The TST

With the arrival of David Gibson in Nairobi, the TST is finally complete. David arrived in Nairobi on January 6th and is already fully engaged in the work of preparation for the establishment of the first cluster of communities in Zambia. Having our sixth member makes the work that much easier and means that when we travel we will always be in twos, like the disciples going out to spread the good news!

THE LETTER OF INVITATION

An important landmark in the life of the TST has been the publication of the invitation letter to Brothers to become part of the first cluster of communities. We are delighted with the enthusiasm of the early responses and look forward to those who will respond after further discernment and discussion with their leadership team.

The invitation is a real call to life and to a challenging future. We in the TST feel privileged to be part of this process, and are confident that what is being proposed will bring life, not only to the Brothers but also to the people made poor.

FAMILIARIZATION PROCESS

The familiarization visits to India involved five Brothers’ cluster meetings and part of a renewal workshop, mainly for the Annually Professed Brothers. The fact that about 80% of the Province attended one of the workshops, shows a high level of engagement among the Brothers for OWITF. A typical workshop lasted for 8 hours and we are most grateful for this generous gift of time. We are also grateful for the often probing and very genuine questions during the sessions. Many of the younger men

Cluster Meeting with Brothers in Mumbai
were certainly fired up by the challenge of the new.

In between the weekend workshops, meetings were held with Province Leadership and Brothers involved in Vocation promotion, all levels of Formation and the Ministries Office. We were most inspired by the dedication of these Brothers to these vital Province ministries and encouraged by the wholehearted commitment of Leadership to making the new OWITF communities a priority. We really felt that a new level of partnership was being forged between TST and the Indian Province.

At the end of each cluster workshop we had a short Discernment process when Brothers in small groups shared how “ready” they felt to consider joining the first cluster of new communities. Naturally, there was a spectrum from “I’m ready now” to “I’m not ready at all”, but the highlight for us was the sincerity of responses and to know that indeed some of us ARE ready to respond to this exciting new call to the Congregation.

**VISIT TO SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT ASSEMBLY**

On January the 4th Donal and Declan took off for Lusaka to be present at the South Central Assembly of the Brothers that was held at ISC. About forty-five brothers were present.

During the Assembly facilitated by Michael Burke, we explored ‘Community’ and OWITF. Community is a vital part of OWITF and we were delighted to see it getting so much attention. Many of the desires expressed by the brothers for community life into the future are at the heart of the vision for community as described in the OWITF documents.

There were many questions and much discussion. Imaginations were encouraged to fly freely as the brothers...
were invited to imagine the locations of the first clusters of communities, which are due to be established in Zambia later in the year. We are banking on the commitment and generosity of these men. We are all being invited as Jesus and Edmund were, to roll up our sleeves, to get our hands dirty working with people made poor. There is no higher calling than this.

The remaining time was spent looking for a venue for the Orientation Program, which will start in September. After much discussion we have decided to use our own ISC in Lusaka.

VISIT TO ELDORE AND SUDAN

Ruvan visited Eldoret and the Sudan as part of the familiarization process. This is what he said about Sudan: “As part of OWITF familiarisation visit, I found the Brothers’ community in South Sudan had a unique approach towards ministry within their wider local community. It was based on some elements of community engagement, with a common ministry as their focus within the wider local community. Brothers were involved in various ministries like health care that focused on HIV/AIDS awareness and medication (Star Project); primary education in the community school, as well as collaboration with the NGO called ‘Solidarity for South Sudan’ running a teachers’ training college. The Brothers are well connected with the wider local community’s struggles around health, education, unemployment and malnutrition. I found the Brothers were gentle and sensitive towards one another, as well as towards the staff who work with them. Hospitality was the highlight of this community.”

Then, he said about the community in Eldoret: “I was very impressed with the Brothers’ work in the project ‘Education for Life’ where Brothers are collaborating with the community in raising awareness of HIV/AIDS. In addition, they have established a library for
the children of the area. Some Brothers work with the youth in the slum area called ‘Langas’. This initiative helps to empower the local youth and to contribute towards the development of the children and their carers.”

**PUBLICATION OF OUR WAY INTO THE FUTURE**

Some time ago, Donal Kirk, on behalf of the TST, invited a number of people to write an article on the spirituality of OWITF. Twelve people responded to the invitation and in the next week or so, the book will be available on Amazon.co.uk or Amazon.com. In order for the book to be readily available, the price of it has been set at the lowest possible price ($5.90, £3.50 and €3.90). So, we encourage everyone to purchase a copy. The material in the book could be a very valuable resource for communities to reflect on the emerging spirituality that underpins OWITF. The views expressed in the book are not necessarily those of the TST, but what we like about the publication is that everyone is searching to express the core of OWITF in a way that makes sense in their own situation.

**COMMUNITY LIFE OF TST**

The TST is mandated not only to plan the establishment of twenty new communities in the developing world, but also challenged to live the spirituality and the lifestyle of OWITF. We meet twice a day for prayer. In the morning, we have a thirty-minute meditation session in common. We have found the shared meditation very helpful in keeping us connected; it ensures that this contemplative aspect of our lives is nourished. In the evening we gather for some shared prayer which different members of the community prepare. A weekly eucharistic service has also proved very inspiring, as we break open the Word and pour the wine of our lives. Another practice that we have found really helpful is the weekly review or check-in, which we hold for an hour and
a half on a Saturday morning. By shar-
ing our experiences of the week, we are
coming to understand and accept each
other. Through these spiritual exercises,
we are growing in our desire to make
God the centre of our lives.

HOSPITALITY

One of the blessings of our commu-
nity in Nairobi is the number of Broth-
ers who come to visit us. It is a real joy
to meet the Brothers from the local
communities and to talk about our lives
as Brothers.

In recent times, we had the privilege
of hosting the Kenyan candidates for
the postulancy who were in Nairobi to
obtain their temporary passports for
entry into Tanzania. We wish all the pos-
tulants every blessing as they begin the
journey towards becoming Brothers.

TST PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Now that the location of the first
cluster of communities has been estab-
lished, we intend to explore which
Province in Zambia and which sites in
that Province will they be located in.
Hence, the TST will move to Zambia in
March – three of us to visit possible
sites and three to do further prepara-
tion for the Orientation program.

While in Zambia, we will receive
from the Leadership teams the list of
the Brothers who wish to be part of the
first cluster. Following receipt of these
names, we will be in personal contact
with each Brother to clarify any ques-
tions they may have, and to invite them
into a process of discernment, leading
up to their final decision in June.

So, Brothers, we are living in exci-
ting times, and we pray and hope that
Our Way into the Future will be for eve-
ry Brother a time of personal and com-
munal revitalisation!