

December 2024



Dear Father Victor and Friends at Holy Innocents:

Season's Greetings from Liberia – today, there is a small respite from the intense heat. But having mentioned this, I am truly sorry for the storms and cold weather that you've been experiencing recently.

With the arrival of a team of visiting Spanish specialists, at St Joseph's Catholic Hospital, an ultra-scan revealed that I required Laser prostate surgery. The work was carried out on November 27 and I was kept in, for several days. While I was in hospital, during the night hours James Nyanku and Musa, my 'carer' looked after me very well. Thank God, I am feeling much better and having several weeks rest, here on the Mission, in Bomi.

By the way, we have been helping James for the past 18 years, since he arrived on the Mission, as a 13-year-old, from a small town far away within the Belle Forest. I am very happy to say that James will graduate as a medical doctor, in July 2025.

Towards, Christmas, Musa and Mambu will drive me to several of our Church Communities close to our town. But long distances to Robertsport and such like, are now the prerogative of the younger generation!

Some other students, whom we have also been helping, are nearing the completion of their tertiary studies. In fact, Nicholas, Samuel and Sumo, graduated in July with BScs in Civil Engineering from Stella Maris Catholic University, in Monrovia: and I am glad to say that they are now working here, on the Bomi Mine, along with John Geeton, who graduated in Environmental Science.

This month, the local Bomi Community College completes another semester. Frederick Jah will graduate with an Associate degree in Agriculture; he has already been assured of employment, at my friend's model farm. However, most of our students at the Bomi College opt to follow the associate degree course in Education. I am so glad that some of them are doing internships: Jacob Mulbah is helping at Oscar Romero School for the Deaf, while Sando Nyuma and Emmanuel Boakai are teaching at St Dominic's School.

Recently, Anna Bsaibes visited us from Monrovia. She and her husband Chawki are the proprietors of the Mamba Point Hotel. Anna is also the ambassador to Liberia, for the Sovereign Order of Malta. Together with St Francis Leprosy Guild, the Order is helping with the patients, who have contracted Hanson's Disease, at the village of Massatine. Over the years, we have supported the community with a small clinic. Moreover, we have constructed a church in honour of St Damien of Molokai's and a school with 260 pupils. On Anna's visit to Bomi, she brought 50 x 25 kilos of rice and some children's food for the Christmas Party, on December 29. Fr Bruno will travel there with Musa.

Before returning to Monrovia, Anna crossed the road and visited the Oscar Romero School for the Deaf. Our O.L.A. Sisters have recently assumed the management of the school. This is of course a very important apostolate. On the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the children, together with the Sisters and Carers, joined the annual Archdiocesan Pilgrimage, at the Shrine of Our Lady Queen of Peace, by all accounts, it was a wonderful day for everyone, (I obeyed 'doctors' orders, and remained here).

So, in our modest way, assisting the children at Oscar Romero, the patients at Massatine, and the seventy physically challenged in Bomi and the villages, our local Church is trying to respond to Jesus' Mission Statement, of Luke 4:18-19.

To close, I am forwarding a short video of 'Stille Nacht' on WhatsApp. Fr Josef Mohr composed the poem in Austria in 1816. Having recovered from ill-health, he was appointed curate at St Nicholas Parish, Oberndorf. It was on a cold Christmas Eve that Josef carried his poem to his friend, Franz Gruber, a choir master. In a few hours, Franz put the poem to music, suitable for the guitar. And so, our beloved Christmas carol was first played during Midnight Mass, at St Nicholas' 1818.

I wish you a blessed Christmas.

Kindest regards,
Fr. Garry.