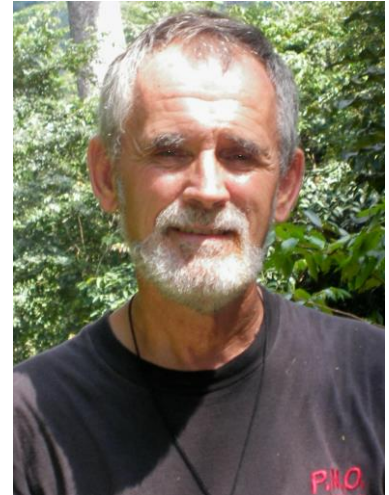


**St Dominic's Parish, Bomi County, Liberia.**  
**c/o Society of African Missions, 378 Upper Brook Street,**  
**Manchester M13 0EP, UK**  
e-mail address [smabomi@yahoo.com](mailto:smabomi@yahoo.com)



June 16, 2018

Dear Father Victor and Friends at Holy Innocents,

Greetings from Liberia. Since we last communicated, we've lost a good friend of Liberia - Marjorie Farrell – R.I.P. I got to know Marjorie towards the end of 1972 when I was at Holy Innocents, awaiting my visa – and we kept in contact all those years.

Before I returned to Liberia on April 4, I spent the last few days in Perthshire which coincided with the Easter Weekend. On Easter Monday, some friends kindly took me on a scenic tour of the Highlands. The photos we took, are in the habit of reappearing almost daily, on my computer, in the 'Image Garden'. Looking at them now, I wonder how I ever survived those Scottish snow showers! For when I arrived back in Liberia, it was very hot for the rest of April and well into May.

But now we are well into the Wet Season, so it's relatively cooler; as I write, it's a pleasant 27. The Wet Season commences in earnest at the beginning of May and ends in November, sometimes going into December.

Families began 'scratching' rice last month. According to Mambu, the people in the south-east *plant* rice i.e. they dig holes. But on this side of the country, the people '*scratch*' rice – they scatter the seeds by hand and then spread a thin layer of earth over the seeds with a hoe. So last month, some of our members couldn't come to Sunday Mass because they were scratching rice, and they would have to walk a distance from the town into the bush to their farms.

On the 'political' scene, there has been a smooth transition from the government of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to George Weah's. All the UN troops have gone and we are left with a very small Liberian Army of not more than 2,000 men and women which is possibly all we need, providing there is no attempt from outside, to interfere with our fledgling democracy.

However, as yet there are no signs of any revival in the economy. And sadly, the Liberian currency continues to lose value against the United States dollar, which makes it very difficult for the majority poor when they have to purchase imported goods,

The government's health-care services also continue to be a 'problem'. While the National Drug service, a branch of the Ministry of Health, affirms that it supplies medicine monthly to the County Hospitals, patients who visit the Bomi Hospital often complain of an absence of medication. Patients are frequently prescribed medicine which their families have to buy in the local pharmacies which many people can ill-afford. Sometimes, people in the interior have to sell their precious seed-rice to pay hospital bills or medication. This affects us too, as the monthly hospital bills that I'm paying in Monrovia's private hospitals, continue to rise; this is in addition to the three clinic outposts in the Belle Forest, Baloma, Kalata and Tokoi which we are assisting because they are not receiving government assistance.

As some of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, were not implemented, there is a certain amount of discussion going on as to whether there should be a

'court', so that the families of victims of the thirteen years of civil conflict, may have redress. A charity called *Civitas Maxima* is assisting survivors and family members of victims. Locally, in our own part of the country, a fitting memorial is being constructed to remember those whose lives were taken from them, at the nearby Maher Bridge, in July 2002.

On April 22, I travelled to Lomé, Togo, for the annual meeting to discuss the progress of the seminarians, deacons and candidates for ordination, in this part of West Africa. When the students complete the course in Philosophy, they have a spiritual year in Benin which is followed by a Pastoral Year in another country, after which there are three years of theology. This year we received three 'stagiaires'. Antoine is from Cote d'Ivoire, Archille is Togolese while Ignatius Nswana is from the Zambia. Antoine and Archille worked in other Parishes while Ignatius worked with Fr George and me in Bomi Hills.

Ignatius worked well at St Dominic's. He has helped to revive the small Christian Communities in the town. *The Leixlip Parish Cell System of Evangelisation* has been a great help to him and the Catechists; we are very grateful to you for introducing this to us.

On the question of 'vocations', Lawrence Quaye who is from Gayah Hills, one of our parish outstations, has just completed High School and has chosen to go to the Seminary.

Fr. George Geayon is very committed to the work. On Thursdays, he travels 55 miles to the Leper Colony at Massatine, in neighbouring Grand Cape Mount County where he spends three nights each week ministering to the forty patients who have suffered with Hanson's Disease, and their families. We have a resident nurse and provide medication and treatment to the patients. Fr George also visits the surrounding villages where we have small mud and wattle chapels. He is an example in real evangelical 'detachment'.

After many years of appealing, our request has been answered. For last Monday, Fr Roger Didier arrived from the Congo. Fr. Roger has been Principal of the SMA High School in Kinshasa, but now wants to return to pastoral work in Liberia. He has been appointed to our parish, Fr. Roger was here as a *stagiaire* eleven years ago. Two other SMA priests will be arriving in September to help extend our work of evangelisation in Liberia,

The OLA Sisters (Our Lady of the Apostles) are having their six-yearly General Chapter in Rome, commencing June 24. Several years ago, the Archbishop extended an invitation to the them to work in Liberia. Last September, Sr Mary Barron came from Rome with Sr Elizabeth Amoako from Ghana, to see the situation for themselves. Now, their congregation is to make a final decision during the forthcoming Chapter. We keep up our prayers, as we need the help of the Sisters in the Parish, helping the sick, training of catechists and assisting our school children.

It's coming to the end of another academic year. Five of our college students arrived last week from Monrovia. They will remain here, helping around the Mission, until school reopens in September. There are also over twenty students on scholarship from the rural areas attending our own School; this week they are doing Semester Examinations; – School closes on Friday with a Mass of Thanksgiving.

With kindest regards,

Fr. Garry.