# Congregation of Christian Brothers

# West Africa District

(GHANA, THE GAMBIA, LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE)

# Wan Pot News



Monthly District News Publication
March, 2012.

# WEST AFRICA DISTRICT NEWS

# WAN POT

# **EDITORAL NOTE**

Warm greetings to our numerous and valuable readers and welcome to our March edition of the West Africa District News – Wan Pot. A lot has happened in the month of March and a lot more is underway. Notwithstanding the difficulties we had with our computer, we managed to bring you our March edition; thanks to Br. Paul M. Luseni who offered us his computer for the said purpose.

VOCATION- From the Latin word *VOCARE* which means "to call". It is a term often used to refer to an occupation to which an individual is particularly drawn or for which a person is suited, trained and qualified. Though now used mostly in a non-religious or secular sense, it originated in the Christian realm — 'calling of all mankind to salvation.'

In the catechism of the Catholic Church it is stated as thus: 'love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being'. The idea of vocation is central to the Christian belief that God has created each person with specific gifts and talents oriented toward specific purposes. In the Catholic Church also, vocation is associated with divine call to serve the church or humanity through vocational commitment such as: marriage life, ordination to the priestly ministry of the church, holy life as a single person and consecration to religious life.

About a week ago, the new district vocation committee (Brs Paul Mendy and Leo Kamara) inspired by the mentoring of the veteran DVD (Br. Martin Vamboi) travelled with Br. Cyril to Port Loko, Lungi and later ended up in Freetown promoting vocations to the Christian Brothers way of life to potential aspirants. Three meetings were held at different locations and all of them very successful from my point of view and I am pretty sure the committee members share the same sentiments.

Freetown pulled the largest crowd; the Calaba town community through Br. Peter Kabia made proper arrangements with the youth inter-units group that met on the 18<sup>th</sup> March,2012 at St. Peter the Rock parish in Calaba town, hence according the team (the committee members, Brs. Paul Luseni, Peter Kabia, Francis George

Salia and Cyril Dauda) the opportunity of talking to the youths. Br. Luseni shared his experiences both as an annually professed brother and as a perpetually professed brother. It was also an occasion of learning for the youths as a number of them confessed "We now know who the Christian Brothers are and what they do in the church." Thanks to Br. Peter Kabia and the rest of the Calaba town community for making the plans and to Br. P. Luseni for his motivational speech to the youth. Special thanks go Brs. P. Mendy and Leo Kamara for taking time out to win souls for Blessed Edmund; keep up the good work, and thumbs up for you.

# OUR EASTER MESSAGE

To all our readers we say happy Easter in advance and may the light of the Risen Christ shine in our hearts and illuminate our paths. May the message of Easter affect our lives and relationships.

# CHRIST IS RAISEN, ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

Cyril and Francis.

# **NOVICES – TAMALE AND GREEN POINT**

We continue to wish our brothers all the best as they do the final lap of their pastoral immersion experience. Patient is gratifying; just learn to hold on a litter longer. To our two (2) brothers — Henry and Felix, we wish you the best in the future. We hope to hear all about these pastoral experiences in our next edition.

# NOVICES – LUSAKA

Be confident of our prayers and support as a district; for your part, do remember to continue flying our district banner higher and higher. SHALOM!!! Let our Wan-Pot readers know how life in your cross-cultural community with the group of 18 novices and multi-cultural formation team is going on.

# Br. Titus Kallon – Lusaka

Thanks for the good work and thanks for making us proud. As a good worker deserves his wage, so too a hard and dedicated worker for Edmund deserves his praises; BRAVO!!!

# **Br. VICTOR ALPHA**

Thanks for investing so much in your studies; we can't wait to have back in the district. Keep up the good work. We would all like to know more of the East Africa district and how it is for the student brother from W.A D.

# **DISTRICT BRIEFING**

# Dear Brothers - Formation-Communication-Wan-pot....

Very encouraging to see such widespread energy and enthusiasm from communities in letting us all know the great things happening around our district. Many of our beneficiaries and well-wishers at home and abroad are highly interested, and surely deserve this service from all of us. So thanks to all, and keep it up.

Many thanks to all of you who have forwarded your spiritual/formation road map for the coming year in the challenging settings of community in ministry. This will surely serve as a focus for us, a spot-check by which we can monitor ourselves on a daily/weekly/monthly basis. In the busy cauldron that is community in ministry, whether it is teaching, study, or whatever, we know that we need something/signposts or we lose focus, we lose our way. We live in a complex difficult world of the modern age, easy to get lost out there or go astray, even as religious with community support, so we need the daily reminders, guidelines of our program for living. After all we make up programs for just about every aspect of our lives, so why not a spiritual program? Hopefully you gain the benefits. I'm sure you will.

As we proceed we can change, shift as needed during the year. It's about what I do myself and in my community on a daily/weekly basis, what I do personally and in community on a monthly basis, yearly basis and so on. Many of the things you do with John will figure on the monthly/yearly calendar. As we are all aware, due to John's very serious and prolonged illness, necessitating his absence from two workshops, the AP accompaniment program was retarded slightly as DLT attended to other district issues. However thanks to the cooperation of all brothers/community-facilitators, AP and FP Brothers, this vital aspect of our spiritual road-map is now very much in place. We all join together in wishing John, Peter and Joseph continuing recovery and rest from these traumatic ill-health experiences so as to ensure no relapses. And so, we continue to monitor, update personally as we add, drop, change etc as conditions, community, dates, cancellations force change, keeping all in a holistic balance. The main thing is we have a written spiritual program that helps us map out our journey. Times of DLT community visitation, community meetings, and meetings with accompaniers/spiritual directors may provide review times. It will surely work for us, but only if we work it.

There are the usual by-products/bonus' of this exercise, we are communicating, congrats. We can admit that for some of us we have never communicated by email with the DLT, PLT, CLT or with Wan-pot/Website. Better late than never, again, keep it up. You are all children of the Cyber-Age, some of us oldsters are of the Industrial-Age, a different age, but we see the need to dip into your newage to survive, contribute to the present times. Sadly, I believe, most African countries skipped or missed out on the Industrial Age for whatever reason, colonial or otherwise, and this is the primary reason for Third World status. My experience is that Africans I know are embracing their Cyber-Age big time. We religious need to be right in there, and many of us are well into the communication ministry, despite constraints.

Not all good news on the formation front. As communicated by the DLT, Henry Josie, one of our novices in S. Africa seems to have gone missing, gone underground at time of writing, while Felix in discernment with his Formation Team has decided not to continue with our way of life. We all thank Felix for journeying so far with us, and feel sure he will stay in touch, as so many of our Ex Bros. do through the ERN. We can only hope and pray that a satisfactory conclusion will result for both Henry Josie and the Brothers.

Our 9 brave men in Lusaka are doing fine under the mantle of Titus and team. I have received three fine emails from Steven Abu, Andrew K. and Joseph Gomeh, representing us all over there very well, flying the W.African flag, "keeping the banner high." Some have been christened with brand new nick-names, but if you want to find them and communicate, they are there, and will fully appreciate your support and novitiate stories. Of course I am quite confident that they too will be communicating with us all through Wan-pot in perfect English grammar and vocabulary!!

I know that Paul and Leo will be embarking on their Vocation- Promotion Ministry under the guidance of their mentor, Martin Vamboi, and the support and assistance of various flag-bearers around the country. We wish them very well, and look forward to the accounts of their journey and endeavors.

I am writing my piece prior to embarking on my safari to Makeni and the Capital City of Yengema, where our dear Bro. Joseph met his waterloo on the motorcycle!! I look forward to visiting my Old Alma Mater of many happy years, St Francis Sec School, seeing if Jeremiah has his generator working....finally? And of course a First for me in Yengema!! You guys had to elect me on to the DLT to get me to Yengema!! When you elect me to the PLT I will visit Liberia and Ghana! after all these years. I know I will enjoy the company of my brothers there, former postulants all, so they better look after me well. And I have my very Able Chauffeur, Andrew Koroma, so I am in the best possible of safe hands.

God Bless All for now, Noel.

# PERSONAL GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE

The following information involves some change of plans from those announced in the February edition of WANPOT, but that now have become necessary.

- 1. HOLY WEEK RETREAT CANCELLED: As a result of a meeting with the DLT earlier this month re: the proposed plans for the PGP programme, it was thought necessary to cancel the Holy Week retreat that had been scheduled from March 31 to April 7 at Kingtom. This was because of information recently received re: three visitations that will be going on at the same time. Reuben and Pious will be going round to look at all the projects in the district; Sam and Paul Follas will be visiting other communities to follow-up on the quick books training that took place last year and the DLT members will be visiting Makeni, Yengema, Gbarnga, Blama and the two Bo communities. In light of this, the Holy Week retreat had to be cancelled.
- 2. TWO DISTRICT RETREATS PLANNED: So there will just be two District retreats offered for 2012. These are scheduled for July 27 to August 3 at the Pastoral Centre in Kenema and for December 16-23 at Javouhey House in Leicester. The July retreat will be followed a couple of days or so later with the District Assembly. I will circulate information re: these two retreats as soon once directors have been confirmed. I received word from Br. Michael Godfrey that he and Sr. Brigit would indeed be here well in time for our July 27-Aug 3 retreat, so no need to hold it in August as announced in the last edition of WANPOT.

3. NEXT AP WORKSHOP SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 9,10,11 AT KINGTOM:

Our next AP Workshop is now set to begin with 7:00 p.m supper on EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 9 and conclude with 1:00 p.m. lunch on WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11. The venue for this workshop is ST. EDWARD'S CENTRE, KINGTOM, FREETOWN.

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN TOWELS.

Look forward to seeing you all there.

CONGREGATION WEBSITE Recent Items from West Africa www.edmundrice.net

1. "Be the change ..."

**by Br. Augustine Kamara** (in RECENT RICE EXPRESS SECTION: March 2012)

- "Reconciliation frees the soul" (Mandela)
   CHRISTIAN BROTHERS WEST AFRICAN ASSEMBLY
   by Br. John Holden (in RECENT NEWS SECTION:

   February 2012)
- 3. Pious Alfred Conteh Sierra Leonean Christian Brother, 38, Development Officer
  (in RECENT PROFILE SECTION): January 2012
- 4. "Teaching to Liberate" by Br. Titus Kallon (in RECENT RICE EXPRESS SECTION: December 2011)
- 'Not as a theoretical possibility but as a lived reality'

**Br. Richard Walsh's homily** at Pious Conteh's Final Profession in Freetown (IN RECENT NEWS SECTION: October 2011)

Why not make write an article for our Congregation Website?

If you need assistance with sending photos by e-mail, contact John Holden.

Send your contributions by e-mail, with photos, to the website editor:

Brother Michael Burke, South Africa E-Mail: <a href="mailto:mtbmichael@hotmail.com">mtbmichael@hotmail.com</a>

# John Holden

# The visit of the Province Mission Coordinator to WAD

The Province Mission Coordinator appointed by the Province Mission Board, Mr **Reuben Chongo**, a Zambian, will visit the West Africa District for the first time. He will arrive on the 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 together with Paul the Province Bursar. Together with the Province Mission Officer for WAD, Pious Conteh they will visit all project

sites and communities of brothers in Sierra Leone and Ghana. He would not make it to Liberia this time due to tight schedule. The areas of consideration for his visit will include:

- Meeting with Brothers/co-workers, visit development projects they are implementing as well as meeting some of their target groups.
- To familiarize himself with the projects financial and management systems being used, identify strengths and weaknesses and propose recommendations to improve upon the identified weaknesses.
- To exchange ideas with the host Brothers/coworkers about new areas for either scaling up projects or developing new projects.

His job is to co-ordinate the development of our Mission across the Province by working with the four Province Mission Officers and in close collaboration with DLTs, the PLT and the Province Mission Board. In order to familiarize himself with places and people he has decided to take this bold step to visit all district in Africa as part of his insertion point in the province. Brothers, co-workers and beneficiaries let us give Reuben a supporting hand to make his visit a success. We are looking forward to receive him. Welcome Reuben to West Africa District.

# **Pious Conteh-PMO**

# **TENGBEH TOWN COMMUNITY**

Greetings to all from TT A lot of movement in community this month, nothing new there, seems to go with the territory....Mostly involved community visitation, second round, still in progress at time of going to press. Also we have Bro. Paul Follas traveling with Sam on the community finance visitation, While Ruben, as the newly appointed Province Project Manager visits all communities with Pious to familiarize himself with district projects and ministries. We all welcome our two visitors from Zambia and hope they will enjoy their time among us.

Noel found the Makeni and Yengema communities to be doing very well, united in community and ministry. Though the road was difficult, it was more than made up for with the warm hospitality of the brothers. Joseph Turay has had to seek readmittance to hospital as the wound was in danger of serious infection. Having walked out of the same hospital some weeks ago, the task of readmittance took sometime and persuasion with a very understandably furious Dr Turay. Only through the intervention of Charles Belmoh and Sr Philomena from Loretto Clinic was this accomplished. The Cluny Sisters, Philomena and Mary Sweeney have been very generous in providing a vehicle and driver for Joseph's movements from the brothers' house to the hospital, as there is no vehicle in Makeni community. Those of us who know Sr Mary Sweeney will feel assured that there will be no escape from the hospital this time round till the treatment is finished. She sends warm greetings to Titus Kallon.

At time of writing, Joseph has had an operation, a skin graft and is recovering well. This operation will need some follow up, monitoring in cleaning and bandaging, and though conditions at the hospital are not ideal, this medical attention is vital to ensure healing. Bros Charles and Jeremiah have been relentless in visiting, cooking and carrying all meals from the house, as well as water and all other needs. His community from Yengema, visit one by one on a regular basis, so Joseph "will be out for the season" in football terms, but with patience in following medical orders will make a full recovery this time round.

Augustine has been absent with the Cordaid representative visiting all that organization's projects in Sierra Leone, which includes some of the brothers' projects. Augustine and Albert now move out to Liberia and Bo-Blama on community visitation after DLT meetings with Paul and Ruben. Ben continues to be engaged in parish and diocesan activities, so watch this space for Ben's itineraries and activities in the next issue. Water continues to be a problem, and despite mending the road to allow transport for the water-bowser, Walker has had to employ an alternative person and system.

Chris is in regular communication as always, enjoying his course and sabbatical. We received very urgent calls to send Chris's second pair of glasses, as he broke the originals. This process was delayed by one brother Paul Luceni who had "stolen" the said glasses from the DLT office!! Much to Albert's annoyance. After some frantic efforts to catch up with the culprit and after several phone calls and the intervention of several members of Paul's

community, this glasses-saga was finally brought to a satisfactory conclusion; Bro Albert in full cooperation with Bro Paul finally got the glasses on their way to a much relieved Chris Teh. Happy Easter to all our Wan-Pot readers from TT community.

# **Br. CHRIS TEH**

# THE UNIVERSE STORY – OUR NEW CREATION STORY?

I was baptized as an infant in my home Church – United Methodist Church, Tombodu. The only proof of this for me is my baptismal certificate which I found when my dad passed on - 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1977 (May His soul rest in Peace).

My Primary and Secondary Schools Religious Knowledge classes, plus my Sunday School lessons all taught me that the world was created by God in 6 days, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> day God rested. The creation story in the book of Genesis, coupled with cultural stories and belief systems handed down to me taught me that there is a being somewhere high in the sky, who is responsible for my being, and that if I fail to honour 'HIM', I will end up in hell fire when I die. Looking back on it all, I say to myself "what a way of influencing a young and tender mind".

Do I still believe the story? Answer is YES. Do I believe them as they are literally told? I doubt it. And there are many other stories in the scriptures (I mean the bible) I would not take literally. I am reading all the stories now within their contexts, and now reflecting on them in the context of the new and unfolding understanding of the whole of the universe.

Science has proven that 13.7 billion years ago saw the beginning of our observable universe. Particles of matter and light were expanding away from a hot origin point. Electromagnetic interactions began shaping the unfolding of the universe. Within minutes, the first nuclei were formed, and within half a million years, the first atoms of hydrogen, helium and lithium formed. Our galaxies and stars appeared 13 billion years ago, and then came our Milky Way (12 billion years ago). Our solar system with three supernova explosions triggered star formation, the birth of the Sun, oceans and continents from 4.6 to 3 billion years ago. First cells, photosynthesis, the ice age, cells with nuclei and multi-cellular organisms, sexual reproduction and heterotrophy emerged between 4 to 1 billion years ago. Plants and animal starting with jellies, sea pens, flat worms start with the era 524 million years up to 72 thousand years ago with polar bears being the new arrivals. It is only 2.6 million years when the first human forms Homo habilis of African origin were discovered, then Homo erectus (1.5 million years ago), and finally *Homo sapiens*, the earliest evidence discovered in caves in South Africa in the last 200 thousand years ago. (Data courtesy of Brian T. Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker – Journey Of The Universe).

In this new universe story, it is clear that we humans are the latest arrivals. Now this is a story that has "turned me upside-down, and is shaking the nonsense out of me", yet there is a wow feeling that has welled in me also.

My time in Glenburn Ecology and Spirituality Centre is an eye opener to this new and unfolding story. It is a known fact that we humans, the newest citizens of our planet have over the years embarked on actions that are meant to destroy the very essence of who we are. Excessive pollution of the air, water and mother earth, with its debilitating consequences is staring at us right in the face.

As with many other life forms, we humans emerged in the Cenozoic period profoundly conditioned by environmental factors that developed during this era. Thomas Berry states that "our inner world of genetic coding, shaped by the same forces that created the world around us, is integral with this outer world. Even our soul life is developed only in contact with these surrounding experiences. So integral is our inner world with the outer world that if this outer world is damaged, then the inner life of our souls is diminished proportionately... when we so ruthlessly extinguish the life forms of our period, we threaten, along with the planetary beings, the inner life of the human" (Christian Future and the Faith of The Earth p60)

We do not need to look far. Take a look at the hills surrounding Freetown (Capital City of Sierra Leone) and its close environs. We have caused so much damage to the trees, the bush and the soil that we do not have enough water for the residents of the city in a country with one of the highest recorded rainfall. The dams are getting lower and lower. Drinking water is always short especially during the dry season – a resulting effect: outbreak of water-borne diseases. The hill side is eroding with every down pour of rain, rocks rolling, causing massive damage to properties, and of lives. We only have to step a couple of kilometers outside Freetown, then we are welcome by truck loads of charcoal and fire wood cut straight from the growing shrubs and trees. Further afield, there is massive logging going on, and the forest is depleted. This latest action is pioneered by those with wealth and power.

It is also a proven fact that 85% of Sierra Leoneans depend solely on the forest, the soil, and the rivers for their livelihood. In most cases, it is the poorest of the poor who are forced to eke a living in this sometimes inhumane, backbreaking, labour intensive manner. The question is

"are the poor destined to survive solely in this way? Are there man-made forces that are responsible for bringing people so low? Are our laws and systems creating room for people to live in squalor and eke a living that is destroying their (our) very essence?" We all know the answers to these and many other questions that have been asked.

I believe what is staring us in the face here are SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES. A system created to keep the masses poor and uneducated, to be content with a living that is below human standard, to be unaware of their actions in search of a living that is in turn hunting them, to continue to cause damage to the very essence of their survival: air, water and mother earth.

Our African Province Mission Statement calls us to: "be effective agents in the liberation of oppressed and marginalised people from poverty, injustice, ignorance, and the effects of sickness, especially HIV/Aids.

To collaborate closely with the poor in the integrated ministries of faith-based education, community development, advocating for the transformation of unjust structures, and in the care of people and the rest of creation".

The main issue that is staring us in the face is that we cannot save ourselves without saving the world in which we live. The world of humans and the world of other modes of beings are not two separate worlds. It is a single world in which we live and die and the world dies both physically and spiritually. We are either to be spiritually nourished by this world and save it, or we starve for spiritual nourishment. We therefore need to develop a greater religious (in our own case Christian) understanding of our universe as one in which "the human community and the natural world are seen as a unified, single community with an overarching purpose: the exaltation of the joy of existence, praise of the divine, and the participation in the great liturgy of the universe" (Thomas Berry).

This is our call. This call may well demand that we establish a harmonious relation between us humans and the earth. "Our Lenten Season is not merely a human or religious ritual. The redemptive sacrifice of Christ was associated with the springtime renewal of Earth. This same sacrifice enables us to join in this great renewal event" (Thomas Berry). It is both the powers of heaven and the powers of Earth that sustain us in our Eucharistic celebration. This then is a new era of interaction between the divine, the human and the natural. May this season of Lent enables us all to embrace this new and unfolding story.

# A WALK THROUGH TIME AND SPACE



## STARTING POINT OF 8KM WALK

On March 12, as part of the programme, I had the opportunity of doing an 8kms forest walk. This is a forest reserved area which by stroke of luck was untouched during the raging fire disaster in and around Melbourne that destroyed miles and miles of woodlands. I am told that some of the trees in this forest would be about 300 years old, and some of the under-growth ferns would be 100 or more years old. This vast woodland and it flora and fauna is nature's way of supporting all life forms, sustaining our human existence.



ANCIENT FERNS

I am reminded of an article I once read sometime ago: Trees - Teachers of Life:



SOME OF THE ANCIENT TREES ALONG THE TRACK

"Trees teach us to be flexible. Opposition is part of life, but if we maintain a degree of flexibility in our attitudes and viewpoints we will not be broken in any storm of criticism or opposition. Stay strong in all types of weather, but sometimes you need to go with the flow and sway with the breeze".

"Mother Nature has so much to offer us in the form of healing, calm, peace, tranquility and beauty. If we would only take the time to listen, look and learn from her children and Elders, such as the giant Baobabs. These majestic historians, reach to the sky, always looking up and nothing can stop them. No time for self-pity or worry, through storms and sometimes impossible odds, they continue to grow and develop, fulfilling their destiny".

Chris Teh – Glenburn (Melbourne, Australia).

fellow human beings through prayer and actions of penance as we reach out to our brothers and sisters because we love God"

our relationship with God and our



A group of blind, deaf and handicap

Jesus comes to us in the poor, the blind, the deaf and the rejected. There we meet him. As we continue to deepen our relationship with God and our fellow human beings. We realize that the period of lent is to seek new possibilities. And one of the possibilities is to discover a different face of God in the poor and needy. A day was set aside to feed the poor around the Blama community.

# **BLAMA COMMUNITY**

**Greetings to all from Edmund Rice Community- Blama** 

"The season of Lent is not a boring period in the year but actually a time of exciting possibilities of strengthening





Sharing food and drink - Bro. Scott and Sallay massaquoi

The purpose of feeding the poor is to bring them together as one family, wherein we listen to their stories and share food with them. This group includes the poor, the blind and the deaf. They were Men, Women and Children. The program started with a prayer and welcome address by Br. Andrew who encouraged them to have faith in God and that despite their conditions, God loves them and is always with them. All the Brothers shared some words of hope with them. The brothers were really touched with their stories which came with feelings of joy, happiness, sadness and sorrow. The life experiences of these people are extremely painful. They wander from place to place during the day in search of food and other help. The situation in which they fine themselves is quite challenging. It



becomes so difficult for them to cope with life as their's is characterized by a life full of pain and suffering.



Aunty Cecilia (Sharing the food) little children share food together

We all shared food and drinks together as one family, everyone was happy and especially those who were invited. Many of them gave thanks to God and the brothers for accepting them the way they are; and prayed that the good relationships continue. As religious brothers, it's an integral part of our call to serve our less fortunate Brothers and Sisters who desperately need our help. The day ended with thanksgiving prayers for the gift of everyone who was present. God bless us all

Br. Leo Kamara

# **Br. EMMANUEL MARRAH STUDENTCOMMUNITY - BO**

# **NEWS HOUR**

I am pleased to inform all our readers that I have consented to be giving updates for our community so that you will be au-fait with happenings in our community. Probably you will be interested to know the location of this new community, its composition, our current ministry and the development projects undertaking by the community especially for those who have never visited the community. It might be of help when one day you decided to make a call.

LOCATION- the Emmanuel Marrah Student Community is situated along the Bo- Freetown Highway. From the highway to the house is a few minutes walk if you so desire to walk. But if you are using the modern technology that is a car it will be a minute or so to reach our fine and attractive community house. The community house is a six self-contained bed rooms with a chapel, library, a big living room, and the like. Unfortunately, no room for visitors for now until our proposed new wing is erected when funds are ready. Nevertheless, that should not prevent anyone who would like to pay a visit.

COMPOSITION- the community has five students and our Personal Growth Programme Coordinator who recently has decline as Dean of studies. We are studying at Njala University College Bo Campus Towama some few kilometers from our house. We are pursuing degrees in Sociology, Social Work, BED in Community Development Studies and Education. Theses courses are all geared toward fulfilling our call to our vision and mission of our district and the congregation as a whole. In few years to come, I tell you the district will be boasting of social engineers and educationist that will be sober change agents that will be able to find solutions to our social problems in the social system.

MINISTRY- our ministry at the moment is studying, we are also engaged in other different ministries in pushing our charism upfront to the community. Some Brothers help out in the local church in catechizing the young ones to understanding their catholic faith which is crucial to their personal growth as Christians. Some are working with the youth while others help in the formation house where those who want to join our way of life are helped to discern what God is calling them to.

**DEVELOPMENTS-** interesting to note that over the past few months, the community has been engaged in massive development projects that have given our community house a new face lift. The erection of a new water tank in the community has been of great of help to the local people as they stream in every morning to fetch water for drinking and cooking. Few months ago, the community was struggling to get cold water because our old fridge was not in good working order. Through our community resources and our student support we managed set aside some money to get a new deep freezer and brand new tyres for our car. Now we can boast of cold water and chill drinks in the house.

TEACHING PRCATICE- happy to inform you that Br Paul Yallah who is on his final lap in the college is currently concluding on his final teaching practice at one of the leading schools in Bo called St Pious Primary School. Br Paul just has few more months to rap-up his course and will be ripe for ministry shortly. We want to wish Br Paul the best of luck as he endeavors to hand back the knowledge gained in the university to the marginalized children in schools.

FIRST SEMESTER EXAMS CONCLUDED- our first semester exams started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January and ends on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. At the moment, we are classes full in full swing. I want to cease this opportunity to congratulate all of us for the maximum effort we are inserting in our studies. I pray that all of us will come out with flying colures.

VISITS- the month of December was a blessing for us as a community. The community hosted Brothers from the Diaspora who came down for our annual district assembly. Brs. Bonaventure, Sonny, from Ghana Tamale and Casmir and Patrick from Liberia Gbarnga had a quality Christmas celebration with us which uplifted our dropping spirit. Brothers, memories of you are still lingering in our minds. The joy you brought to our community is still deep and strong. We hope you will come back.

Also, recently the community received friends from England whom every year come down to help out our brothers and sisters in schools. Roisin the Head teacher of St Joseph's College with a cross section of her staff and students spent a week in Bo helping out in teaching and visit deprived areas of the township. The community has served as a host and Br Emmanuel was charged with the responsibility of navigating them in and around Bo and it's environ. Thanks Emmanuel and all the community members for the support and quality time we extended to our visitors and friends. From what I gather today from Br Pious the Province Mission Officer {PMO} from a telephone conversation which lasted for an hour he confidently told me that the people were indeed impressed with their visit and that thumbs up were given to the community. Bravo Brothers keep up the good work.

**TEAM-BUILDING-** the community welcomed the Deputy District Leader Augustine Williams and councilor Albert Gomez for a team building exercise on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January. Thanks Brothers. For the quality time you gave to the

process. It was valuable and we hope to put into practice all what we have learnt from you.

St Edwards.

# YENGEMA COMMUNITY

## A MESSAGE OF PEACE PREACHED THROUGH SPORT

Greetings from Yengema where the brothers have successfully organized different games within the community.

The Ngiaya and Yengema community had heads against each other in a football match. At the end of the 90 mins. encounter, the Ngiaya people were able to break the Yengema's 50 years record. The game ended with 6-5 goals in favor of Ngiaya. The' White Gentlemen' sealed the basketball match with 30 points against their opponenst,' Blue Sky'. In the Volleyball game, 'Sunshine', with the color yellow won the trophy for the girls. Because of bad weather and the tiredness of the two teams, we were unable to end the Volleyball match for men. Both teams were considered winners.

The winners and all those who participated in the competition were happy to take home an envelope with certificates.

Watch out for more news on sport and other activities from Yengema community.

# **CHOGGU COMMUNITY**

Greetings from Tamale; there is not much happening at the moment but I would love to send some photos of the school.

We will be writing our exams at the beginning of April and close on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Bona and I just returned from Navarongo in the Upper Eastern Region where we met with the father of Felix Koram and handed back Felix to his family.



# **CALABA TOWN COMMUNITY**

# HURRAY!!! GHANA CELEBRATES 55<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY

Br Andrew Turay (Headmaster Kanvilli) with visitors from

On the 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 the Republic of Ghana celebrates her 55<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary; the Calaba town community was not an exception to this. All the brothers in the community gathered to celebrate with Br. Cornelius Pengnjin (Ghanaian).

As a community the day was marked by prayer sessions — morning and evening. Prayers were offered for all the fallen heroes and heroines of Ghana, Sierra Leone and Africa as a continent; and prayers were also said for unity and peace to reign in these nations. Libation was poured in honour of these great men and women, on whose shoulders we now stand.

The day was climaxed with the brothers having a sumptuous meal in celebration of the Ghanaian freedom from colonial rule, oppression and suppression. This was also a moment when the strength of true brotherhood was manifested.

'Long live sister Ghana and long live mother Africa.'

# **COMMUNITY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

Calaba town community sends you all warm greetings. On the 13<sup>th</sup> March, our community gathered and rejoiced as we celebrated the birthday if Br. John E. Benya.

As we always do when we gather as a community of brothers, prayers were said for Br. John, his family, friends and loved ones. Coupled with that, our brothers giftedness was affirmed by community members. As a community tradition, the prayer session was concluded with the happy birth song. We later proceeded to the table where Br. John was presented a birthday gift and this was followed by a bumptious meal that was shared in a fraternal atmosphere.

John is one person that hardly dances, but to be candid he could not hide his feeling of joy on that day and he finally stretched out his 'tick – tack' dance posture as a way of expressing joy.

Finally, he sincerely thanked the community members for their generosity, love, concern and support for him. We your brothers wish you well on your life's journey.

Br. Cornelius Pengnjin

## **DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

## **NEWS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

A wind of change has blown in the projects; physical restructuring and movements have taken place. The PMO Br. Pious has moved from the 'corner' of the projects office to the centre room, new job descriptions are being compiled with additional responsibilities and task reviews adopted. All of these changes are being effected in response to the call for the implementation of the Province Mission Plan. As outlined in *The Way Forward*, this restructuring is a vision towards an increased and improved coordination in the West Africa District which is a key element in Development Corporation

What did we do during this month? The project team in Pujehun District, conducted a week -long basic book keeping course for fifty (50) girl-mothers who have dropped out of school between the ages of 12 and 18 years following which, each of them signed for and collected five hundred thousand Leones in an open court Barry in Futa Pejeh and Bandajuma villages as a grant to set up small scale enterprises. The expected outcome of this grant is to facilitate economic empowerment of the girls and their families so that they can return to school in September, 2012. Similarly, the project also supplied recreational materials such as footballs, valleyballs, table tennis, play cards and monopoly to six schools in the two chiefdoms. We have planned to supply agricultural inputs including grand nut seeds and seed rice to the vulnerable families in the district as Pujehun and Koinadugu districts have been indentified as the poorest districts in the country. By supporting these families, it is hoped that children within these families will grow healthy and stay in school instead of going to the street to eke a living.

Furthermore, in Moyamba, the births and deaths project team distributed and installed five computers and accessories, 2.7 KVA and 32 bicycles to support the primary heath care unit to carry out digital birth registration as a new initiative which is being piloted by CB with Support from Cordaid. The right to identity is a fundamental child right as enshrined in Article 7 of the UNCRC.

Similarly, in Freetown, a three-month outreach phase of the non formal education at old wharf kick started during the month. It is targeting 50 children in the slum communities. The expected outcome of this project is to facilitate access to formal education by vulnerable children in the slum communities. We hope that we will be able to access funds to support more children as the current funding will be exhausted in August, 2012. Thanks to Noel and his friends for the current donation.

In Bo, a donor visit has just been completed during which one of our main donors, Cordaid visited our project site to review our results, documentations, networks and partnerships in our areas of intervention. We are pleased to announce that the outcome of the donor visit was very positive. At the moment, we are supporting 41 clients to access basic life skills in Computer studies, photographing and designs, metal works, welding and Honda mechanic. CB is part of the National Child Rights Coalition and focal agency in Bo. This means that we coordinate and facilitate Civil Society Organizations that have child protection as a mandate in Bo District.

In the development office, we continued to have our weekly programme meetings during which individual projects share reports of actions carried out, their plans for the upcoming week and key challenges encountered during the week. Management also shares similar reports with programme staff as a strategy for effective coordination and communication. We have concluded our first quart Board Meeting on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012 the outcomes of which we will share with our readers in subsequent editions. We submitted three concept notes/ proposals to the Province Mission Board for review for possible recommendations to future donors. We are pleased to share with our readers that the board has recommended the projects for the provision of teaching and learning materials for Saint Martin in Gbarnga and Saint Joseph's Blama as well as the construction of additional classroom Block, a Lab and an Administrative Block in Choggu. However, the concept for the construction (rehabilitation) of a Library in Yengema was put on hold.

We warmly welcome our Province Mission Coordinator-Reuben Chongo in the district. He is presently visiting ALL CB communities except that of Gbarnga to share his mission, listen to what development initiatives Brothers have and to chat the way forward on how to get there.

What are our short term plans: We are planning a twoday workshop with all communities to review the ongoing projects, think strategically on the way forward and share some common approaches in terms of the ongoing implementation of the Africa Province Mission plan. We follow up on the ongoing dialogue around dates and venue with all community leaders very soon.

### David S. Yambasu.

# **Br. BEN KAMARA**

I wish to announce to the district that I have been appointed as the new administrator for the Blessed John Paul II pastoral centre of the archdioceses of Freetown since the 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2012.

For further information or for booking arrangements consult Br. Ben Kamara – Tengbeh Town Community.

# **HAMILTON COMMUNITY**

# FIRST PASTORAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE ARCHDIOCESES OF FREETOWN

# THEME: TOWARDS A RELEVANT AND A SELF - RELIANT CHURCH

There was a big gathering in the archdiocese of Freetown from the 19<sup>th</sup> – 23 March, 2012 at the St. Anthony's parish hall to listen and to dialogue the way forward for our 'Mother Church' in Freetown in the presence of the chief shepherd - His Grace Archbishop Edward Tamba Charles; the priest, religiuos and the lay faithful for different parishes within the Archdiocese were all in attendance. Many things came under consideration, all pointing at how we can make our diocese self - reliant, the following were the main points delebrated on:

- Evangenlization
- Self Reliance
- Human Resource Managaement
- Social Issues
- Education in the light of Catholic proprietorship
- Health Care
- Marriage and family life

The Archbioshop in his opening message stated that we are called to live inclusively with no barriers with whoever

we might be in the church, and we must also try our best to carry that same message to our non- catholic brothers and sisters.

Many delagates were in attendance; from our congregation, Brs Ben – Tengbeh Town community, Benjamin – Calaba Town Community, Frank and myself (Joseph) represented the Hamilton Community. The programme ended on Friday 23th March, 2012 with Mass at the St. Anthony's parish

# Br. Joseph Abdulia

# **EDMUND RICE NETWORK - BO**

Even as non – brothers or better still lay faithful, there is a growing number of people around the world who admire the charism of our founder – Blessed Edmund Rice and want to be associated with his charism in one way or the other; this branch of our district is fast growing. On the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 the Edmund Rice Network in Bo had a meeting at the Senan Kerrigan formation community. They converged at the entrance of the property and bravely marched on into the compound as a group; this was symbolic of love and unity.

Their meeting commenced with an opening prayer and later individual members had the opportunity to introduce themselves as a way of getting to know each. The brothers and the postulants also had the chance to introduce themselves. The purpose of the meeting was to accord every member of the ERN in Bo the occasion to warm up with the brothers, postulants and other ERN members.

# WE ARE THE SIGN OF WITNESS

I have been trying to reflection on my life especially at this season of lent and one word that comes to mind is "Witness". What does it mean to witness? What is it about witness? Witness to who? Who to witness? These are some of the questions that came to mind in terms of witnessing. This was also a theme for the annual African Religious union Ghana (ARUG) held in January at Tamale. I have tried looking at it in my own understanding. Talking about witness I believe witness is first and foremost for all Christians. Mission belongs to the very being of the church. Proclaiming the word of God and witnessing to the world is essential for every Christian. At the same time, it is necessary to do so according to gospel principles, with full respect and love for all human beings.

Aware of this I believe as religious and a Christian Brother for that matter, I am called to be a sign of this witness on earth. St Peter wrote in his first letter that for Christians it is a privilege and joy to give an accounting for the hope that is within them and to do so with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). As a religious I believe am a sign of this hope and need to express this hope in a manner and way that will bring life to all of creation. I can do this by being a witness base on the way I live my life taking into account the resources available at my disposal. What is this hope within me?

Jesus Christ is the supreme witness and the hope for all. I believe Christian witness is always a sharing in his witness, which takes the form of proclamation of the kingdom, service to neighbour and the total gift of self even if that act of giving leads to the cross. Just as the Father sent the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit, so we are sent in mission to witness in word and action to the love of the triune God.

In some contexts, living and proclaiming the gospel is difficult, hindered or even prohibited, yet Christians are commissioned by Christ to continue faithfully in solidarity with one another in their witness to him (Matthew 28:19-20)

If I engage in inappropriate methods of exercising mission by resorting to deception, and coercive means, they betray the gospel and may cause suffering to others. Such departures call for a change of heart and mind and remind us of our need for God's continuing grace. I need to continually ask my self what are some of these inappropriate methods that I engage myself into as a Christian Brother in my efforts to be a sign of witness to God's creation?

As a religious am called to adhere to certain principles that seek to fulfill Christ's commission in an appropriate manner, particularly within the wider community.

Am challenged to act in God's love. I believe that God is the source of all love and, accordingly, in my witness am called to live life of love and to love my neighbour as myself. In all aspects of life, and especially in witnessing am called to follow the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. By virtue of being a religious I am first and foremost to be a sign of witness to my Brothers in community before the wider community.

Christian virtues are an integral part of our lives. We are called to conduct ourselves with integrity, charity, compassion and humility, and to overcome all arrogance, condescension and disparagement. Acts of service and justice should be seen in our every day apostolic life. I am called to act justly and to love tenderly (Micah 6:8). I am further called to serve others and in so doing to recognize Christ in the least of their sisters and brothers (Matthew 25:45) I should denounce and refrain from offering all forms of allurements, including financial incentives and rewards, in their acts of service.

There is the need for me to recognize that the gospel both challenges and enriches cultures. Even when the gospel challenges certain aspects of cultures, I am called to respect all people. I am also called to discern elements in my own culture that is challenged by the gospel. A religious is to speak sincerely and respectfully; they are to listen in order to learn about and understand others' beliefs and practices, and are encouraged to acknowledge and appreciate what is true and good in them.

BY BR. BONAVENTURE ADAGIYELE CHOGGU COMMUNITY- GHANA

# ST. AMBROSE CORNER

# FROM THE ACTING PRINCIPAL'S DESK – SAINT AMBROSE ACADEMY

# **Brief updates**

The second semester examination has ended this gone Friday for the seven (7) and eight (8) graders. The nine graders will complete theirs by next week  $-26^{\rm th}-30^{\rm th}$  March. Many thanks to Br. Benjamin Borniea, Mr. Sorie Turay, Mr. Ansumana and Miss. Lahunatu Lahun( on loan from Baptist Secondary School, Upper Allen). It is of great importance also to thank all the staff members for their cooperation during the examination exercise. It would be ungrateful of me to forget to extend my thanks to the parents – making sure that their children were available and on time for the examinations.

We want to thank the Greater Spirit(God) in and around all us for the protection during this semester especially for Pa. Saidu Mansaray ( Night Security –SAA) and Br. Peter Amara Kabia( Social Worker)who recovered from terrible malaria attack. Mr. Cecil A.D.K. George (Social Studies Teacher SAA) was also down with skin disease and few of our kids (pupils) were down with stomach pains, headaches; but that has passed away. My belief is this,

that all things will pass away but Saint Ambrose CBC Academy will remain, hopefully.

Three hundred new iron chairs to be produced before the end of the first week of April. This will help the demand of the West Africa Examination Council. They said body has confirmed with the school administration (SAA) that 700(seven hundred) students will be sitting to their external Examinations at Saint Ambrose CBC Academy. The Project Development Office (formerly PRC - Project Resource Centre) Howe Street and the school administration have agreed in a letter to buy the deal. Hopefully, we shall commence the production by the coming week. Many thanks to Mrs. Moriba Mustapha, Jinnah Momoh and Br. Samuel Yankuba who brought in the design for the iron chair. We will not forget to thank the P.M.O. and the staff at the Development Centre, Howe Street. We hope that the reformation or transformation that has started will give new waves to the vision and mission of the district and the congregation as well.

Few invitations – internal and external. One from Saint Ambrose College – an invitation to their prize giving day (still in the pipeline). Many Thanks to The Principal (Mr. Kabia) of Trinity International Secondary School, Allen Town, for the support that he has given to us – academically.

One day HIV/AIDS workshop was conducted in the school an effort propelled by Br. John Benya and his team. We say thank you to Br. John Benya and Team.

Br. Joseph Cyril Dauda and his Justice and Peace Pupils Club have attended their first symposium at Vem Secondary in Allen Town on the topic: Non-violence in elections and among school going kids. Plans are also underway for a formal launching of the said Club next semester. I therefore encourage our readers to watch out for that.

This second semester will end on the 30<sup>th</sup> March. On behalf of the school, I want to say big thanks to all our benefactors. I wish to hang-up with this poem.

Think God, Think Jesus
Think Spirit, think of all creation
Think good, think bad, think rich, think poor
Think religion, Christianity, Islam, and others
Think Edmund Rice, think big
Think Christian/Presentation Brothers andSsisters
Think yourself, think others
Think Easter
Think Saint Ambrose Academy.

HAVE A PLEASANT SEASON

PAUL M. LUSENI

THE DOG'S TRUE STORY

My first master was an old man called Paddy. He had a smoky smell about him as if he had sat hunched over fire for years.

The flood board in our room were hard and splintery but I was not allowed on the chairs or the bed. He was strict but he was kind to me. He fed me most days and only shouted when I got something wrong.

He called me bodger and we spent the days walking in the streets. I had to stay close him, though he walks even more slowly than most humans. Paddy gave me two important jobs: the first was to beg for food in the shops and the second was to sniff out things in the dust bins. When I found something, Paddy called me scratched my ears sometimes, after we have eaten, Paddy will say in his happy voice, "come on then my old bodger let's go up the pub and have a drink." There were always other people at the pub drinking from pink mugs and laughing loudly. Paddy told them stories about the old days and they said, 'have another one Paddy.' I did tricks for them and they gave me a hand full of rice and a big bone.

Next morning when I woke up I tried to get Paddy out of bed to open the door for me. He just patted my head. I was hungry and thirsty but I soon found out how to lap a little water from the dripping tap over the sink. I was pleased with my discovery and ran to tell Paddy so that he could also get some. I nosed his ears, they were cold and he did not move. He had gone away somewhere else and I knew he would never come back.

# Rebecca Betty Robinson - JSS III

# St. AMBROSE CBC ACADEMY FIRST ANNUAL SPORT MEET.

From the 24-25 of Februry, 2012 the above named school held its first inter-house sport meet at the Korea filed, Mayemi section, Allen town. It lasted for two full days. There were four houses, Red – Mazord, Yellow – Harding, Green – Kerrigan and Blue – Bishop Tamba Charles.

On the first day yellow house was leading comfortably, followed green, red was third and blue fourth. On the final day, Green took the lead, followed by Red, Yellow third and Blue maintained the fourth position.

The most interesting events were the staff race and the invitation relay. Foday Bangura of Green house won the best Athlete trophy and was given a term's school fees scholarship. The guest of honour was Councilor Rev. Br. Albert Gomez.

Thanks to the Christian Brothers Project, the school administration, the teachers and to my friends who properly behaved themselves right through the meet. We can't wait to have another next academic year.

Victoria T. Lahai - JSS III

# POEMS AND QUOTATIONS

### I RAN AWAY

Is aw you Lord,

Crucified on the tarmac of Calaba towns Golgotha – Main Bai Bureh road, and I feared, the black Jews.

I saw them Lord,

Throw their nailing stones at you, which showered your bloody face, I heard them shourting "thief, thief", but I was consumed by fear and so I fled.

"Crucify him - a thief"

I heard them Lord,

But I took to my heels because I feared that instant justice brigade.

You cried aloud for help, Lord; I heard your cry, but I feared and ran away leaving you there in agony. Your clothes torn to pieces, your face covered in blood, continuous bleeding as you face death, and still in need of my help. But I ran Lord. I Keep running away, because I fear them; I am too ashamed of my fears. Lord give me the courage to be brave enough the next time and not to run away as a result of fear.

# **COMING UP EVENTS**

The annually professed Personal Growth Programme workshop is coming up from the  $9^{th}$  Easter Monday to the  $11^{th}$  April, 2012 at Kingtom.

# **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Happy birthday wishes to all whose birthdays occur in the month of April. From the Wan Pot team, we wish you all that you wish for yourselves.

# **PRAYER REQUESTS**

We continue to ask all and sundry within and beyond the district to remember Br. Joseph Turay who is currently admitted at the Holy Spirit hospital in Makeni and from a reliable source, we gathered that he is responding to treatment.

We also request all to continue praying for Brs. Peter Kabia, John Holden and Br. Leo Kamara's father for speedy recovery.

# THANK YOU!!!

We express our sincere thanks to all who contributed to our March publication and we encourage community members within the district to send in their nominations for the community of the month competition.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

We continue to ask our valuable readers and contributors to send their contributions to Brs. Joseph Cyril Dauda Jr and Francis Salia George.

jdaudius@yahoo.com

francis.george29@yahoo.com

COMMONITY OF THE MONTH COMPETITION RESULT FOR THE MONTH
OF APRIL 2012

# FROM: THE WAN POT TEAM

# TO: ALL OUR READERS

We are pleased to announce to all our readers that BLAMA COMMUNITY has been named as the community of the month - March, 2012.

BRA VOIII BRA VOIII BRA VOIII

