

mission **tomorrow**

missio 



The magazine of the Society of St Peter the Apostle (SPA) 2018/19
SPA is part of Missio, the Pope's official charity for overseas mission





Prayer for Seminarians

Heavenly Father

We pray for the men you have called as they prepare for the priesthood.

Bless them with courage and perseverance in their desire to serve you.

May their hearts overflow with your compassion, understanding and generosity.

May they inspire others to answer your call.

Fill their hearts with the fire of your love, and give them the grace to follow you on their journey of faith.

Make them holy as you are holy through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Image on front cover:
Fr Anthony concelebrating Mass at the Latin Patriarchate Seminary of Jerusalem
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National Director's Message

Do Not Be Afraid

In a talk to seminarians in Rome, Pope Francis warned them about becoming too comfortable in their future lives as priests. He urged them not to let fear stop them from serving the Lord, saying 'You can overcome fear with love, prayer and a good sense of humour!'

We all know what fear can do to us. It can hold us back from doing what is good and right; it can stop us from taking risks for the sake of the Kingdom of God; and in some situations it can paralyse us.

Jesus knew fear and overcame it with a courage that can only come from knowing God intimately. **On many occasions, when crisis intruded or failure loomed, Jesus encouraged his disciples with the simple phrase: 'Do not be afraid'.**

All around the world there are young men with the courage to come forward to declare that they want to serve as priests. For some of them, the journey will follow a different path, for others, fear of the future will discourage them, but for many, the training you support will equip them and arm them with all they need to combat their fears.

You support those that will be sent out to communities to heal, to teach and to lead. When fear comes their way, they will be ready to overcome it with love, prayer and a good sense of humour, thanks to you and the training they have received.

You have shown that you are not afraid to give generous support for the future of our Church throughout the world. Your love and prayers will have their own special reward.



Father Tony.

**Fr Anthony Chantry
Missio National Director**

MALAWI

St Peter's Major Seminary



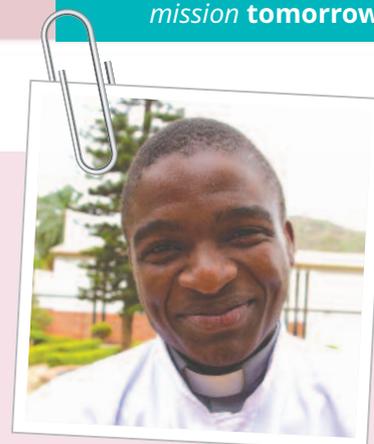
In all honesty, you keep us going

Fr Wezi Mfunne, Rector, tells us:

'We have many young men who feel called to serve God as priests in the Church. The seminarians participate in many pastoral activities, including visiting those in prison, in hospital, the elderly, young people, teaching in schools, and visiting the sick in nearby villages. They also help with running small Christian community groups.

'Although living conditions are improving, there is a continued need for ongoing maintenance. For example, we are in need of new dormitory facilities. We also would like to help, more practically, those most in need in our community, such as those in prison.

'The local community helps as best it can with supporting the seminary but cannot meet all the costs. We are ever so grateful to all our benefactors in Missio England and Wales for standing by our side and offering us the much needed financial, moral and spiritual support. In all honesty, you keep us going.'



Fr Mark (past seminarian at St Peter's)

Fr Mark tells us that from a young age, he wanted to be a priest: 'Before I went to the minor seminary, I thought I *wanted* to be a priest, but once I was at the minor seminary I had a strong sense that I *had* to be a priest.'

Through the SPA Sponsorship Scheme, Fr Mark was able to complete his formation and has been ordained a priest.

He says: 'I find the Church of Malawi brings joy into peoples' lives. Our Church is not just the Church at the altar – it is helping the nation and the society with various issues; the Church in Malawi is a torch bearer.'

'We have many young men who feel called to serve God as priests in the Church'

Did you know?

- The seminary opened 27 January 1977
- It serves eight dioceses
- In 2018, 14 young men were ordained to the priesthood and 12 were ordained deacons

INDIA

St John's Regional Seminary

Did you know?

- The seminary opened in Nellore Diocese in 1926 with a Mill Hill Missionary as its first rector
- In 1964 the seminary moved to Hyderabad
- Over 1200 priests have been formed here

Shepherding the parishes

Fr K Marianna, Rector, tells us:

'There is a great need for priests here, in some dioceses one priest has to cover as many as 20 villages. The priests not only fulfil the Sacramental needs of parishioners, they also help communities with their pastoral needs, always taking into account the multi-religious and multi-cultural nature of the region.

'The seminarians come from different dioceses, languages and social backgrounds, so our formation prepares them to relate both the Christian and non-Christian



communities. People are happy to see these young men doing their mission work and also preaching the Word of God well in the local language.

'The students are involved in charitable works, youth ministry, Sacramental and pastoral duties, children's catechism classes and family apostolate. All are doing marvellous work in their mission, providing spiritual care to the faithful, shepherding the parishes and bringing souls to the Lord.



'Missio's SPA gives us tremendous support in fulfilling the needs of the seminary. We know Missio supporters work hard to raise funds and contribute to the formation of priests here, in a part of the world where resources to support this work are scarce. The ongoing challenge is to provide seminarians with the basic necessities, such as food and education. We rely on Missio's SPA and local contributions. The staff and the seminarians pray daily in the Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations for the intentions of all sponsors and supporters.'

Br Gollapudi Sravan Kumar (1st year)

Bro Gollapudi explains that his mother had asked God for another child. In the same way that Samuel's mother, Hannah did in the Bible, she made a promise to God that whoever would be born she would offer for the service of the Lord.

After 11 years of waiting and praying, Gollapudi was born. He feels that his vocation was therefore chosen by God before he was in his mother's womb. However, his path to priesthood has not been easy. His family was very poor and when his parents became unwell, he left the seminary to look after them. He never thought he would return to the seminary after his mother died.

After much soul searching and prayer, he felt the call to rejoin the seminary. He believes now that his experiences have led him to work with the poor and marginalised in society, especially refugees, helping them to know God's unconditional love for them. Gollapudi thanks his sponsor and all those who support him and the seminary.

'All are doing marvellous work in their mission, providing spiritual care to the faithful'



NIGERIA

Bigard Memorial Seminary

Instruments of God

Fr Albert Ikpenwa, Rector, tells us:

'Bigard has seminarians from 17 dioceses and nine religious congregations. Our formation staff are men and women of integrity who are able to transform the seminarians into better instruments of God, not just through their lectures, but also through their example.'

Did you know?

- The seminary was founded in 1924
- 834 seminarians are currently studying for the priesthood
- The seminary has produced many priests, including 3 Cardinals, 11 Archbishops and 31 Bishops

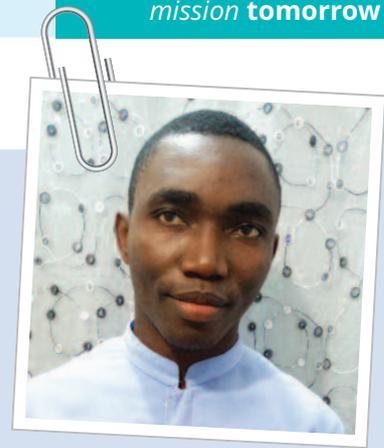
'Situated within the seminary grounds is the Bigard Primary School (pictured) which, as part of the seminary's pastoral duties, assists local families and staff in educating their children. The school population, as with the seminary, continues to grow.'

'In its desire to be self-sufficient, the seminary has also initiated the following self-help projects: the Bigard Press, the Poultry, the Piggery, the Canteen and the Book shop. These provide services to the seminary community and the general public, thus reducing our expenditure and increasing our income.'



'The Bigard family remains grateful to Missio's SPA and its supporters and sponsors. Your support has been of immense help in the day-to-day running of the seminary. Without you, things would be very difficult for us. The Bigard Family offers daily prayers to you and all our benefactors.'

'The school population, as with the seminary, continues to grow'



Br Kelvin Chinedu Asogwa (3rd year)

Kelvin came from a family who were not practising Christians and had no idea that one day he would attend seminary. As he grew up, however, he became aware of the suffering of people around him and was tormented by their poor conditions and predicaments. He felt that he could help them not just practically, but in their spiritual and pastoral needs too.

Once ordained a priest, Kelvin hopes to serve the Church by helping the poor and rejected in society.



SRI LANKA

The National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka

Did you know?

- The National Seminary is 125 years old
- The seminary is named after Our Lady of Lanka, in honour of her protection of the country during World War II
- It is the very first seminary supported by Missio's SPA

Preach the Good News

Fr Expeditus Jayakody, Rector, tells us:

'We currently have 291 students studying. Many of them reach out to the neediest in society; those in prison, differently-abled children, the elderly, the blind, less-fortunate children and those who are marginalised. The seminary tries to generate income in the seminary garden farm, the poultry, dairy and piggery, and also by growing pepper and cloves.



'Christ the Poor League Association was formed by the seminarians to help the workers in the seminary

and the marginalised local community. Last Christmas, they presented each workers' family with food for Christmas from funds they had collected themselves. They also organised a donation of books for the school children which they gave as Christmas presents. The seminarians have also recently organised two medical camps for the workers and local villagers, with some of the local government hospital doctors. Our 4th year students also teach English to the mainly Buddhist staff in the local hospital.



'We would not have been able to achieve our goals and mission if it were not for the very willing and large-hearted support you extend to us. You have become active partners of their universal missionary effort. We esteem and value your generosity, concern and sacrifices from the bottom of our hearts. The world today is in crisis and it is into such a world that the seminary is preparing tomorrow's priests to preach the Good News.'



Br Milinda Gayan Fernando (2nd year)

Joining the minor seminary helped Milinda to deepen his faith in Christ, but when he was sent on a pastoral year to work as a teacher, he chose to continue working at the school for the next eight years. However, whenever he went to Mass, he felt drawn to be in the place of the priest.

After feeling God's healing touch when praying about the sad death of his niece, he enrolled back in the seminary. One year on, he counts himself lucky to be able to devote his life to the mission of the Church.

He explains, 'Fellow seminarians and formators are like family. Every day in the seminary is precious and challenging as I draw near the altar day by day. There are ups and downs in my life as a seminarian but it is always blessed by God. By His grace, I continue this journey with gratitude to all those who have shown me the path towards priesthood.'

'You have become active partners of their universal missionary effort'

KENYA

Christ the King Major Seminary



Sound relationship with God

Fr Peter Maingi Mutune, Rector, tells us:

'Our seminary belongs to the Archdiocese of Nyeri with 14 resident staff and 11 visiting staff. Our focus is on the formation of seminarians which is based on a sound relationship with God, Christian morals and values, with an emphasis on maturity and responsibility. The four pillars on which the formation is arranged are: academic, pastoral, human and spiritual.

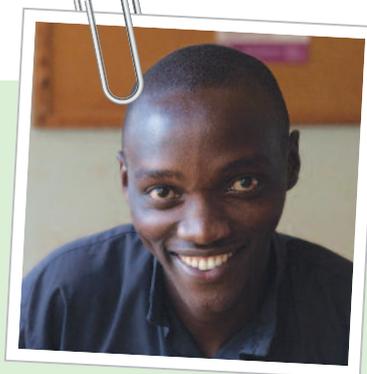
'We are very grateful to Missio's SPA for the support we receive from them. We truly value the sacrifices

Did you know?

- **The seminary was founded 19 March 1990**
- **Since 2015, the number of seminarians has risen by 40%**
- **Students come from 19 of the 26 dioceses in Kenya**

of supporters and sponsors. The local community also visit the seminary with donations and the seminary itself farms the seminary land to generate income.

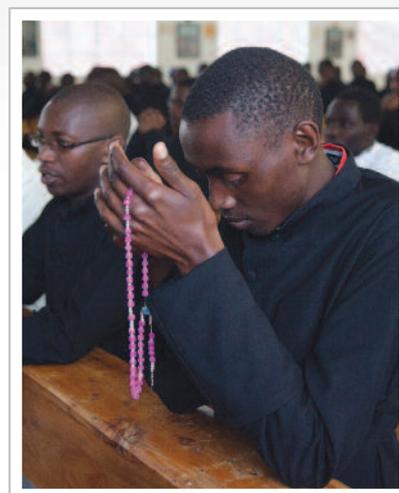
'We are grateful for the support we get from our benefactors. May the good Lord who is not outdone in generosity reward you.'



Fr Stephen Muwangi
(past seminarian at Christ the King)

Fr Stephen is the youngest in a family of eight sons. His father died when he was 14 years old and his mother and brothers paid for his education by working in coffee farms. When he told his mother he wanted to become a priest, she said: 'Join the seminary with your two feet, as a whole person.' Fr Stephen recalls 'what she meant was, don't go there with a double heart – either be at university and enjoy married life or join the seminary and become a priest. She encouraged me to dedicate myself to God.'

Fr Stephen was supported through the SPA Sponsorship Scheme and became a priest in 2017.



Just one new priest can make all the difference

Through your prayers and financial help, Missio's SPA supports seminarians in mission dioceses around the world, enabling communities to train their own priests, become self sufficient and flourish

Many mission dioceses are unable to cover the full costs of seminary training. Therefore, the Holy Father has tasked Missio's SPA with the responsibility of ensuring that no vocation will be turned away through lack of funds.

Our Sponsorship Scheme maintains a relationship with five seminaries

which are supported every year. If you can commit to £500 annually for the final four years of a seminarian's training before ordination, we can offer you the name of a student so you can pray for each other and, if you wish, correspond. This can be done individually, as a family, a community or a parish project.

Thank you if you are already a sponsor – your support means so much. You are encouraging faith to grow and the love of Christ to be shared. If you do not yet sponsor, please get in touch to receive a free, no-obligation, information pack (see centre pull-out).

The students pray for all our supporters and sponsors, as we also do here at Missio, and you are remembered at daily Mass in St Peter's Basilica in Rome every day.



Nourishing with love

Life for the plantation workers in Kenya is difficult – labour intensive tasks with little reward, as the salary is around £1 per day. And the work is seasonal, so in the rainy season, there is no work and therefore no pay. This desperate situation means that most families cannot afford essential items and often go hungry.

The Assumption Sisters of Nairobi, supported by Missio's children's branch, *Mission Together*, recognised the need for change and now run a feeding programme from a local school in Thika. It aims to ensure the children living on the plantations are given the opportunity to have a healthy meal every day; it is often their only meal.

The promise of a meal at school means that many more families are now choosing to send their children to school, rather than having them work.

The Sisters are doing more than simply physically feeding the children. They are also nourishing them with love, empowering them with hope and fuelling a more positive future for them.



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