ORIENTATION PROGRAM

It’s hard to imagine that the Orientation Program (OP) is over! We had lived together for fourteen weeks, and had many transformative experiences that hopefully enriched the lives of all those who came together in Lusaka on 6th September to begin a journey of adventure and challenge.

In our last bulletin we reported on the program up to week 8, and a lot has happened since then.

Diarmuid Ó Murchú

Diarmuid Ó Murchú’s workshop on Religious Life and the Emerging Spirituality that underpins our new understanding of the vows and of Religious Life was a real tour de force, and all were in admiration of the depth of his learning and preparation for the week he had with us. We were also delighted to have Hugh O’Neill, Peter Dowling Richard Walsh and Julian McDonald attending the workshop, all of whom were very pleased with what Diarmuid offered to the group.

Community Engagement – the Way Forward!

Another highlight of the OP was the workshop on Community Engagement delivered by Dominic Mbutu and Paschalia Mbutu (husband and wife) of the University of Tangaza, Nairobi. This couple has been teaching and living Community Engagement for many many years, and the way they presented their material was exactly what was needed for us to understand its key concepts and learn how to implement it when the communities arrive in Western Province. The greatest challenge facing us as we move to Western Province is to be real listeners and learners instead of imaging that we have the solutions to the problems of the people of Western Province.
A Wonderful Experience of Immersion

Part of the OP plan was the idea of Brothers spending a week in a Zambian family in order for them to come to appreciate life in Zambia. Some people were nervous of doing this, while others felt that we would be imposing on the families and disrupting their lives. Such doubts and worries turned out to be unfounded.

The Brothers went to families in Kabwe, Ten Miles and Mazabuka and stayed there for the best part of a week. On their return they were really pleased with the experience. They found the families so welcoming, so and so helpful in putting the Brothers in touch with the village life. As this experience had followed on from the course in Community Engagement, the Brothers were very conscious as to how to interact with the people, and found, in turn, that the people responded with warmth and openness.

New Structures

One important aspect of the Cluster of communities is how they will function, how they will be governed and how they will communicate one with the other. The TST have been in contact with the various Provinces/Districts and legal/canonical experts as we worked on a governance structure that will assure the good workings of the Cluster.

What emerged was that the hub community will function as a leadership team that will support the frontline communities. The hub community will also be a house of welcome for those Brothers working at the frontline, as well as a community that will facilitate the growth of the frontline communities. So, we are very pleased that the structure of the Cluster will ensure an effective and cohesive unit.

Locations of the new communities

Donal presented a PowerPoint on the various proposed locations for the
frontline communities. He outlined in detail the situation in each of the four communities. Some of the houses are in a better shape at the moment, but we are very confident that when the Brothers finish their three-month language course, the houses will be ready to house them. All of the houses in question are rented. It was impossible to find a house for sale. Eventually, the various communities may decide to build a community house once funding can be found for this.

**We Have a Hub Community**

The choice of members for the hub community involved a day’s discernment where the group identified key qualities that the members of the hub would need to fulfil their roles. In many ways their roles involve not only working pastorally with the Brothers in the frontline communities but also working on the Cluster Trust. Hence, the hub community needs people with administrative and financial skills.

The outcome of the nominations by the Brothers and the appointment by the TST resulted in a team that will be effective on both fronts. The members are: Joe Lauren, John Holden, Michael Godfrey, Mouvin Fernandes and Sammy Munyua. We wish this community every blessing as they begin their time as the hub community team.

**The Frontline Communities**

The original idea of the cluster was that we would have five communities of five Brothers in each community. However, with the departure of nine Brothers over the course of the orientation programme, we have decided to reduce the number of frontline communities to three instead of four. So, we now have the hub community with three frontline communities. The composition of these communities is as follows:

**Limulunga**
Dominic Mwania, Edward Masinde, Fredrick Ochwallo, Jacob Kanda, Jerome Manuel (CL)

**Luampa**
Conrad Cerejo, Innocent Kaimbo, John Nyamba, John Phiri, Michael Tatenda Chimbima (CL)

**Senanga**
Mark Cody, Nicholas Mutiso, Philip Kwena, Rohan D’Souza (CL), Steven Sitali

We wish these new communities every blessing and happiness as they
embark on a new and exciting adventure.

**A SAD FAREWELL**

The departures of Gambhir Vasava, Joseph Abdulai, Lawrence Agalo, Roshan Kerketta and John McCourt were indeed a sad occasion for all. During the OP, Gambhir received the news of his father’s demise and then travelled to India to be with his family. In the case of John McCourt, he leaves at the request of the SCD leadership so as to support them in their work over the next few years. We hope that his new role will be a real boon to the SCD leadership. Joseph, Lawrence and Roshan leave to further discern their role in the clusters. We wish them all every blessing in their continuing discernment and hope that they will consider joining a cluster in future.

**WHAT A CELEBRATION!**

When the day finally arrived to mission the Brothers to their communities in Western Province, it was indeed a day of celebration!

The Brothers and invited guests gathered in the ISC hall to the beautiful music of St. Joseph’s English Choir from the parish of Kamanga. Some notable guests were Brothers Peter Dowling and Richard Walsh from the CLT, Br Michael deKlerk, Province Leader in Africa, Brs. Chris Nhete and Revy Hangandu, members of the SC DLT, Mr and Mrs Seamus O’Grady, the Irish Ambassador to Zambia, Mr and Mrs Limata, the Chief and his wife of Luampa district, and religious and friends of the Brothers.

The ceremony began with Br. Nsamu welcoming the guests and introducing Peter Dowling who expressed his thanks and admiration for the Brothers who have taken this step to create vibrant and cohesive communities in Western Province. He stressed the significance of the initiative and wished the Brothers every support and blessing for their new venture.

Br Mouvin Fernandes, one of the participants in the OP and some of his companions shared on what they had gained from the program, explaining what, in fact, the OP had attempted to achieve.

Then, Br. Richard Walsh called forth the Brothers for this new mission, and anointed them, while Peter
reversed as the Brothers in their new community groups moved from the assembly hall to the entrance gate of ISC.

At the entrance gate, Br Michael deKlerk called on the ancestors in the Congregation to bless the Brothers as they venture forth. He then expressed his delight at this significant moment in the life of the Congregation, and wished the Brothers every blessing for their life in Western Province.

The invited guests then stood around the seated Brothers in their community groups and blessed them for their way into the future.

This historic day concluded with the Dowling presented them with a bible in the Silozi language (the main language of the people of the Western Province, Zambia).

Following that, Mr and Mrs Limata called forth the Brothers in their community groups and presented them with a Lozi beret. Mr Limata as Chief of Luampa, came with his wife to attend the ceremony of missioning, and to welcome the Brothers to Western Province.

The opening ceremony that took place on 8th September, started off at the entrance to ISC and ended up in the assembly hall. Now the situation was
went to Rome to work for a week with Br Dean McGlaughlin, the Congregation Bursar. Such a complex project as the setting up of three OWITF Clusters by 2020 requires a great deal of planning, using project management methodology as the key tool. Existing planning for 2016 was reviewed ensuring a clearer focus on the Brother’s presence having some impact on the chosen local marginalised communities, as well as on the Brothers themselves.

The week proved extremely valuable in progressing the planning and the processes for seeking funds for the new Clusters. TST would like to record its deep gratitude to Dean and the Rome community.

MEANWHILE IN THE WEST

Work continues in Western Province in preparing the houses for the arrival of the Brothers in March. The assistance of Br. Dominic Sykes has been invaluable and the work will continue into the New Year. After the Brothers have completed their language course in March, they will move into their new houses just in time to celebrate Easter with the local Catholic community.