Breaking News: The First Cluster!

After weeks of research, consultation with various parties, and a day-long discernment process, the TST has opted to establish the first cluster of communities in the Western Province in Zambia. Districts such as Kaoma, Kalabo, Lukulu, Mongu, Senanga, Sesheke and Shangombo could become the locations of the new communities. Members of the TST will now visit the Western Province to see where best to situate the Hub community and the frontline communities.

The experience of entering into a discernment mode to decide the first cluster was rich and rewarding. It is really only in such an atmosphere of openness and listening that a group can arrive at a decision that becomes a real group decision, where the voice of the Spirit can be heard.

THE JESUIT CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION (JCTR)

A visit to the JCTR was very useful in continuing the process of discerning where best to situate the new communities. JCTR is a faith-based organisation whose main area of focus is research, education and advocacy to improve the standard of living for all, especially the poor. The centre conducts research on a variety of socio-economic issues that affect people’s livelihoods.

We asked JCTR to supply us with a researcher who will travel to Western Province, and draw up a report on the suitability of various sites.

As this is going on, the TST members will do their own research with the help Brother Nsamu Moonga who will bring to the process a valuable Zambian perspective. The search for sites for the
communities will continue for the next month or so as some of the TST members travel to Western Province on Easter Monday.

FENZA

Fenza stands for The Faith and Encounter Centre Zambia, which aims at empowering Christians in Zambia to face the challenges of contemporary and traditional cultures with openness and to encounter people of different Christian denominations, contemporary religious movements and religions. We hope that they will have some input during the early days of the orientation programme. Obviously, with Brothers arriving from different parts of the world, it will be necessary to offer some form of orientation into the new culture of Zambia.

BROTHERS FOR THE NEW COMMUNITIES

During March, Brothers from different parts of the Congregation are discerning about joining the first cluster of new communities. As part of the process, they are in dialogue with their Leadership teams.

The leadership teams are then contacting the TST about each Brother who has applied, either recommending them or not. TST will then contact each recommended Brother.

TST is deeply grateful for each Brother who has applied. It has been very inspiring to see Brothers, younger and those more experienced, and from several continents, offering themselves for this exciting new Congregation initiative. This diversity will prove very enriching for the new communities and a wonderful expression of the global call of our Chapter.

FAMILIARISATION CONTINUES

On Sunday, 8th March, a group of Brothers from the East Africa District met in Mary Ward Centre to discuss the implications of the move of Brothers from East Africa to Zambia. The questions they raised were very interesting and challenging:

What about the Brothers in school?
What kind of training will the young Brothers get and when?
Why was Zambia chosen?
FAMILIARISATION IN ZAMBIA

Brothers Alfred Banda and Clement Sindazi have just concluded their visits to some communities in Zambia, familiarising the Brothers with regard to the plans for the first cluster in Zambia. They were delighted with the response and shared with the TST the insights from their conversations with the Brothers.

This familiarisation will continue with Francis and Sunil meeting with some communities to further explore the implications for the Brother of his moving into a new community. The work of familiarisation is always a moment of real grace for the TST when they have a chance to meet with Brothers and share dreams for the future of the Congregation.

Will the members of the Cluster belong to the Province/District?
What will happen to the District when Brothers move to the Cluster?
What will happen to the present communities?
How will the ministries be set up?
What happens to Brothers who don’t opt for the new communities?

It would take too long to respond here to these very insightful questions, but the Brothers at the meeting were very pleased with the clarifications given by the TST, which helped them in making their decision around applying to join the first cluster of communities. The questions will form the basis for an OWITF FAQ (frequently asked question) list to be published soon.
OWITF PUBLICATION

Following feedback from Brothers, TST decided to improve the cover of the Our Way into the Future publication. The various essays therein, are providing Brothers with rich material for their reflection and prayer. We thank the Brothers and Sisters who contributed so generously to this compendium of creative and prophetic ideas. The book is available on Amazon.com.

LIFE IN THE TST

Our experience as a TST of living together makes us more and more convinced that the call of the Nairobi Chapter ‘to build joyful communities characterized by intimacy, gentleness, compassion and love’ is the basis for our way into the future. As communities of Brothers begin to grow in love and acceptance of each other, they will experience a spirit of freedom and energy that enables them to face the challenges of becoming “Brothers for the world”.

MOVING HOUSE

Moving house, they say, is one of the great stressors that a person can experience. For some of the TST, the move was challenging, as we had got used to life in Nairobi and now had to adjust to a new country, a new house and a new culture. For Donal, however, it was a “coming home”.

We wish to thank the Africa Province for making Keating House available to us for the next few months. It has proved to be a very positive experience to have this environment in which to do our planning. We also thank Mick Podbury for his welcome to us and his gentle presence and patience in the face of our invasion!