

Troubadour

Volume 64, No.1

Summer 2021





In the 12th century Christ spoke to St Francis of Assisi from this cross:

“Francis, go and rebuild my Church which you see is falling down.”

Don't complain about the Church in the 21st century.

Hear Our Lord's call and do something about it!

The Friars Minor have followed St Francis' example for the last 800 years.

Why not be one of them?

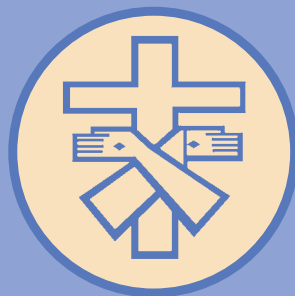
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Troubadour

A MISSIONARY MAGAZINE

at the service of

- The Franciscan Missionaries working throughout the world but especially in disaster areas.
- The Franciscan Missionary Union.



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St. Anthony's Home bond of friendship.

Back cover:

May we always remember to help those in need.

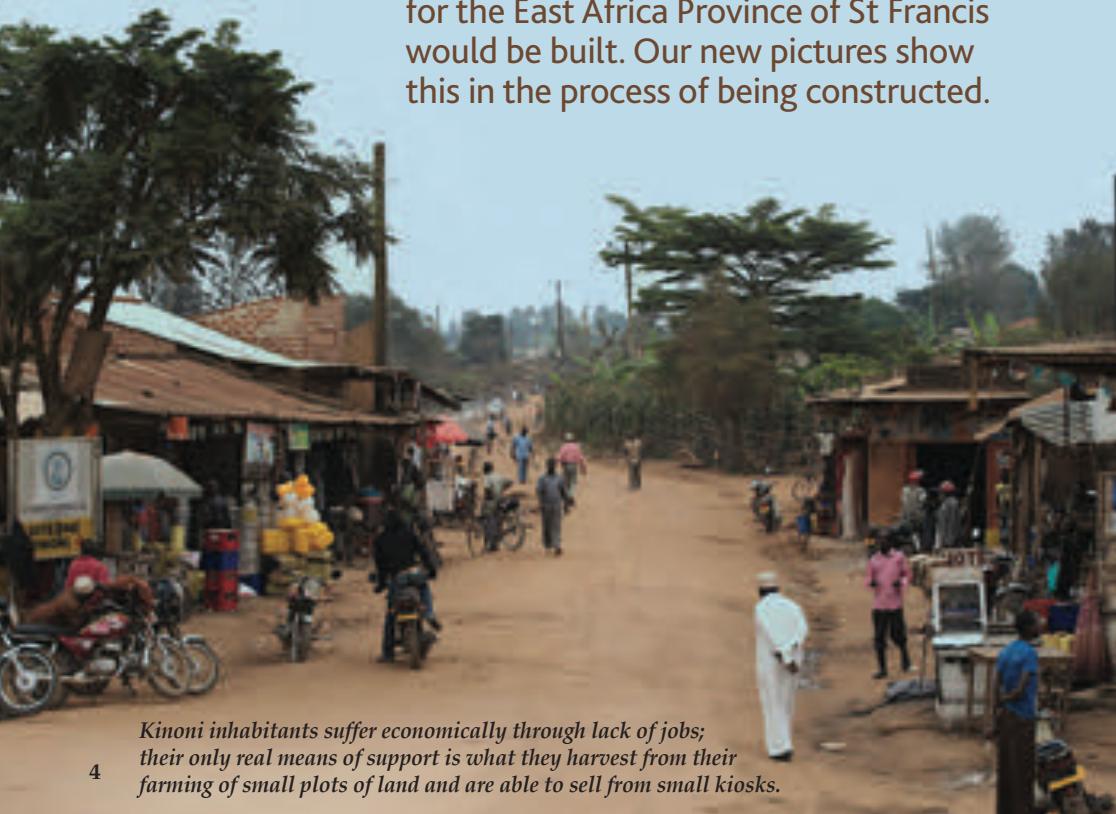
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Uganda Novitiate Building

You may remember an article by Fr Cornelius in our Autumn 2019 issue, which showed a picture of a special field: the field on which the new Novitiate for the East Africa Province of St Francis would be built. Our new pictures show this in the process of being constructed.



Kinoni inhabitants suffer economically through lack of jobs; their only real means of support is what they harvest from their farming of small plots of land and are able to sell from small kiosks.

Dear friends,

Due to a whole number of issues among which Covid-19 played out its part, we have managed at last to begin the construction of our new Novitiate in Kinoni. And I think it is only just that you should see for yourselves from these pictures that work has really begun, after all it was with your financial help that we were able to purchase the land in the first place. Yes, our methods of building may not look too professional, but I can testify that such structures, built in this local way, are really very solid and do last.

As almost two years have passed since I made my appeal to the Father Eddie, perhaps I should remind you all of why it is that we need to build a new Novitiate.

The present Novitiate in Kakoba, Mbarara District of Uganda, is no longer big enough to accommodate the increasing number of candidates. It only has four rooms for sleeping. In the early days after its completion in 1987, and until quite recently our number of candidates was manageable. But due to the

hard work of our Vocation Promotors in recent years, we can now expect a number between twelve to twenty. This increase has meant that too many young men have had to share rooms, which is not good for healthy /hygiene, nor for the ambiance of a Novitiate community.

Another reason why we need not just a new Novitiate but a new location, is the social changes that have taken place in our area of Kakoba. One of our neighbours is the Teachers' Training Centre (TTC). This was never a problem in the early days of our presence in Kakoba, but around 2003 the TTC was upgraded to the status of a University. When this happened, students came from all over Uganda and beyond to study there. But the TTC had very limited accommodation, a fact that gave rise to the local residents building hostels all around the perimeter of our Novitiate to accommodate the new inflow of students seeking somewhere to stay. The end result of this influx of new neighbours - and there quite reasonable need - meant that we were completely surrounded by new hostels, so much so that

the peace and quite required for a Novitiate community was just not possible. So we just had to move elsewhere to Kinoni - if of course we could find the money to buy new land and build. Well, you kindly came to our aid and we were able to buy the land we needed.

The Novitiate will be located in a poor area (Kinoni) someway outside the town of Mbarara, among people suffering economically through lack of jobs; their only means of support is what they harvest from their farming on small plots of land. There are no Supermarkets or Shopping Malls: nothing bigger than a few small kiosks.

In our present location in (old Novitiate) the friars support a number of children with school fees whose parents are suffering from AIDS. And these same children receive food and medicine from the friars. Even the children whose parents are in prison have their school fees paid for them by the friars. Their imprisoned parents also receive food, clothing and blankets from the friars, and even such basic things like toothpaste and soap. I'm not saying this to impress you, but

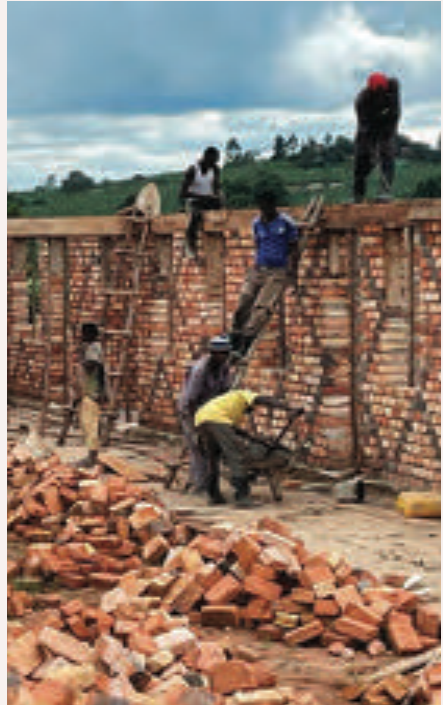
simply to show that our focus is not exclusively on ourselves and our needs, but embraces those of others around us. We shall continue our Kakoba tradition here in Kinoni.

At the beginning of these few words I mentioned Covid-19 and as we are now in the Red category you might be interested in a few facts about the situation here in Kenya.

Today for example, 1,030 people tested positive out of a sample size of 8,316 who were tested in the last twenty-four hours. Out of the cumulative tests so far conducted of 1,557,704, only 145,184 have been positive. Obviously compared with the figures for the U.K., and our neighbours on the Continent, it doesn't look as though we have been too ravaged by the Virus. But nevertheless, the restrictions on movements outside various regions has meant thousands of people have lost their jobs. Our Curfew now begins at 8.00 p.m. and ends at 4.00 am. Again, bear in mind that we are not blessed with an NHS. As there is no price control, Hospitals can charge whatever they like for their services. Just now there is a shortage of beds even

in the more expensive Hospitals. Like elsewhere, the staff in the Hospitals and Health Centres are doing a superlative job – and quite a number have already have died from Covid-19.

Today, 11th April 2021, the figures issued by Committee on Coronavirus are as follows: 1,616 patients are currently admitted in various health facilities, while 4,234 patients are on Home Based Isolation and Care. 247 patients are in Intensive Care Unit (ICU), 46 of whom are on ventilatory support and 170 on



The new Novitiate construction continues, even in the hot sun.



supplementary oxygen. 31 patients are on observation. Another 259 patients are separately on supplementary oxygen with 246 of them in general wards and 13 in High Dependency Units (HDU).

Last year (2020) we broke-up our students and sent them to stay with our communities in their countries of origin. Thankfully none of them caught Covid-19. And even now we are still free of it. However, this year in March, five of us Solemnly Professed were hit by it. Three had to be hospitalized, one got over it within the fourteen-day window. The fifth one tested positive twice, but on each occasion was asymptomatic.



We pray daily that God will protect our students, Novices and Postulants from being struck down by Covid-19. And may the Good Lord and His Holy Mother protect you, your families and friends.

Kenya

Provincial House

Fr Cornelius also asked for help in building a perimeter fence for the Provincial House in Nairobi, Kenya. These photos show the Perimeter wall and gates now helping to keep our friars safe in a sometimes volatile area of Nairobi, not far from the scene of the terrorist attack at the Shopping Mall.



Once again many thanks for your support. Fraternally, Cornelius.

Sri Lanka

I am really testing your memory now!
We had a request from Fr Edward ofm in Sri Lanka to help in the purchase of a truck suitable for the terrain he had to cover in serving the poor people of the tea estates of his Mission.





Fr Edward, with his invaluable new companion.

PAX ET BONUM!

My dear Brother Edmund,
Greetings in the Lord Jesus.

I am keeping very fine though the COVID19 is spreading so fast even in Sri Lanka. I am really very, very sorry dear Brother that I could not contact you for a long time due to my hectic life in the Foundation and plus in the Parish. I was extra busy with the Foundation Chapter in June through Zoom and eventually turned over my office to another Friar. Now I am concentrating on the parish mission only, after working so

hard for the Foundation and the parish. Though it was so heavy and hard but I learnt a lot during my office as the Foundation President for about three and a half years. I have become a very strong and experienced person now, PRAISE GOD FOR HIS BLESSINGS AND GUIDANCE...

Regarding the vehicle for the Parish at Haputale, I am really very happy to announce that last December, we already bought the vehicle (BRAND NEW HILUX DOUBLE CAB 4WD- AUTO TRANSMISSION)



Faithfulness in Worship.

which is the suitable vehicle for the mountains. I am EVER GRATEFUL to you, the Minister Provincial, and the generous support of the people

in your Province. May God reward you for your generosity and kindness.

Keep you all in my daily prayers and the Holy Masses.

MAY THE BLESSINGS OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND MOTHER CLARE BE WITH YOU ALL!

Thank You!

May God Be With You!

Fraternally,

A . EDWARD, OFM



St Anthony's Children's Home, Blaubosch

Over the years we have helped the children of St Anthony's Home in many ways. But it keeps answering the needs of the people in many ways. Here are some pictures showing the children celebrating, among other things, Freedom Day, April 27 2021, with Uhuru Striders.



Above: It all started at St Anthony's gate, 4km run and fun walk.

Top left: Child and Youth Care Workers who participated in the 4km run.

Left: Welcoming Uhuru Striders and starting our day with a prayer.



Below: 10-12 year old boys who participated in the 4km walk.



Above: St Anthony's children, who were leading a 4km run, and one of Uhuru team members.



Above: Child and Youth Care Worker enjoying meals with children after the run.



Above: Growing through playing.



Left: Closing our day with a prayer and sending things back to God.

Our South African Province

Some time ago one of our Friars in South Africa made a request for help to renovate parts of our La Verna Retreat Centre near Vanderbijlpark, on the banks of the Vaal River. Sadly, the work was forced into abeyance for a while, but it has now been completed as shown in the following photographs and correspondence with Fr. Clement KHOLOPA ofm, (Franciscan Development and Projects coordinator). Some photos also show our Friars and Novices of the South African Province, whom you have supported for many years in one way or another.





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Dear Br Eddie,
May the Lord give you Peace.

It has been a while since our last communication. I would like to start by thanking you sincerely for the assistance you have been giving us.

I am hereby giving you a short report of the project we applied for which was forwarded by the late Br Peter Wilson last year.

The project was affected by a number of issues including the national lockdown which has just eased recently. However we could not afford to sit and do nothing. We managed to get a number of things done under those difficult circumstances.

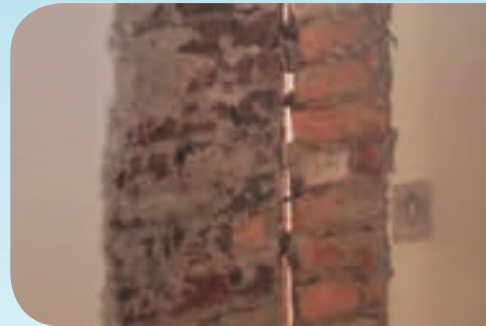
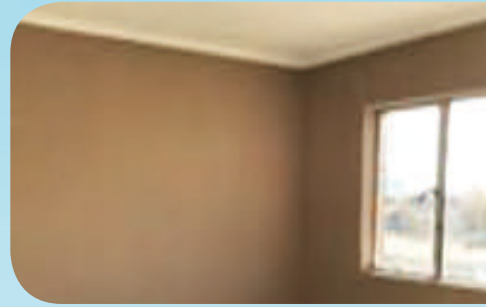
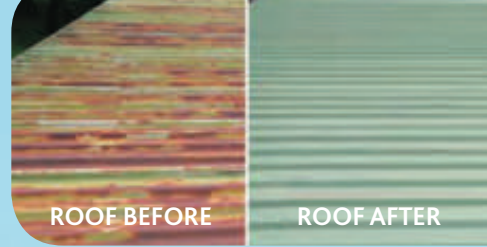
We eventually got most of the work done which was the renovation of the La Verna Retreat Centre.

A simple breakdown is as follows:

Received	Activity	Expenditure
£50,000 = R980,000	Renovations of rooms	R525,000
	Building of office	R350,000
	Labour	R105,000

Some of the work done in the units is as follows:

- The roof was repaired and in some cases replaced.
- The same roof was painted for the first time and some parts like flasher boards were added.
- All the ceilings in the buildings were replaced.
- Some electrical wiring was redone as the old wiring was no longer safe for purpose.
- Water was reconnected and new geysers were bought.
- The walls were also painted on the inside; many walls had serious cracks as can be seen from the picture on right.
- There was some work done on the fencing although not complete.
- New doors were bought for all the rooms and in some cases window panes had to be replaced.
- Kitchen cabinets were bought, although not in all the rooms.



Top: The roof was repaired, painted or replaced where needed.

Middle: All ceilings were replaced and in many cases walls replaced or repaired.

Bottom: This shows how bad some of the walls were. We had to get an engineer to study and advise on how to deal with the cracks.



The Vaal River, the third largest river in South Africa

Some young people who frequent our chapel from the nearby squatter camp.

All in all the houses are habitable now. It is a pity that the gathering of groups is not yet allowed. We can say that the accommodation part has gone a long way. We are looking at the next phase of building a hall for the youth. As it is they come but we can only gather them outside.



Top: New guysers bought and installed.

Middle: The youth come but we can only gather them outside until we build a hall.

Bottom: The new office, built from scratch.



Below: The provincial, the guardian of La Verna, some of the temporary professed Brothers and some of the Novices.



South Africa Hardenburg

Fr Rodgers Sihlobo ofm, an old friend of mine whom I knew from my days in South Africa, wrote to ask for help in finishing the new Church building in a place called Hardenburg in the Diocese of Kokstad. The original Church was built by the Trappist Monks who worked in South Africa and who later, because of their commitment to serving the people rather than staying in their monastery, became the Marianhill Order devoted to the evangelisation of the people. The Church was built towards the end of the 19th century (1897?) and has grown and grown. I hope these photos sent by Fr Rodgers will encourage you by seeing the progression of the new Church building in South Africa, helped by your generosity.



Site levelled.



Foundations laid.



The pictures show the story as the building of the new Novitiate progresses. When the construction is complete we are sure to send more pictures.



The bricks arrive.



Framework goes up.



Roof goes on.

Opposite: Some of the congregation arrive to have their first viewing of the building as it progresses.



Building underway.



Good progress!



Fr Christopher Eunan Dooley OFM - RIP

by Gerry O'Reilly

On Tuesday 25 May 2021 the friars of Our Lady Queen of Peace Province in South Africa buried one of its senior friars after requiem Mass at St Francis church Van der Bijlpark, South Africa, at La Verna Retreat Centre. The present Covid-19 restrictions are still in vogue. We are allowed fifty people in the church or half the capacity of the church at the funeral, with all the international rules, mask, social distancing, and sanitation.

A good number of the friars travelled to accompany Eunan on his final journey home.

Eunan was born in Wicklow on the 5th February 1936 where he lived until he was 13 years of age. He was the last of five boys in a family of eight children. His family then moved to London. While in London he joined the YCW. He went to Belgium with them and on his return, he had decided to become a priest. He joined the English Province of the friars on the 7th September 1957 in Chilworth. He made his first vows the following year and studied for the priesthood at East Bergholt, Suffolk. After ordination on 14 March 1964, he did his pastoral year at Woodford and then was assigned to the friary in Bristol where he worked in the parish.

In January 1968 he left Southampton and travelled to South Africa. He arrived in Durban on 12 February 1968. He was appointed to work in



Fr Eunan OFM.

the Prefecture of Volksrust. He studied Zulu for a few months and was sent to parishes where he would have a first-hand, hands on opportunity to perfect his speaking and understand Zulu. He was deeply impressed by the welcome he received by the parishioners.

His next parish was Maria Ratschitz where he put his heart and soul into the missionary work. He experienced under Apartheid the effect of forced Removal of the Zulu people from their ancestral homes and land. The friars of the Prefecture protested in many ways against the actions of the Apartheid Government. This even became a matter of discussion in the Parliament in Cape Town. One friar wrote a widely read book entitled the Discarded People, which later led to his expulsion from South Africa. Fr Eunan was part of all these protestations.

Later during this life, he did all in his possession to keep the mission station of Maria Ratschitz open. The mission had a beautiful church and monastery build by the Mariannahill brothers and priests. One of my recollections of visiting the mission was a walk in the local cemetery attached to the parish and come across the grave of a Brother Cletus, age about 20 years of age, by falling from the scaffolding which was erected around the bell tower being erected by the brothers. The

Mariannahill congregation and sisters (Congregation of the Precious Blood) worked in the parish.

Eunan went to the mission weekly with a few bags of coal trying to keep the place habitable by lighting fires in the different rooms. He had the vision of seeing priests and sisters back on the mission again. He was overjoyed when Bishop Paschal Rowland had the 'monastery' and the church repaired with the financial assistance of the German province of the Nardini Franciscan sisters.

The Sisters took residence there. They built a provincialiate and started their noviciate there. They were later able to open a clinic for people with HIV Aids with two sisters, who were doctors, doing clinic work at the Mission and in the surrounding farms and villages. Later they built a thriving home for the elderly and sick. This would not have taken place without Eunan's love and dedication to the mission.

Later on, he worked in Newcastle and Mhlumayo. Mhlumayo had a big school attached to the parish and that's where Eunan got involved in helping the children with food, and he got funds from the UK to build houses for the teachers. It was a tough mission, the roads were bad, the people underprivileged. That brought out the best in Eunan. He could not just sit back and not help. People may have forgotten this dedicated work but God saw all that unselfish love and has surely rewarded him.

Then the time came for him to move. He served for some time as Secretary of the Province working with Robert in Durban and from there, he moved to be chaplain of Mother of Peace children's home, a short distance from Amanzimtoti. There were forty children there and each one of them

won a place in his heart. He did all he could to help the children, and it was there that people realised that he was getting forgetful and the first signs of Alzheimer's disease became evident.

The Franciscan sisters at Marseilles, not too far from Bloemfontein in the Free State, came to the rescue with the outstanding help of Fr Sizwe Mkhonza who became his constant companion. From Marseilles Eunan made his last journey with Fr Sizwe to our Retreat Centre at La Verna, outside Vanderbijlpark.

During the last week of his life he consistently asked the friars to allow him to Go Home. The day before he left for his eternal home Fr Benen gave him Holy Viaticum, and Eunan responded by saying: "Thank you Father".

After the Requiem Mass at St Francis church at Vanderbijlpark Eunan was buried with the friars who had gone before him at La Verna. May he rest with the Risen Lord for ever.



To change
the world
we must be good
to those
who cannot
repay us.

Pope Francis

