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Dear Friends and Family

Since I wrote my last newsletter in August 2023 we have seen some blessed events, but also some challenging ones. From mid-August until mid-October I was on leave in Europe. It was a blessed time. I managed to visit the UK, Ireland and Spain. I spent the first two weeks with my sister Sue and her husband Dave at their home in Anglesey, North Wales, where they live near the sea. Two days after arrival I attended a marriage blessing of a nephew of mine, Timothy Jennings who married Sandra, at the Baptist Church in Holyhead, North Wales on 18th August. Sue, who is Timothy's mother, organised everything for the blessing since the couple live in China, which is where Sandra comes from. It was a great day, and I managed to meet some close relatives and friends that I have not seen for a while. During my stay with Sue I said Sunday Mass at the church where I was ordained, St. Paul's Church, Yate, (near Bristol). I managed to visit Bury St. Edmunds, near Cambridge, for a few days. That is where my parents last lived before they died.

After two weeks in the UK it was off to Ireland for a few weeks to visit various friends and prayer groups. These relationships I have built up over the years, starting with the 5 years that I spent in the seminary there while studying for the priesthood. An old friend from seminary days, Tom Claire, who works as a plumber, for many years now has been kindly driving me round Ireland to all the places and people that I visit.

Another good friend of mine that I always stay with in Ireland was Dr Jimmy Clair, who lives with his wife, Diana. At the end of my stay in Ireland he treated me to trip to a Marian shrine in Northern Spain, called Garabandal. We spent a blessed three days there, meeting many spiritual people. In the early 1960's Mary appeared there to four young girls, asking for people to come back to God. After Garabandal I spent a few days in Madrid, visiting some old priest friends who had returned to their native Spain after working in Zimbabwe. Then, with the help of the 'Ave' high speed train, it was off to Valencia on the Mediterranean coast. I had planned to meet up again with my mentor and big friend, Fr. Alexander Alapont, who had worked closely with me in my early days of priesthood. We have that saying, 'man proposes but God disposes.' It happened that just two weeks before I reached him he died. He was in a care home and had suffered from serious health problems for many years. That did not stop him reaching 90 years of age. God bless the Spanish doctors! I did at least get to see his tombstone. He had formed an informal charity at his home village of Carcer, near Valencia and these people kindly gave me funds to help start building a new 6th form for our local secondary school, Neshaya.

I arrived back at the mission on 14th October. On 4th November all roads led again to our newly blessed shrine at St. Mary's Mission, about 15 Km from Hwange. This time we priests and bishops celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving for the new bishop of Gokwe, Bishop Eusebius Nyathi. He is originally from one of the outstations of our mission, so we look on him as 'our son'. He was ordained bishop on 23rd September, so I missed the ceremony since I was on leave then. I made sure that this time I would be present! About 40 priests, a similar number of sisters, four bishops and thousands of faithful were present. I had journeyed with Eusebius on his path to the priesthood, so it was a special day of thanks for me.

On Saturday 11th November Bishop Raphael came to one of our outstations, St. Matthew, Dambwamukulu, to proclaim it a new mission. The new mission has now taken on 10 outstations that originally belonged to St. John's Mission, so that leaves St. John's with just 13 outstations instead of the original 24. The bishop announced that Fr. Stanislaus Lumano, my assistant priest, would be the new parish priest of the new mission. For the foreseeable future he will still be staying with me since no priest's house has been constructed there. About 10 priests came for the ceremony.

What I am now sharing is an event that is of a more challenging nature. During the night of 29th/30th November four thieves broke into the mission. They first of all tied up and gagged the night security guard, then they broke some burglar bars to get into the priest's house. I was the only person sleeping in the house that night. I was fast asleep at the time. The first I knew that they had entered the house was when three of them held me down on the bed while one of them tied my hands and legs with cable ties and ropes. They then gagged my mouth to stop me making any noise. They worked in almost total darkness but I could hear they were going through all my belongings, so I realised they were thieves. After a while they ungagged me and asked, 'where is the money?' I told them truthfully that I did not have money in the house. They had obviously expected to find thousands of dollars in cash, but all they found was about \$40 in US plus a few hundred Euros and pounds. It was clear they did not believe my story, so one of them, the biggest, then proceeded to apply pressure to stop me

breathing. After releasing the pressure to let me breath they asked again, 'where is the money?' Since I gave the same answer he applied pressure again, only relieving the pressure to ask again, 'where was the money?' This process went on repeatedly for over half an hour, by which time I began to wonder if God was calling me. I prayed for God's mercy on me, but I also prayed for those four robbers, asking God to bring about a conversion in their hearts. I even called out to them, 'Do you realise God is watching everything you are doing?' They were not very happy to hear this, and one of them immediately fired back, 'Shut up! Stop talking nonsense!' They finally gave up and left.

They were all caught two days later. They had stolen many items from the mission, including lap tops, phones and so on, but the police only managed to retrieve about a quarter of the property. Meanwhile I was able to recover quickly, thank God, and get back to my normal duties after a few days. I did not let the memory of what happened traumatise me since I believed at every moment that God was ultimately in charge, and he, not the thieves, would decide if it was my time to go. I guess he wants me to be around for a while longer! It has made me more acutely aware that we don't know when we will be called, so I see that it is a sign from God that from now onwards he does not want me to waste any time.

After sharing all this with you, what note can I end on as we come towards Christmas? Christ came into the world to save us, but his own people could not accept him, epitomised by his birth in a stable. But God has blessed us all with a free will and if we choose to follow Christ then he, not Satan, will become our master. Christ is the only one who can bring peace into our hearts and the promise of happiness in the next life.

Sorry no pics this time; I lost all my pics in the phone the robbers took. Sue has found a few.

Thank you for your prayers and donations Fr Tim Peacock



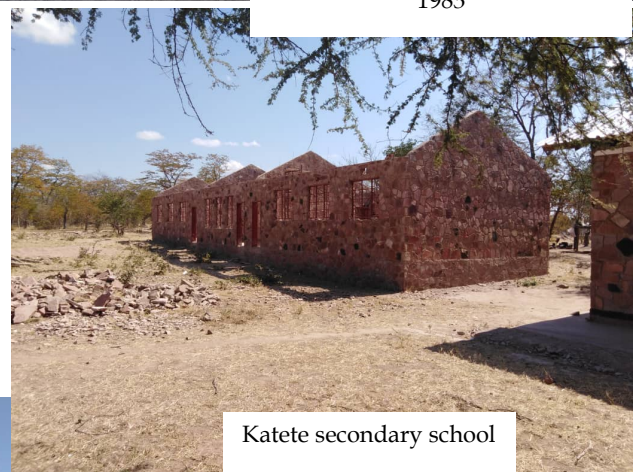
Fr Tim & Tim



Standing outside St. Patrick's seminary, Ireland, on 6th September 2023, where I studied for the priesthood from 1978 until 1983



Michael, Tim, Sue & Robin



Katete secondary school



Dambwamukulu secondary school

A message from Sue Jennings, the lead trustee for CFNZ (Children and Families in Need in Zimbabwe)-

May 8th 2024 will mark the 10th anniversary of our UK charity CFNZ that supports the running of the Missions and community development. I am going to Zimbabwe to celebrate this wonderful achievement with Fr. Tim and his parishioners, and audit the charity.

As you may know, the charity is run by 4 volunteers, none of us claim any expenses, so the only extras we need to pay from donations are postage for newsletters, most of which go by email now. Fr. Tim is most grateful. We are able to send him £7700 a month, due to the generosity of donors. Thank you so much. We also value your prayers. I am attaching the new trifold about CFNZ.

Attached are some of my paintings and photos, that I have done over the years. I would like to be able to take enough money with me to pay for desks and seats for the children who will attend the new secondary schools at Dambwamukulu.

If you would like to send me a donation for any of these items, I am very happy to post them to you. If you could pay the postage that would help! Whatever you feel able to give will be much appreciated. I have all the dimensions of each item, should you need to know the sizes.

The African scene is on a canvas, also the Thai scene by the pond, the other paintings are framed or mounted. There are photographs and an embroidery.

Thank you.

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