



CB Inter In

Number 59, March 2010

Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo

The growth continues!

The jubilee year – fifty years of service in Tanzania- has not come to an end, yet. Hence, we received a lot of copy from and about this area to be published in this edition. Stories, memories, challenges from ex-missionaries and from our Tanzanian fellow sisters in particular.

All these contributions reveal gratitude for this God given growth! From the various contributions we can gather that the example our Foundress set us, always has played an important role in everything we did.

It is true, the growth continues! Sister Tarcisius was to experience this when she could take part in the festivities organised round this jubilee. What a joy to, on this occasion, also be present at the temporary vow taking of six young African girls. Though she observed quite a few changes for the better in public life also the problems remain existent not in the least because of several terrible diseases.

But, as a young Tanzanian sister amongst others writes: 'We can help them through our love, by working together and by welcoming people as they are, not as we would like them to be!' Don't you think this would be a good thing for us to work on now that Lent is with us and we are heading towards Easter?

Wishing you a fruitful preparation and a Happy Easter.

**On behalf of the editorial staff
Sr Adeltruda Jongerius**

The fruits of a jubilee

Sr Leocardia P. Masabo
Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

After having done my first profession in the Philippines in 1998, I was assigned to the Sengerema community. It was the very place where I, as a Kindergarten teacher, had come to know

the CB-sisters through sr Tarcisius and sr Gervasio. I really enjoyed working with the kids.

Being a member of an international Congregation I live together with Dutch



and Indonesian sisters. Many people admire me and ask me questions like: "How do you feel?" and "How do you manage to live among foreigners being the only African sister yourself?"

Right there and then it hit me that what they said was true. I am the only native national among non-African sisters. I have always known that we are all one and that we love each others as sisters. There is no separation of nationalities and it has been like this till this very day of writing. That's why we celebrated our golden jubilee together.

One day I attended a Lake zone meeting for young sisters held at the St Theresian sisters in the Bukoba district. To me, it was very challenging, because every time I entered their chapel it was

crammed with St Theresian sisters. My prayer there and then was: "God when will we get more good sisters, big numbers of them so that the CB-Congregation in our region can grow?"

I really believed this day would come. And see, here it is.

Now, what can we say to our pioneers and to those who continued this mission in Tanzania? I feel that just saying THANKS is not enough. Let us pray for them, that our good Lord may bless their work until the end of times. We really do appreciate the presence of our CB-missionaries in Tanzania and in Nairobi, Kenya. May the loving God receive those who have gone ahead of us, and may He grant those who are still alive many more years yet to come.

We thank all the CB-sisters wherever they are. So let us celebrate this milestone together with our dear Foundress, Mother Elisabeth Gruyters. Together let us say: "May the Name of the Lord be blessed forever and ever.

Is your heart filled with love?

Sr Elisia Terry
Maastricht, the Netherlands

In September I went for a retreat to the Elisabeth retreat house in Denekamp, owned by the Franciscan sisters (FSGM). There were nine sisters/retreatants from three different congregations (SSPS, PJJ en CB). All of them were Indonesian assigned to go and work as missionaries in the Netherlands and Germany. During the retreat I was favourably impressed by sr Renalda (sr FSGM Indonesia) who runs the retreat house since 2003. With great joy and skill she serves all her guests.

"Unbelievable! The FSGM has a retreat house in Lampung. More than likely that sr Renalda gained a lot of experience in La Verna", I muttered. Everything she did radiated her love of work. Sr Renalda's joy really impressed me for, lately, the willingness to fulfil my assignment which is the implementation of this General Chapter decision, seems to have left me.

From the moment I entered the Netherlands till now my main task has been to learn Dutch. This in preparation to the real assignment that awaits us, namely to continue the existence of the spiritual life of the Congregation in Maastricht, birth town of our Congregation. How this task will be realized is not yet clear. Many people in the Netherlands have turned their back on the Church. This gives me the feeling

that my coming here is useless, as if all the effort I put into studying has become meaningless. Here, I have to start from scratch studying both the Dutch language and the Dutch culture. In Indonesia I could do many things. Here, though still in my active years, I just study. Weird, isn't it? I did not take part in the General Chapter but here I am, fulfilling one of its decisions. *Someone eats the fruit and leaves me the pit!* During the retreat days these were the feelings that strongly controlled my heart. Till, one day, the retreat-father offered material for reflection on St Joseph, who most certainly had his share in the history of the life of Jesus Christ, though his name may not be as well known as that of Mother Mary.

In this meditation I shared my innermost feelings with father Joseph. Without asking anything he immediately began to share his experiences. It was obvious that he exactly knew what I meant. This was his story: "After having been engaged to Mary, I worked even harder. I received many orders for making wooden cupboards, chairs etc. I was planning to invite a lot of people to the wedding so I worked night and day to earn enough money. I did not spend my active years idle but really did my utmost. Then, all of a sudden, I received word that Mary, my fiancée, was pregnant. How could that have

happened? For, we had never lived together as husband and wife! Even worse, later on I was asked to emigrate with Mary and the baby Jesus to Egypt. *It was as if I got the pit!* I had to cancel all the orders I had taken on!" "But your task was obvious and honourable for, after all, that baby was the Messiah, the long awaited Saviour!" I interrupted. Patiently Joseph continued his story: "That's right, the news went round that the baby Mary had given birth to would become a man of importance to many people." A man of importance to many people? Was that so? For, all that I could see was an ordinary tiny baby, born in a stable. Lowlier than other babies, surely. Nowhere did I see a single sign that he was to become the man of importance people said he would be. I was amazed at how easy I believed what these people told me. Now, more than thirty years later, I see that, at the time, there were 'signs' that Jesus was to become a man of importance to many people. Yet, these 'signs' were not always clearly visible. Sometimes they were gloomy. Only love enabled me to faithfully assist Mary and Jesus. I kept silent, unable to say anything. Father Joseph closed his sharing with a question that startled me. "Is there love in your heart?"

“I remember Tanzania”

Sr Theresina Asri Endah Nurartri
Jakarta, Indonesia

The melody of mentioned song still echoes in my heart and touches it, although I carried out my mission assignment in Tanzania for only less than two years. To me, Tanzania really was wonderful! The unseen hand of God was at work there and arranged everything. I must admit that when I was asked to go and fulfil a mission assignment in Tanzania, a country came to mind that was dry and barren, a country also with scary diseases. How I would communicate with the people? I never gave it a moment's thought! Surely the language of love should do the trick, should it not?

I left for Tanzania from Jakarta together with sr Hanna. On our arrival there was a slight drizzle. It was the first rain after a long period of drought. The sisters and local workers were waiting for us. We saw their merry smiles and when I first shook hands with them their sharp glances and athletic bodies struck me. Striking also were all the various plants and the different species of birds with their beautiful colours. This first impression made my heart thankful to God, for the graces He had showered upon me. It made that I quickly felt at home. After having spent a couple of days in Dar es Salaam to finish some business, we proceeded on our way to KIA. Because of the beautiful panoramic view along the way this nine hour journey was not tiring at all. When we arrived at KIA the leaders of the Congregation were preparing themselves for the General Chapter in Maastricht. We were all shocked by the sudden death of sr Laura. *“Only God knows, and He begins to work in silence”*. These words of Mother Elisabeth spontaneously popped up in my mind. In facing this event, we needed endurance, unflinching courage, patience and the capability to suffer in silence and to often look at the crucifix just like our Foundress did in her days.

For as long as I stayed at KIA, I was allowed to visit the postulate and novitiate (at about a thirty minutes' drive by car from the regionalate). Here I met our Congregation's native followers. I got the impression that they really possessed the movement of heart to follow Mother Elisabeth's spirit in times which offered all kinds of op-



portunities and pleasures. In spite of all these limitations, they dared choose to follow Jesus on the narrow road. This encounter gave me strength and enlivened more and more the hope for a fertile harvest in this so beloved mission country

Three weeks later I continued my journey to Musoma-Makoto to follow a course in Kiswahili together with sr Hanna and fourteen other missionaries whom we had never met before and who came from nine different countries. The two of us called on Sengere-ma where our sisters genuinely served the poor, the suffering and the marginalized all of whom lived heavy lives. They worked in the field of health care and education. They also ran a kind of boarding-house (Bustan C) for babies who were left behind by their mothers in the hospital or in other places or had AIDS. I remember quite well that, when sr Marie José took us along on one of her hospital rounds on the first day, there only was one nurse who had to look after all the patients. I also remember all the mothers who were breastfeeding their babies. I saw a beautiful almost naked baby in one of the boxes. It was crying but there was no mother to comfort him. I decided to warm some milk, put it in a feeder and gave the child something to drink. I rocked it till it stopped crying. One year later I met this funny, big kid who was doing exceptionally well at Bustani C and, instantly I knew that this was the child I had bottle-fed in the hospital.

After my orientation through Sengere-ma hospital sr Immaculati, the then regional superior, asked me to go to Dar es Salaam where I would work in the policlinic and the maternity home which had a capacity of 10 beds. Both were run by the Camillian Fathers. Meeting the sisters of the Dar es Salaam community, getting to know the patients who came to the clinic to get their medicine, visiting the people at their homes and getting acquainted with the male and female workers and the parishioners..., all of it truly was a grace of its own.

Besides teaching the sisters also served the people in the parish. I could feel that Mother Elisabeth's spirit was clearly present in this community. And what is more, it gave joy and strength to the sisters. During the holidays, the young sisters who were still studying and lived in the boarding house would participate in community life. I really felt at home in this community. Yet, my wish was not His Will. In that situation I was assigned to go and live in the Ndala community. The sisters here worked in Ndala hospital which had a capacity of 125 beds. You could disturb the sisters any time of the day. This mostly happened at night when there were only few workers.

Just like in any of the other places here, too, we experienced different challenges. Yet, this did not make Mother Elisabeth's spirit to serve fade. The spirit namely to always persevere in prayer and to be conscious of the fact

A wonderful challenge

Sr Beatrice Ekisa (n)
Arusha, Tanzania

that God never abandons His people. Going through this together gave strength in facing and overcoming hindrances and difficulties. The togetherness in this community also strengthened my heart more and more to fulfil the mission assignment entrusted to me by the Congregation. When I was to return to Indonesia for surgery, I bought a return ticket Dar es Salaam Indonesia convinced as I was that I would be able to continue my mission assignment in Tanzania. Yet, my hope was in vain. Due to social family affairs my departure for Tanzania was delayed. I had no idea for how long. The melody at the beginning of this sharing still echoed in my heart. My guide is the slogan of our Foundress' *"With or without me if only God's Name is glorified and fellowman served"*. With these words at the back of my mind, I fulfil my mission assignment with joy no matter where I am, no matter what the assignment is. For, the most important thing is not what I do but how I do it and how I experience it.

First and foremost I would like to thank God for creating me in His image and likeness, and for having given us Mother Elisabeth Gruyters as Foundress of our Congregation. Her spirit is still alive, very much so. I am happy for God's love which is being revealed to me through His people. For, they have enabled me to be in the novitiate and to have gained all the experiences in the communities where I have stayed.

Before I go on, I would like to introduce Jesus as our example for a healthy way of relating. We learn from His relationship with 'Abba', from His friends, the sick, the poor, the rich and from His relationship to work. Often His disciples find Him in conversation with his Father. He spent time in prayer at a lonely place (cf. Lk 4:42). He would always go off to places where He could be alone, where He could pray (cf. Lk 5:16). Yet, He was at the service of all people and of the whole person. He loved the sick and cured them; he loved people and preached the Good News of Salvation to all who wanted to hear Him. He loved sinners and made them experience forgiveness and wholeness. He saw the large crowd and His heart was filled with pity. "They look like sheep without a shepherd, and He fed the multitude" (cf. Mk 6:34)

When I compare the experiences of Jesus with the apostolate of our sisters in the communities, I don't see any big difference. When looking at the Ndala community, I see sisters who work in the hospital, who serve the sick and the poor. They have no Sunday rest because the sick or the whole hospital can make an appeal to them at any time. They are always ready to help someone which doesn't mean of course that they don't do other work in the community as well. They also have to spend time on community and individual prayer. At times they also go out to visit the poor and/or those who have lost loved ones. Sometimes it makes you wonder how they can squeeze so many things into one single day! They get together with the workers for celebrations and share their time with other people without forgetting the sick. The sisters invite the parish choir and

together they go from one ward to another with gifts for the sick while singing and dancing. How wonderful, so Jesus is not alone, He has His followers. I myself also got the chance to be with the sick almost every day.

Let us now see how Mother Elisabeth's spirit is alive in our sisters of the Sengerema community. Here the sisters have different forms of apostolate e.g. school of nursing, Caroli primary and secondary school, Malezi teacher training course, Bustani A and C (Kindergarten) and hospital. This does not differentiate and separate them from others. They work hard and go out of their way to serve the poor, the lonely, the mentally disturbed and the aged. Each Sunday the poor visit the community. Like the sisters they visit the sick in the hospital in return and thanks for alleviating their needs. Almost every day the sisters visit the sick in the hospital. They usually visit them in the evening because during the day they are all busy. People come and ask them for assistance at ungodly hours.

In both communities the sisters are very active in prayer and in adoring the Eucharist. At least once a week they renew their faith and love of neighbour. They regain their strength from prayer. When we go back we see that Jesus is their example. Like any other person, He was also busy visiting and healing the sick, the young and the old ones. But He never forgot to pray. This is a challenge for us, in our lives. How can we benefit from the example Mother Elisabeth set us? After all, she was a good and wonderful imitator of Christ. She prayed for almost sixteen years, hoping that God would not forsake her. And see, her wish came true. That is why, today, I can say something about her.

If we pray wholeheartedly, we will see the hand of God working in us and we will be able to show the light of Jesus to the people in our society. That is why people believe that when one is a religious he or she knows all the ins and outs. This is a challenge for today's religious. How can we help the laity to understand this? We can help them understand this through love, sharing our talents with them, listening to them, working together with them, being

tender-hearted to them and by welcoming them as they are, not as we would like them to be.

This is a true to life experience in Sengerema. Some sisters are called by the laity '*mama wa Mungu*' which means '*Mother of God*'. What a wonderful challenge for me! For, people are given this name because of their actions and deeds, aren't they?

tekeningetje

The Caroli kids club - Nairobi

Nairobi community,
Kenya

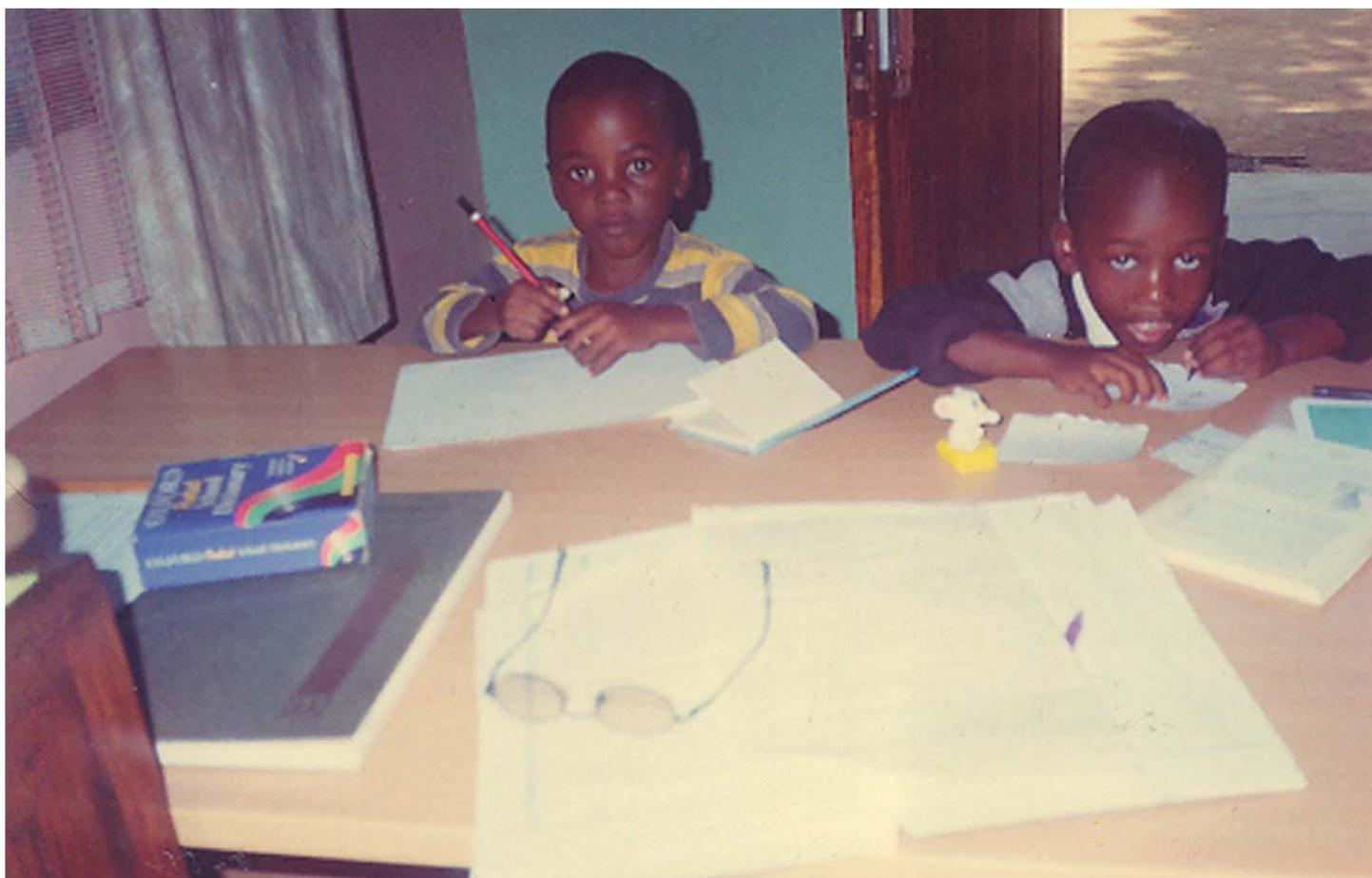
The Caroli Kids club was started by the Caroli Borromeo community in Kenya, December 2008. The community decided to start this club after what they had experienced during the post election violence of 2007. Revenge and tribalism controlled the hearts of many, and children were not an exception. In addition to this children have to be made aware that there are other needs, too; needs that exist outside the school or home. The societies/communities in which the children live today are party to circumstances in which most of what happens is entirely above children's age.

The club has an exchange programme with other kids clubs so that they can interact with one another and also develop the spirit of socialization. So far the club has planned various activities such as entertainment sessions, drawing, choral recitations, games, visits to the aged and fellow kids for example those who stay in orphanages which border on the community of sisters. There are sisters, brothers and lay people who have been trained in psychosocial support and who have enough experience to, in this area, assist in facilitating the sessions. The sessions are held according to the ages

of the kids.

The objective of this club is to help the children build their self-esteem and also to help them feel secure enough to confidently make their own choice. Their rights and even moral issue foster communication and relationship among the children and the community. Today's children are injured in various ways, so you and I are welcome to heal them where we can.

May the Lord Jesus, friend of children, accompany them so that they can cope with the challenges in their societies and overcome them where necessary.



50 years Sengerema

Sr Tarcisius Heijmink
Maastricht, the Netherlands

In 1958 Pope Pius XII called on the religious to pay more attention to missionary work in Africa. Some congregations already worked there, especially the White Fathers of Cardinal Lavignerie. This time, however, the call was directed at the religious in general, the world over. The Brothers of St John de Deo immediately decided to respond to this call and made plans to set up a health care clinic somewhere. They were looking for sisters with whom they could start this spiritual adventure. This because they were told that man could only be attended to by man and women only by women. In their search they got in touch with the Sisters Onder de Bogen. The Board immediately reacted enthusiastically. While the brothers went on an orientation trip, sr Gervasio, sr Waltera and sr Hungera prepared themselves in England for a life on an unknown continent. They were our pioneers. It was April 29th 1959. There was absolutely nothing. The brothers were accommodated in a nearby parish hall. From out of this place they would build a shed on a piece of land

allotted to them by the bishop which would serve as simple temporary lodging. The sisters moved on to another convent to master the basics of the language, get to know the culture and study the English system of nursing in an old-established hospital.

On November 4th 1959 –feast-day of St Charles– the brothers and sisters each went to live in their own convent which neither had proper doors nor windows but that was quite safe in those days. In 2009 the adventure of having been present in this country for fifty years was festively commemorated. As I lived and worked there for forty-seven years I was granted the opportunity to go to Sengerema for one month in order to celebrate this milestone with the sisters. Note that there is a difference between working and living there. Living there means being present among the people, listening to and opening your heart for them as well as sharing in their joys and sorrows. Working there is making the world a better place with the help of the people who live there. How? By investing in their future and in the future of their

children. We, the sisters, could help them do this. If we were to write down all that we managed to realize over the past fifty years of working and living there, the pages of one book would not suffice.

The jubilee was celebrated on Sunday October 5th. It all started with a procession from the convent to the church. The crucifix in front followed by the bishop, by priests from far and near, sisters, students from medical school and, last but not least the parishioners and friends of different faiths from the village. The church was way too small. Quiet as a mouse the crowd outside the church followed the ceremony in which six young African girls took temporary vows in the presence of their parents and relatives, promising to be faithful to this vow and to serve fellowman. Witnessing the reaction of those present is a view no pen can describe. You have to be there, have to see and experience it yourself. Afterwards there was a thunderous applause in the church and outside. After the church ceremony there was another, less official, procession in which all headed to

“Sister, I trust you...”

Sr Symphorosa Pili (novice)
Arusha, Tanzania

When staying in the Elisabeth community -the newest community- I learned a lot from various kinds of people who all found themselves in different situations of life. But now, I would like to share some of my experiences with you about how the community was able to participate in helping the sick, especially those who are affected by HIV, through giving them casual jobs to do in order to survive (for those who are still strong).

When I went there, there was one person who had already reached the climax stage of HIV, which is AIDS. Her condition was getting worse day after day but she kept coming in for work. During my first days, I didn't know any-

thing about her condition. Sometimes I saw her lying down during working hours because of her health and sometimes I felt I needed to talk to her harshly. But God took away my negative thinking and provided me with sweet little words of encouragement instead, all expressing care and love. It made that she somehow felt consoled which helped her to feel close to me, meaning that she started to open up about her condition and feelings. She was reluctant at first, afraid that she might lose her job and/or be isolated by fellow workers.

One day, when she was busy cleaning around the house I joined her. I believe that the spirit of God directed me to do

so. She told me: *“Sister, I trust you, that is why I am telling you this but please don't tell anyone else, it must be our secret”*. I said, *“Of course, but it is better to also inform the sister who helps you here so that she can give you work that fits your condition”*. After a long approach she accepted my request, by allowing me to share it to sr Immaculati, who told me to encourage and strengthen her and to be open to her, she did so, too. Sr Immaculati tried to console her thus enabling her to feel happy. She also advised her to wear nice clothes and to start feeling just like other people. She even began to smile nicely when we met her and she became really good at her work.

the campus of the nurse's training course to attend the party. A traditional African party started: singing, dancing, speeches, presents and last but not least eating together off a plate on your lap. For many people the only meal they would get that day. After having seen the bishop off, the party went on for a couple of hours though many still had to walk quite a stretch in order to get home. Often people asked me if I thought things had changed during the one year and a half that I have been in the Netherlands now. If someone sits in the saddle too long it is probably for the best that young horsewomen take over the reins. Though it is the most sensible thing to do, it hurts. Being back again felt familiar and they did not treat me as a guest.

Also in public life there were major changes to be seen. Sand tracks had been paved with asphalt, at a small three-way crossing they had built a roundabout and in town there were traffic lights everywhere. Old clay houses were demolished, new houses had been built or were still under construction and a small supermarket had opened its doors. All of this most likely in view of the elections coming year. Besides all these improvements there are still many problems. The gap between rich and poor - AIDS with as inevitable consequence a large number of orphans - malaria, killer disease

number one – no one to care for the elderly except relatives – the care for the handicapped which is still in an initial phase – only few possibilities for school-leavers – no social security benefits for the unemployed like in the Netherlands and a growing number of people who turn to witchcraft of which especially the Albino's are the victims. Because of the great many motivated young people who really want to tackle all these problems, the desperate situation of daily worries and a promising future go hand in hand. It demands great endurance. During my stay I had a wonderful time contacting good old friends and acquaintances. I enjoyed the visit of the Nuncio who had come to bless the chapel in the centre of the

hospital, a gift from the Brothers of St John de Deo. I immensely enjoyed visiting the schools where my predecessor showed that they have everything under control and of course I loved to see all the kids again -most of whom still recognized me- for they are tomorrow's future.

Despite our human failures and shortcomings our Congregation is miraculously blessed. The Region now counts seven Indonesian sisters, one Dutch sister and thirty-two African sisters. There are six communities, one novitiate in Tanzania and one community in Kenya. Tanzania's possibilities are legion. With Mother Elisabeth we dare say: "*All things will come.*" The national anthem testifies to a deep-rooted faith:

**Mungu ibariki Tanzania,
Wabariki Viongozi wake,
Wake na Waume na Watoto,
Mungu ibariki Tanzania.**

**God, zegen Tanzania,
Zegen haar leiders,
Zegen het volk en de
kinderen,
God, zegen Tanzania.**

After a month her condition got worse. She couldn't eat anything except fruit. I used to visit her at home. One day I found her son suffering from herpes-zoster, which is a consequence of HIV. His mother was not aware of this. She used to rub him instead of sending him to the hospital. I felt great pity and advised her to send him to the dispensary nearby. Her sister helped her to take him there, and the boy got a better treatment. One day when I visited them again, she expressed her great gratitude. I transferred it to God and thanked Him for letting me be His instrument to these people.

After one week her condition changed again and she was admitted to hospital; I also used to visit her there. It was on Sunday, February 22nd 2009, after mass, when I visited her. Her mother, who was taking care of her, told me that she didn't want to speak or show even a bit of a smile. When I was there talking with her, she started talking, laughing and feeling alive again, and she promised me she would take cou-

rage and feel just like other people. On March 7th in the afternoon her condition took a turn for the worse and she breathed her last in the KCMC Hospital. It was a day of mourning for our community. For, on that same day, sr Immaculati had a road accident and got wounded. We thank God for keeping her alive. The burial was held on March 12th at her parents' house. I attended with the workers as representative of

the community. There were many people all gazing at me wondering: who might that be?, because the people in this place all are of protestant religion. However, the relatives were very pleased to see us.

Above all I have come to realize that, as religious, we should try to create unity among ourselves and to socialize and be generous to the needy.

The Mtemi

Sr Kitty Andree
Utrecht, the Netherlands

*Now is your time
of grief but I will see
you again and
you will rejoice and
no-one will take away
your joy*

John 16:22

Colofon

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Who of you, who ever worked in Ndala, Tanzania, doesn't know the Mtemi? Mtemi, means tribal chief in Swahili. As a headman you belong to the VIP's, to the nobility as we used to say.

The Mtemi always was en route, walking, kilometers on end, back and forth to Tabora (70km), Kipalepala (82km) or going in the direction of Nzega. When we met him along the way, we used to blow our horn for a minute. He never asked for a ride but stopped, waved kindly and walked on. Along the way he had his customary places where he would stay a little longer.

Everyone knew him. Some offered him food, whereas others gave him a few pennies for a cup of tea. He usually slept outside but when it rained he would seek shelter under a lean-to. The clothes he wore and the blanket he wrapped himself up in were his only garments. He would carry a stick on his shoulder with a knapsack tied to it at the far end. In it his possessions: papers with figures. These were his bank cheques, he said and with these he used to pay. He lived in his own fantasy world.

When he was in Ndala, he would come to us for a cup of tea and some sandwiches. He would sit on the bench in front of our house enjoying the moment. When he was ready he would knock on the door (shouting hodi), thank us and pay with one of his cheques. Serious business, indeed. He also used to regularly knock on the door of sr Guido's office to cash one of his cheques. Once a year we would give him new clothes. The old ones were burnt straight away. Be that as it may, he had a certain dignity and was an absolutely free spirit.

One day he fell ill. I advised him to get himself admitted to hospital. But the answer he gave me was: "No, we Watutsi don't do that. I feel sick and I know I can't go on, so I will lie down under one of the trees yonder." "But who will take care of you", I asked him. "You will", he answered. And so it happened. Every morning before I went to the ward I brought him porridge and medicine. Now and then I slipped off to look at him and bring him water. Fortunately, he soon recovered. One day he came to thank me and to tell me that he was



moving on again. He had everything under control, 'the rich poor man'!

He moved me. He, who had nothing, certainly was the most free human spirit I have ever met.

He was already old when I left Tanzania in 1997. The distances he used to walk were getting shorter and shorter and the time he stayed in Ndala became longer. I heard that Constantino, our driver, took him by car back to his place of birth one day where he was received with open arms. He was home again in his own community.

The Mtemi, a man always en route, always a kind word, polite, feeling at home with himself, free and with the human dignity so characteristic of a Tanzanian. At least that's what I experienced in the years that I lived and worked there.

They were rich years. Sr Gervasio once said: Tanzania leaves a scar on your soul. I couldn't agree more.