

FRONTLINE REPORT

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Catholic Hospital—Healing Haven

During the years of civil strife in Liberia, when dire poverty was the norm, and widespread destruction of lives and property left the population devastated, **St. Joseph Catholic Hospital**, Monrovia, continued to provide life-saving medical and surgical care to all those who came through its doors. Now, with peace for the Liberian people, it is a time for new beginnings—starting over in a situation where jobs are not available and beginning again is courageous and hopeful but a real struggle. Poverty is still rampant. In this post-war environment, **St. Joseph Catholic Hospital** continues to provide excellent health care for the Liberian people despite the heavy costs of operating such a facility. For almost 45 years, the hospital has been run by the **Brothers of St. John of God** with the assistance of the **Sisters of the Immaculate Conception**. It is staffed by Liberian Doctors, Nurses and Technicians, offering life-saving treatment around the clock. This 144-bed Hospital averages 109 surgeries a month, 40% for Obstetrics and Gynecology. The Hospital



Above: (L-R) **Sister Socorro and Brother Justino** stand in front of **St. Joseph Catholic Hospital** in Monrovia, Liberia. In 1963 the Brothers came to Monrovia and started with a Clinic-Hospital. They began building the current Hospital which was officially opened March 19, 1967. *Below:* **Brother Justino** with a Laboratory Technician in the new **Brother Joseph Sebastian Medical Laboratory** named in honor of Brother Joseph who passed away in 2003. He was dedicated to providing good health services to the Liberian people—and he did!

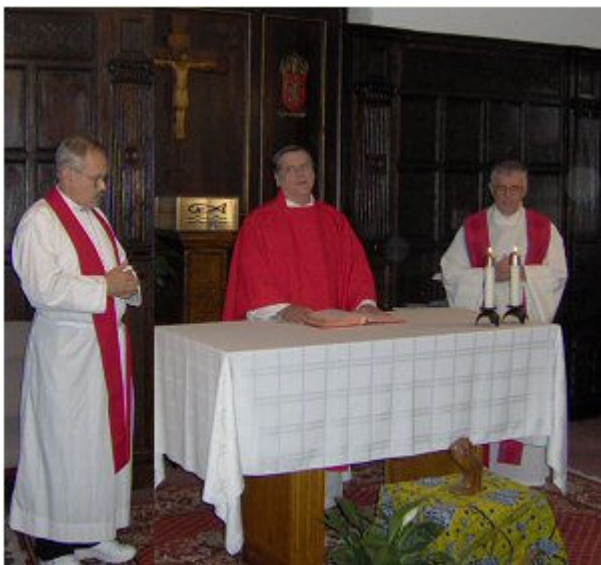


sees 200 - 250 patients daily in the Outpatient Department. The Obstetrics Ward averages 125 deliveries monthly. From St. Joseph's, many Programs are operating: HIV-AIDS, TB, Primary Health Care, Antenatal, Well-Baby Clinics and an outreach clinic in New Kru Town. The AIDS Program includes home visitations and supplementary feeding for AIDS and TB patients. The Hospital also is the center for Seminars for AIDS Program facilitators and counselors. Another valuable service at St. Joseph's is receiving Nursing students and Laboratory Technicians-in-training from Government and Catholic nursing schools providing a practicum for the students.

The medical staff share in the life-and-death struggles that face so many. With no money, some family people wait until "death is knocking on their door," before bringing their loved one to the hospital. The medical staff give the best treatment possible and with proper care, there have been some amazing recoveries. The Brothers, Sisters and Staff have been tireless in doing whatever they can to save lives, offering a high standard of up-to-date care for their patients.

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Provincial Assembly 2007



Above: On June 18, 2007 the newly elected **Provincial Council** concelebrated the closing Mass for the 2007 Provincial Assembly of the S.M.A. American Province, bringing it to a successful and prayerful conclusion. (L-R) **Fr. Frank Wright, S.M.A. Provincial Councilor; Fr. Michael Moran, S.M.A. Provincial Superior** and **Fr. Brendan Darcy, S.M.A. Vice-Provincial.**



Above: The **Provincial Assembly 2007** took place at the Carmel Retreat Center in Mahwah, NJ.

Below: Congratulations to **Fr. James Hickey, S.M.A.** At the Assembly, June 15, 2007 marked the 61st Anniversary of his ordination to the Priesthood.



sisters in Africa, and those of African descent in the U.S.A.

S.M.A. American Province is “good to go” for another six years with its newly elected Provincial Council. All Members and Associates are encouraged to live out their missionary calling wholeheartedly and be willing to serve in whatever capacity their energy and skills may be needed for the good of S.M.A. and its mission to our brothers and



Above: S.M.A. participants are shown at the end of the Provincial Assembly in Mahwah, NJ. *Front Row (L-R):* **Steve Phillips (Lay Missionary), Fr. James Hickey, Eliecer Sandoval (Seminarian), Fr. Ulick Bourke, Fr. Brendan Darcy, Fr. Joseph Foley, Fr. Frank Wright, Fr. Michael Moran, Fr. Matthew Cole, Fr. Ted Hayden.** *Back Row (L-R):* **Stephen Price (Secretary), Fr. Al Cooney, Fr. Jim Gessler, Damien Truslow-Trudeau (Seminarian), Fr. Jack Brennan, Deacon Dermot Roache, Fr. Tom Wright, Fr. Tony Fevlo, Fr. James McConnell, Fr. Austin Ochu, and Fr. Bill Dyer of the Missionaries of Africa (Facilitator).** *Not shown:* **Theresa Hicks (Lay Missionary).**

A Mission of Reconciliation

by Fr. Paul Quillet, S.M.A.

Fr. Paul Quillet, S.M.A., of the S.M.A. Province of Lyon is currently serving as the Regional Superior for the Region of Benin, West Africa. He took time from his busy schedule to share with us the following reflections on his mission with the Fulani people. He spent 25 years in his mission with the Fulani in the Republic of Benin, walking daily with his brothers and sisters.

Fr. Paul writes:

When my bishop told me, “Father Paul, you will go to the Fulani people and to the Muslims,” I was surprised. As a young missionary at that time, my dream was to go around to villages and preach the Good News. Now, here I was, sent to a people that had chosen the way of Islam, four or five centuries ago. A people that spread Islam through the Sahel Region of West Africa. My bishop added, “I want the Good News of God to be offered to all peoples in my diocese.”

I was sent and I went. I had come to teach but I had to let myself be taught: Their language, their way of life, their culture . . . and I tried to become one of them as much as possible. Through the Fulani, little by little, the Lord helped me to understand the meaning of the mission He had entrusted to me.

One day, I went to visit a Fulani compound in the bush. Seeing me, people were afraid and fled. The “Old Man” (local chief) tried to be brave. He made me sit on a mat and had sour porridge and fresh milk



Above: (L-R) Fr. Paul Quillet, S.M.A. and Fr. Clark Yates, S.M.A. enjoy S.M.A.’s 150th Anniversary Celebration in Lyon, France in July 2006.

brought for me, the good Fulani way of welcoming a guest. I could see they were troubled so I did not stay long.

On the way out, the Old Man asked me a few questions. Suddenly he realized I was a “Padri,” a “Father.” A smile shone on his face. Then he said, “You the Fathers, **you are the people who ‘repair’ the world, please repair the world for us.**” This is a poor translation of what he said. The word he used means

“Acquire inward
peace, and thousands
around you will find
their salvation.”

St. Seraphim of Sarov

‘to make the world better,’ ‘to reconcile.’ Anyway, the message was clear for me.

My mission was a mission of reconciliation. Reconciliation of people with God, people with people, people with themselves. This is what I tried to do all the years I lived with them.

I went to a Fulani friend. Late in the night —the moment when people share the ‘word that comes from the heart.’ His wife and children were asleep and we were sitting on a mat in the silence of the night together. The moon was our light.

After awhile, he said, “Why do you love us so much? You could be so comfortable in your own house, in your own country, make plenty of money and you come to us. We have no food to give you tonight, it is cold and wet and here you are. You know that we have our own way (Islam) and that we cannot follow your way (the way of Jesus). Why do you love us so much?”

This question touched me very deep down. After awhile, I said, “**With Jesus, I came to know the heart of God, His love and tenderness.** I would like so much that you Fulani know it and enjoy it.”

These are some of the ways I sowed the Good News among the Fulani for 25 years. Since then I have been called to live different kinds of missions. I am glad to hear that I did not sow in vain. Some Fulani people have come to know Jesus and the Good News He has brought us.

*Catholic Hospital—
Healing Haven*



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For clinics in the area, Catholic Hospital is a place where emergencies are referred and where, often, patients are brought back from the brink of death.

Administrator’s Concerns

“It costs close to \$1,000,000 U.S. to run the hospital annually,” Brother Justino says. He notes that the fees are very small: Adults pay \$2.75 US while medicine and treatment for a child is \$1.75 US. With help from his Order in Spain and with local intake, they can raise 2/3 of their running costs. They are in search of the balance. Brother Justino’s main concern is keeping up with the running costs of the hospital, especially medicines and the fuel expenses for the generator which provides electricity to the Hospital. “Without these, we cannot run the Hospital,” he concluded. “We need help!”

Precious Gift by Stephen Price

Summer is the time for a dip in the lake, or at least a run through the sprinkler—followed by a tall glass of clean water over sparkling ice cubes. Unfortunately, many places in the world don’t have that luxury of clean, abundant water, even for drinking. Many ordinary people in Africa must drink water obtained from untreated rivers and streams, ponds, or even large puddles, because they have no choice. This is true also where rainfall is abundant, because there is no access to clean groundwater and no treatment system. In dry areas, such as vast regions of Northern, Eastern, and Southern Africa, the problem becomes acute. Chronic disease or even death can be the result. Illnesses such as dysentery and schistosomiasis are carried in water. By one estimate, 70% of hospital visits in East Africa are caused by contaminated water.

What can we do about this?

- 1) **Support water projects** to drill wells and boreholes and provide sanitation in areas of Africa lacking these.
- 2) **Support high standards of maintenance and treatment**

through your own municipal water system. Do you know that bottled water is often just filtered tap water? And that when buying a bottle for \$1.50 or \$2.00 you may be paying as much as 5000 or even 10,000 times the cost of the same amount of tap water delivered through your faucet? Worse than that, in the U.S. we discard 140 billion single-use bottled and canned beverage containers each year—an amount that has doubled in the past ten years. About 86% of plastic water bottles used in the U.S. become garbage or litter.

3) **Respect and conserve water in your own daily life.** Water is life, a gift from God!



One water tap serves hundreds.

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Fr. Matthew Cole

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