

CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Spiritans) THE FOUNDATION OF ETHIOPIA



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Gadamoji Ceremony among the Borana people — Vince Stegman, CSSp.

This is an eventful year for the Borana people and especially for a small percentage of them. It is the year of the *Gadamoji* ceremony. And it is especially significant for us Spiritans who have been working here because our longest-working catechist in Dhoqqolle now enters the *Gadamoji* stage of life. Arballe Gollo has been with us first as a translator and later as a committed Christian and catechist for twenty-five years. This year he becomes a retired and respected elder in the Borana society.

The *Gadamoji* ceremony takes place every eight years. At this ceremony the men of a certain grade and status within the society become officially old (retired) men. The

preparations for the ceremony are long and elaborate, culminating in a two-month stay in a ritual village during which the ritual head-shaving takes place. After all the preliminaries have finished, and they are many, the *Gadamoji* moves to the *ardaa jilaa*, the ceremonial site. Even this move is ritualized. The family uses only one camel on which they place all the necessary house-hold goods for living for a two-month period. If the man does not own a camel he borrows one. The move is made on the first day of the ritual month (July). The *Gadamoji* holds a hooked stick which he will use to build the ceremonial cattle enclosure at the ritual place. He holds this stick when they pray before setting off for the ceremonial site. On the way the wife of the *Gadamoji* (cont. pg 2)

News update from Fr Martin Kelly CSSp.

Recent events of note in the Foundation of Ethiopia are centered on language study. We have two newly arrived Mission Appointees on their final weeks of a six month language course, along with two students from Uganda on PEP. Two other Mission Appointees have had their language courses interrupted due to ill health and bureaucratic obstacles. All these newly appointees are:



Fr Dennis Bukenya, CSSp, is from the Foundation of Uganda and was ordained in the 2003 who is now the new Pastor of Arba Minch Catholic Parish in the Gamo Gofa Zone. He is still learning the Amharic Language in Addis Ababa. Best wishes Abba Dennis.



Fr Anthony Nweke, CSSp, is from Nigeria and he was ordained in the year 2009 and appointed to the Foundation of Ethiopia for his Mission Appointment. He joins the Community of Dhadiim Parish and takes over the Dhadiim School as a supervisor and a manager. Best wishes to you Abba Anthony. (cont pg. 3)



Mr Arballe, one of the many *Gadamojis*

cuts four poles to be used to build the house at the ceremonial place. At the ceremonial site a certain tree, without thorns, is chosen as a sacred tree. Here they will hold meetings during the two-month stay. When they arrive the first day they go to this tree to

hold a blessing ceremony, asking God to bless and protect them during this time. At this blessing ceremony four ewes with lambs are brought, representing four divisions within the Borana society. The owners milk their ewes a little, letting the milk fall on the ground to bless it. After prayers they return to unload the camels and prepare to build the houses they will use during the two months.

The Borana tribe is divided into two halves, the *Sabbo* and *Gona*. For the *Gadamoji* ceremony each half builds its houses in two lines, *Sabbo* to one side, the *Gona* facing them. All the houses are built facing east. If the *Gadamoji* has married sons they also build near the father's house. The ceremonial village may end up with as many as a hundred houses.

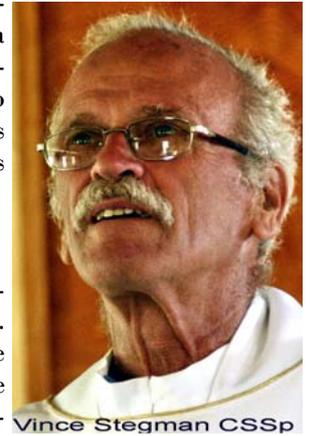
Every *Gadamoji* wears on his forehead a *kalach*. This is a pointed metal shaft held on the head by a leather band around the head. The shaft is symbolic of fertility. On the third last day of the two month ceremonial time the *Gadamoji's* head is shaved by his wife (or senior wife if he has more than one.) While he is being shaved his heir, his oldest son, wears the *kalacha* as a sign of his future entrance into that rank.

Since the first day they arrived at the ceremonial village each wife has piled cow dung every morning into a mound near the gate of the village. By the time of the shaving this mound may be even a yard high. When the *Gadamoji* is shaved his hair is buried in the top of this mound of cow dung (*foduu*). After all the men are shaved the women, both married and unmarried, in ceremonial dress of hides and beads enter the village singing, asking for rain and flourishing of the grass for the cattle. When they have entered and are seated the *Gadamoji* relates in a ritual way all the heroic deeds of his life; having killed a large animal such as a buffalo, an elephant, a lion or giraffe; having killed a man in battle, etc. (These days when most of the wild animals have been killed and there is relative peace between the tribes the recitation has to include other accomplishments.) After this recitation the *Gadamoji* goes into seclusion in his house for three days. He is not allowed to sleep in any other place during these three days. On the morning of the third day

the last ceremony takes place. A ram, given by the junior most clan of the *Gona* side of the tribe, the *Dambitu*, is sacrificed and all the people present, both men and women, eat at least a small part of this roasted meat. The ritual has ended but everyone must stay at the ceremonial site for one more month. They leave at the time of the new moon.

On the morning of the leaving the cattle are milked at daybreak. Then the camel is brought and all the household goods are tied on the camel. When their house is absolutely bare the *Gadamoji* and his (senior) wife go to sit on the bed for their last prayer. The man sprinkles a little tobacco at their feet then he and his wife pour out a little milk onto the ground while saying; "give me plenty of milk, fill me with peace." They then go out without looking back. The woman picks up the lead rope of the camel and they leave the village. Every house in the village is doing the same thing at the same time. By mid morning the entire ceremonial village is deserted, each family returning to its home village. After this ceremony no other transition ceremony can be held for a period of two years; no name-giving ceremonies are held, no marriage can be performed. This is the ceremony to end all ceremonies within the Borana society.

All organizations have periodic meetings for future planning. The Spiritans in Ethiopia will have their second such meeting for five days in July this year. In preparation for Chapter meeting we had a meeting of the entire group last February. A number of papers have been prepared for consideration prior to the chapter. They will be discussed and whatever propositions are derived from them will be voted on during the Chapter. We are a growing group – now fifteen members, so proper organization and planning is essential. When I think of the *Gadamoji* ceremony with its ritual and meaning for the Borana I wonder how long it will take us to develop something as meaningful in a Christian setting. We may have to wait until that day to develop a true Borana Church and leadership. Perhaps our catechist, Arballe, will be instrumental in helping bring this about. We pray to the Holy Spirit to guide us in preparing for that time.



Vince Stegman CSSp

As we are in the Easter tide, I pray that all of you may experience the joy of the life-giving God who came to us for our sakes and who waits now for us to go to him in our everyday lives and actions. May the Peace of the Risen Christ be with you now and for ever. Amen.

Fr Gerald Kimata, CSSp, is from the Foundation of Kenya and was ordained in year 2010. He is appointed to the Ethiopian Foundation for his Mission Appointment. Fr Gerry, joins the Dhoqqolle Community and takes over as the in charge of development in that parish particularly in education. Best wishes to you Abba Gerry.



Fr Matthew Ambrose, CSSp, is from the Province of Tanzania and was ordained in the year 2010. His Mission appointment is to the Foundation of Ethiopia. He is appointed as a new Pastor of the Yabello Youth Hostel Catholic Parish. He will be joined by two other confreres Fr Iede de Lang from Dhadiim Parish and Sch Denis Mugalula a PEP student. Best wishes to Abba Matthew.



Fr Dida Wario, CSSp, is from the Foundation of Ethiopia and he finished his studies in CUEA University—Nairobi. He is now appointed to Ethiopia as a new Pastor of Dhoqqolle Parish. Fr Dida is the first Spiritan from Ethiopia with the second still in the second cycle of formation. We wish you all the best Abba Dida.



Sch. Denis Mugalula, CSSp, is from Uganda and he had his first religious vows at Magamba, Tanzania, in the year 2010. He is sent to the Foundation of Ethiopia for his PEP. Denis will be joining Fr Matthew and Iede in the Yabello community. Welcome Denis.



Sch. Jude Kigala, CSSp, had his first vows in Magamba, Tanzania in the year 2010 and he is also sent to Ethiopia for his PEP. While in Ethiopia, Jude will join the community of Dhadiim with Fr Boniface Muema and Anthony Nweke. Welcome Jude.



ARBA MINCH MEETING. At the end of March we had a two days meeting in Arba Minch of all the confreres here in preparation for our forthcoming chapter in July. Confreres concerned are now putting the final touches to their presentations. We are looking forward to welcoming especially representatives of our fellow members of UCEAF to Ethiopia, most of them for the first time.

UGANDA FOUNDATION CHAPTER. Early in April I had the honor of helping moderate the Ugandan Foundation Enlarged Council. It was great being back in lush Uganda, seeing the fertility and abundance, albeit with envious eyes. The following weekend the superiors, bursars and formators of UCEAF held their annual meeting, this time at Spiritan House in Lang'ata, where we were wonderfully hosted by Fr Philip, Fr Patrick and the students. Apart from budgets and formation, some specific issues discussed were the planned mission to Southern Sudan, the Bagamoyo General Chapter, and directly affecting formation, the timing of PEP in the formation cycle and the possible relocation of the Novitiate.

VINCENT MUTEBI, CSSp. We wish Vincent Mutebi, back in Uganda after two years PEP in Dhoqqolle, a well-earned holiday and the best of luck as he begins his theology in Tangaza shortly.



EASTER GREETINGS. With this first edition of our News letter I send you best wishes for the Easter Season as you prepare for the feast of Pentecost.

Fourth Memorial Mass for the late Fr Ton Leus, CSSp at Dhadiim Parish on 29/04/2011



From left to right: Frs Vince Stegman, Dida Wario (chief celebrant) Matthew Ambrose and Iede de Lange, during the Eucharistic celebration.

After Mass, we had a moment of prayer at Ton's grave.



BIRTHDAYS MAY TO JULY

JUNE 15: Denis Mugalula

JUNE 30: Gerald Kimata

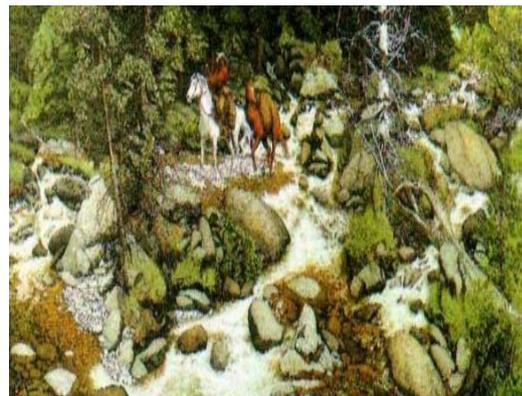
JULY 02: Brendan Cogavin

JULY 18: Vince Stegman

JULY 25: Emmanuel Fritsch



A test for your mind, by Matthew Ambrose



There are 11 human faces on the picture. Can you find them all? Normal people find 4 or 5 of them. If you find 8 then you have an ordinary sense of observation. If you find 9 then you have an extraordinary sense of observation. And if you find 10 to 11 then you are a real observer. Where do you belong?

REACTIONS FROM OUR READERS

Dear Readers, this is the first Newsletter we are producing for the Foundation of Ethiopia. We believe in progress and improvement. So please always feel free to send us your reactions, comments, aimed at helping us to serve YOU better in disseminating news to YOU. You may contact us at the following addresses:

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