

AJANews 94 - July-August 2010

Fr Michael Czerny SJ: Health update

Fr Paterne Mombé SJ: Engaged in schooling the heart

Internship: Pastoral experience at AJAN House

AJAN: Launching *Youth Movies for life and for love* competition

Blessed Anuarite Nengapeta is a young Sister of the Holy Family of Kisangani. She worked at Wamba as a teacher. She was murdered resisting the sexual demands of a rebel leader in the Congo in 1964. St Aloysius Gonzaga is a young Jesuit who selflessly gave his life caring for victims of the deadly plague in Rome in 1591. We entrust the African Jesuit AIDS Network to their prayer and protection.

FR MICHAEL CZERNY SJ: HEALTH UPDATE

Since the myocardial infarction on the KLM flight of 22 May to Toronto, when Fr Michael got a heart attack, he has been recovering at the infirmary of René Goupil in Pickering where he moved on 8 June. Commenting on his progress, Fr Michael says *I am fine and making steady progress - I now have a good cardiologist, he has revised the medications to adapt them better to my condition and am soon beginning rehabilitation.*

Many companions, friends and well wishers have been sending messages of consolation and moral support to Fr Michael. *I have felt surrounded by everyone cheering for my recovery. You have been patient, knowing I should not be on the computer replying to e-mails, and I have benefited so much from your long-distance care and some very nice visits,* said Fr Michael. On his birthday - 18 July, Fr Michael said *thank you for being near,* especially on that day when he turned 64. His wish for himself and everyone comes from Julian of Norwich:

All shall be well,
And all shall be well,
And all manner of things shall be well.

FR PATERNE MOMBÉ SJ: ENGAGED IN SCHOOLING THE HEART

As stipulated by the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, all Jesuits must go through tertianship, engaging in *schooling the heart* in a bid to achieve a vital synthesis of the spiritual, apostolic, intellectual and technical aspects of his formation and a personality that is well integrated in the Lord, in keeping with the Society's intentions as envisaged by its founder Saint Ignatius.

In response to this formation requirement, the new AJAN director, Fr Paterne Mombé, left AJAN House on 19 June to spend three months in Burkina Faso. In his absence Fr Thuadi Ngoma Antoine SJ from the Central African Province (ACE) is AJAN House's spiritual moderator while Ekeno Augustine SJ is acting director of work. Also overseeing AJAN's activities is Fr Ignatius Ikunza SJ, who is currently in the US for medical treatment. In the meantime, AJAN House invites AJANews readers to keep Fr Mombé in their prayers during this important stage of his Jesuit formation.

INTERNSHIP: PASTORAL EXPERIENCE AT AJAN HOUSE

AJAN offers training in different aspects of HIV-AIDS ministry to increase the knowledge and abilities in this sphere of young Jesuits in formation. This year, Harris Tombi SJ and Watson Matara SJ, both studying theology at the ICTJ in Abidjan, arrived at AJAN House on 30 June 2010 for pastoral experience in AIDS ministry in Kangemi and Kibera, both slum settlements on the outskirts of Nairobi.

Uzima: Deep moments of presence

UZIMA, a programme of St Joseph the Worker Parish in Kangemi, caters specifically for the people with HIV. Services rendered by UZIMA include support groups, counselling and pastoral support, income-generating activities, social assistance and help with children's schooling.

Given his experience of working with the *Afoubenou* support group in Abidjan, Harris had much to contribute to the UZIMA programme. *Despite the blockage of the language, he says, because almost all our partners were expressing themselves in Swahili, I experienced moments of great presence at their side, sometimes silent, praying, and sometimes even questioning with the help of Br Lucas (Little brother of the Gospel) as interpreter. I really appreciate the way our clients welcome us and open their heart during the sharing.*

UZIMA provides support and care to those infected by HIV and affected by AIDS in Kangemi partly through visits aimed at offering psychological, spiritual, social and medical attention to clients. Through these visits, Harris says *I witness the simplicity and generosity of each member of Uzima especially in the way they console, support, and carry in prayer and in love all people infected and affected.* Describing his experience as *a chance for a deep moment of sharing, listening and receiving from the clients the desolations and consolations they face daily through this disease,* Harris thanked AJAN House for offering him the chance to serve and experience the suffering Christ in some people in Kangemi.

Everybody's responsibility

Life in Kenya is beset by numerous problems, but HIV/AIDS is the most challenging and the most devastating the country has ever faced. It negates life as a whole. It brings about suffering, fear and hopelessness. It intensifies poverty and attacks the least privileged. It attacks and destroys the human body, by infecting it and eventually killing it, said Watson.

Lea Toto is a community-based outreach programme of the Children of God Relief Institute (Nyumbani Foundation, which was set up by the late Fr Angelo D'Agostino SJ), providing services to HIV+ orphans and their carers. For Watson, his pastoral work at Lea Toto *has been a very important step in realizing how efforts are being made to help curb this scourge in Nairobi.* This programme is not only meant to help those already living with HIV but also to provide awareness and encouragement to those who have not yet gone for testing.

While working for Lea Toto, Watson witnessed some challenges, for example, *the negligence of the caregiver may result in the early death of the patient since the medication has to be taken as prescribed by the doctors or nurses. The breaking up of the family is one issue which is a painful reality. Most families live in conflicts due to the denial of their status, or blaming the other partner for their demise. I have managed to visit different homes where most of the patients live, and I have discovered that*

spiritually, HIV/AIDS sufferers experience a crisis in recognizing the love of God - a situation made worse by the deplorable conditions they live in due to poverty. Describing his experience as enriching, Watson believes work that involves campaigning and care for those living with HIV and AIDS is everybody's responsibility.

AJAN: Launching Youth Movies for Life and for Love competition

AJAN happily announces the official launching of the regional competition within Jesuit educational institutions to run from 15 September to 15 December 2010. All youth aged between 10 and 25 years in all Jesuit educational institutions and other centres of learning affiliated to the Jesuits in sub-Saharan Africa are invited to participate in a scriptwriting competition whose objective is to give young people an exciting opportunity to learn and educate themselves and others about HIV/AIDS.

Through this contest AJAN hopes to offer the young generation in these centres of learning a chance to understand and express what the epidemic means for their own everyday lives and for their friends, families, and communities. The *Youth Movies for Life and for Love* scriptwriting contest also allows them to inform others throughout Africa and beyond about the need to protect themselves from HIV infection and to support those who are most directly affected.

The participants are invited to come up with an original idea or "scenario" for a short film of 5 to 8 minutes in length. The hope is to have good scripts that propose the best message on how the youth can respond to the challenge of HIV pandemic, adopting value-based lifestyle or making choices that are life-giving (promoting healthy relationships and a promising future) and that will help them avoid contracting sexually transmitted infections and HIV. The first 20 best ideas with correct information on AIDS will be adapted by professionals chosen by AJAN to make educational DVDs in the context of HIV and AIDS prevention in sub-Saharan Africa.

The posters advertising the contest, as well as the rules of the competition, are being sent to all Jesuit educational institutions that confirm their participation in the contest. Thus for more information about the contest, visit your nearest Jesuit educational institution before 15 September.

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