<sup>70</sup>. He went to Rome and became good friends with Pope Pius IX who was very much impressed by Lavigerie's priesthood spirit and his attitude towards the contemporary church. His successor, Pope Leo XIII, also counted on Lavigerie and "wept for him as for a lost brother when he died".<sup>71</sup>

At 38 years, Lavigerie was appointed Bishop of Nancy (1863). He took up this responsibility with great charity and kindness. In fact, he even chose *Caritas* (love, charity) as motto for his coat of arms. He had enormous energy and capacity for work that no one could stop his cause<sup>72</sup>. His standards of performance were also high beyond comparison. In 1867 he became Archbishop of Algiers in Algeria<sup>73</sup>. This appointment marked the beginning of a twenty-five-year journey of Lavigerie's life in Africa where he worked, died and was buried.

In 1868, Pope Leo XIII made him the Apostolic Delegate for the Sahara and the Sudan and the Equatorial Africa. This appointment expanded his responsibility and mission field. Moreover, Lavigerie had the privilege of attending the 1<sup>st</sup> Vatican Council in 1870. In 1882, Pope Leo XIII appointed him cardinal. At the re-erection

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<sup>70</sup> The Roman Rota, also called Apostolic Tribunal of the Roman Rota (Latin: *Tribunal Apostolicum Rotae Romanae*) is the highest ecclesiastical court constituted by the Holy See. The Pope himself appoints judges, called auditors, who serve in this court. Among them he chooses a leader of the group called the Dean. In 1861, Lavigerie was appointed by Pope Pius IX as one of the auditors.

<sup>71</sup> W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 9.

<sup>72</sup> For example, it is reported that as Bishop of Nancy, Lavigerie wanted to revive the Old Catholic academic institutions which had collapsed because of the French revolution. So, he established institutions for higher learning in his diocese and put up a policy to ensure that he had properly qualified staff. The Sisters were first to sit for an examination before being allowed to teach. This instruction was opposed especially by the Nuncio who told him to withdraw on the order of the Pope (Pope Pius IX). Lavigerie wrote directly to the Pope. And the reply said that the Pope was not aware of such an order and that he was giving Lavigerie full support in this instruction. (This example is paraphrased from the book *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, p 10, by William Burrige; London: Geoffrey Chapman 1966).

<sup>73</sup> *Cardinal Lavigerie: Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 15.

of the See of Carthage in 1884, Cardinal Lavigerie became responsible of it and also became the Primate of Africa<sup>74</sup>.

Lavigerie is known as a champion of anti-slavery campaign which he started around 1888. He heard a lot about the widespread practice of slave-trade from his missionaries. And according to him it was important that the church should join the rest of the world to denounce this practice. Francis would later insist on this point in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Laudato Si'* when he wrote that “a sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings” (*LS*, 91). With Pope Leo XIII's permission, he travelled from country to country taking his anti-slavery campaign by giving lectures, talks and sermons in cathedrals, public halls and churches.

During the 70's and 80's Lavigerie suffered greatly with arthritis. He died on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1892 and was buried in Algiers, Algeria. In (the year) his remains were exhumed and taken to the Headquarters of the White Fathers in Rome. Thanks be to God for Lavigerie and for who and what he was for the continent of Africa and her peoples. Since his arrival in Africa, he was basically and always a man of Africa and of the Church. He “saw the Church in all the reality of its mission to man which our Lord, its founder, had entrusted to it. Like St Paul, he championed this cause without fear or favour.”<sup>75</sup> He was such a forceful and determined personality; the “presiding genius over the activities of the Society which he himself had created.”<sup>76</sup> He wrote several letters and made speeches at different times to his Missionaries. Some of his quotations are very central to the Missionaries of Africa.

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<sup>74</sup>Cardinal Lavigerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 15.

<sup>75</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 5.

<sup>76</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 53.

## 2.2 Cardinal Lavigerie's Dream for Africa

First and foremost, Lavigerie conceived Algeria as “a great field of missionary apostolate and the gateway to a still greater one, the heart of the African continent”<sup>77</sup>. He intended to spread Christianity not only among Moslems in Algeria but also the conversion of Africa itself. Those days, as we have seen in chapter one, only the coast of Africa had been partly evangelized. Lavigerie knew that south of Algeria there was a vast unexplored area. And according to him, it was only the Sahara that stood between the gateway and the new lands beyond.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, he began the ‘campaign for evangelization of Africa’. The French government tried to entice him with offers so that he can divert his thoughts but Lavigerie was adamant and he knew exactly what he wanted.

He began his pastoral plan. First, he wanted to win the full freedom for church's apostolate, for example, of charitable works and education. He conducted campaigns in Europe to call attention the situation in Algeria. “He grappled with the civil authorities and even demanded and obtained an audience with Napoleon III”.<sup>79</sup>

Secondly, on the onset of his new life as Archbishop of Algiers, Cardinal Lavigerie was disturbed to find “that the work of his Church was confined to those of French blood”. Contacts with Muslim/Arab community in Algeria were restricted. These natives of Algeria were not cared for in any way to the point that there existed a great gap, almost impossible to bridge<sup>80</sup>, between the natives and the French. This was because the French government which was controlling the Mediterranean region

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<sup>77</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 12.

<sup>78</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 12.

<sup>79</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 13.

<sup>80</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 37.

since 1830 after defeating pirates from Turkey had forbade all education and all evangelization of the indigenous inhabitants. Such was a big challenge to Lavigerie and the Church he was to head.

Lavigerie also met other catastrophic circumstances like cholera outbreak throughout Algeria, locusts that ate up all the crops and trees, drought that persisted for months, famine and diseases that brought misery etc. Lavigerie knew exactly what to do. Firstly, he made all his priests learn Arabic. Secondly, with his experience in Syria where “he had instituted self-supporting orphanages after the rising of the Druses”<sup>81</sup>, he founded the first orphanages in Algeria for refugees children and persons in distress. All people were received in these orphanages without distinction of colour, race, or faith. These people were put under the care of Catholic Sisters who provided them with both secular and Christian education. They also adopted the orphans. During the year 1868 about 750 children were cared for in these orphanages.<sup>82</sup>

In this work, Lavigerie had engaged members of several religious groups. Sooner than later he came to learn that they could not be expected to continue because their services were of great demand for other charitable activities elsewhere. Lavigerie began asking himself: What will become of these children now that they were rescued? Who would help bring them up as good Christians and useful men and women? After the famine of 1867, Lavigerie could not find a single priest in his diocese who was able and willing to take charge of these orphanages. It was in the midst of this that he realized the need of founding a congregation. As a consequence, he began to shape his own missionary group. This gave rise to two missionary groups; the White Fathers (1868), and later, the White Sisters (1869).

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<sup>81</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 46-47.

<sup>82</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 39.

With his position as the Delegate for the Sahara and the Sudan and the Equatorial Africa, Lavigerie followed reports of explorers in the interior of Africa. From these reports he felt that the apostolic charity of the Church was needed in many places like Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasa (Malawi and Zambia), Rwanda, Burundi and Congo (then Zaire). From these discussions concerning Lavigerie and his dream for Africa, we can say that the foundations of his missionaries originated from the “new emphasis dictated by new environment or specialized field of activity.”<sup>83</sup>

### **2.3 The Founding of the Society of White Fathers**

In 1867, several days before the birth of Lavigerie’s congregation, three seminarians of the Major Seminary of Algiers freely and willingly offered themselves to the work of the Missions of Africa. And on October 18, 1868, near the orphanage of Ben Aknun in Algiers, the first noviciate of what was to be known as Society of White Fathers was opened with thirteen novices (10 Clerics and 3 Brothers)<sup>84</sup>. Lavigerie requested the help of the Jesuit Fathers to be his first novice masters. This is because he valued and respected their solid spiritual life and he also knew that he could count on their collaboration. Thus, Fr. Vincent, a Jesuit, “a man of experience among Arab orphans”<sup>85</sup> became their novice master. In 1869, the orphanage of Ben Aknun was transferred to Maison Carrée where Lavigerie had bought land.

From time to time Lavigerie toured France to obtain recruits and to look for funds to support them. In 1872, he went to Rome taking with him two of his young

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<sup>83</sup>W. BURRIDGE, *Destiny Africa: Cardinal Lavigerie and the making of the White Fathers*, 14.

<sup>84</sup>*Cardinal Lavigerie: Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 16.

<sup>85</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 41.

missionaries dressed in white gown, “gandourah”, and a “bournous” which gave the Society its nickname, “White Fathers”. The objective of this journey was to lay the Rules of the Society before the Pope. These rules were approved in May 1873 by Pope Leo XIII. Cardinal Lavigerie wanted his missionaries to identify themselves as close as possible with the people to whom they were to live and work.

As a sign of respect for the local people, Lavigerie insisted that his Missionaries were to eat their food, live in the same sort of houses and dress like them. Since the Society was founded in Algeria whose local population was Muslims, the dress code of the Missionaries of Africa “became fixed as the clothing worn by the people of North Africa”<sup>86</sup>. This dress code consists of “the ‘*gandourah*’, a single garment from neck to foot”<sup>87</sup>; a ‘*bournous*’, a hooked cloak; ‘*chechia*’, a red felt hat rather like a fez...and finally, there is the *black and white rosary* worn around the neck...”<sup>88</sup> with all the 15 decades. This was before Pope St. John Paul II added the Mysteries of Light.

On October 1, 1872, the first 12 novices took the Solemn/Missionary Oath, thereby consecrating their lives to the services of the mission in Africa. The words for swearing are:-

“In the presence of my brethren here assembled, I swear on the Gospels, to consecrate myself henceforth until death, to the Church’s mission in Africa, According to the Constitutions of the Society, placed under the protection of Mary Immaculate, Queen of Africa.” (*Society of Missionaries of Africa: Constitutions and Laws, No. 25*).

From Algiers, Algeria, this missionary effort slowly extended beyond into the Sahara itself and to Central and Eastern Africa. The first expedition of missionaries from Algeria was in 1876. Three of the attempted to reach the Sudan. Unfortunately they were murdered in the Sahara probably by the Tuaregs who were

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<sup>86</sup>M. HEAP, “Our Lady, Mary, Queen of Africa and the White Fathers”, 8-11.

<sup>87</sup>M. HEAP, “Our Lady, Mary, Queen of Africa and the White Fathers”, 8-11.

<sup>88</sup>M. HEAP, “Our Lady, Mary, Queen of Africa and the White Fathers”, 8-11.

their guides. On this day the sands of the Sahara were painted with the blood of these young and generous missionaries. Even after losing his sons, Lavigerie never gave up with his mission. In fact this increased the missionary zeal in him and in the members of his Society who were ready and willing to give their life for the Gospel. Truly, 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church'.<sup>89</sup>

By 1877, the new society had 125 members<sup>90</sup>. It extended its activities to Carthage in Tunis. On the plot where St. Louis of France died, Lavigerie built a church in his honour. This church also became the centre for the charitable works of the White Fathers in the Arab villages. About this time, White Fathers became guardians of the shrine of St. Anne at Jerusalem. Years later next to this shrine, Lavigerie opened a school and a Senior Seminary for training priests and teachers in accordance with the ideas of the Eastern Church. This is just to show that he never lost interest in the Churches of the East and their union with the Roman Catholic Church.

Lavigerie wanted his "sons and daughters" to be primarily men and women of prayer. With a profound conviction that the Virgin Mary "has a precise place in the plan of salvation" (*RM*, 1), he placed the two Societies "under the protection and patronage of Our Lady, Mary, Queen of Africa."<sup>91</sup> They were all expected to recite the rosary. Today, towards the end of the novitiate and just before going for pastoral experience, each student strings together his own personal White Father rosary. And at the end of theological training, the student takes his Missionary Oath; swearing on the Gospels and in front of the Superior General or his representative.

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<sup>89</sup> These are the words of Tertullian, a Church Father of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. With these words he meant that people who are willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause of the Church/Gospel (martyrs) influence others to convert and be strong in faith. This is because their life become a source of inspiration and strength for the Christians.

<sup>90</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 44.

<sup>91</sup>M. HEAP, "Our Lady, Mary, Queen of Africa and the White Fathers", 8-11.

## **2.4 The White Fathers arrive in Kenya**

The White Fathers came to Kenya “in early 1960’s. They did not have a specific task of setting their missionary work in Kenya. This is because by the time they came, the missionary work of evangelization had already taken root in Kenya.”<sup>92</sup> As we have seen in Chapter One, the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans) were at the Coast of Kenya, Eastern and Nairobi regions; the Consolata Missionaries in Kikuyu land and the whole of Central region; and the Mill Hill Missionaries were in the whole of Western region.

## **2.5 What prompted the coming of the White Fathers to Kenya?**

Different factors led to the coming of the White Fathers to Kenya. It should be noted that although they were officially assigned by the Congregation, the pioneer White Fathers came to Kenya as individuals for individual assignments. Firstly, it happened that the Catholic Bishops were looking for someone to be the chaplain of the German Catholics working in East Africa. After a period of searching and consultation, “Fr. Anton Specht, MAfr., from Deutschland, was assigned by the Society to this task. He became the first chaplain of the East Africa German Catholics (EAGC) covering Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia.”<sup>93</sup> Fr. Anton himself resided in Nairobi, hence becoming the first Missionary of Africa priest to reside in Kenya. At this time, there was little and sometimes no road

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<sup>92</sup>M. ONYANGO, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes. At the time of this research, Martin Onyango, a member of the Missionaries of Africa, was the Priest in Charge at Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Parish, South B. He was ordained in 1995, the second Missionary of Africa originating from Kenya.

<sup>93</sup>R. TESSIER, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

networks. Fr. Anton, a trained pilot, “had a personal plane which he used to fly himself around to these different countries and carry out his mission.”<sup>94</sup>

Secondly, there was a need for personnel to teach at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, a National Theological Seminary situated in Nairobi. Again, after the Missionaries of Africa had been contacted, the Society assigned Fr. Joseph Donders, MAfr., from Deutschland, who became the first Missionary of Africa officially assigned to work in Nairobi, Kenya. This was in 1960’s. While teaching at the Seminary and interacting with other institutions, Fr. Donders was invited to teach at the University of Nairobi (UoN). He joined the UoN in 1970, and taught Religion and Philosophy. Years later he became head of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at this university. While at the UoN, he realized that the university had no chaplaincy and no specific and designed place for prayer for the Catholic Students. After considerations had been made, he established the chaplaincy of the UoN. This was followed by a series of plans and survey that led to the purchase of land and the building of St Pauls University Chapel<sup>95</sup> which still stands along Uhuru Highway in Nairobi City. Today, this chapel operates like a parish, serving both the Catholic University students and the neighbouring Catholic community.

Fr Donders was an inspirational speaker, preacher, counsellor, priest-philosopher, teacher and educationist. He helped students at UoN and St Thomas with great interest. He wrote a book, *How to Study*, to help students to develop good study habits. He was liked by his students, workmates and confreres that they called him “Father Sjeff”, which is a form of his first name Joseph. Fr Sjeff “worked at the UoN until 1984 when he left and went for another assignment in Washington (USA). He came back a year later (1985) to help in the preparation of the

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<sup>94</sup>R. TESSIER, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

<sup>95</sup>R. TESSIER, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

International Eucharistic Congress (IEC) which took place in Nairobi”<sup>96</sup> that same year. After this he returned to the USA. Then he retired in the Netherlands where he later died.

## **2.6 White Fathers begin Parish-based Pastoral Assignments in Kenya**

After the independence of Kenya, the White Fathers saw Nairobi as an “upcoming hub for East Africa. Although their presence in Kenya was still minimal, they opened a house along Ngong Road in Nairobi in early 1960’s. This house was basically meant for service and administration of those White Fathers working in Uganda.”<sup>97</sup> Little by little, and through the help of those involved in teaching, parish-based pastoral assignments opened up in Nairobi for the White Fathers. It happened that the Holy Ghost Fathers were facing difficulty of personnel to run their different assignments and the White Fathers were looking for an insertion in Nairobi; an urban area that was beginning to experience challenges of migrations from the rural areas, increase in poverty, emergence of slums et cetera. Two parishes, formerly under the administration of the Holy Ghost Fathers, were given to the White Fathers. The first was “St. Teresa of Avila Parish in Eastleigh, commonly known as St. Teresa’s Eastleigh (STE), and the second was Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Parish, South B. This marked the official beginning of parish-based pastoral ministry in Kenya for the Missionaries of Africa.”<sup>98</sup> The next chapter, Chapter Three, will elaborate on these areas as it treats the pastoral activities and approaches used by the White Fathers in Kenya.

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<sup>96</sup>R. TESSIER, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

<sup>97</sup>M. ONYANGO, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

<sup>98</sup>M. ONYANGO, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **PASTORAL ACTIVITIES AND APPROACHES OF THE WHITE FATHERS IN KENYA**

### **3.0 Introduction**

The question of the importance of pastoral care was held at heart by the White Fathers. Their mission was and is still the mission of Christ. It is God's work, not theirs. Thus it was considered so and lived as such. This can be seen in the address of Cardinal Lavigerie to his missionaries when he told them, "My sons, be apostles, nothing but apostles." This chapter treats the logistical and organisational nature of the mission of the White Fathers in Kenya. It will concentrate on the pastoral activities and approaches of the White Fathers in the Archdiocese of Nairobi. For the interest of feasibility, the exploration into their activities and approaches will be limited to the areas of pastoral, education/teaching and social ministry.

### 3.1 Pastoral Activities and Approaches used by the White Fathers in Kenya

Being a man of vision, “Cardinal Lavigerie discerned the apostolic needs of his time and tried to respond to them with all his strength.<sup>99</sup> His basic approach was to “Christianize Africa by Africans”<sup>100</sup> and that “Africans must not be turned into ‘Europeans with black skins’”<sup>101</sup>. That is to say, Africans were to be converted to Christianity but they were remain ‘African’ in their whole way of life. Faithful to their founder’s command, the White Fathers developed methods of evangelizing “according to the different circumstances of time, place and culture” (EN, 40) wherever they were sent for mission. They made sure that the African peoples were evangelized, educated, transformed, respected and enjoyed a happy and dignified life.

The pioneer White Fathers to Kenya held several meetings and questions of research were raised and discussed. This was in view of finding a balanced methodology that harmonizes the mission of the Society of White Fathers in general and the needs of the people and the religious community in this particular situation. Little by little, different pastoral commitments opened up for them as they encountered and interacted with the people in their daily undertakings. This research has summarized their areas of engagement in three categories, that is, pastoral, education/teaching and social ministry. We shall discuss them one by one.

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<sup>99</sup>Cardinal Lavigerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 9.

<sup>100</sup>Cardinal Lavigerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 46.

<sup>101</sup>Cardinal Lavigerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 46.

## **3.2 Pastoral**

### *3.2.1 Parish Ministry*

Parish-based pastoral ministry was opened up through the help of those members of the Society of White Fathers who were present in Nairobi and involved in teaching. The criteria that was used was based on “being at the service of the fracture zones”. Two parishes were eventually given to the White Fathers because of two reasons: poverty and slums. These parishes were serving mostly slum dwellers; Mathare slums (STE) and Mukuru slums (OLQP) whose majority were poor.

#### a) St. Teresa’s Eastleigh (STE)

It was the first parish-pastoral assignment given to the White Fathers in Kenya. The parish was established by the Holy Ghost Fathers. Some of the White Fathers who worked in STE are Fr John Slinger, Fr. John Lemay, Fr. Arnold Grol, Fr. Castagna Giovanni, Fr. Arnould de Schaetzen and Fr Willy Schoofs. In terms of vocations from this parish to the White Fathers, there is Fr. Francis Thairu, MAfr, ordained in 2011. His first missionary assignment was parish ministry in St Thomas Parish, Nigeria, where he worked for two years. Then he was moved to another parish in Kasamwa, Tanzania, where he ministers till today. The White Fathers moved out of STE and since then it is under the administration of the diocesan clergy.

b) Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP), South B.

Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP), South B was established as a parish in 1968 by the Holy Ghost Fathers<sup>102</sup> (Spiritans). Eleven years later (1979), the administration of this parish was handed to the White Fathers. Today (2017), the White Fathers have been present in this parish for 38 years and “the proclamation of Jesus’ mission is as enduring as ever” (NMI, 4). The parish has “founded St. Margaret church which serves as an outstation for the main parish”<sup>103</sup>. A unique feature for this parish is that it embraces “both the poor and the rich who live side by side even though drastically opposed to one another”<sup>104</sup>, for instance, in terms of their job, income, social status and way of life. A recent survey carried out in OLQP parish showed that over 50% of the parishioners live in the informal settlement<sup>105</sup> (Mukuru slums).

In Kenya, the White Fathers discerned several pastoral methods/approaches to respond to the situation of the time. These pastoral methods/approaches were used in these two parishes. Sometimes adjustments, however, were made so as to suit the particular individuals, group or situation depending on the parish. These methods/approaches include:-

i) Living Community Life

An English proverb goes: *Action speaks louder than words*. People want more of “seeing” than “listening”. “And if they listen to the teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (EN, 41). Missionaries of Africa have a culture of *esprit de corps*

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<sup>102</sup><http://www.olqpsouthb.org/index.php/about/> (accessed 22/2/17).

<sup>103</sup><http://www.olqpsouthb.org/index.php/about/> (accessed 22/2/17).

<sup>104</sup><http://www.olqpsouthb.org/index.php/about/> (accessed 22/2/17).

<sup>105</sup><http://www.olqpsouthb.org/index.php/about/> (accessed 22/2/17).

(unity), that is, living in a community of at least 3 confreres of different nationalities, cultures and sometimes even continents. They pray together, plan and carry out their mission together, make reports, write diaries, make correspondence with other confreres within the region and the society at large and share their experiences – joys and challenges. Their model is the early community of believers that was of one heart and mind, sharing things in common (Acts 4:32-37). By so doing, they become a witness of an authentic Christian life. In *Missionaries of Africa* terms, such communities are called *witnessing communities*. People are easily attracted by seeing the way they live and do things together.

#### ii) Preaching about Christ

St Paul says faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes from the preaching about Jesus Christ (Rom 10:14-17). Preaching the Word of God is necessary because it yields conversions, fosters spiritual growth and nourishment of the converts. Cardinal Lavignerie once said to his sons and daughters: “be apostles – men and women, who put prayer first among the duties of apostolic life.”<sup>106</sup> Preaching may take various forms. Therefore, being first, prayerful people, the White Fathers offered prayers, needs and sacrifices of their own and of the people in the Eucharistic celebrations and sacramental life.

#### iii) Emphasis on Sacramental Life

Sacraments radiate grace and holiness (*EN*, 47). The White Fathers dedicated themselves to educating and preparing people for reception of sacraments and to help them live them as a sign of real transformation brought about by them. Over the

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<sup>106</sup>Cardinal Lavignerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 7.

years, and because of this emphasis on sacramental life the parish of OLQP has experienced tremendous growth in the number of parishioners. Currently, OLQP church has a capacity of 2000 – 3000 people<sup>107</sup>. By evangelization, the universal Church seeks to express the love of God “through Word and Sacrament, an undertaking that is often heroic in the way it is acted out in history; and it seeks to promote man in the various arenas of life and of human history” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 19).

#### iv) Catechetical Instruction

It is the systematic religious formation and teaching of the fundamental principles and truths of faith as revealed by God in the Church (*EN*, 44). With his vast experience of history as professor at Sorbonne, Lavigerie had a strong sense of the past centuries when the early Christian Church had its finest converts in North Africa. He wrote, “...we hope to procure the return of the natives of Algeria to the faith which for the large majority may be said to be the faith of their forefathers”.<sup>108</sup>This was his dream for Algeria and even the rest of Africa. Hence, he structured “a catechumenate programme of four years: every individual had to be a postulant for two years, a catechumen for another two years, and finally a participant in a pre-baptismal preparation.”<sup>109</sup>

Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, testify that when it comes to catechumenate, “the White Fathers meant business – and so they do, even today.”<sup>110</sup> That the orders of Lavigerie of four years “prevailed through generations”<sup>111</sup> and that “they are still recognized by his successors as necessary for building of solid

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<sup>107</sup><http://www.olqpsouthb.org/index.php/about/> (accessed 22/2/17).

<sup>108</sup>E.M. MATHESON, *African Apostles*, 43.

<sup>109</sup>B. SUNDKLER – C. STEED, *A History of the Church in Africa*, 665.

<sup>110</sup>B. SUNDKLER – C. STEED, *A History of the Church in Africa*, 665.

<sup>111</sup>B. SUNDKLER – C. STEED, *A History of the Church in Africa*, 665.

Catholic communities on the equator.”<sup>112</sup>Over the years and up to the time they came to Kenya, this programme of four years was condensed in two years. This period is “either preparatory to baptism – baptismal catechesis – or subsequent to it – the mystagogical catechesis of the neophytes”<sup>113</sup>.

v) Personal Contact through daily visits to the villages

This is a kind of person-to-person model. Confreres visited families and homes in the ‘fracture zones’ (slums) so as to have special contacts with families and all peoples. Such visits were to make one fell valid and important. Jesus also visited villages and homes and made great impact on the people he met, for example, Zacchaeus the tax collector (Lk 19:1-10); and the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:4-42). Again, by visiting different families in the slums, the confreres experienced their poverty, pains, sufferings and many other life challenges. These visits are important because they are “capable of sustaining and fostering attention, nearness, presence, listening, dialogue, sharing, and real help toward individuals” (CL, 54) in different moments as mentioned above.

These visits have been, in some way, helpful in unearthing people’s problems and needs so that they can be addressed. And has seen the life of people improve. The words of Lavigerie are echoed in this mission: “that family, honour and liberty be restored”<sup>114</sup> to the people especially the poor of the society. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* reminds us of the importance of such visits when it says that: “it must not happen that the pressing need to proclaim the good News to the multitudes should cause us to forget the form of proclamation whereby an individual’s personal

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<sup>112</sup>B. SUNDKLER – C. STEED, *A History of the Church in Africa*, 665.

<sup>113</sup>AUDINET, J., “Catechesis”, *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, 173 – 178.

<sup>114</sup>J. PERRIER, *Wind of Change, Cardinal Lavigerie 1825 – 1892*, 135.

conscience is reached and touched by an entirely unique word that he receives from someone else” (EN, 46).

vi) Creation of Small Christian Communities (SCCs)

They are commonly known as *Jumuyia (s)* in *Swahili*. The SCCs in OLQP were developed by Fr. Ben Cluttier, MAfr. This included the objectives, mission, vision, boundaries, names, leadership and policies of the SCCs. In this formation of SCCs, Fr. Ben Cluttier was assisted by Bishop Holm Siedles, MAfr., who came to Kenya after his retirement as bishop in Tanzania. “He was residing in Sotik Pastoral Centre where he was doing ongoing formation for the laity and religious. Bishop Siedles later fell sick and his health deteriorated fast due to his old age. He was taken back to England where he died in 1993.”<sup>115</sup> Currently, OLQP has 34 SCCs<sup>116</sup>, more than half of them are found in the slums.

In *Novo Millennio Inuente*, Pope St John Paul II teaches that SCCs must become genuine ‘schools’ of prayer, where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just in imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly ‘falls in love’” (NMI, 33). That is

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<sup>115</sup>R. TESSIER, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

<sup>116</sup>The 34 Jumuyias of OLQP are St. Michael – Golden Gate, St. Augustine – Government Quarters, St. Stephen – Plainsview, St. Joseph – Plainsview, Bl. Annuarite – Mariakani, St. Therese of the Child Jesus – Postal Flats, Ss. Ann and Joachim – River Bank, St. Mark – Balozi, St. Patrick – Police Depot, St. Cyprian Michael – Diamond Park, St. Felicita – Kaberera, St. Claire – Hazina, St. Cecilia – Mukuru, St. Agatha – Fuata Nyayo, St. Peter – Fuata Nyayo, St. Charles Lwanga – Mariguini, St. Aloysius Gonzaga – Commercial, St. Perpetua – Kisii Village, St. Francis of Assisi – Shimo la Tewa, St. Kizito – Kenya Wine, St. Rita – Kariba, St. Catherine of Siena – Mukuru, St. Valerian – Mukuru, St. Jude – Mukuru, St. Francis Xavier – Mukuru, St. Josephat – Mukuru, Malkia wa Amani – Mukuru, Rosari Takatifu – Mukuru, Moyo Mtakatifu – Mukuru, St. Paul – Central Jumuyia, St. Anthony – Central Jumuyia and St. Thomas Moore – Young Professionals, YP. <http://www.olqpsouthb.org/index.php/about/communities/> (accessed 22/2/17). Another recently created Jumuyia is St. Padre Pio – Diamond Park.

why in parish ministry the White Fathers find it extremely important to build and strengthen SCCs in order to minister through them<sup>117</sup>.

#### vii) Youth Ministry

In order to journey with the young people, to help them to be happy, thoughtful, eager to pray, seek meaning of life and true friendship (*NMI*, 9), the White Fathers developed vibrant youth ministry in the two parishes. In OLQP, for example, Fr. Michael Munier, MAfr worked closely with the youth and established a foundation and policies which still hold together and give life and meaning to the young people who are members of this group. Together with the youth, Fr Munier organized musicals: Rock Nativity and Christmas Carol which attracted many people from around Nairobi. They also staged successful and outstanding performances in hotels around Nairobi and the coastal town of Mombasa to raise funds for the poor youth and street children of Nairobi.<sup>118</sup> These youths, now grown up, still work together in OLQP Parish through a group called Young Professionals.

#### viii) Establishment of Lay Groups

These are various groups of popular piety/religiosity that have “particular expressions of the search for God and for faith” (*EN*, 48). The White Fathers realize the importance of these groups in the parish. For instance, in them people manifest their thirst for God and their belief. Also, they are able to develop attitudes of sacrifice, generosity, patience, detachment, and many more. In OLQP, there are lay groups like Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC), Catholic Men Association

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<sup>117</sup><http://www.olqpsouthb.org/index.php/about/> (accessed 22/2/17).

<sup>118</sup>T., WILDSMITH, *One Sows, Another Reaps! A Missionary's Journal*, 93.

(CMA), Youth, Catholic Women Association (CWA), Legion of Mary, Pioneers and Charismatic.

ix) Training and Formation of Catechists

Missionaries of Africa identified people whom they trained as catechists. At OLQP parish, they have gone even a step further to train some catechists in the Kenya Sign Language so that they can be more effective in their ministry even to those who are impaired with hearing. The catechists have also been incorporated into the ministry of visits – visiting families and SCCs on weekly basis as evidenced at OLQP parish.

x) Establishment of Parish Social office

They carry out social welfare related activities. This has developed well in OLQP parish. During a talk to the White Fathers and MSOLA in view of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of the two Missionary groups, Fr. Manuel Gordejuela, MAfr., said that “the White Fathers were officially invited to the Archdiocese of Nairobi by Cardinal Otunga to work in the slums.”<sup>119</sup> This explains why the two parishes in the slums were given to the White Fathers and also the importance of creating the social office as a means to take care of the social welfare of the poor slum dwellers in an organized manner.

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<sup>119</sup>M. GORDEJUELA, “Towards the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Foundation”, tape recording.

xi) Establishment of Outreach Programmes

One of the programmes was *Watoto Wetu* (Our Children), established in STE to reach out to the street children and street families. Unfortunately, this programme died off when the confreres left STE. Now we have *Kwetu Home of Peace* in OLQP.

xii) Establishment of a Health Centre

A Faith Based Health Centre was established in STE to help people acquire health and medical services easily and within reach. Treatment charges were also subsidized so that the poor slum dwellers could afford. This Health Centre is still in existence in STE.

xiii) Pastoral Care to Students

This means offering pastoral needs to students for spiritual growth and nourishment. This was done especially in the learning institutions within the parish territory. There is a monthly celebration of the Eucharist in each institution. For the Sunday Liturgy the catholic students in these institutions come to the parish. They either join the Christian community in one of the Masses or a Mass is organized for them alone.

xiv) Establishing of Skills Training Centres

The aim of these centres is to equip men and women, young as well as adults with skills to help them to be self-sufficient. These centres target mostly the poor people from the slums especially the youth who are faced with the problem of unemployment. In OLQP, for example, there is a tailoring project to train people in

tailoring and dressmaking. There are many other training Centres under Undugu Society.

xv) Establishment of Parish Library

To provide a good room, space and environment for students to study and do their research. This was done bearing in mind that the environmental conditions in the slums and in some homes may not be favourable for students to study and do research. In the library at OLQP, students come with their own books to study. However, the parish too has its own books which are rented for a period of time. Upon registration, each library user receives a library card to enable him/her access the library. Today, we have 500 registered library users at OLQP.

xvi) Learning of the local language

By local language I mean the language commonly used as a medium of communication by the people in a particular area. Knowledge of the local language is important and helpful in engaging and dialoguing with the people. Initially, White Fathers had six months of learning the local language before engaging in ministry. Today it has been reduced to three months and it is a requirement for all confreres appointed for ministry as well as students in pastoral training. In Kenya, apart from learning *Swahili*, confreres also learn other local languages like *Kikuyu*, *Kamba* and *Luo*. Proper learning of local languages led to the writing of dictionaries, Bible, Catechetical books and translations of all kinds.

### *3.2.2 Pastoral Care of the Students*

#### a) University of Nairobi (UoN)

The appointment of Fr. Sjeff (Joseph) Donders, MAfr., made him the first chaplain of the UoN. His “job description” was to offer pastoral care and spiritual needs to the Catholic students of the UoN. When he was the chaplain, Fr. Donders championed for the establishment of St. Paul’s University Chapel which today stands along Uhuru Highway in Nairobi City. It serves both the University students and the neighbouring Catholic community. Fr. Donders worked at the UoN for almost twenty two years (1960s – 1984) as chaplain and lecturer in the Department of Religion and Philosophy. Since then, this chaplaincy is headed by a priest from the Archdiocese of Nairobi.

#### b) Other Institutions of Learning

Besides the UoN, the White Fathers committed themselves to the pastoral care of the students in different institutions. The priests also organize motivational talks and workshops and engage the students in various activities so as to assist in training social minded people. Worth mentioning is a Canadian priest, Fr. Réginal Carrière, MAfr., who came to Kenya in 1995. He taught at Starehe Boys Centre (1995 – 2004). He was a great pianist and also a specialist in playing the accordion. At Starehe Boys Centre, he was in charge of music and developed several songs. He was also in charge of the library and began the system of renting text books. Moreover, he trained the boys to do various social and volunteer works like helping

in the library. Again, during holidays the boys did volunteer works like washing in hospital wards.<sup>120</sup>

In addition, we have already seen that the priests working in the parishes are responsible for providing pastoral care to the Catholic students in various institutions of learning that fall within the jurisdiction of the parish. Together with the Parish Pastoral Council, they determine the needs for the Catholic students in each of the institutions and device the best means to address them. These needs could be spiritual guidance, catechesis, administration of sacraments (like sacraments of initiation), Masses among others. These institutions range from primary schools, secondary/high schools, skills training centres to name but a few. Under OLQP parish, for instance, we have Our Lady of Mercy Primary School (for boys and girls), Our Lady of Mercy Secondary (for girls), St. Michael Secondary School in Mukuru (for boys and girls) and Highway Secondary School (for boys).

### *3.3.3 Prison Ministry and KEFABIS (Kenya Ex-Prisoners Fighting for Acceptance Back to the Society)*

Fr. Arnold Grol, MAfr., started what we call *Fr. Grol Welfare Organisation* whose main focus was prison ministry. Different confreres engage themselves in prison ministry within Nairobi County such as Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Industrial Area Remand Prison, Langata Women's Prison and Langata Men's Prison. KEFABIS is a Registered Charitable Trust Organization that helps ex-prisoners to re-integrate and settle in the society once they terminate their sentence and are released from prison. They establish a link with their biological families and leaders of their faith communities who prepare for their return to the society. Today,

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<sup>120</sup>R. TESSIER, "The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya", personal notes.

the one who is more involved in KEFABIS is Fr. Innocent Maganya, MAfr., from DR Congo. OLQP parish also allows the prison pastoral ministers to come and make appeals. And the Christians offer outreach programs such as funds and other collections when the prison pastoral ministers come for help. Some Christians are also part of this apostolate. They are foster parents to various prisoners in different prisons around Nairobi.

### 3.3.4 Hospital Apostolate

The White Fathers are not directly involved in hospital ministry. It is not their full time pastoral activity. However, confreres engage themselves in this ministry at the individual level. It is either because they are inspired by Christ himself who out of love and compassion associated himself with the sick; or it is an inspiration from Lavigerie's motto, *Caritas*, which characterized his actions. It could also be because at the beginning Lavigerie spoke of training African doctors who would receive a solid Christian and professional preparation and who would be able to make their own contribution to changing the face of Africa.<sup>121</sup> In fact, the White Fathers trained about ten Africans who became doctors<sup>122</sup>. They worked closely with them and they had a considerable influence for many years. In Kenya, the confreres in hospital ministry were Fr Luigi Morell, MAfr., from Italy, at Mater Hospital<sup>123</sup> and Fr. Peschen Ludwig, MAfr., from Deutschland who was engaged in healing

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<sup>121</sup> Cardinal Lavigerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 46.

<sup>122</sup> Cardinal Lavigerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 46.

<sup>123</sup> Mater Hospital (*Mater Misericordiae* Hospital – Latin for Mother of Mercy Hospital) was opened in 1962 by the Sisters of Mercy, a Catholic Order of Nuns from Ireland. The colonial authorities granted them 12 acres of land in a swampy, mosquito-infested area, which has since become the Industrial Area of Nairobi. This hospital was to cater mainly for the poor, indigenous Kenyans (especially from Mukuru Slums), with the primary mission of offering general healthcare. Today, the missionary role of the Sisters of Mercy has spread to other parts of Kenya and the Mater Hospital has become a private hospital with this group of Nuns as the Registered Trustees (Adapted from <http://materkenya.com/about-us/>, accessed 17/2/17). The White Fathers have worked closely with these Nuns in caring for the sick since their coming to OLQP parish in 1979 to evangelize the same slum dwellers.

ministry. Fr. Peschen worked in Kenya from 2005 – 2010. Other members of Society of White Fathers offer minimum care for patients in hospitals when they are called for prayer and/or anointing (for example in Mariakani or Mater Hospital in South B) because all hospitals have chaplains who carryout hospital ministry as their full time pastoral engagement.

### *3.3.5 Retreat in Daily Life (Ignatian Spirituality)*

This apostolate concerns the training and formation of catechists and the laity. Confreres don't teach them Ignatian Spirituality but they use it in training and forming them. They undergo the training and formation following the Spiritual method/exercise of St. Ignatius of Loyola<sup>124</sup>. At the end of the training and formation they become catechists and prayer guides, and they help their fellow Christians in their spiritual journeys. Some of them also become trainers, collaborating with the priests to help the new members in their respective parishes. They collaborate with the people who come for this training and formation from different parishes within the Archdiocese of Nairobi. In the beginning there was Fr. Arnold Descartes, MAfr., in this ministry. Today, Fr. Willy Schoofs, MAfr, has taken up this ministry more closely, doing it with great passion and enthusiasm.

### *3.3.6 Spiritual Direction/Companionship*

The White Fathers offer spiritual direction/companionship to individuals who approach them for this service. Those who request for this service are religious as well as the laity. The venue, the time and the frequency of the sessions/meetings

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<sup>124</sup>St. Ignatius of Loyola is the Founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). He wrote what is called The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, to help the members of his congregation develop a spiritual attitude and relationship with the Holy Trinity, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These spiritual exercises have been adopted by other different Congregations (like the White Fathers) and/or groupings in the Church.

are agreed upon by the spiritual director/companion and the client (who is now called a spiritual son or daughter).

### *3.3.7 Directors of Retreats and Recollections*

Again, the White Fathers are available to offer retreats and recollections to individuals and groups. More often than not, they are also invited at Mwangaza Jesuit Centre in Karen – Nairobi to give their service in directing retreats, especially 30 days' retreat. Those who have been part of this group of retreat directors are Fr. William Moroney, Fr. Willy Schoofs, Fr. Donald Anderson, and Fr. Bigeziki François-Xavier.

### *3.3.8 Theology for the Laity (Zaidi Centre)*

Zaidi Centre of theology for the Laity is a collaboration between Missionaries of Africa, Mill Hill Missionaries and Jesuits. It was created on the basis that “theology plays a particularly important role in the search for a synthesis of knowledge as well as in the dialogue between faith and reason” (*On Catholic Universities*, 19). Zaidi Centre offers basic theological training to the laity so that they can better understand their faith and religion and become better practising Christians. In this project, Missionaries of Africa are represented by Fr. Willy Schoofs. Some of the Missionaries of Africa students of theology in Nairobi are also part of this project of teaching theology to the laity as their apostolate.

### *3.3.9 Establishment of the Theologicum in Nairobi*

This is the founding of the Formation House in Nairobi for the students of theology with the Missionaries of Africa. It happened that Europe was becoming

expensive to train students. Therefore, a shift was made to move to Africa. Nairobi was chosen because of the growing number of institutions like Tangaza<sup>125</sup> University College (TUC) that offer seminary training and formation. Having no house of their own in Nairobi, this formation programme started in a rental family house in South C, commonly known as *Sungura Road*. The students attended their theological studies at TUC in Karen, about 20km from their residence in South C. Since it was a family house, it wasn't an ideal building for formation. Later, the Society bought a piece of land next to Balozzi Estate in South B, where a proper formation house was build. This house was completed and occupied on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1998. Up until now (2016), the house is 18 years old.

During an interview, Fr. Roger Tessier, MAfr, said that the choice of Balozzi Estate rather than Karen where land was still available at a decent price was due to the following reasons:-

- ❖ To be near the people, including the “ordinary wananchi” and the poor ones.
- ❖ To be near the Parish (OLQP) for pastoral work
- ❖ To be near the slums of Mukuru for pastoral and social work
- ❖ To interact with the people of Balozzi which had started to develop at the time with new buildings and people arriving regularly.

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<sup>125</sup>*Tangaza* is a Swahili word for *announce*. The college was called Theological Centre of Religious at its inception, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1986, to give theological and ministerial education in the context of the Church in Africa to the students of religious congregations in Nairobi preparing for ministry as priests. The college began with 20 students from 7 countries and from 3 religious congregations (Consolata Fathers, Salesians of Don Bosco and the Congregation of the Holy Spirit). Today, Tangaza University College (TUC) as is legally known, has students and lecturers coming from over 40 countries and approximately 100 Religious/Missionary Congregations. It is recognized as a constituent college of CUEA for academic purposes and at the same time it remains autonomous administratively. Over the years, a number of Institutes have been affiliated to TUC and others have been established as integrated Institutes of TUC. (Adapted from TUC School of Theology Academic Handbook 2014 – 2015).

### 3.3.10 Vocation Promotion in Kenya

Young men from Kenya have been attracted and inspired by the life, mission and charism of the Missionaries of Africa. Some of them have freely and willingly joined this Congregation and dedicated their whole life as Missionary priests to the mission in Africa and the African world. However, it should be noted that “for a long time the White Fathers never actively recruited young men in Africa, and in this case in Kenya, to join their Congregation. This was mainly because of their founder’s dream of promoting “the African clergy through seminaries”<sup>126</sup> so that “Africa is eventually evangelized by Africans themselves.”<sup>127</sup> Today, vocations in Kenya for the Missionaries of Africa are still very positive and quite encouraging. So far there are 11 Kenyan men with Missionary/Perpetual Oath in the Society of Missionaries of Africa and several others in different stages of formation. The table below shows the vocation statistics of the Missionaries of Africa originating from Kenya.

#### Kenyan Confreres and Students Data as per March 2017

NB:

- All names are listed alphabetically
- Source: Society’s Personnel Booklet (1995 – 2017) and File Report of the Vocation Promoter (2017)
- Key: P = Priest      D = Deacon      S = Scholastic  
Sta = Stagiare (Student on Pastoral training)      N = Novice      C = Candidate

Members with Missionary/Perpetual Oath			
Name	Year of Ordination	Home Diocese	Function
P Bukelembe John	2011	Bungoma	Ministry, Kisenso – Kinshasa, DR Congo
P Dero Owino Vitalis	2010	Kisumu	Ministry, Lusaka – Kabwata, Zambia
P Gachuru Ndiritu Bernard	2014	Nyeri	Ministry, Lubumbashi, DR Congo
P Limo Ng’etich	2014	Eldoret	Ministry, Mingana, DR Congo

<sup>126</sup>Cardinal Lavignerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 9.

<sup>127</sup>M. ONYANGO, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

Fredrick			
D Lyubah Andibah Humphrey	2016	Kakamega	Studies, Nairobi, Kenya
P Obai Emekule Patrick	2010	Bungoma	Ministry, Wa, Ghana
P Obanya Charles	1997	Bungoma	Provincial, East Africa Province, Nairobi
P Odhiambo Patrick	2005	Homa Bay	Studies, Nairobi, Kenya
P Ogato Momanyi Douglas	2016	Kisii	Ministry, Serenje, Zambia
P Onyango Martin	1995	Homa Bay	Ministry, OLQP Parish Nairobi, Kenya
P Thairu Francis	2011	Nairobi	Ministry, Kasamwa, Tanzania
<b>Students in Theology – Fourth Phase</b>			
Name	Year of Ordination	Home Diocese	Function
S Aduol Maurice Odhiambo	----	Kisumu	Theology 3, South Africa
S Mucani Geoffrey Mugeni	----	Homa Bay	Theology 1, Kinshasa
S Musyoki Joshua Masive	----	Machakos	Theology 2, Kinshasa
S Muthamia Robert	----	Meru	Theology 3, Abidjan
S Njuguna Simon Chege	----	Machakos	Theology 3, Jerusalem
S Nzomo Nicholas Mulinge	----	Machakos	Theology 3, Kinshasa
S Obare Edwin Oduor	----	Nairobi	Theology 2, Nairobi
<b>Students on Pastoral (Stage) – Third Phase</b>			
Sta Akunga Calvin Ototo	----		2 <sup>nd</sup> Yr – Tunisia
Sta Bwire James Ian	----		1 <sup>st</sup> Yr – DR Congo
Sta Bwire Mukhwaya Peter	----		1 <sup>st</sup> Yr – Lubumbashi, DR Congo
Sta Gachoki John Waweru	----		2 <sup>nd</sup> Yr – Burkina Faso
Sta Ndiritu Martin Kibira	----		1 <sup>st</sup> Yr – Kipaka, DR Congo
Sta Rioba James	----		2 <sup>nd</sup> Yr – Ghana
<b>Students in Novitiate – Second Phase</b>			
N Mugeni Wesonga Simplicious	----		Arusha, Tanzania
N Odhiambo Joseph	----		Kasama, Zambia
<b>Students in Philosophy – First Phase</b>			
C.. Imbusi	----	Kakamega	Jinja, Uganda
C..Kiendi Polycarp			Jinja, Uganda
C..Muema Patrick		Machakos	Jinja, Uganda
C..Mwaliko Kelvin			Jinja, Uganda
C..Njagi Peter Wachira			Jinja, Uganda
C..Ouma Gabriel		Busia	Jinja, Uganda

C..Urban		Machakos	Jinja, Uganda
C..Zeno		Kakamega	Jinja, Uganda

### 3.4 Education/Teaching

By education/teaching, I mean “the systematic imparting of information”<sup>128</sup> by teachers/lecturers to students in schools, universities and other institutions of learning. Missionaries of Africa were involved in teaching in the following institutions:-

#### 3.4.1 *St. Thomas National Major Seminary*

St. Thomas Aquinas is a National Major Seminary found in Karen, Nairobi. It offers theological training to students preparing for ministry in the Church as priests for various dioceses in Kenya. The White Fathers who taught at St. Thomas National Major Seminary were Fr. John O’Donohue, Fr. John Bessem and Fr. Hermen Housa. Fr. Bessem was a lecturer, bursar and librarian at St. Thomas Seminary. After many years of service in this Seminary, he moved to the Diocese of Lodwar as diocesan bursar. Later in his life he joined the Order of St. Benedict (Benedictines) and moved to Kipkelion, in Kenya.

#### 3.4.2 *Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)*

Fr. Aylward Shorter, MAfr., was present at the very beginnings of CUEA and was one of the founding team of the institution. CUEA was established as “a centre of creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity” (*On Catholic Universities*, 1). Fr. Shorter joined the teaching staff of CUEA and taught

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<sup>128</sup>J.CUMMING, “Education”, *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, 419 – 424.

there for many years. Another White Father who lectured at CUEA is Fr. Herman Hauser from Deutschland. Today CUEA is a fully fledged University, offering its own “contribution to the Church and to the society whether through research, education or professional training” (*On Catholic Universities*, 10). Like any other university, students at CUEA are also “challenged to pursue an education that combines excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training” (*On Catholic Universities*, 23).

#### *3.4.3 Tangaza University College (TUC)*

TUC was established in 1986 to offer theological and ministerial training to the students of religious congregations in Nairobi preparing for ministry as priests. Throughout the years, TUC now has several institutes affiliated to or integrated to it<sup>129</sup>. TUC has seen many lecturers who are members of the Society of White Fathers. Those who have taught at TUC are Fr. Aylward Shorter (British) (who also became the Principal), Fr. Herman Hauser (Deutsch), Fr. Bigeziki Francois-Xavier (Rwandese), Fr. Luigi Morel (Italian), Fr. Alloysius Ssekamate (Ugandan), Fr., Martin Addai (Ghanaian) (RIP), Fr. Felix Phiri (Zambian), Fr. Innocent Maganya (Congolese), Fr. Stenger Friedrich, (Deutsch) Fr. Vuillemin Guy (French) Fr. Paul Hannon (British).

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<sup>129</sup>*Tangaza University College School of Theology Academic Handbook 2014 – 2015.*

### 3.5 Social Ministry

#### 3.5.1 *Undugu Society*

While working at the UoN, Fr Donders often encountered these young street children/parking boys. He realized that they faced a lot of challenges ranging from hunger, poverty, lack of education and unemployment. He “felt pity for them” and he gathered a few of them whom he could visit and also invite them to his place and offered them some food and other aids. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis teaches us that “all of us are asked to obey his (Jesus) call to go forth from our own comfort zones in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel” (EG, 20). When Fr. Arnold Grol, MAfr, from the Netherlands, came to Kenya in 1972 Fr. Donders asked him to take care of these boys and he accepted. And so with Fr. Grol, and youth of Makadara, Kariobangi and Mathare Valley this group grew bigger and gave birth to what is called *Undugu Society* whose aim was to establish a human and brotherly relationship amongst the people living in the slums of Nairobi. *Undugu* is Swahili for *brotherhood* or *solidarity* in the sense of basic Christianity<sup>130</sup>. The *Undugu* society is still in existence. Today the White Fathers are still part of the Board and Trustees and they seat in all their meetings.

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<sup>130</sup>Cf. *Despair and Hope in the SLUMS of Nairobi: Undugu Society of Kenya*, 3, 9.

*Undugu* Society began with several youth clubs. The first to be started by Fr. Grol in April 1973 was a popular band called *Undugu Beat 75*. Other clubs opened later: *Undugu Vocational Training Centre* (training in carpentry, masonry, motorcar mechanics, tailoring, shoemaking, home economics); *Small Scale Business Loan* (Gives loan to youth, elders and leavers of Training Centre to start their small business); *Parking Boys Project* (started in 1975 for street boys in Nairobi and other children living in the slums); *Undugu Basic Education Programme* (for ex-parking boys and school drop-outs to buy uniform and pay school fees); *School fees and Sponsorship Programme* (give uniform and pay school fees for children attending City Council primary schools); *Women Groups* (Produce articles for sale and learning through adult education); *U-dada Club* (newest club for service to town prostitutes); *Evening Classes* (for adults and trainees in Training Centre who lack sufficient academic knowledge); *Agricultural Projects* (in Katangi - Machakos); *Community Health Programme* (for slum population and training on basic knowledge of most common diseases and how to prevent them). Cf. *Despair and Hope in the SLUMS of Nairobi: Undugu Society of Kenya*, 7-8.

Fr. Grol also founded *Happy Mixture Organisation* (for refugees from the Great Lakes region – Burundi, Rwanda, DR Congo and Ethiopia). This Happy Mixture Organization is now what is called *Tushirikiane Africa (TUSA)*<sup>131</sup>. The White Fathers are also still fully involved with this group and in this ministry.

### 3.5.2 *Kwetu Home of Peace*

*Kwetu* (our) Home of Peace is a rehabilitation centre for street boys. The name was chosen by the youth of OLQP to give to this project of street children<sup>132</sup>. It was started as a reach out programme to street children in 1995 by a Canadian priest Fr. Michel Meunier, MAfr., who was then the Curate at OLQP. The street boys could come to this centre to clean themselves and have “a good meal” on monthly basis. After him Fr. Edward Wildsmith (Fr. Ted), MAfr., from Britain took over the running of the project. Now it is an independent Non-governmental Organization (NGO) and a project of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, and managed by the Assumption Sisters of Eldoret<sup>133</sup>. However, the parish of OLQP and Missionaries of Africa confreres still fund it directly.

### 3.5.3 *Justice and Peace Commission*

In the Society of the White Fathers, the commission for Justice and Peace is merged with that of Integrity of Creation, hence it is called Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). Several confreres are engaged in JPIC. In Kenya, those worth mentioning are Fr. Wolfgang Schonecke, MAfr., from Deutschland who

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<sup>131</sup>R. TESSIER, “The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya”, personal notes.

<sup>132</sup>T., WILDSMITH, *One Sows, Another Reaps! A Missionary's Journal*, 17.

<sup>133</sup> When the Assumption Sisters of Eldoret took over the administration, the first director was Sr Macrina Cheruto, followed by Sr Veronica Wayua, Sr Christine Mbali and now Sr Angela Adhiambo respectively. Before them, the first director of the project was Brother Peter Kiama, a Marianist who headed it for two years. (Cf. T., WILDSMITH, *One Sows, Another Reaps! A Missionary's Journal*, 110).

worked more closely with the refugees from the Great Lakes Region; and now there is Fr. Rogger Tessier, MAfr from Canada. At the parish, OLQP, the lay people are also involved in this ministry. There is an active commission of JPIC made up of lay people and working together with the priests at the parish.

#### *3.5.4 Dialogue with Islam and Ecumenism*

In the area of dialogue with Islam and Ecumenism, the confreres involved were Fr. Richard Nyombi, Fr. Paul Hannon and Fr. Felix Phiri. They founded the Islamic Department in Tangaza University College, and headed that department at different periods in time. Together with other lecturers, they offered courses pertaining to Islam and Islamic religion and ecumenism.

#### *3.5.5 Tushirikiane Africa (TUSA)*

TUSA was “initially an AMECEA Refugee Program (1996 – 2001) and later on Africa Refugee Programme Great lakes (2001 – 2010).”<sup>134</sup> It was started in “1996 with the purpose of supporting refugees from the French-speaking countries of the African Great Lakes region<sup>135</sup> living in Nairobi – Kenya.”<sup>136</sup> Target groups are Refugees or asylum seekers from the African Great Lakes region (AGLR) and are registered by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and/or the Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS). It also considers refugees who are members of TUSA’s solidarity group-basic unit at the grass root level and are ready for volunteer work and mutual help among members. Thirdly, the needy Kenyans recommended by parishes offering TUSA working spaces.

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<sup>134</sup>C. OBANYA – L. IPOMA, “2016 Annual Report”, 2 – 19.

<sup>135</sup> Countries of the African Great Lakes Region include Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

<sup>136</sup>C. OBANYA – L. IPOMA, “2016 Annual Report”, 2 – 19.

Today, TUSA is a Registered Charitable Trust Organization that helps to promote a spirit of tolerance, ecumenism, social transformation and diversity. It offers educational support and formation of the refugee children and encourages refugee families to work in order to sustain their livelihoods. People at TUSA also give a listening ear to those in need so that they can share and ease their pains, hence enabling them to have a quick integration in the social and economic life of the host country (Kenya).<sup>137</sup> Since its creation, several missionary congregations and volunteers have become part of the program.

Currently, the Chair of the Board of Directors is Fr. Charles Obanya, MAfr., the Provincial of East Africa Province of the White Fathers; and the Chair of Trustees is Fr. Leon Ipoma, a religious priest and member of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD).<sup>138</sup> There are also many other lay people and volunteers involved in the ministry at TUSA, including some theology students of the Missionaries of Africa who engage in weekly pastoral ministry with TUSA. Through their generosity, love and dedication at TUSA we can see a connection between love of God and love of neighbour (Cf. *DCE*, 16). In this context, the refugees and their families are the neighbours in need (Lk 10:25-37). Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Est* emphasizes that “the love of neighbour is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God” (*DCE*, 16).

### 3.5.6 GABA Publications

Some Missionaries of Africa priests were part of its foundation. It started in Kampala Uganda at a place called Gaba, hence the name Gaba Institute. It was later

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<sup>137</sup>C. OBANYA – L. IPOMA, “2016 Annual Report”, 2 – 19.

<sup>138</sup>C. OBANYA – L. IPOMA, “2016 Annual Report”, 2 – 19.

moved to Eldoret, a town in Western Kenya in 1976 due to the political unrest in Uganda during the reign of President Idi Amin. It changed its name to Gaba Publications. Some of the White Fathers who worked here include Fr. John O'Donohue, who was specialized in Marriage and Counseling; and Fr. John Lemay, who worked at the research department of Gaba Publications. Others are Fr. Alyward Shorter and Fr. Roger Tessier. Fr. Lemay and Fr. Shorter were instrumental in the production of primary school syllabus for East Africa. They also worked in the research department and produced documents on catechesis, marriage and ecumenism.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter offers the analysis of the data, recommendations and a general conclusion. Finally, there will be appendices with some important dates in the mission of the White Fathers in Kenya, pictures and other illustrations.

#### **4.1 Relevance of the White Fathers in Kenya Today**

In his address during the First General Chapter of the White Fathers in November 1874, Cardinal Lavigerie said: “The missionaries should in the main be initiators, for the lasting work has to be done by the Africans themselves, once they have become Christians and apostles.”<sup>139</sup> From this statement, someone can raise a question whether the White Fathers are still relevant for the Church in Kenya today. The answer is absolutely positive due to several reasons. To begin with, their presence in Kenya is still relevant because of the nature of the Church as missionary (AG, 2). This missionary calling of the Church is still needed everywhere and at all times and Kenya is no exception.

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<sup>139</sup>Cardinal Lavigerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 17, 26.

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, Pope St. John Paul II says that missionaries are necessary “to keep a watchful eye on this our world, with its problems and values, its unrest and hopes, its defeats and triumphs: a world whose economic, social, political and cultural affairs pose problems and grave difficulties...” (CL, 3). In Kenya, for example, there is still a need for evangelization and re-evangelization, to address issues of primary evangelization, tribalism and ethnicity, justice and peace, corruption, human rights and integrity of creation.

Again, the presence and the mission of the White Fathers in Kenya has contributed to the growth of the population of Catholic Christians. This can be seen from the number of Masses and the attendance. For example, Sunday Masses at OLQP parish have grown from four (4) to nine (9). Besides, OLQP parish has also given birth to two parishes: St. Catherine of Alexandria, South C <sup>140</sup> and Mary Help of Christians, Upper Hill.<sup>141</sup>

Moreover, we can say that the methods and approaches used by the pioneer White Fathers were appropriate because they met the needs of the people and of the society at the time. Today, these same approaches are still valid despite the fact that the new challenges facing the Church and society may sometimes call for adjustment and/or redefining other new approaches of dealing with the issues.

Through the different methods and approaches of evangelization, the White Fathers have helped to improve the life of the people especially the poor, the refugees and the slum dwellers. However, the Church in Kenya and the society is

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<sup>140</sup>St. Catherine of Alexandria is found in South C, Nairobi. It was an outstation of OLQP. Later on it was made a Parish and is currently under the administration of the Conventual Franciscan Friars.

<sup>141</sup>Mary Help of Christians Parish, commonly known as Don Bosco Parish is found in Upper Hill, Nairobi. It is run by the Salesians of Don Bosco. The creation of these two Parishes has eased the population at OLQP. This is because some of the people that used to come to OLQP were moved to St. Catherine of Alexandria and Don Bosco Parishes due to the territorial reasons.

still undergoing profound changes and facing various challenges which need ongoing intervention of 'bringing fire to the earth' (Lk 12:49) and of proclaiming a year of favour (Lk 4:19) by the Missionaries of Africa through constant contact with our common Founder, Jesus Christ. In fact, their future plan in Kenya is to open up to other areas in order to spread the light of Christ and their Charism which no one else has. Therefore, the missionary work has not ended. During an interview with Fr. Martin Onyango, MAfr., he said that: "We can never say that we have finished our work in Kenya as Missionaries of Africa and now we need to go away. Go where?"<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup>M. ONYANGO, "The Missionaries of Africa in Kenya", personal notes.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study on the mission of the White Fathers in Kenya was done with great interest and passion. Firstly, it is my hope that the findings of this research work will be a source of inspiration to all, both Africans and Missionaries, because it is a story of faith that traces the beginnings of how the message of Christ has been preached in Kenya by devoted men of the Society of Missionaries of Africa (aka White Fathers) and inspired by their founder, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie. These men gave their whole life to the mission in Kenya in the spirit of cheerful generosity. Some of those who died in Kenya are buried in Nairobi at St. Austin Msongari. Quoting Lavigerie, I can testify that these men were indeed *visum pro martyrio*, endorsed for martyrdom<sup>143</sup>.

Secondly, I hope that this work will also inspire the people of Kenya and present and future Missionaries to continue this work that was began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or even back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century during the time of Portuguese occupation of the Kenyan coast. That they may continue listening to the teachings of Christ and conform their lives to it despite the challenges of the time. “Faith and morality of Christianity are to be respected”<sup>144</sup>, said Lavigerie. May their good actions bring great blessings and prosperity to Kenya and to the continent of Africa.

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<sup>143</sup>Cardinal Lavigerie: *Missionaries of Africa, Selected Texts*, 23.

<sup>144</sup>J. PERRIER, *Wind of Change, Cardinal Lavigerie 1825 – 1892*, 114.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I:

Missionaries of Africa Confreres who have worked in Kenya since their coming in 1960's – 2017.

**NB:**

- All names are listed alphabetically
- Source: Society's Personnel Booklet (1968 – 2017) , Necrological Calendar of Missionaries of Africa (24/6/1873 – 30/4/2012) and File Report of the Vocation Promoter (2017)
- Key: P = Priest/Father      B = Brother

CONFRERES WHO HAVE WORKED IN KENYA				
Name	Nation	Arrival & Departure	Deceased	Function
P Addai Martin	Ghana	2005 – 2007	Nairobi, Kenya 2007	Formator, Rector [2006 – 2007] Lecturer Tangaza University College
P Adeboa Emmanuel	Ghana	2001 – 2006	----	Ministry: Eastleigh & OLQP, Vocation Director
P Alekwe Clement	Nigeria	2004 – 2007	Nairobi, Kenya 2015	Curate OLQP, Parish Priest OLQP [2005 – 2007]
P Arnauld Dominique	France	1999 – 2002	----	Formation [2000 – 2001]
P Aserbire John	Ghana	2013 – till date	----	Assistant Provincial
B Baaladong Anthony	Ghana	2004 – 2007	----	Formator, Bursar
P Barnes Francis	Britain	2010 – 2012	----	Formator & Bursar SFC
P Beaudry Marc	Canada	1995	----	Formation
P Bernard Benoît	France	1999 – 2000	----	Formation
P Bessem John	Dutch		Haarlem, Netherlands 2000	Lecturer, Bursar and Librarian (St Thomas Aquinas Seminary) Bursar – Diocese of Lodwar (Helped drill over 100 wells for nomads, worked

				for Catholic Relief Service [CRS] to provide food during famine)
P Bigeziki Francois-X	Rwanda	2004 – 2008	----	Formator SFC [Rector 2007 – 2009]
P Biringanine Jean Pierre	DR Congo	2015 – till date	----	Vocation Animation
P Carrière Réginald	Canada	1995 – 2004	Sherbrooke, Canada 2013	Teacher (Starehe Boys Centre)
P Castagna Giovanni	Italy	2003	----	Eastleigh [Parish Priest]
P de Schaetzen Arnould	Belgium	2002 – 2003	----	Eastleigh [Ministry, curate]
P Doguiles Lito	Philippines	2016	----	Curate OLQP
P Donders Sjeff [Joseph]	Dutch	1960's – 1984		Lecturer (UoN) Chaplain (UoN Chaplaincy)
P Gieringer Franz	Deutschland	1995 – 2002		Parish Priest OLQP [1995 – 1999], Curate Eastleigh [2002]
B Godard Lionel	Canada	2002 – 2006		Ngong Road [Bursar]
P Gordejuela E. José-Manuel	Spain	1995 – till date	----	Eastleigh (Curate), Sector Bursar [2010 – 2011 ], Provincial Treasurer [2012 – 2016]
P Groener Gerard	Netherlands	1999 – 2002		Ngong Road, Guestmaster [1999 – 2002]
P Grol Arnold	Netherlands	1995 – 1997	Mombasa, Kenya 1997	Eastleigh [Curate 1995], Founder – Undugu Society, Udada, Happy Mixture Organisation (for refugees from Great Lakes region – Burundi, Rwanda, DR Congo, Ethiopia) Fr. Groll Welfare Organisation – for prison ministry
P Hannon Paul	Britain	2006 – 2007	----	Formator SFC, Lecturer – Islam [TUC], Bursar SFC
P Hauser Herman	Deutschland	1995	----	Leacturer (CUEA 1995)
P Huber Helmut	Deutschland	1995 – 1999	----	Curate OLQP
P Kangwa Francis	Zambia	2003 – 2007	----	OLQP [Curate]
P Kasule Charles	Uganda	2001 – 2003	----	Formation (Bursar)
P Kramer Piet	Netherlands	2000	Dongen, Netherlands 2011	Formation
P Komba Petro	Tanzania	2011 – 2014	----	Vocation Animation
P Leduc Paul-Emile	Canada	2012 – 2014	----	Provincial Secretary [Ngong Road]
P Lefief Luc	Belgium	2003 – 2005	----	Formation [Rector]
P Lemay Jean-Claude	Canada	1995 – 2002	Machakos, Kenya 2002	Parish Priest Eastleigh [1995 – 2001], Worked at Research Department of Gaba Publications Part of the team that produced school syllabus for East Africa Wrote and published documents on catechesis, marriage and ecumenism
P Lensen Jan	Belgium	2002 – 2008	----	Ecumenism [Ngong Road]
P Maganya Innocent	DR Congo	2011 – 2017	----	Formator [Balozi], Rector [2014 – 2017]

<b>P Mahwera Anselm</b>	<b>Tanzania</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Bursar SFC</b>
<b>P Malumo Phelim</b>	<b>Zambia</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Ministry OLQP &amp; Oljoro Onyore</b>
<b>P Menoud Henri</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>1995 – 1999</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formation [Rector]</b>
<b>P Meunier Michel</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>OLQP (Curate 1995)</b>
<b>P Mjankwi Deusdedit</b>	<b>Tanzania</b>	<b>2014 – till date</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formator &amp; Bursar</b>
<b>P Morell Luigi</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>2007 – 2014</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formator SFC, Bursar &amp; Formator [Balozi 2008 – 2014]</b>
<b>P Moroney William</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>2007 – till date</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formation [2007 – 2012], Curate OLQP [2013 – 2014], Provincial Secretary [2015 – 2016]</b>
<b>P Nolf Gérard</b>	<b>France</b>		<b>Billère, France 1996</b>	<b>Eastleigh (Bible Apostolate)</b>
<b>P Obanya Charles</b>	<b>Kenya</b>	<b>2007 – till date</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Vocation Director, Ministry OLQP, Provincial East Africa Province – Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan [2012 – 2017]</b>
<b>P O’Donohue John</b>			<b>----</b>	<b>Taught at St Thomas Aquinas Seminary Secretary of Association of Theological Institute of East Africa [ATIEA] Worked at Gaba Institute</b>
<b>P Onyango Martin</b>	<b>Kenya</b>	<b>2008 – till date</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Curate OLQP [2008], Parish Priest OLQP [2015 – 2016]</b>
<b>P Ouedraogo Simon</b>	<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<b>2008 – 2014</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Curate OLQP [2008 – 2012], Parish Priest OLQP [2013 – 2014]</b>
<b>P Peschen Ludwig</b>	<b>Deutschland</b>	<b>2005 – 2010</b>		<b>Healing Ministry [Ngong Road]</b>
<b>P Phiri Felix</b>	<b>Zambia</b>	<b>2014 – 2016</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Lecturer, Head of Department [Mission and Islamic Studies – TUC], Sector Superior [2015 – 2016]</b>
<b>P Proulx Pierre</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>1995 – 2003</b>	<b>Québec, Canada 2003</b>	<b>Ngond Road [Superior]</b>
<b>P San Juan B. Jesús M.</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>OLQP [Curate]</b>
<b>P Sawadogo Augustin</b>	<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<b>2013 – 2015</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Curate OLQP</b>
<b>P Scheurer Franz Xaver</b>	<b>Deutschland</b>	<b>2000</b>		<b>Formation</b>
<b>P Schonecke Wolfgang</b>	<b>Deutschland</b>	<b>1995 – 2001</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>AMECEA, Ministry</b>
<b>P Schoofs Willy</b>	<b>Belgium</b>	<b>1995 – till date</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Eastleigh [Curate 1995 – 2002], Retreats/ Spirituality [Ngong Road 2007 – 20011] Formator SFC [2012], Formator Balozi [2013 – 2017]</b>
<b>P Shorter Aylward</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>1999 – 2002</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Lecturer, Principle (Tangaza University College)</b>
<b>P Singarajan Johnson</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Curate OLQP</b>
<b>P Slinger John</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>2008 – 2012</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Parish Priest OLQP [2008 – 2012]</b>
<b>P Smith George</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>2000 – 2004</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Parish Priest OLQP</b>
<b>P Smith Malcon</b>	<b>Canada</b>			<b>Produced material for International Eucharistic congress in Nairobi – 1985 Worked for Marriage Encounter</b>

<b>P Specht Anton</b>	<b>Deutschland</b>	<b>1995 – 2008</b>		<b>Chaplain of East Africa German Catholics [Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia]</b>
<b>P Ssekamate Aloysius</b>	<b>Uganda</b>	<b>2008 – 2013</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formator [Balozi], Rector [2011 – 2013]</b>
<b>P Stenger Friedrich</b>	<b>Deutschland</b>	<b>2001 – 2008</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formation, Lecturer [TUC], Superior [Ngong Road, 2008]</b>
<b>P Sullivan David (Dave)</b>	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>2007 – 2010</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formator Balozi [Rector 2008 – 2009]; During this time, he made a research on Evangelical Churches in and around South B.</b>
<b>P Tessier Roger</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>2001 – 2017</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Media/ ANB, Counseling, JPIC</b>
<b>P Trédou Vabié Emmanuel</b>	<b>Ivory Coast</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formator [Balozi]</b>
<b>P Ubemu L. Robert</b>	<b>DR Congo</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Parish Priest OLQP</b>
<b>P Wildsmith Edward</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Curate OLQP [1995], Parish Priest OLQP</b>
<b>P Woo Edward</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Bursar CUEA [1995.....]</b>
<b>P van Broekhoven Marinus</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>1999 – 2001 2007 – 2017</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Eastleigh [Curate 1999 – 2001], Guestmaster – Ngong Road [2007], Bursar – Ngong Road [2008 – 2011], Vocation Animation [2012 – 2013], Ministry [2014 – 2017]</b>
<b>P Vande Walle Remi</b>	<b>Belgium</b>	<b>2002 – 2006</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formation</b>
<b>P van Oostrom Evert</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>2001 – 2003</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Formation</b>
<b>P Vuillemin Guy</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>2003 – 2004</b>	<b>----</b>	<b>Lecturer – Islam [TUC]</b>

## Appendix II

Cardinal Charles Lavigerie (31 Oct 1825 – 26 Nov 1892); founder of the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) and the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (MSOLA).



**Source:** Missionaries of Africa Website: <http://www.africamission-mafr.org/menugb.php> (accessed 1/3/17).

### Appendix III

Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Parish, South B. It is currently the only parish in Kenya under the Missionaries of Africa. They have been present here now for 38 years.



OUR LADY  
QUEEN OF PEACE  
SOUTH B CATHOLIC PARISH



**Source:** File photo taken by the author on 21/8/13

## Appendix IV

The author (extreme right) dressed in White Fathers' "regalia", that is, gandourah, black and white rosary, bournous and chechia



Source: Photo taken by Elie Sango in Namushakende, Western Zambia on 30/12/12

## Appendix V

Theological formation of the students of Missionaries of Africa started in this house in South C, Nairobi



Source:[From the Website of the White Fathers:  
[http://vocations.ca/communities\\_dioceses/brothers/white\\_fathers/](http://vocations.ca/communities_dioceses/brothers/white_fathers/) (accessed 2/3/17)]

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