



# Spiritans in Ethiopia



## እንኳን ለብርሃን ልደቱ አደረሳችሁ!

*Happy  
Christmas!*

*Khumsavira  
Noël ingasu  
no mwakya  
umuhya gwe  
tsingauwe  
sya nasaye!*

*Gerard and David*

*መዐ ልደት  
ስናአሃቦዮ!*

*Hagos and Tewodros*

*Anuli onomu  
jesu kristi!*

*Anthony and Kenneth*

*Baga  
dhalloota yesso  
christo naga-  
yan  
dhagabde!*

*Dida and Kilimpe*

You are the bush which Moses saw blazing with fire  
and of which the wood was not consumed.  
It was the Son of God who came and dwelt in your womb,  
and the fire of his divinity did not consume your flesh.



ሙሴ በነደ እሳት ሳትቃጠል ያያት ዕፅ አንቺ ነሽ።  
ደኸውም መጥጦ በማሕፀንሽም ያደረው እግዚአብሔር ልጅ ነው።  
የመለኮቱ እሳትነት ሥጋሽን አላቃጠለም።

*Nollaig faoi shéan  
is faoi mhaise  
Daoibh go léir!*

*Paddy, Brendan & Martin*

*Een Zalig  
Kerstfeest en  
een glukkig  
Nieuwjaar!*

*Iede*

*Joyeux  
Noël!*

*Emmanuel and Philippe*

*Tubagaliza  
amazalibwa ga  
mukama waffe  
Yezu Kristu  
gababelere malun-  
gi n'omwaka  
omuqya gubeere  
qwamirembe!*

*Dennis*

## *“The face of God in all situations”*

I was ordained on 8<sup>th</sup> of June. After that I had three month holidays, most of which I spent in my home parish helping Iede de Lange and Anthony Nweke in celebrating Mass in their parishes. Almost at the end of my holidays I decided to get away and have a short break before reporting to the place I was appointed to. After a few nice days in Hawassa, on August 26, on my way home, I was involved in an accident. The driver of a taxi, travelling at high speed, lost control and swiped my car breaking the side mirror. He then went off the road and two people died immediately. Five people were left with serious injuries and three people were slightly injured. He claimed that I had hit him and sent him off the road and therefore was responsible for the accident. So I was taken into police custody in Chalalatu for a month and in Dilla for 21 days. To cut a long story short after 51 days – instead of just two - I was released on bail of 10,000.00 birr (€380, \$525).

My experience in custody was both good and bad. It was good in the sense that it offered me the opportunity to get to know many people. It also prepared me to accept the challenges of life that are ahead of me. It was a good experience too, to get to know the other side of life, especially the life of the poor prisoners and those who suffer innocently. Prison puts all on the same level, both rich and poor, in the sense of denial of freedom and free living. We shared everything in common. It has also revealed to me some of my strengths, weaknesses, and qualities. Through my patience and long waiting some good things happened. Passengers from the other car came and testified that I was not the cause of the accident. Actually, these witnesses' testimony opened for me the door to freedom.

On the other hand it was not so pleasing because I didn't get the justice I was supposed to get. At one point my nationality was even questioned for reasons I cannot tell and my rights were withheld in my own country when I had all the documents expected of any citizen. You can imagine being in such a horrible place, dirty, wet, smelly, no water, no freedom of movement, no bathing, not even freedom of visiting washrooms at your own pleasure, for almost two months. To be among the poor and needy in your limitations. To enjoy your meal while the eyes of a pathetic and hungry prisoner are on you. Having long nights and short days - doors of custody were opened for the prisoners at 7:30 am and closed at 6:00 pm.

Mind you, the rooms were not self-contained! Just imagine what can happen when somebody got an upset stomach... In all of these I came to learn the importance of patience and the secret of remaining faithful in the middle of problems and in dark moments of life when things look impossible and the truth seems to be very far away. As Libermann said we have to seek the face of God in all situations. I think this is very important to all of us who are in difficult situations and challenging missions. Just have a little pa-

tience and wait for the Lord. When I was in custody someone said to me: *“Be patient, justice is only delayed but not denied.”* It was very true because on the very day I appeared in the court my case was decided and the file closed. Surely the Lord hears our prayers since he came to my aid. Hence the reason why today I am a free and happy man doing my mission.

Trials can help to make us more mature, to lift us to higher levels of freedom, and manifest our devotion to God. Job offers a good example of this. God allowed Satan to try Job. Satan hit him very hard so that his whole body became one putrid sore. But Job remained faithful to God. In this way he passed the test, although he did not know the real reasons for his plight. God does not tempt us to evil (cf. James 1:3). But he can allow trials to come to us for the reasons stated above, or for reasons that we do not know. Regarding the man born blind, the apostles asked Jesus who had

sinned; this man or his parents that he should be born blind...(Jn 9:3). If the Eternal Father allowed his Son Incarnate to bear the sufferings due for our sins (cf. Is 53:4-7), who are we to think that we know why good people go through trials? We should therefore meet trials with prayers and humility. There is no doubt that trials can help us to be strong and also to make us to love God.

You may ask, what kept me going was my acceptance of that situation the way it came to me? I was not bitter rather I got

better with the situation and the people in custody. Above all things I turned to God in prayer. I made peace with the guy who hit my car and we became friends. We shared meals and life together. Right now, even though he is still in prison, we are friends. Despite the distance sometimes I visit him in prison.

Many people were deeply touched by my situation and kept backing me up with their prayers till the end. At this juncture therefore, I would like to thank those of you who carried the heaviest cross and suffered with me physically and spiritually during my stay in custody. First and for most I thank God for his blessings, the good health that he granted me and his care. I thank all my confreres, particularly the Superior General, Fr John Fogarty, and Fr Joe Shio his Assistant, who kept contact with me directly and indirectly. Many thanks goes to Fr. Dida Wario and my Superior, Fr. Martin Kelly, and all the confreres in Ethiopia; those in Spiritan House, Nairobi and the entire Spiritan family; the Franciscan Sisters in Galcha, the Bambina Sisters in Dhaddiim, the Apostles of Jesus in Gedeo Zone, Mr Godana Halake, Mr Chuchu in Hawassa and my younger brother, Tadhi Garbicha, without forgetting the many Borana elders who were involved in my case and visited me. May God bless you all.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year 2014.

*Fr. Kilimpe Garbicha CSSp.*



**Kilimpe just after his release on bail**

# Exploration and Farewell—Rescue Trip Two

Our second rescue trip began with more realistic expectations as we had a qualified mechanic with us, a young Dutchman, Jan Helder, who had been working as a volunteer for two years in Ethiopia. But before we got to the lake we ran into some difficulties. A

the mud. There was no other way. Getting through depended on momentum. After reaching the eastern side of the lake the long walk to the island began. After a few minutes, never mind a few hours, a Landrover battery weighs more and more. And while walking through water it's not possible to leave most things down and take a rest.



Sometimes even the mighty need help

bulldozer belonging to the road-building crew got stuck in the Woyto river while towing us across and another had to be called on to pull it out. When we got to the lake we found that the water level had reduced significantly but this wasn't much help to us as we were now left with wide expanses of deep mud where water had been before. We had some fun racing through

We were resolved that there would be no more toing and froing between the shore and car. This had taken up so much of Jan's and Morishu's time and energy during the first rescue trip. This time we knew better what we were facing. We were focussed on starting the engine. Everything depended on that. We had a new battery with us. We had decided that if that didn't start the car it would not start under its own power and another solution would have to be found. After a full day working on the engine we failed to start it. It was a huge disappointment. When you see one more qualified than you fail it can lessen your own sense of failure. But that that was not much consolation at the time!

We spent a second night on the island and then set out for the 2½ hours trudge to the shore and began our journey home. That is when it started to get interesting. Where we had excited-



Homeward bound after a long fruitless day



"Two men look through the same bars; one sees mud and one the stars."

ly raced through the mud a few days earlier we now anxiously and in dread drove through the thunder and rain which seemed to come out of nowhere. We had two cars but our water was limited and if we got stuck it could be days before we could get moving again. We made it to the western edge of the lake and there our progress was hampered, not by mud, but by torrents of water coming down the mountain-side. Every gully was waded through with trepidation as fast flowing water can change the bed of a water course unseen. Happily we made it through and found ourselves back on dry ground as we left the lake area about 80 kms later.

## Exploration and Farewell—Rescue Trip Two

Our trip took six days and only two were spent on the island and we had none of the drudgery of the first rescue trip. Being more focussed in our task and able to leave most of the mechanical worries to the mechanic freed our minds and we were able to relax a bit more and enjoy the wild life of which there was plenty – huge flocks of Thomson’s gazelles, oryxes, wild boar and Grevy’s Zebra, distinguished by their narrow stripes and found only in the Ethiopia/Kenya border area. Flocks of ostriches and flamingos were there in abundance too. The presence of a slight breeze kept the mosquitoes away and made for ideal camping in the open air under a starry sky, a stargazer’s paradise.

We now knew that this car would never come out of there under its own power. We knew also we could not keep coming back time after time. It was expensive, time-consuming and even risky. On the other hand we needed Jan’s car back and would happily benefit from cannibalising Hans’s Long Wheel Base Landrover.

In those days Landrover was well known for the interchangeability of its parts, even between quite different models. Some of the different parts of the longer vehicle we would be able to modify and use in the shorter one later on.

Several months later we were to make it back for a last ditch effort. We would have Owen Lambert with us - and some German technology. How could we not succeed?

*Martin Kelly*



Running for dry ground

### Go out into the whole world...



David Opondo

David Opondo arrived in Ethiopia last January and has just completed his Amharic language course. He will move to Dimeka in January 2014, after a short holiday at home. While waiting to come to Ethiopia he worked in his native Kenya in Wenje and Kisumu parishes.

Philippe Sidot, from France, moved to Arba Minch in August. After his sabbatical he worked for one year in Addis Ababa. Previously he worked in Arba Minch from 2000 to 2006 when he moved to Addis Ababa to be Executive Secretary of CMRS. He will work in the Pastoral Formation Programme of SCORE in Gamo Gofa and South Omo.



Philippe Sidot



Dida Wario

Dida Wario moved from Dubluq to Yabello in November, taking up the post of Director of SCORE in Borana. Ordained in 2006 he worked in Nairobi, Kenya, before returning home in 2010 when he took up the post of Parish Priest of Dhoqqolle, moving to Dubluq two years ago.

Ordained in Yabello on June 8th of this year, Kilimpe Garbicha took up the post of Parish Priest of Dubluq and Dhoqqolle in November. He did his studies in Tanzania and Kenya and his Mission Experience on Pemba Island, Tanzania.

We wish them all a long and fruitful time in the Lord’s vineyard.



Kilimpe Garbicha

The icon on the first page is the work of Sr Helena Gormally who presented it to the Spiritans on the occasion of our Silver Jubilee in Ethiopia 1972-1997. The text in English and Amharic is from Tuesday’s Ethiopian Rite Morning Prayer.

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