

# MISSION RESTORATION PROJECT # 2

*Mission Saint Therese of the Infant Jesus*

**Reaching out to the "Poorest of the Poor"**

Mouila, Gabon, Africa – Easter 2013

by Rev. Canon Henry Fragelli

On December 8, 2012, I sent you "*Mission Restoration Project (#1)*". As a result, a few generous souls contributed to the *Mission* allowing us to initiate its restoration. This "*Mission Restoration Project # 2*" is a report about this "initial phase".

This Report # 2 is very late simply because... there is so, so much to do. Unfortunately, for the time being, this *Mission* is (humanly speaking) pretty much a "one man show". I have to do EVERYTHING. Time just vanishes. To top it off... my computer crashed a few weeks ago and... I lost Report #2 which was ready to print and mail. So I had to redo it all over again. But where to find the time for it?

In redoing the report, it occurred me that I could get it done faster if I did it based on pictures rather than long written narratives. "*Pictures say a thousand words*", right? So, here it is! I apologize for it not following any specific order. I neither have the time nor the computer knowledge to make it much better. It is, if you wish, very "homemade".

## Gratitude

This Report # 2 is also my duty of gratitude to the few generous souls that have helped us. They and their families are remembered, every day, in the intentions of Holy Mass here at the *Mission*.

## Urgent request

This Report # 2 is also an urgent request for help. Since I bought a lot of materials, I am able to continue the *Mission's* projects for a little while yet. But other than that, the work has come to a halt. As you will see through this Report # 2, lots has been done and lots more can be done for this *Mission* to flourish for the formation and salvation of many souls. It is not easy being here. Not at all. But with God's help and your spiritual and material support, we will get there. And God will be greatly served and pleased, I so hope and pray. May He reward your generosity a hundred-fold.

**TO DONATE TO THE MISSION, SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 14!**

## Future projects

Are not part of this Report # 2 projects that we were not able to work on yet, mainly the building of the class rooms, the library, the bakery and the workshops to teach crafts to the youth. All of it, of course, with the goal of attracting them to the *Mission* and making of them better people and good practicing Catholics.

## Picture CD

I have a CD with these and many more pictures. It can be used to show others, or for presentations at your parish or prayer group. If you wish one, please just let me know. Together with the CD I will send you a detailed explanation of each picture. If you send me your email address, I can also send this Report # 2 electronically.

### DISCLAIMER

**This report contains a lot (too many) pictures of me. Please know that if I could help it I would. But, for now, I don't know another way of conveying to our donors, and all those that pray for the Mission, that their generosity and prayers are producing much fruit. My camera is not "grace sensitive" ☺. If it were... you would see God's mercy and Our Lady's smiles all over these pictures. They have truly blessed us. The rest... is a lot of sweat, toil and tears.**

## Small Chapel

We began the restoration of our little chapel to give Our Blessed Lord a worthy dwelling. (One must always start with Him.) We redid the ceiling, put in crown molding, painted the walls, put in windows, installed air

conditioning to make it a pleasant place to go pray, installed a beautiful statue of Our Lady above the altar, and several other details such as having new altar linens made, etc.



Before... and after

(The pictures don't show it well, but the difference is immense.)



**Shrine of Our Lady**

Then we restored the shrine to "Our Lady of the Three Names" at the entrance of the *Mission* grounds.

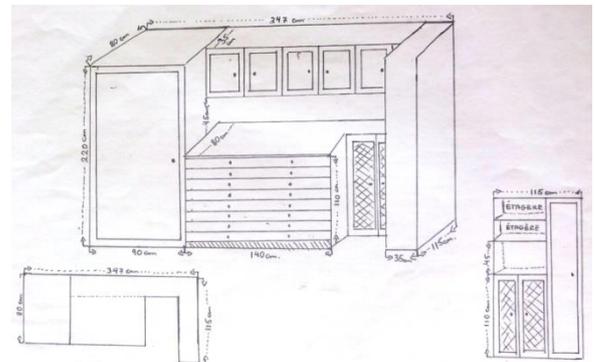


Before... and after



**New Sacristy**

One day... it just "hit me" that I should make a design of new furniture for our Sacristy. I went to my room and did the drawing you see below. While I was at it, I asked myself why I was doing that. We didn't even have the money to have such furniture made. And the answer was always: "I don't know". But... I finished the drawing anyway. The next day, as I came back from running errands in town, a gentleman was waiting for me at the *Mission*. He had just stopped by to visit. I gave him a tour of the *Mission* and showed him the different projects. When I showed him the design I made the day before, he told me: "I'll offer you this piece of furniture." I asked: "What do you mean?" He then told me that he owns a carpentry business and that he was offering this sacristy furniture to the *Mission*. I understood then why I had been "inspired" to make that drawing the day before. I took it as a gift from the holy carpenter St. Joseph as a way of telling us *thank you* for taking care of his Family first. So we will name the sacristy after him. The new piece of furniture will be delivered on April 15. A picture of *St. Joseph's Sacristy* will be in Report # 3.



**Public Relations – Participating in the local community.**

In between the many *Mission* projects and tasks, public relations and being part of the local community are important.



Our first neighbors are the *Trinitarian Sisters*. At their request I have preached them two retreats already and had them over for lunch once. This last Holy Thursday, feast of the Priesthood, they kindly invited me for dinner at their place.





Our second neighbor is the *Val Marie School*. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, feast of the school's patron saint, the Immaculate Conception, we did a beautiful procession from the school to our shrine and back.



On the occasion of the celebration of 50 years of the presence of the *Trinitarian Sisters* in Gabon. At table, surrounded by the diocese's Vicar General and local clergy, I offered the champagne in honor of the memorable occasion.



The *Mission* is often used for military exercises. A wonderful occasion to "plug in" a word about God into the soldiers' ears.



PR contacts: (pictures above) **Picture #1:** Having lunch with the local Police Chief, a very pious practicing Catholic. **Picture #2:** A visit with Mouila's Prefect, the Director of the Telephone Company, and Mr. Nguema, General Director of Public Works. The latter, as this report will show, has helped us tremendously in restoring the *Mission's* grounds. **Picture # 3:** Joined also by Army Major Igouangou, and Mr. Masala, Principal of *Val Marie School*.

### Our first Christmas



Very simple, but extremely blessed. Midnight Mass followed by Christmas carols (in native language) around the nativity scene.



... followed by snack and sparkling grape juice to celebrate Our Lord's birthday and... the birthday of our cook, *Noëline* (she was born on Christmas day, thus her name.) The next day, after Mass: lunch for all our little black community, on the terrace.



**Mission entrance**

This garage just happens to be, for all practical purposes, not only the main entrance of the *Mission* but also its main *carrefour*. On one side of the “garage” we have the main house, on the other side the chapel and the kitchen. So we fixed it up a little bit by building a wood divider to separate the entrance from the laundry. (Before, during and after pictures.)



**A 1000 details**



we keep all the restoration. There were also two empty windows that made no sense. So we built a wooden grid and painted it white.



A great deal of time is dedicated to fixing things like this (pictures 1 & 2). Picture # 3: This was an unused corner of the house. We built a piece of furniture to better use the space. In it powertools we bought for the *Mission's*

The elephant... was my birthday present.



**Snakes... exorcised**

During my first month at the *Mission* I had seven scary encounters with poisonous snakes—two of them inside the house. Our presence and a lot of spraying the gardens with anti-snake products, made them get the message that they were no longer welcome. *St. Patrick, pray for us!*



**Car loads from Libreville**



Once a month I go to Libreville to be with our Community and to do shopping. Things are much cheaper in Libreville than Mouila. That is... whenever we can find what we need in Mouila. It is normally a six hour trip. When the bridge is closed and we have to take the ferry to cross the river... it's a twelve hour trip. This is what our truck looks like on the way back.



## Our growing community

Pictures 1, 2, 3: Our first, second and fourth Sunday. Pictures 4, 5: St. Blaise's blessing of the throats on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Picture 6: **Adoration** (every Wednesday afternoon).



## Cleaning (the rust), repairing and painting of the roofs (special antirust roof paint).



Before  
&  
After



## Visit from my Confreres from Libreville

After Christmas, I spent a wonderful few days in the company of my confreres that came from Libreville to rest and relax. It was a real treat to have a little bit of *Community Life* for a couple of days. An improvised wood net made a great ping-pong table ☺. The next day we all took a long eight hour trip (through horrible roads) to *Mayumba* to visit our former Missions.





“My country, Brazil, is... just across the pond!”

### Mission Staff

- 1) **Noëline**, our cook and house cleaning lady. A fervent Catholic. Hired for part-time but spends all day working at the *Mission*. Extremely dedicated and joyful lady. Her little son: *Marc-Antoine* is the *Mission's* mascot. 😊
- 2) **Mamoudou**, our night guard and groundskeeper. He has been at the *Mission* for four years. Very trustworthy. Not baptized but has started coming to catechism classes. He also comes to Sunday Mass.
- 3) **Ibrahim**. Very hard worker. A welder by profession, he is very handy in carpentry and masonry. Non-Catholic but also has started to open to the Faith. Has become very attached to the *Mission*. He does mostly repairs and maintenance but has been used to work on bigger projects, too. We have worked quite a bit together.



It is thanks to a few **monthly donors** that we are able to hire this staff. I am VERY grateful to our monthly donors. Without them I would have no help at all. My hope and prayer is that a few more monthly donors will sign up so that we can hire at least two more. One to help with the many projects still to do. The other (probably a lady) to be the librarian, *Mission* secretary, cleaning lady for the new big chapel, and a person to watch over the chapel and the buildings next to it that are a bit distant from the main house of the *Mission*. (A monthly salary here is US \$450).

### Altar Boys

Out of the woods... Or sent by the Good Lord? A bit of both! They just “showed up” from all over. We already have 16 altar boys (in training). They can’t wait to wear their new blue cassocks. I have told them that they will only do so if they know their prayers by heart. With great dedication they hand copy their prayers. (Picture 2)





... free hair cut for altar-servers 😊

**Choir Practice**



For now... you're better off just seeing the "choir" rather than hearing it 😊. But... we'll get there! I've just hired Pierre (\$10 per practice) to lead the choir. He's a former choir master and a former altar boy of the *Mission*! Pierre does the polyphony and the songs in native language while I teach the Gregorian chant.



**Unending work...**



Rock hunting in the vicinities and along the roads in order to bring rocks to the *Mission* to serve as boundaries for our driveway. Once in place they will be painted white. It will look nice. Our visitors love to park their cars on the grass. Soon... that won't happen anymore.



This is where I spend a few hours of the day: writing sermons, preparing classes, answering letters and... fundraising.



New windows for the Chapel.



We can always use an extra hand. 😊

**Guests**

It's always a joy and a "breath of fresh air" to have them. Pictures: Two families from Libreville who came to visit.





### Guest Rooms

We are redoing all our guest rooms. Receiving guests is also a form of income for the *Mission*. We have changed the ceiling, painted, and put tile in three of our five guest rooms.



### Bell Steeple

I don't know much of the story, but we were able to recover a bell from one of our old Missions. So now... a bell steeple project. Here is the bell, the steeple design, and the search of the wood.



*"... wish all crosses were as easy to carry as this one."*



It is being made of two very hard African woods. Just the wood itself weighs 1,150 pounds. Carving and drilling through that wood has cost more than one saw blade and several bits. It is a wood made to endure 30 years in water without budging. God willing, in Report #3 you will see the finished steeple.



### The "Men's Group"



We formed a "men's group" to discuss and execute the different projects of the *Mission*. We meet every two week and sometimes weekly.

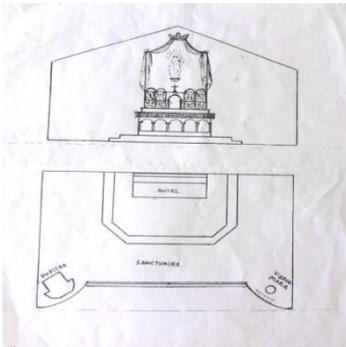
### Care Packages

## Thank You!

My heartfelt gratitude for those that so kindly and generously chose to send us care packages with things the *Mission* needs.

## New "Big Chapel"

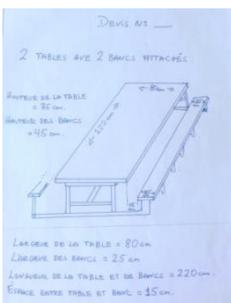
The altar is being made of hard African "noble" wood with images of our patron saints carved in soft rock. We bought large tiles for the sanctuary and laid down the foundation for it. There is quite a bit of work to be done yet for this "big" chapel to be ready, but we are advancing steadily.



Last row: laying down the bricks for the foundation of the sanctuary and altar. Then we filled it with dirt and packed it. Just yesterday we laid down the concrete slate. The last picture is us going after gravel that is abandoned on the road side by the "Chinese". It is free. We needed quite a bit of it for the concrete floor of the sanctuary. Next week we will lay down the tiles and the week after that we will raise the ceiling. Hopefully on Report # 3 you will see more of a... chapel.

## Worker's Refectory

In order to preserve the privacy of the *Mission*, we made a little refectory for the workers, with a small window that communicates with the kitchen so that Noëline can pass the food to them.



## Catechism Classes

Every Saturday, three classes: For the little ones, for teenagers, and for adults. Keeping it simple is the norm.



## African Dinners

A couple of months ago, our little community wanted to offer me an “African dinner”. They prepared local dishes, and we all had a great time together after Sunday Mass. This past Easter we did it again.



## New Pantry



Our food budget was exorbitant and I found out that, unfortunately, visitors were just helping themselves. So I built a pantry that is kept locked and new shelves outside of the pantry (left picture).

## New equipment

Thanks to the generosity of good souls we were able to buy several electric tools and a welding machine for all the work of the *Mission*. We use them every day and a lot.



## New Blue Cassocks for our new Altar Boys

Again... thanks to your generosity we were able to order 25 blue cassocks for our altar boys. The surplices were made by our local tailor and his daughter (picture below). Other surplices were donated by a generous American donor. The blue cassocks took an “eternity” to arrive but... they finally did (last picture.) The Altar Boys who have been training so hard to learn how to serve will be thrilled. And, most importantly, our liturgy will be more beautiful.



## Redoing Mission access road and driveways

- Thanks to contact with the *Director of Public Works* (who has become a friend), we were able to fix the access road from the city to the *Mission* as well as the *Mission's* internal roads. The work is not finished. It should conclude next week.
- They also uprooted four huge tree roots that could only be lifted by bulldozers.

- They are also making two parking lots outside of the *Mission* for the people that have cars to park when they come for Mass or another activity.
- I also visited the director of **Acciona** (a road building company) here in Libreville. They are donating six trucks of gravel to cover the internal roads of the *Mission* once the leveling is finished. It should look really nice once it's done.



### ... babies

Since I've been here (four months), we were blessed with **three new babies**. One is the son of a former altar boy. The other two belong to our parishioners. One was born on Christmas day. The others on Good Friday. Truly "*children of the Mission*". To the latter was given the name of *Marie de la Passion*.



### Holy Week

Being my first Holy Week here, there was LOTS of preparation. We had to do everything from scratch.



Preparing the Monument, then making the incense grains, and painting the Pascal Candle.

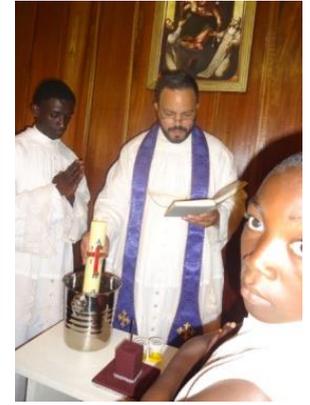


Holy Thursday Monument and Palm Sunday procession.





1. Blessing of the new fire at the Paschal Vigil
2. Pascal Candle procession.
3. Making baptismal water.



**Left:** Easter Mass was, finally, our first “Sung High Mass” with incense

**Right:** An “egg hunt” for the children. (We can’t use chocolate eggs because of the heat, but we make a little bag with other goodies.) For all of them it was the first time in their lives they experienced such a thing.



And a football match for our altar boys (while the adults set the table.) We will soon have a Mission Football Team that will, hopefully, compete with the local schools, etc.



#### EASTER DINNER

Another “African Dinner”

Great bonding moments for our little family.



#### Last but NOT least...

We were blessed by a new Bishop (picture of his installation on March 17)

**Msgr. Mathieu Madega.**

Msgr. Madega is a very good friend of our Institute. He often comes to our Ordination ceremonies in *Gricigliano* (our Seminary). “Coincidentally” it was Msgr. Madega that gave me ALL my *Minor Orders*. It is a blessing to have him as our new Bishop, and we are looking forward to working with him for the flourishing of the Mission.



#### Last and least...



Also in Holy Week, our watch dog gave birth to a litter of five little ones. They will make nice Easter gifts 😊. Some of them are already spoken for.

**Dear Friend of the Mission,**

There you have “Report # 2”. It is very “homemade” but it’s all I have the time for right now. I beg your understanding.

- It is meant to thank you for your generosity.
- It is also meant to encourage you in your giving.
- It is meant as well to encourage new donors—new souls who want to join me in the *Mission* so that together we can continue rebuilding this *Mission*. **There is still a LOT to be done. I cannot do it without you.**

As you can see by the above pictures and captions, we have been working hard. Please help us continue. Beautiful things can come out of this *Mission*, and in joining us you are part of this missionary drive to save souls for God and to expand the frontiers of our Holy Mother the Church as well. These are the immediate needs:

MONTHLY DONATION - To be able to hire two employees	\$ 900 / month
MONTHLY DONATION - For our growing monthly expenses. Mainly electricity, food, gas.	\$ 500 / month
<b>Big Chapel</b> - To finish the Big Chapel, including 26 church pews, a cry room, and confessional.	\$12,500
<b>Library</b> - Restoring and building shelves. We also need to make a door entrance separate from chapel.	\$5,500
<b>Guestrooms</b> - Need to be finished. Need doors for bathrooms and some furniture.	\$2,800
<b>Main House</b> - Other restorations needed at the main house.	\$4,700
<b>Garage</b> - Building a garage and place to house a big electricity generator that is being donated to the Mission.	\$4,500
<b>Bakery</b> - This bakery will not only bring income to the Mission but it will also be our first craft shop for the youth.	\$7,500
<b>Dorms</b> - Restoring beds, painting, electrical. (We are preparing for two 10-day youth camps in July.)	\$6,000
<b>Dorms</b> - Purchase of 30 mattresses for the youth camps (for the dorms that will be used always).	\$2,100
<b>Classrooms</b> - Two class rooms. Painting, electrical and mainly the making of tables and benches.	\$6,500
<b>External bathrooms</b> - All doors need to be changed. Plumbing and electrical needed.	\$1,200
<b>Photocopier</b> - Mainly for the use of the choir.	\$550
<b>Tools</b>	\$1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$55,350</b>

May God reward you and bless you and your family a hundred fold. At the Mission every Mass is said in the intentions of its benefactors and their intentions.

God bless you. Hope to hear from you soon.

Rev. Canon H. Fragelli

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO DONATE TO THE  
*Mission St. Therese of the Infant Jesus*  
Mouila, Gabon - Africa

**To safely send a donation or a monthly donation to the Mission is simple:**

**Step 1**

- a. Go to [www.institute-christ-king.org](http://www.institute-christ-king.org).
- b. Click on *Shrine of Christ the King*.
- c. Click on *Donate*.
- d. Click on *African Missions*, and follow the prompts for donating. You can make a one-time donation or set up for a recurring donation.

**Step 2**

- a. Send an email to our secretary, Mrs. Mary Hall, at [info@institute-christ-king.org](mailto:info@institute-christ-king.org) to let her know that you wish your donation to be sent to the *Mission Saint Therese of the Infant Jesus*, in Mouila, Africa. Or if you wish, to make it clearer: "for Fr. Fragelli's Mission". \*
- b. IMPORTANT: Copy that email to me at [fragellihenrique@hotmail.com](mailto:fragellihenrique@hotmail.com) so that I can follow up on it every month.

\* You will get a yearly tax-deductible receipt for your donation.

\* If you wish you can contact Mrs. Mary Hall at: (773) 363-7409 ext. 3.

We need urgent help. There are literally hundreds of families waiting to receive catechism and the Sacraments. But we need **\$85,000** to restore the *Mission* to its minimum operating conditions. Then, just as important, we have to keep it up. So, in considering helping the *Mission*, I would beg you to consider donating perhaps a little less, but then signing up to our monthly donation program, so that we can guarantee the continuity of the missionary work. The monthly donation budget will be the measure of the *Mission's* growth. If we cannot guarantee its continuity, I will NOT build a "magnificent mission" even if it means evangelizing a lot of people.

May God repay you a hundred-fold. Your name and your family will be remembered in ALL the Masses said at the *Mission*.

In a few weeks I will send our donors an extensive report of the great progress we have made, by the grace of God, at the *Mission*. I have a lot of good news to share with you. Please consider joining me in this *Mission* through your generous donation.

And please be assured of my prayers and immense gratitude. Being out here is quite a challenge. Having you "on board" means a lot to me.

May God bless you and Our Lady be always in your good heart.

*Fr. Fragelli*