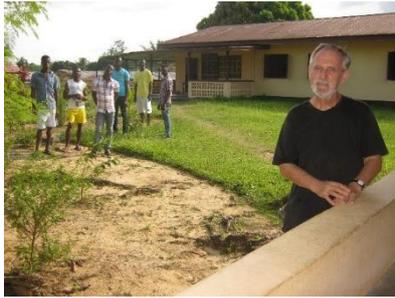


Fr Gareth Jenkins St Dominic's Mission, Bomi County, Liberia June 29th 2021

Our account details are: Sort code: 16-00-01 A/C number: 22044548

Name for Bank details: SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSIONS SMA DONATIONS BUSINESS CURRENT ACCOUNT Use the reference N/C2550 and your surname.



Dear Father Victor and Friends at Holy Innocents,
It is a while since my last letter. Thanks to our friends in the U.K. and the St Dominic's Alumni, the solar system is in operation, providing 24 hours current to the convent, rectory and the church. So there are no more noisy sounds at night from the 20 KVA generator, emitting fumes into the atmosphere.

I happy to report that most of the St Dominic's students who merited a place in college in Monrovia, have now graduated.

However, there are still a handful, who are studying. Rebecca and John are studying Environmental Science, Nicholas, Sumo and Samuel are studying Civil Engineering. Mustapha is reading Biology in order to take the entrance to the Medical College.

One of my main concerns at present is the situation of James Nyanku. He is from the Interior: the Belle District. We have helped him from Elementary School at St Dominic's, through the Stella Maris College of Health Sciences, until he obtained a degree in Biology and he succeeded in passing the entrance examination to the Medical College.

Next Semester, James will enter the Fourth Year. However, the person who was assisting him, 'has gone to the Lord'. Although James is not required to pay tuition, at the Medical College, I give him \$20.00 weekly, for his food, clothing, stationery and transport. But when he asked me last month for assistance to purchase PPE for hospital work, sadly, I said that I wasn't in the position to help. For the scholarship fund, which I've managed over the years, especially since the Ebola crisis here, through the generosity of friends, including yourselves, is now exhausted. So I was wondering if some family could please help us, to help James?

Following the COVID lockdown one year ago, the cases in Liberia became less. Then people began to forget to take precautions, some even thought that the pandemic had passed them by. But during the past several weeks there has been a noticeable increase in cases in Monrovia. People are once again taking matters seriously and wearing face masks.

To end on a positive note, the OLA Sisters are settling down well. They are helping the children on Sundays at Mass. Sr Naetali and Sr Maureen have started the Holy Childhood Society for small children. And Sr Sophia is very much interested in re-establishing the Junior Legion of Mary within the parish.

Moreover, I can already sense the difference with the Sisters' presence in St Dominic's School. There is punctuality. And the behaviour of the children has much improved and the classrooms are now conducive to study, rather than places of too much chatter and noise! Sr Maureen is also helping across the road, at the Oscar Romero School for the Deaf. For a number of years now, we have had the readings and homily 'signed' at Sunday Mass. I'll close for now.

With kindest regards, Fr. Garry.

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Dear Cecilia,

Thank you very much your correspondence. Having spoken to James Nyanku, this afternoon, I am not so sure that the 'visitor' intends to help James, as I had hoped. For thee is a need for me to give him pocket money for food, clothing, books, stationery and transport. Being from the Belle Forest, which is far in the Interior, James hasn't the contacts in Monrovia. However, I feel that James has the qualities he needs, to be a good, caring doctor.

As well as helping the six students I previously mentioned, who are attending Monrovia colleges, there is also Sando Nyumar; he was able to come to school through the assistance from Holy Innocents', following the Ebola outbreak in 2015. I have registered Sando at the local Bomi Community College. Sando hopes to obtain an associate degree in Education. The expenses involved in sending someone to the local College, are considerably less. Sando is presently at home, helping his elderly parents to haul sugar-cane to the village, en route to the market in Monrovia. I informed two of our other school leavers, Boimah and Borkai, that they should be patient, until I can find a way to help them. They have both returned to their villages; their families are subsistence level rice farmers.

As I indicated, COVID is making its worrying presence felt again. As soon as the vaccine arrived in Monrovia, I took the first dose, at St Joseph's Catholic Hospital, on April 16. On return to the hospital after two months, I took the second dose. But I had fever afterwards, for several days. Rather than suffer Musa to drive me back to Monrovia, I visited the local Ahmadiyah Muslim Clinic. Lab. tests revealed that there was a highly reactive Typhoid Fever accompanied with Malaria They treated me well and I am feeling much better, thank God.

When I returned from the U.K. during November 2019, I indicated to the Archbishop that it was time for the parish to have fresh leadership. Consequently, early last year, Fr Firmin Kouassi, from Côte d'Ivoire, arrived here, as the new Parish Priest. Fr Firmin and I have served together on the Society of African Missions Regional Council for a number of years, so we know each other well.

I was given the option of retiring to the United Kingdom or remaining in Liberia. I expressed the desire to stay in Liberia, so that I can continue to help the people. Moreover, I reminded my superior, of his earlier suggestion that I could live in the Casa Nova. This building is situated on St Dominic's compound. It is a former student dormitory that I refurbished about ten years ago and changed into a 3-bedroom house, for lay missionaries; it has been empty for over one year.

So this is my home. I am using the middle room as an oratory; that leaves the other room as a guest room. I am grateful to the archdiocese and the SMA for allowing me to remain in Liberia: I left Holy Innocents shortly after Christmas 1972. I arrived here as a 29 year-old in the New Year, having left a snowy Gatwick, on a British Caledonian flight. I'll be 78 on Liberia's Independence Day, July 26 – so I've spent much of my life here.

I look forward especially to weekends, when Musa takes the wheel and we travel the 55 miles to Cape Mount, stopping on the way at the scenic Lake Piso. Robertsport is the county town, of Grand Cape Mount County. There we stay overnight in the two rooms in the sacristy. Anthony Mensah is the catechist. The small congregation at Sunday Mass is comprised mainly of Fanti and Kru fishermen and their families; occasionally, there may be a visitor from Monrovia. Our association with the people of Robertsport goes back to 1977, when I started going there. In 1983, Fr Tom Ryan, our present Provincial, arrived and worked tirelessly for six years. Fr. Tom built the fine church, which is aptly dedicated to St Peter the Fisherman.

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I also visit two of our nearby outstations, Jawa Jei and Willie Town, just to keep in contact with the Gola people, who were so welcoming, when I arrived in Bomi County.

The Sisters have e-ailed some photos. So Musa is going to help me now to forward them. By the way, Musa, together with Nicholas, his brother, were helped through school by the late Marjorie Farrell, following the loss of their parents, and we remain in contact with the family, both in Kent and Norfolk. I'll close for now. With kindest regards,

Fr. Garry. July 1st 2021.



A visit to the Mission by Senator Edwin Snowe, newly elected for Bomi County: From left to right (me) Sr Maureen, Sr Cyria, the Senator, Sr Sophie and Sr Nateli .

(Fr Garry baptised Edwin as

The sisters take a break from school and visit the Leper Colony at Massatine.

Facing the picture, Sr Sophie is on the left , Mr Tailor, a member of the community at Massatine, and a former patient, is in the centre and Sr Maureen is on the right side.



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Sr Maureen with the Children belonging to the Holy Childhood Society. (slightly different poses!)

