



JBMS NEWSLETTER

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BIG THANK YOU TO FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS

Huge gratitude goes out to all those who have continued their support to help keep our work going this year at Mutemwa.

We would especially like to thank The Leper League in Birmingham for their wonderful support for projects at Mutemwa, and also to the Australian 'Zimbabwe Challenge' team. The sustainable way forward for Mutemwa is to strive to develop self-sustaining and income generating projects for the future.

Already this year there have been two projects undertaken to develop this area. A pig rearing building has been put up in order to generate income from the sale of piglets. Also a new poultry building has been built



Jean outside the new poultry unit

to extend the existing one, which will mean a larger production of eggs and poultry meat to provide home grown food with the excess sold at markets nearby. It has greatly helped to provide the residents with new incentives, and pride in what they can achieve at the Centre.

Tim and Jean Dufton sent these photographs recently of their visit to Mutemwa to see the work in progress.

A new solar installation has begun to provide lighting for Mutemwa which will make a huge difference to the way the residents can live their lives. Also an irrigation project is being appraised to develop a good area of the land at the site for agriculture.

Fr David Harold-Barry fully supported the projects by saying that '... if they can grow their own food and supply their own power they will be a long way on the road to self-sustainability. There are a number of residents who can help in the cultivation of the plot, and take pride in the work they do. The motivation,

the manpower and the skills are all there. So I think these projects will be a blessing for them. Since there are thousands of people who visit Mutemwa every year, the news will soon get round. Here is a place that can run itself.

It is obvious that Africa must go solar. We have bright sunshine more than 300 days of the year. The problem has been how to harness the power.

What the Manager really wants is the sort of structural investment that would make the centre much more self-reliant, and the two projects seem to me to fit the bill perfectly.'



Tim and Jean Dufton of 'Zimbabwe Challenge' admiring the young piglets

spent some time with him and listened to him with their ears and hearts, went away uplifted. They found new courage. I have always found this with what we call 'holy' people. They give me heart. Their greatness of spirit does not make me feel small. On the contrary their greatness draws me on.

The second, and only other point I want to make is that John Bradburne showed that we are all called to holiness. The second Vatican Council opened the gates that bit wider to a fuller following of Jesus. John was fundamentally a lay person who cared for others. Three or four times he tried religious life in different ways. But he eventually realized that he was called as a lay person. At the very time the Council was preparing beautiful documents on the Church and the offer of the fullness of life to all, John was trying to adjust to the life of a layman in S

Rhodesia. In one sense he wasn't very good at it: he could put diesel into a petrol tank and he could feed chickens with fertilizer pellets and wonder why they lost their feathers.

But at the other level, which I have already indicated, he was magnificent. When Jesus gave us the sermon on the Mount, and especially the Beatitudes, he was not thinking of people who were specially religious. He was addressing "the crowds." It is surely clear that he was calling **everyone** who wanted to be his disciples to be "poor in spirit". This blessing describes all those whose eyes are on others and not on themselves. They leave the 'what do I get out of it' to God. This remains as crazy to a person in the twenty first century as it did to someone in the first. Yet John lived it. The beatitudes remain **the invitation** of Jesus to his followers. In a



John with Simba

sense they are **the** only calling in the gospel. John is someone who lights up this call in big letters, in bright colours. He reminds us that we are all called in this way and he makes us feel good about the efforts we make along the way.

This was the homily given at Westminster Cathedral on the 25th Anniversary of John Bradburne's death.

John and St. Damien of Molokai by Didier Rance

1945. John Bradburne, flown back for health reasons to India from the Burmese front, struggles to regain health in hospitals and rest places. The same year - but how could he know it, Gandhi declares: *"The political and journalistic world can boast of very few heroes who compare with Father Damien of Molokai. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, counts by the thousands those who after the example of Fr Damien have devoted themselves to the victims of leprosy. It is*

worthwhile to look for the sources of such heroism."

1951. John, now a Catholic, sought his way. Back from the Holy Land, he entered the Fathers of Sion novitiate in Louvain. During one of his first walks in the Belgian town, he found, right at the corner of the street where he lived, the small St Anthony church of the Picpusian Fathers. When he entered, he noticed the mortal remains of Jozef De Veuster, the Apostle of Molokai lepers in the Pacific, better known

under his religious name of Father Damien (his remains were returned from Molokai to Belgium at the request of King Leopold III in May 1936). On April 3rd, he wrote a few words to his mother about this discovery, which is an echo of those of Gandhi about Father Damien as a hero (which of course he never read): *"In that same little church is the tomb of Father Damien, who died a martyr to leprosy as you know. He was a hero and a saint to have done what he did. I remember hearing about him ages ago*

from one of your magazines". John often went back to this church to pray and meditate near the tomb, until July 1952 when he left Louvain (the same year incidentally that the drug dapsone was discovered to stop the progression of leprosy).

1969. Father Damien entered Washington ... as one of the one hundred statues of the National Statuary Hall in the US capital. The same year, John arrived at Mutemwa on August 1st. The poem he wrote when he decided to go and stay with the lepers is worth remembering:

*In that I've always loved to be alone
I've treated human beings much as lepers.
For this poetic justice may atone
My way with God's, whose ways are always helpers;
I did not ever dream that I might go
And dwell amidst a flock of eighty such
Nor did I scheme towards it ever, No.
The prospect looms not to my liking much;
Lepers warmly to treat as human beings
Is easy to the theorist afar,
Near to my heart from bondage be their freeings,
May it be flesh not stone, O Morning Star!
Miriam, shine, sweet Mistress, in thy name
Salvation wake, lepers make leap, unlame!²*

1977. Pope Paul VI promulgates a decree of

heroic virtues for Father Damien, opening the road to his beatification.³ On December 31st of the same year, John is preparing the New Year with his dear lepers, in the middle of the turmoil of the war (a week before, 134 villagers have been killed, caught between the Rhodesian army and guerillas, not far from Mutemwa). But he found a few minutes to write a letter to his friend John Dove, in order to thank him for having come to Mutemwa for a visit some time before. And he adds this: "*Your Mother's kind package was a booklet with photos about Father Damien. What a wonderful man and what tremendous work of dedication. It is of no use to shudder at the contrast of his life and mine, but only to say and to mean Gloria in excelsis Deo. If you had been here in my place you would have been a close runner-up to Father Damien.*" Six weeks later, he wrote a poem which showed the depth at which he has been moved by Fr Damien, and once more his own humility and humour:

*I know it's Lent, but I have bathed this morning
Blind Peter and blind Simon in succession
And then this afternoon when all were yawning
I paced the compound in a sole procession;
I've hardly glanced this evening at a booklet
Which tells how Father Damien behaved,
How from the island-sunrise*

*till its sunset
He toiled and toiled and never respite craved;
Excuses are bad reasons for wrong-doing
But he was made of sterner stuff than this
Bottom of all the class! alas for wooing
Continually temporary bliss!
"Nevertheless, I've not removed the top
"And thus tis proved I haven't drunk a drop!*

The following year, John would know (what he wrote about Fr Damien some 27 years before) martyrdom, giving his life for the lepers.

Parallel Lives

St Damien and John Bradburne both gave their lives for the poor lepers of Mokolai and Mutemwa, but we could write, as Plutarch did for famous men of Antiquity, a kind of *Parallel Lives* of these two witnesses of God's love and compassion for the poor:

- Both spent many years of their life with lepers (16 years for St Damien, 10 years for John).

- Both treated, fed, and cared for them, built houses for them, prayed and sang with them (St Damien created a band, John a choir), and even made coffins to bury the dead.

- Both defended the lepers against discrimination or violence.

- Both quickly gave joy and hope to the poor lepers who were living Hell on earth before their arrival. Both Molokai and Mutemwa

became an oasis of peace and love after being places of despair.

- Both were deeply happy with their beloved lepers, in spite of a lot of daily problems, challenges, oppositions, threats and setbacks.

- Both gave Christ to the lepers (Fr Damien celebrating Eucharist, John ministering for Holy Communion distribution). Both promoted adoration of Christ in the Holy Sacrament.

- Both served Catholics and non-Catholics without discrimination.

- Both organized solidarity for medicines and other needs - with an ecumenical dimension (an Anglican Parish supported St Damien, Anglican friends John).

- Both worked with dedicated consecrated women who also served and gave their life for the lepers and the poor (the second one being killed, as

was John himself): St Marianne Cope - canonized October 21st, 2012 - and the Servant of God Luisa Guidotti.

- Both had to bear their Cross, both were misunderstood, not only by hostile people, but also by those who should have supported them: St Damien had to bear defamation by jealous Protestant missionaries who insinuated he had caught syphilis when he became a leper himself, and went on with this calumny even after his death⁴; and he was misunderstood by his superiors most of his life in Molokai. John also suffered calumny from both sides of the Civil War; and he was expelled from Mutemwa by the Leprosy Association.

- And if St Damien died from leprosy, and John from being killed, we know that when the latter started living in Mutemwa he prayed to catch the disease. His friends told John if he contracted leprosy he would be immediately be sent to a hospital for Europeans and so would have to leave Mutemwa and his dear lepers. John had to agree, and waived the idea, though he hardly changed his contact without precautionary measures.

Let us remember Gandhi's sentence quoted above: "*It is worthwhile to look for the sources of such heroism*". Are not the lives of St Damien of Molokai and of John Bradburne an answer to his request about the sources of Christian

heroism, love of God and of the neighbour? And, more importantly, aren't they a testimony of God's compassion lavished towards the smaller brothers of Jesus? The Church has already recognized in Father Damien of Molokai one of the saints of compassion.⁵ What for John?

¹ *This 1945 declaration has been published in T. N. Jagadisan's booklet, Mahatma Gandhi Answers the Challenge of Leprosy, Madras, 1965.*

² *This poem, as the following one, may be found on the Web site dedicated to John's poems:*

<http://www.johnbradburne.com/poems/cm/>

³ *Fr Damien was beatified by John Paul II in 2005 and canonized by Benedict XVI on October 11th, 2009.*

⁴ *Robert L. Stevenson wrote a magnificent Open letter to the Times, defending the memory of Father Damien.*

⁵ *In May 1984, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta wrote to John Paul II: 'We need a saint to lead and protect us. Father Damien can be this saint. Holy Father, our lepers and everyone on earth beg you to give us a saint, a martyr to love, an example of obedience to our religion.' And she added that the miracle for the beatification so needed was already there, in the heart of the lepers, who are no longer fearing of the disease, but hoping to be cured.*



An image of Christ healing a leper which used to decorate the Chapel of a Leprosy Hospital in Malawi at Mua Mission.

It is the work of Fr Claude Boucher and Tambala Mponyani at the Kungoni Centre of Culture and art in Malawi

RESIDENTS' PROFILES

SANTE AZATI



Born in Tete in Mozambique, 90 years old. He was admitted to Mutemwa in 2000 as a destitute patient. Once married with three children, all girls and now separated. He never went to school, but worked in a Hotel in Harare for about ten years.

Challenges:

His back gives him pain. He is also hard of hearing and does not have good sight.

Likes: He says he loves the food and shelter and care given to him at Mutemwa, and gives thanks to those looking after him. Mutemwa is now his permanent home.

EMELDA CHIDHAKWA

Born in Domboshava on 15th April 1922. Emelda is a destitute patient. She was born into a family of nine children and is the first born. All her family members have passed away. She was

admitted to live at Mutemwa because she was homeless. She was married to the late Timothy Nhembereni, and they lived in Makumbe. She has two children and has suffered many miscarriages. Her two children, a boy and a girl, died at the age of two and ten years respectively. Her husband also died mysteriously due to conflicts at work, and she had problems with her in-laws because she had refused to be inherited by her husband's brother. Her in-laws then sent her back to her family where she stayed for a while. She started gardening and made hats and mats which helped to sustain her livelihood for a while.



In 2005 Emelda developed a problem with her eyes and went blind.

In 2007 she was admitted to Mutemwa and is so happy

with the hospitality and treatment given to her.

Challenges: - Emelda says that she does not now have any problems in terms of getting food or clothing now she is at Mutemwa, and she still likes to cook for herself.

IRENE MAPURANGA



Born in 1930, her husband is a leprosy patient while she was born blind.

Married with four children, three boys and a girl. She never went to school.

Despite being blind she does all domestic work in her home. She is a devoted wife and likes the simple things in life.

Likes: Loving God and loving one another as husband and wife.

Challenges: She has problems with her legs and arms.

TALKS ON JOHN BRADBURNE AND THE WORK AT MUTEMWA LEPROSY AND CARE CENTRE

A talk with visual aids can be given on request. If you are interested in having one, either in your parish or elsewhere please contact us by email: info@johnbradburne.com or leave a message on 01568 760 632.

YOUR LETTERS

Dear Friends,

I have been praying to John Bradburne for some years since re-reading his life after a long time. I had decided that I would pray to him for various family and personal needs.

I want to say that everything I have asked through his intercession has been granted. Most recently, one of my brothers had treatment for prostate cancer. The first two blood tests after radium treatment showed small but definite increases in PSA levels. Most recently, against all the odds, the increase was "negligible". It seemed miraculous, and I do attribute it to John's prayers. Other intentions were: a nephew who after a lot of effort passed all his exams, got a masters degree and finally, after a long wait, a good job in London. A cousin of his who also, after a number of temporary jobs got her first 'real' job in London. Another brother, diagnosed with colon cancer made a complete recovery. A friend got the 'all clear' after cancer treatment, and so on ... I have the name of someone who is a very powerful advocate to pray to!

At present I have given John more intentions, but praying to him with great trust, and also with his example of his life and death, may somehow rub off on my own.

Thank you for your work in making him known far and wide.

Carol - Ireland

Thank you for sending me the newsletter.

Finances have been so worrying for me for a long while and I have been praying to John Bradburne asking for his intercession. Today a cheque arrived out of the blue. I am so thankful to him for helping me and promised him if he heard my prayers I would send you a donation. Please could you send me a few prayer leaflets so I can spread devotion to him, and please continue to send me the newsletter.

God bless you and my sincere thanks to John Bradburne, I hope he will be declared 'blessed' by Pope Francis soon.

Mrs. W. - Essex

Many thanks to John for his ever ready help to my many intercessions, too numerous to mention. I can only repay in a very small way, but it is nice to know I have a friend who is always there to help.

T. Lobo

Please find a donation for the centre at Mutemwa. It is uplifting to read of the older patients profiles at the Leprosy and Care Centre. May the work there go from strength to strength.

Since knowing of John Bradburne, I have found him a great source of healing, he is always a good friend to appeal to in times of need. As I write I can hear through my open window the humming of hundreds of bees busy feasting on the nectar-filled wild blue geraniums which

are profuse in my garden. I feel John is near.

Jack Howarth - Lancs

I have been a long standing supporter of the JBMS. I wanted to thank you for the work you are doing to help support Mutemwa Leprosy and Care Centre, east of Harare in Zimbabwe, and for spreading word of John Bradburne's life.

After reading an article in one of the Sunday colour supplements, I was immediately inspired by John's remarkable and saintly journey - a true hero for our times today. His example of simple living and huge loving is a beautiful gift to us in our secularised and materialistic world. There is no doubt in my mind that John will be recognised in the Catholic Church some day soon. I do hope so.

I have many experiences of his power in Heaven before God. As John himself said in his deprecating way about himself, that if he is brought to the altars of the Church it will give so much hope to so many people, especially the young people.

May his case be soon brought to fruition in Rome.

A. Hempley - Yorkshire

Dear JBMS

Please would you send me some leaflets with the prayer for the beatification of John Bradburne. I have a lot of ill-health and I always ask for John's help and he never fails me.

A. Pope - Manchester

JOHN BRADBURNE'S CAUSE

You will probably have read recently in the press about an investigation into the Cause of G.K Chesterton being considered for Beatification.

John's Cause continues, but on rather a stop/start basis. The Archbishop of Harare asked Fr Liam McCarthy OFM to prepare a Cause dossier. There are already a number of earlier files safely stored in the Archbishop's Office in Harare.

Due to retirement because of ill-health Fr Liam has now returned to Ireland, and another Franciscan, Fr Elfigio OFM has taken on the role of looking after John's Cause.

In the meantime if anyone has any testimony to tell of John Bradburne's intercession please do put this in writing to us. We are already building up a substantial dossier in England.



*John Bradburne Archive at
Archbishop's House, Harare, Zimbabwe*

We wish Fr Liam a very happy retirement and thank him for all his work promoting the life and work of John Bradburne at Mutemwa.

SPREADING THE WORD IN THE UK

Do please ask if you would like a pack of 33 free booklets (1 kg) on the life of John Bradburne for your parish or friends. It is all part of our work in order to help make John Bradburne's life better known in England. As we approach this 35th anniversary in 2014 we hope to promote knowledge of his life and work more widely to enhance his case for a Cause for Beatification.

Please send an email to info@johnbradburne.com
or call or leave a message on 01568 760632.