

A get closer of hearts lived for 150 years

By Serge St-Arneault, M.Afr



The Mission of Our Lady of Africa near the Olympic Stadium in Montreal was literally “black” with people during the mass on Palm Sunday, as I was presiding this event last March. This church opened its doors to all the African communities on the island of Montreal. The mass that started around eleven o’clock was ended at 13h30, without astonishing any participant. It is true that the Passion reading was a bit longer on that day. Yet in spite of the dramatic character of the readings, the singing and the rhythms revived the fervours of the assembly.

I lived quite a number of times through this kind of celebration throughout the years that I spent in Africa. The time spent is never programmed to the minutes as it is often the reality here in our Society. Indeed, we insist so much on the good use of our time that we have this saying: Time is money.

Time is a precious commodity. It is the case when you spend some time with a friend, a member of your family, or even with a stranger. But what about the praise or the prayer offered to the Lord? This is what my African brothers and sisters have taught me. There is a true kind of community support expressed as much in time of bereavement as in time of festivities. I shall be ever grateful to them. On that day, celebrating Palm Sunday, I found myself telling them that I felt like “an African of a white race.”



And why not? The colour of the skin is not an accident of nature. But it is what builds one’s identity of another kind, that of the heart.

This getting closer of the hearts has been lived for 150 years by the Missionaries of Africa. We will celebrate this more particularly during the coming months. Our joy is to know that another celebration will take place in 150 years, thanks to the growth of our Missionary Society. At the present time, we are training over 500 young people who wish to live in the same missionary charism as that of their predecessors.

Let us rejoice and a happy anniversary.