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WELCOME

It has been a busy time since our last newsletter. In spite of all the challenges we face in the world today, and indeed the many challenges within Religious life, and for us as Spiritans, our work in 'Walking with the poor' continues.

In this issue you will learn more about the work of Fr Michael Walsh, now 85, as he drives a range of essential initiatives in Zambia; the Spiritan University Duquesne in Pittsburgh comes under the spotlight as Fr John Fogarty settles into his term there; and we have our regular From The Archives spot, as well as many more items of interest.

As we approach Autumn, the Fall of the year, we might consider the words of American Poet William Bryant ~

"Autumn . . . the year's last, loveliest smile" and as we go through our daily lives with all their ups and downs, we might remember that *"what sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity."* ~ Joseph Addison

Fr. Martin Kelly, CSSp, Provincial

OVERSEAS NEWS



LIFE IN ZAMBIA

It was in Nigeria in 1966, the year after his ordination, that Michael Walsh CSSp, originally from Co Offaly, began his long service to date as a missionary priest. He first arrived in the west African country not long before the beginning of its civil war, known to many as 'The Biafran War'. After leaving Nigeria, he was one of a group of Irish Spiritans who moved to open up the Congregation's first-ever mission in Zambia in 1971 and he continues to serve in the southern African country to this day.

In 2001 Fr Michael founded the Orphans and Vulnerable Organisation (OVO ZAMBIA) in Pemba in the Southern Province of Zambia. OVO, which is a registered charity, was established to provide education support, food for hungry children, and help for orphans and the most vulnerable children and people in society in Zambia, especially during the pandemic of HIV/AIDS and drought. The charity has no paid workers and all its activity is delivered by volunteers.

OVO has grown considerably over the past 22 years. As it grew, OVO activities also increased according to the needs of the time. There are now eight OVO Centres in the Districts and Parishes where the Spiritans are working. OVO focuses on a number of key areas of concern including education; a feeding programme; Children's Rights and Safeguarding; Environmental Protection & Biodiversity; and Self-Sustainability. OVO's work is essential to the development of wellbeing of children and young people in Zambia and relies on grants and donations while it works to become self-sustaining.



EDUCATION

The provision of educational supports has been the primary function of OVO since its establishment. Currently, this is achieved through the provision of tuition fees and essential school items, such as uniforms, shoes, books, pens, pencils, etc. Education has remained the main focus of OVO from the time it was set up. The demand has been such for education that construction of a new school and orphanage began in 2022 in Habbongo Village. The project has only been possible through support from Fr Michael, volunteers, benefactors and the local Community.

OVERSEAS NEWS



The people in Habbongo village are poverty stricken, living on less than \$1 dollar a day. Due to a lack of proper education and the resultant lack of opportunities, most of the people do not have formal jobs. Instead, they rely heavily on farming, which is also seasonal and is barely enough to sustain their families. As a result, some parents decide to marry off their daughters at a young age to raise money.

At present, to get to school, children have to go through thick forest and bush, and also have to endure speeding vehicles and trucks which are incredibly dangerous, causing death in the recent past. The forests are infested with dangerous animals and criminals that hide in the thick forest to attack children. There have been reports of children being raped. Some have been bitten by snakes, attacked by wild or stray dogs. This and many other challenges lead to most of the children usually dropping out of school where they end up in early marriages, drug abuse and other difficulties.

The presence of a school which OVO is constructing within proximity of the villages, away from the forest, will encourage more children to go back to school. This will not only improve literacy levels in the community, but will also open doors to more opportunities for children to attain education. Furthermore, the school will also be a source of employment in the community and the region.



FEEDING PROGRAMME

OVO also provides a feeding programme which provides nutritious food for the orphans at school and the Child-headed homes (children taking care of themselves after the deaths of both parents). OVO looks after HIV+/AIDS children by providing food and helping them to access medication.

The work which OVO is doing is critical to the welfare, health and safety of children and young people in Zambia. To date over 8,500 young people have benefited from the services including street kids, GBV clients, girls retrieved from early marriages, young people in conflict with the law, etc. Approximately 864 young people who have used the OVO services are now working as teachers, nurses, brick layers, carpenters, clinical officers, etc.

To find out more about OVO's work and how you can help, please contact the Promotions Office at 01 406 3090 or frmanager@spiritanplt.ie.



Felix, from The Democratic Republic of the Congo in Central Africa

HEARTS ON FIRE, FEET ON THE MOVE

Missio Ireland is the Holy Father's official charity for overseas mission and is part of a global network of such charities serving the Church in over 120 countries. It co-ordinates World Mission Sunday which always falls on the second last Sunday in October. This year, the Pope has selected the theme of 'Hearts on Fire, Feet on the Move' for World Mission Sunday.

In 2023 World Mission Sunday falls on Sunday 22nd October. This is an important day in the calendar as it is the Holy Father's annual appeal in support of overseas mission. All offerings made on World Mission Sunday become part of the Holy Father's Universal Solidarity Fund. This Fund supports missionary activities in over 1,100 mission dioceses, mostly found in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and is essential not only for missionaries, but for the future of the Church.

HOW DID WORLD MISSION SUNDAY BEGIN?

World War I caused great damage to Catholic missions throughout the world. After the war ended, Pope Benedict XV — he has been referred to as the "Pope of Missions" — invited Catholics to bring light to a world devastated by conflict asking for Catholics throughout the world to participate in rebuilding and supporting these activities. His successor, Pope Pius XI was Pope from 1922 to 1939. He is noted for having established Vatican Radio in 1931 and being the first Pope to broadcast on radio. Pius XI announced that Mission Sunday would fall on the second last Sunday of October. Over a century has passed since this missionary call and the face of mission has changed considerably since then. The Holy Spirit is already present

in every baptised person, and no one is too helpless to give nothing, nor too rich to have nothing to receive.

But Missionary work today remains a work of love, of giving and of sharing, to which so many missionaries give witness. Missionaries passionately believe in the total worth of every person and that the world can be transformed by the powerful message of the Good News.

To find out more about the work of Missio Ireland, please contact Fiona on 01 4972035 or visit www.missio.ie.

Children like Felix dig for cobalt in the Congo every day to support their families. In so doing, they risk their lives. This valuable metal is used for a range of products including rechargeable battery electrodes, airbags in cars; diamond tools; drying agents for paints, varnishes, and inks; magnetic recording media; magnets; and steel-belted radial tyres. It is regarded as being of strategic and critical application.





DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY, PITTSBURGH

This year (2022/23) marks the 150th anniversary of Spiritan presence and mission in the USA

The first four Spiritans, expelled from Germany by Bismark, arrived in the US towards the end of 1872 and accepted an invitation from the Bishop of Pittsburgh to serve in his diocese where the most pressing need of the time was a Catholic boy's school. In a rented property over a downtown bakery, Spiritans offered the first possibility of education to the children of impoverished immigrants working in the steel mills, opening up new opportunities for their future.

The construction of a permanent building on a nearby property was soon undertaken as student numbers grew and Holy Ghost College, as it was then known, was granted a university charter in 1911. With its newly acquired status, the college changed its name to Duquesne University in honor of the Governor of Canada who, in 1754, had built a fort which became the site of the future city.

Although the college expanded over the years, Duquesne continued to maintain a focus on those who were on the margins of the society of the day and gained a reputation for openness to diversity and inclusiveness. Today Duquesne has evolved into one of the top-tier Colleges in the USA, with nine schools – soon to be ten - offering an excellent academic education to some 8,000 students coming from every US State and several different countries across the globe.

Rising costs of private College education have made it increasingly difficult to ensure that the possibility of access remains open to poorer members of contemporary society. A system of financial aid and scholarships means that students from lower income backgrounds and disadvantaged urban and rural communities can still avail of a Duquesne education and develop their talents and gifts.

Several programmes ensure that the Spiritan charism is central to the education offered at Duquesne: mission trips overseas, placement opportunities in poorer communities, collaborative projects for the empowerment of disadvantaged groups both locally and in Africa, a graduate degree programme in sustainability.

Irish Spiritans have made an important contribution to this educational enterprise over the years and today three members of the Irish Province continue to serve at Duquesne in teaching and administrative capacities. In all, fourteen Spiritans from six different nationalities work with several lay collaborators across the campus, who are deeply committed to Spiritan mission, to ensure its continuity into the future.



SPIRITANS ON MISSION WITH APPRENTIS D'AUTEUIL

In March 1866 a priest of the diocese of Paris, Louis Roussel, gathered together six street children who were wandering aimlessly around the streets near his home. For Fr Roussel these kids were not simply vagabonds destined for a life in and out of prison. Fr Roussel saw in each of these boys the potential to become men, actors of their own destiny.

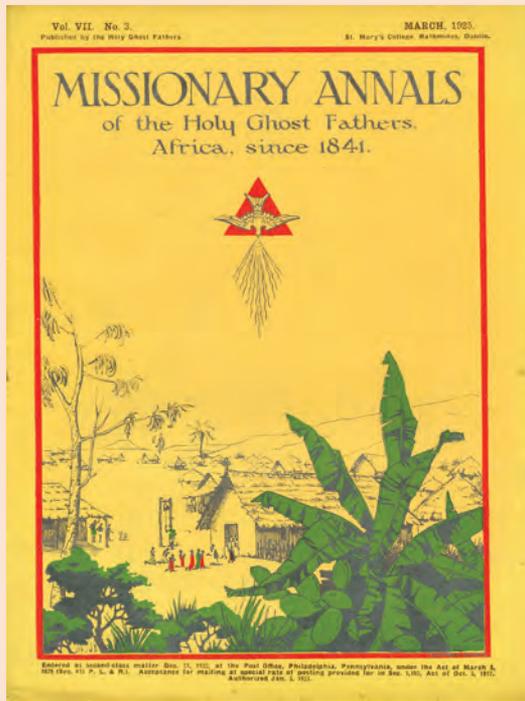
From this intuition of a simple priest the educational work of Apprentis d'Auteuil was born. Some sixty years after Louis Roussel, when Apprentis d'Auteuil was struggling to survive after the difficult years of the First World War, the diocese of Paris asked the Spiritans to take over the work knowing that, in the words of their founders, they make themselves the advocates, supporters and defenders of the poorest. Blessed Daniel Brottier CSSp was the first Spiritan in Auteuil in 1923 – one hundred years ago. He immediately took charge of the mission and has been an inspiration of the work ever since.

Today Apprentis d'Auteuil welcomes over **40,000 young people and families of all religions and none** who are in extremely vulnerable situations and offers to journey with them so that they may get an education, train for skilled work and find their place in society.

Part of the mission of Apprentis d'Auteuil is to care for nearly 2,000 unaccompanied minors who have crossed the Sahara and the Mediterranean Sea or who have come from the war torn regions of the Middle East to give them safe refuge and the possibility of an education and

vocational training. We also have developed a network of family centres based essentially in deprived areas of high immigration to provide a safe place for mothers to come together for mutual support and to provide parenting skills to those struggling to educate and rear their children. 15 Spiritans are currently on mission with Apprentis d'Auteuil. They form part of the pastoral network of nearly 200 members who accompany the young people on their human and spiritual journey. In recent years, given the development of Apprentis d'Auteuil, the role of the Spiritans has evolved to become more of an accompaniment for those who accompany the young people in our care.

Our mission then is to accompany over 180 principals and heads of department who have been missioned by the Spiritans to ensure that our activities and projects are rooted in Gospel values while welcoming to all, especially the poorest and most forgotten in our society. Working together we seek to discern with the eyes of our Gospel faith the signs of the times so that we can be faithful to the mission of our founders in a creative fidelity that responds to the needs of today.



THE MISSIONARY ANNALS/OUTLOOK COLLECTION 1919-2010

In our archives are the bound volumes of every issue of the Missionary Annals/Outlook since January 1919. They offer a fascinating account of almost one hundred years of missionary history. From the outset the focus was on telling missionary stories in order to arouse interest and support from the laity. Published monthly missionaries became 'foreign correspondents' sending back accounts of their experiences, adventures, disasters and the strange new cultures to which they were trying to adapt.

From the earliest editions a thematic thread of 'journey and pilgrimage' is evident. Many articles share with the readers the fruits of mission in a parish-based context which witnessed the building up of the local church along with education projects and also outreach in community development work. With the publication of the Vatican II documents, in 1965, and the discussion on "reading the signs of the times" there was a change in the kind of articles published. As the decades continued there was a more honest portrayal of the poverty of the people while maintaining respect alongside a vision of hope and possibility. In later editions the stance for justice and the rights of people were publicised with articles spotlighting the volatile political situation in the countries where

Spiritans were working. We see also a greater inclusion of the laity in the work of mission and more images of women and children being published. Towards the turn of the century contemporary issues were highlighted such as: development education programmes, advocacy issues, migrant concerns, interfaith dialogue, culture and diversity, and care of creation. The children's section of the magazine was continually popular. It involved children fundraising for the mission and sending their photographs and letters into the magazine. To this day we get requests for scans of long lost childhood photos which were published in this section. As time moved on editors started to visit the mission regions for themselves to conduct interviews, collect stories and photographs. The last years of the magazine started to see a move to story and photo collection using social media and 'selfies'. Currently the collection is in the process of being digitised which will allow it to be accessed by a larger online audience in the future.

The collection leaves us today with a wonderful legacy of well informed and written articles about the Spiritan story that is consulted by every researcher who visits the Archive to this day.



THE
SPIRITANS

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One of the most powerful ways that you can help us make a difference is by leaving a gift in your Will. By doing so, you can ensure that those in need will continue to receive the help and support they need.

If you'd like to learn more, please contact us at **promotions@spiritane.ie** or call **Gráinne at 01 406 3090**