

E-BULLETIN #31

"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5,16)

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Happy Birthday – Mother Teresa

August 26 is a day sanctified by the Birth of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. It is just a year since we solemnly concluded her Birth Centenary Celebrations. The year was made especially memorable by the Indian Railways which launched *Mother Express* which carried the message of the *Saint of the gutter* to every nook and corner of the country. Some thoughts on the life of this simple woman who held centre stage in world history is certainly in place as we celebrate her birthday.

The greatest achievement of Mother, to my mind, is not the fact that she was able to bring solace and comfort to thousands of people all over the world, rather the deep influence she exerted on the international community. No individual in recent history has touched the hearts of people so profoundly across the world, as Mother Teresa did; no one has effected such a massive conversion of hearts of people. Millions across the world venerated her. The world rated her as the greatest and noblest human being who ever lived on the face of the earth. She broke down all forms of barriers that divide humanity and forged a wonderful unity of humankind at the international level in favour of the poor. She knit together believers and unbelievers, young and old, rich and poor, black and white. The many awards that she received and the presence of a host of world leaders at her funeral are all indications of the world's admiration of her person and recognition of her works.

She continues to live on in the hearts, memory and affections of the people. At her memory the arrogant and humble alike go down on their knees, tears roll down from haughty eyes, passions are calmed, hearts are lifted to greater heights, and noble thoughts and resolve fill the minds of those who visit her Samadhi and her shelters. Contributions continue to come from the least expected quarters.

Though fiercely catholic, she grew beyond Catholicism; she was interreligious; she was a universal citizen and recruited collaborators from all religions and political affiliations. She blunted the aggression of the arrogant and the selfish by the power of her love. Mother Teresa awakened humankind to their social responsibilities. She promoted love; revived and renewed the hearts of people, enkindled hope among the sick and the poor. She effected a change in the world's attitude towards the poor. In short, **she was humanity at its best and religion in its purest!**

And all this she did without any major capital investment. It is well known that when she embarked upon the project of serving the poor she had merely five rupees in hand! In order to do good, we do not need great resources. It is has been verified by a thousand experiences that money will never be wanting or

resources lacking, when good work is done. What is required is good will and abundance of love in the heart. Where love is lived in all its concreteness, God becomes tangible and proximate. Religion lived in terms of love and service as Mother did has many takers all over the world. All religions can meet and be at home at this level.

Her work is still continued not just by the religious communities she founded, but by many good willed souls - not all Catholics - all over the world. She left behind a legacy which has become the heritage of humanity. Her spirit lives on and continues to inspire us today.

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LUSAKA HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

brief history of the Pallottines in Zambia

Pallottines from the Epiphany Province arrived in Lusaka on 07 Dec 05 – Fr Shaji Mathew and Fr Sijoy Thomas – accepting responsibility for Holy Family parish in the suburb of Mandevu. Farmland [23 acres] with a house was purchased in 2008 at Westwood, 30kms from the town center, with the intention of opening a formation house. An extension is being added for students in initial formation (Postulate).

present status/areas of apostolate

Mandevu is one of the biggest compounds (colonies) in Zambia. Including Divine Mercy church-Chaisa, and St Mary's church-Kabangwe, the parish has approx. 28,000 Catholics. In July 2010, Divine Mercy church was handed back to the pastoral care of the Archdiocese. The Pallottines were overwhelmed and it was a great challenge even to undertake the most important areas. In the field of health care for the HIV/AIDS patients they continued to collaborate with the Home Based Care Project of the Archdiocese, and at parish level organized various programs. The HBC programs are an excellent way of taking care of the sick and vulnerable, and it is working very well with the collaboration of hundreds of volunteers willing to visit the sick and give them medicine, food and personal care.

However looking after the sick and the dying alone are not enough to build up a healthy society. The people need to be given fresh hope for a better future, and an expectation of a more meaningful life. Something more has to be done... something towards building a better future... indisputably the target should be young people, and especially children who are orphans and vulnerable... the only lasting solution is to provide good education!!

establishment and aims of the Lusaka Pallottine Society

In 2007 the Lusaka Pallottine Society was registered under Zambian Law so that it's functions could be established on a more solid foundation. Since then it has undertaken various activities aimed at the development of the common people, to bring a change in their attitude especially the youth. Education was recognised as the main focus and means. Our Society, in collaboration with other international Pallottine entities and good willing people, started educating hundreds of orphans, providing for their school fees, study materials etc. These students are being educated in various schools, both private and government managed. Currently we educate almost 500 vulnerable children, mostly orphans, involving

huge annual costs. To coordinate this activity and keep in touch with donors the Society established a Secretariat, appointing a permanent secretary who is paid a reasonable salary. This Secretariat also organizes common gatherings, value based study programs, and common celebrations for the orphans to provide them with a sense of belonging, and impart to them human values and a purpose in life.



However we cannot be satisfied with this bare minimum because poor education and lack of facilities in the government/community schools cause many students to fail exams. There are too many drop outs. Something more has to be done... our Society should have a school for quality education!!

Christian education background of the country

Zambia is a Christian country. After Zambia's Independence most schools were owned by the Catholic church and its contribution was tremendous. Even in the remotest villages schools were established, with government support. Qualified teachers were invited to come from Europe and India. There are still a few good schools but unaffordable for ordinary people. Over time, due to its ministry in the fields of evangelization and health care, the church could not continue to manage schools. So they were given back to the government. Presently there is a trend by the Catholic dioceses to take them back, and to encourage religious congregations to open new schools. Recently a Catholic university was started, and a Congregation founded another private university in Lusaka. However overall there is still a slow response from the church to take the initiative to enter into the most needed apostolate of education.

Despite becoming independent in 1964 the development and living standard of the vast majority of people is still deplorable. Poverty, unemployment and various epidemics like HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB etc have paralyzed normal life and caused many orphans, unwanted-abandoned and vulnerable street children. Normally a Zambian family will have 8 to 10 children. Often the breadwinner is forced to look after many other dependents as well as his own.

Every Zambian wishes that their children be given the best education possible so that they can have a brighter future. However most people are forced to depend on government-owned community schools where they do not get quality education. Most don't have even the basic facilities or enough teaching staff. The situation becomes worse due to corruption among teachers and authorities. So people seek quality education in Christian institutions. There are very few Christian schools in Lusaka which provide good education. Catholic schools are often overcrowded because of their values education. And church funding is stretched by projects like health care, pastoral concerns etc. leaving very little for education.

the proposed St Vincent Pallotti Higher Secondary School, Westwood, Lusaka

Westwood is a very good place for a school. Over the past few years the development of Lusaka has been extensive and undoubtedly within a few years Westwood will be part of the city. Many organizations are established on this road, but unfortunately no schools. Local people are basically peasants and low income employees working on farms. There is a single government-owned Nyanja Basic School (Local Medium) nearby, and only up to Grade VII. Higher Secondary students have to go either to town or to a rural school again 35 kms away. The proposed St Vincent Pallotti Higher Secondary School will cater for these deprived people and provide a good education with moral values. It is expected that normal running expenditure and salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff will be covered by fees. Though the people are economically below average, yet they should pay for the education of their children.

However Westwood is not merely intended for local students. It is intended to be a Catholic Residential School with hostel facilities for boys and girls up to Grade XII. The intention is to serve orphans and

vulnerable children, but not to exclude other families seeking to provide their children with quality education and good Christian values. In time it is expected that hostels will be built so that students from near and far, rich and poor, can equally benefit. Hostels are also a good means of character formation.

"Once the entire project is well planned out and approved by the Provincial Council, we will have to look for financial assistance from every possible source. As you can understand very well, such an important project will require an abundance of God's blessings, a lot of hard work and generous financial contributions from other Pallottine entities, funding agencies and benefactors".

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