

ASMAT DRUMS

THE CROSIERS AND THE ASMAT PEOPLE

No. 24 Continuation of NEW GUINEA LETTER

Fall 1971

Sister Antonina Dies

A member of the Community of Sisters of the Mother of God, Sister Antonina from the Island of Tanimbar in eastern Indonesia, died suddenly in Agats on May 11, 1971. Sister was one of the pioneer group of five Indonesian Sisters who came to Asmat in 1966 to serve the Church in Asmat. For five years the little lively Sister was Director of the Girl's School of Home-Arts in Agats.

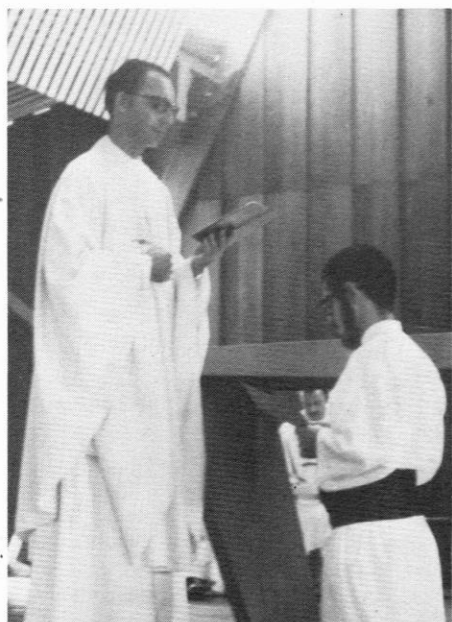
On May 10, Sister Antonina went to the hospital with a severe toe infection. The doctor examined her and questioned her concerning her receptivity of penicillin. Having received several injections of penicillin in the past few years without any reaction, she was given an injection. Within three hours Sister began to complain of paralyzation of the chest and facial muscles. The doctor immediately came to give her an injection to counteract the reaction. The muscular constriction worsened within another few hours and Sister succumbed to shock,

cardio-vascular collapse. Shortly after, her situation became more critical, suffering from respiratory collapse. For a duration of another fifteen hours, hour by hour Sister's condition became increasingly more critical. During these fatal hours with the assistance of artificial respiration and oxygen, intravenous feeding and a series of injections, Sister prepared herself to meet her creator. The struggle and pain was severe, but her faith and acceptance shone with joy and was a lesson to everyone. After a night of struggle, Sister died at 7:00 a.m. on May 11th in the Sisters Convent.

The next day all the missionaries gathered in Agats for her funeral mass of concelebration, led by Bishop Alphonse Sowada. Following this celebration, Sister was buried in the private cemetery on the mission grounds where Father John Smit, O.S.C. was buried six years ago. May God grant both of them the joys of heaven as a reward for their earthly labors.

Sister Antonina, M.M. is laid to rest next to Father John Smit, O.S.C. with Bishop Sowada officiating.





Brother Mark Makes Vows

On March 19th of this year, Brother Mark Grundhoefer renewed religious vows for three years in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Agats, the first Crosier to profess vows in Asmatland. The occasion brought all the missionaries together in Agats to share the joy of the generosity of one dedicating his life, work and self in the service of God and man.

Members of the Agats parish joined the Crosier Community in the Concelebrated Mass of Profession. The Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Profession was led by the Superior of the mission community, Father Edward Greiwe, with two members of the community as lectors for the readings. The celebration of the ceremony of profession was in simple Indonesian language, with Brother Mark promising "obedience and service to God in the Order of the Holy Cross for three years, asking God to accept his gift of self: A giving of his hands to help others, a giving of his heart to love others, and a giving of his self totally in the service of God." The community joined Brother Mark in giving and exchanging the sign of peace which was followed by the prayer of consecration and blessing by the Superior. Bishop Alphonse Sowada led the community in the Concelebration of

the Eucharistic Liturgy, which began with the bringing of the gifts by three young Asmat men who are co-workers with Brother Mark at the sawmill project.

Brother Mark is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Albin Grundhoefer of Saint Cloud, Minnesota. Brother arrived in the Crosier Mission, February, 1970, after serving in several of the Crosier Monasteries in the States for six years. Presently Brother Mark is radio mechanic and electrician and director of the sawmill project in Agats, where he is training Asmat men in taking fuller responsibility in the running and maintenance of the sawmill.

Asmat: One of the Last Places

Because Asmat and its people represents one of the most remote spots on earth and one of the most isolated people relative to contact with the "outside world" those of us on the "outside" have great interest in their life and customs.

This past year has been one of active interest in Asmat. A National Geographic Team, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Kirk of New York City and Dr. C. Voorhoeve of Sydney, Australia spent three months in Asmat preparing a feature article for the National Geographic Magazine.

The team lived and worked with the missionaries in their attempt to document the life of these marvelous people. They made the Crosier Community House in Agats their headquarters where they stored their equipment and came back to resupply themselves and to rest. While they patrolled the villages they stayed in the pastor's house and used his experience with the people and the language to gather and translate stories and songs of the people. They used almost 400 rolls of film to help document their story for the magazine.

According to a report just received from Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Kirk this feature story on the Asmat people is tentatively slated to appear in the March 1972 issue of the National Geographic Magazine.

The Geographic people had hardly left the area when a joint Japanese-Indonesian film crew came to Asmat to spend a month making a film documentary for Japanese Television. They too used the experience of the missionaries to prepare for the film and then used the missionary's contact with the people to arrange for filming in each of the villages. Most of the resource materials which they used were from missionary notes and research.

Beata Erap: Women's Liberation

Beata Erap is a young 21 year old lady from the village of Juferi. She has received eight years of education and is one of the few Asmat women who have made major advances in "going modern."

Most of the Asmat women remain in their village, work harder than the men and marry as well as age earlier than the men of Asmat. Since they are the primary providers of food and have the responsibility for keeping the household together and fed they are more difficult to change than the men.



Beata (left) bringing a cooked meal.

Beata has worked with and for the mission for many years. She has a marvelous sense of humor which makes her presence an occasion for real enlivenment of the atmosphere. She frightens easily and often finds a priest or a brother hiding behind the door when she comes to prepare the community's dining room or some other work in the Agats Community House. Although most Asmat women are very bashful Beata has learned to strongly express her opinion and to enforce her will.

She has been a catechist for the young children of the Agats and Sjuur villages. She assists the sisters in matters of discipline and supervision in the girls' boarding school of Agats. She supervises the cleaning and care of the Community House in Agats.

Through her own efforts Beata has managed to greatly improve her way of life as well as her outlook on life. Now she faces the challenge of finding a husband who will allow her to continue her present style of life. This is a serious problem since the Asmat man is clearly the "master of his house" and most men will find it hard to treat Beata as an equal.

The Indonesian Government replaced the Netherlands in New Guinea with a transfer of authority which began in October, 1962.

ASMAT DRUMS

The Crosiers and the Asmat People
Continuation of NEW GUINEA LETTER
Editor: Father Ed Greiwe, O.S.C.

Changes of address and new addresses
should be sent to: Crosier Missions
Crosier Fathers
Hastings, NE. 68901

August 2, 1971

Dear Co-Missionaries,

Today more than ever before we are confronted with the Third World. Its poverty and social problems are telescoped for our personal and immediate scrutiny. The view is a shocking one. Our complacency is shattered and we become uneasy about our affluence. Sophisticated communication--rapid mail service, news media, convenient jet transport, literature and visual aids--as never before experienced in the history of mankind has brought the needs and dilemmas of the Third World upon our very door-steps. The knocking is incessant. We are relieved and overjoyed by the knowledge that inroads are being made by authentic Christian influence, but are rightfully dismayed and worried by the evident and numerous reverses.

Although the Church has always held the Third World in its heart and administered to its needs, it is because of this easy communication and the facts it presents that the Church has developed a fuller appreciation of the enormity of those needs. Because of this, the Fathers of Vatican II gave particular and serious attention to them. With the knowledge that rich nations are growing rapidly and that the poor nations with unsure and halting steps are developing altogether too slowly, making the imbalance between them magnified daily, the Fathers called upon the Church for renewed and intensified efforts to help right the disparity. For the document on the missions they took as their theme the truth that the Church has been sent by Christ to be the "Sacrament of unity of the whole human race." But we who have been baptized in Christ and share in His life are the Church. It is in this vital sense, co-missionaries, that we willingly take on the privileged obligations as Christ's Own to assist those in need. And, as Christ's Own we feel the stirrings of enthusiastic goodness in our hearts to help others who do not yet share in Christ to begin to share in Him so that at some date they, too, will participate in Him and in all His wonders given to us. Truly in this manner we--you and your extensions in Asmat, the missionaries--become brothers to those who are imploring our help.

Co-missionaries, with deep gratitude the missionaries of Asmat extend their appreciation to you for the past years of your constant and faithful help to the Asmat people. In your name, the missionaries of Asmat are making haste to narrow the gap that exists between them and us. The task is indeed a difficult one, but as your representatives we hope to slowly build a better Asmat world in which each Asmat individual will be able to live a fully human and Christian life. We all share in the hope, ambitions, hardships and the small joys of the Asmat people. This sharing brings us closely together and unites us in mind, heart and will. Through this union we acknowledge ourselves brothers in Christ and give evidence of His Spirit.

In closing, in behalf of the missionaries of Asmat and its people, a most fruitful and holy Christmas to one and all.

In Christ,

+Alphonse A. Sowada
Bishop of Agats-Asmat

A Bishop and a Developing People

**"Wherever we have freed from bondage
we have become servants of Redemption"**

Ministry of Freedom

A bird in flight is a marvelous sight. Broken chains have, for many ages, symbolized mankind's attempt to break away from anything which prevents true human growth. The Cross of Christ, in itself a terrible form of enslavement and punishment, has also spoken through the centuries of freedom.

The people of Asmat were, until 1952, free like the bird and they knew no metal with which to forge chains. They were, however, not free because they did not know the freedom which comes from the Cross of Christ. Now as civilization and political realities break into that jungle swamp the Crosier Missionaries are talking of freedom which goes far beyond the flight of the bird and the breaking of chains.

The presence of the missionary to Asmat proclaims a ministry of freedom. By being all things to the people of Asmat the missionaries are teaching the people to control their own world, to be superior to and in control of their environment. By preaching and working with the adults the Crosier Missionaries are challenging the fears which bound the people to the old superstitions and also alleviating the fears which burst in on the people when the first outsider came into their world less than 20 years ago. With the freedom comes new dignity to supplement the dignity which the people knew before Christ.

This is the investment we are making in the future of Asmat. Christ brings freedom and man needs freedom. This is, then, the missionary challenge 1971—and for all ages.

Missionary Policy for Asmat

Experience is one of the most important factors involved in work among such people as the Asmaters. When the Crosier Missionaries first went to Asmat in 1958 they had no missionary experience. Over the years under the leadership of Father Francis Pitka and then Father Alphonse Sowada all of the missionaries gained experience to help direct their work. The early experience, often, led the missionaries down blind alleys which would create difficulties. At the same time all of the missionaries were being trained in the social sciences so that they would better understand the depth of their involvement in Asmat. The changes

in the Church and the thinking of the missionaries further brought new orientations to bear upon the Asmat situation.

Recently Bishop Sowada wrote a long circular letter to his missionaries to help formulate the results of this accumulation of experience. Since the readers of *Asmat Drums* are co-missionaries with us it is important that they also become involved in understanding the growth of our Asmat mission policy. Although it is still popular to view the foreign missionary as a man who lives in poor homes far away and simply baptizes the people he lives with, this image, if it has ever really existed, is a false one today.

"Our" Faith and Asmat Faith

A popular American Catholic periodical recently published an article on what to do when a son stops going to church. The sub-title to the article was, "He is losing **my** faith." Unfortunately this is often the problem which faces our missionaries. All of us are products of our own Western World and American Catholicism. The temptation is simply to transplant "our" faith to the Asmat people and then judge them by "our standards." Just as there is a temptation here in America to have one generation judge the new generation by old rules so in the missions the temptation is to judge the

people by a foreign standard. This is the first problem that Bishop Sowada addresses himself to. He asks his missionaries to search for new ways to respect the traditions of the Asmat people and to make certain that the Church is really an Asmat Church.

It is always difficult for a person to learn something totally new. In Asmat, of course, the people were confronted, less than 20 years ago, with a whole new world. This new world, represented by the missionary and the government personnel, was more strange to them than the moon was to our first astronauts. Everything that those first Asmaters saw was magic—flashlights, boats, lamps, radios, typewriters, screen for the windows and metal roofing for homes, etc. The amazement which the first Asmat people knew has gradually faded into a feeling that we can do anything we want to do . . . but the sense of wonder at our technology has not diminished.

The Bishop recognizes this fact and reminds his missionaries that our idealism—based in the love of Christ—will not be the first thing that the people recognize or respond to. This is not immediate and obvious to the people. If we are to reach the people, then, we have to help the people understand the concrete things that they encounter—and then we will gradually be able to communicate the idealism.



"People must realize that they can master, change and enhance their environment, which, in effect, frees them from the environment."

Right now, however, we have to strive to answer the simple how and why questions which the people raise relative to our physical presence and technological skill and equipment.

Socio-Economic Involvement

This need to be involved with the concrete realities of the people has gradually drawn the mission into more and more involvement with the socio-economic betterment of the people of Asmat. Bishop Sowada quickly warns his co-missionaries that our involvement in the economic sphere is not simply to be viewed as economics. The mission is working to help set the people free of dependence, of need for others so that they can quickly recognize the freedom which comes from Christ. Because economic responsibility frees people from dependence on the outside world we are involved in a basic freedom. The Bishop reminds his priests that, "Whenever we have freed from bondage we have become servants of Redemption."

It is clear, then, that although we are dedicated to helping the people grow in economic responsibility and freedom our economic involvement is not primarily to supply material goods to the people. The primary purpose is to help reach the adults and to make certain that they become the leaders of the "new world" just as they, as headhunters, were the leaders of their "old world." Because the missionary can spend most of his time educating the people to this type economic freedom he plants the seed of Christian responsibility so that par-

ents can train their children. The Bishop emphasizes that "It is the adults who have control over the ongoing affairs of the village." So it is the adults who must learn that they can master, change and enhance their environment and thus, in effect, be free from slavery to that environment. Again a ministry of freedom.

An Asmat Church

As this freedom continues to grow in Asmat the people will become closer to the point of free choice relative to the gospel of Christ. This is not something which will happen overnight but will gradually dawn and burst forth into a new day. We are already in that dawn period and the Bishop asks his priests to become creative so that we can meet the people in worship as they emerge. The knowledge of the Asmat and Indonesian languages is an essential part of this preparation to meet the people. Also each missionary is asked to be sensitive to the traditions of the people so that our very ceremonies will better meet the needs of the people. They must be able to worship God as "their God" in their own way.

Since changes are already taking place the Bishop has to recognize that admission to the Christian Community is already necessary for some of the people. He asks; though, that Baptism be given to the people only when they really are seeking to be good disciples of Christ. Children should be baptized only if their parents are really striving to be good Christians—or else these children should simply be allowed to

grow into adulthood and then have the freedom to make their own choice. Communion too should be delayed until the child is in the 5th or 6th grade. Confirmation should be given only to adults who are already married and who have shown a real desire to live a good life.

Preparation for the sacramental level of the Church's life, however, is also important if this high ideal of a free and responsible Christian people is to be our goal. The Bishop's letter invites the Fathers and Brothers to seek out and find new ways of providing that preparation through education.

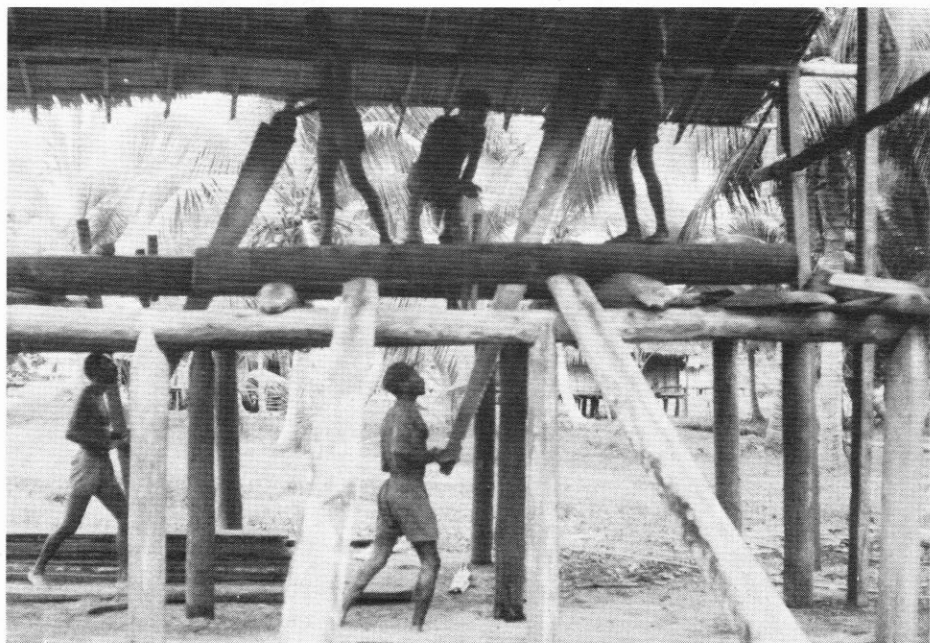
Education here in the United States is a simple matter. The children are taught arts and crafts, history and science which already fits the mentality of the people and the needs of the society. In Asmat it is another matter. The school must pioneer into fields unknown to the society. The missionary must prepare the teachers for this task and he must prepare the parents of the students for these new ideas.

Although the pastor rarely enters the school or visits the classroom he is constantly an educator. He is seeking ways to relate the village and the school to each other. He is preparing the teachers, in catechist schools, primary and secondary schools, for their responsibility. He is seeking ways for the educated students to use his education once he leaves the classroom. He promotes high standards and must work frantically to assure that the high standard can be lived after school hours.

The Bishop also expresses his concern that there is so little printed material in the village. He is now seeking assistance in funding a small printing press so that a newsletter can be circulated in the villages. If the people have nothing to read then their ability to read and write will disappear in a matter of months once they leave school. A small newspaper, occasional booklets and school supplies will help obviate this problem.

Ministry of Freedom

Freedom speaks to the whole man. Freedom shoots through every facet of man's life. Thus it is that the missionary to Asmat is so deeply involved in every phase of the growing Asmat society and the Asmat Church. Baptism merely recognizes a pattern of new growth and initiates the new christian into more intense growth. This is the missionary policy for Asmat. This is the purpose of Bishop Sowada's letter to his missionaries.



"Our involvement in the economic sphere is not just viewed as economics. The ultimate intention is to develop an authentic Christianity."

Meet Our Missionaries . . .

Father David Gallus, O.S.C.

Bishop Alphonse Sowada announced in February of this year that Father Dave would serve on the Board of Directors for Associated Mission Aviation. As a member of the Board of Directors, Father Dave represents the Diocese of Agats, in forming major policies for the organization, as consultant for major expenses and expansion of the organization, together with reviewing the annual reports.

Associated Mission Aviation is an organization serving the four Dioceses in West Irian, Indonesia, directed and coordinated in partnership by the four Dioceses. The aviation service is sponsored by **MIVA**, a mission organization in Holland which provides transportation assistance for missionaries in the mission land. At present four Cessna planes provide service for the missionaries, with the mission aviation headquarters in Sentani, a small town about twenty miles outside Djajapura, the Capitol of West Irian.

In June of 1967, Father Dave arrived in Asmat and six months later became the pastor of the mission parish at Ewer. Together with his pastoral duties of caring for four villages, Father Dave is in charge of the maintenance and running of the diocesan airfield in Ewer. Father Dave is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George Gallus of Royalton, Minnesota. He expects to return home next spring to visit them and to have a medical checkup.

Sisters of Mary, Mother of God, Educators and Apostles to Women

In November 1966 five very small women stepped into Asmat mud for the first time: five Sisters of Mary, Mother of God, from the Kei Islands. In the years they have worked in Asmat they have made great strides to improve the role of women in the Asmat society. Their own example and the fact that they are close to the Asmat people in life style and background has made them tremendously effective in this work.

Several of the Sisters teach in the school of Agats and also in the Teacher Training School. Several others direct and supervise a "Home, Economics" type boarding school for girls in their upper teens from the various villages of Asmat. Here they teach the girls arts and crafts which can be realistically used in their villages. The girls are taught basic hygiene, how to keep clothes clean, how to care for children and, basically, how to live a Christian life in their own situation and their home villages.

Sister Margereta has passed her fiftieth birthday but is still a 4' 5" ball of fire. She is a nurse who helps Dr. Sander Batuna in the Government Hospital. She also patrols the various outposts to help the pastors in their health problem—although she avoids the sea with a passion since she is very prone to seasickness. The people of



Asmat place great confidence in her ability and recognize both her principles and her dedication to them.

Whether the Sisters are teaching, cooking, walking through the village, attending a funeral or simply visiting in their house in Agats they are constantly teaching the people of Asmat what Christianity has to say about the role of women. They care for the missionaries with selfless dedication and, even, patience. Each Sunday afternoon before dinner the Fathers and Brothers spend an hour of recreation with the Sisters to demonstrate how much of a team they are in the whole missionary effort.



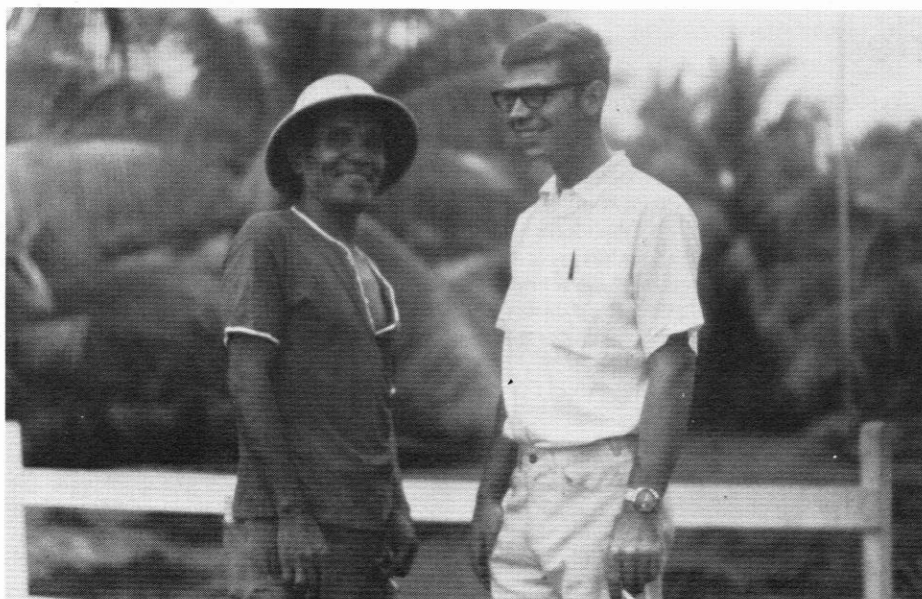
They work with little financial support away from their own people. With the little things they can gather they weave and teach the girls how to work with their hands. In these things and in their lives and vocations they are vital missionaries to Asmat.

Brother Michael Adrian, O.S.C.

Brother Mike for the last year has been head mechanic at the mission dry dock in the village of Jamas, coordinating all maintenance and repairs for the



Father David Gallus, O.S.C., together with some of his people of Ewer, where our primitive airstrip is located.



Tom Sarkol and Brother Mike, O.S.C.

fleet of ten mission boats. Along with this service, Brother has initiated a program of preventive maintenance, training both the missionaries and the young Asmat men who are motorists for the boats, in the basic operation, care and maintenance of the boats.

In June of this year, Brother Mike extended his activities, working more directly with the people, directing and providing leadership for the local lumber producing cooperative in the village of Erma. Brother is now spending half of his time in Erma, assisting in the development of the program and in the formation of the people to fuller participation and responsibility in the running of their cooperative. Brother Mike is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Matthias Adrian of Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Tom Sarkol: Foreman, Carpenter and Friend

Much of the missionary effort to Asmat involves teaching the people to help themselves, to improve their environment and their way of life. In this way Christianity has great impact on the traditional Asmat Dignity and saves it to contribute to the universal Christian Genius.

Tom Sarkol is crucial to the Crosier Missionaries in this effort. He is a native of the Kei Islands off the coast of New Guinea. He came to Asmat seven years ago and was immediately placed in a position of leadership in training and supervising Asmat carpenters. He was involved in the building of the Monastery, the Teacher Training School, the new Cathedral and the Bishop's House—as well as almost

every construction project in Agats and other villages. He is helpful and patient to/with new missionaries and is constantly helping the various fathers build important things for their villages.

Since so much of the success of the Asmat mission effort depends on the ability of the people of Asmat to stand on their own feet much of the missionary's time is dedicated to teaching social discipline and responsibility. As foreman and supervisor of all the Agats building and maintenance Tom Sarkol is deeply involved in this effort. By his own selfless dedication he frees the Brothers such as Brother Clarence and Brother Mike from routine work so that they can dedicate more of their time to value instruction.

As a dedicated Christian Layman his example speaks in times and places where the celibate witness of the Crosier Missionary cannot speak or influence. His family life, with his wife and children, teaches the Christian Insight to the Asmat people concerning responsible parenthood and responsibility.

In his dedication, his constant "being with the Asmat men", his involvement in mission discussions and decisions and his friendship for the Missionary he ranks as a vital link in the Asmat Mission Program—and is, himself a real missionary to Asmat.

In October, 1962, a cholera epidemic began in the village of Owus. More than 400 people died of cholera. In April 1970 a flu epidemic also began in the village of Owus and more than 600 people died before the epidemic was brought under control.

Father Pitka's Mother Dies

Mrs. Barbara Pitka died a happy death after a brief illness on August 16 at Wenatchee, Washington, where she was living with her sister. Mrs. Pitka was the mother of Father Frank Pitka, O.S.C., the first Superior of the Crosier Missions at Agats. She was 66 when her 45 year old son started his mission work, but Father Frank preceded her in death by almost six years. Her husband Joseph and daughter Magdalena also preceded her in death. She is survived by her daughter Delores Schneider and son-in-law Stan Schneider.

A Requiem Mass was said for Mrs. Pitka in Wenatchee, where she passed away, by Father P. J. O'Sullivan. Then her body was brought to Pine City, Minnesota, where she and her husband lived for many years. Here the principal celebrant at the Funeral Mass was Father Richard Frank, O.S.C., recently returned from the Crosier Missions. Concelebrating with him were Father Leo Kapphahn, O.S.C., Vice Provincial, who also gave the Homily, Fathers Fridolin Mischke, O.S.C., Leo Sovada, O.S.C., Robert Neale, O.S.C., Chris Mehr, O.S.C. and Monsignor George A. Gallik, pastor at Pine City. Other Crosiers attending the funeral were Brother Martin McGuire, O.S.C. of Crosier Missions, Agats, and Brother Roman, O.S.C., brother of Father John Fleischhacker, O.S.C. of Agats.

At the request of Mrs. Stan Schneider all memorials were added to the Father Frank Pitka Scholarship Fund.

A Jubilee Greeting and a Gift

This summer Father Richard John, Provincial of the American Crosier Community, celebrated his 25th Jubilee in the Priesthood. Shortly after his election as Provincial in 1969 he visited Asmat and participated in the dedication of the new Cathedral as well as the ordination of the new Bishop. He has, since then, been of great assistance to the mission community as a friend and advocate.

The Mission Community was represented at the Jubilee celebration by Father Frank Trenkenschuh. The Superior of the missions and the Bishop sent congratulations to the Provincial but they were in no position to send him any gift. The Provincial, therefore, sent **them** a gift so that his celebration would involve the missionaries. Many people had given the Provincial gifts to celebrate the Jubilee. He shared these gifts with the people of Asmat so that his priestly Jubilee would be a source of celebration for the Asmat Community too.

What do they eat?

Homecoming missionaries always encounter some common questions about their lives in the mission of Asmat. One of the things which worries people the most is the diet of the missionary.

Naturally there are some foods which must be shipped into the area from the outside world: sugar, flour, powdered milk, spices. These are things which do not and cannot grow in the Asmat area. Cows, for example, can't live there because of the climate and the mud (they were tried by Fr. Pitka but lived only one year—and were constantly stuck in the mud!) It is too wet for wheat and there are few native spices.

The missionaries, however, rely to a large extent on what the lush jungle has to offer them or what the people now grow in the gardens which the missionaries have helped them start. There are, for example, many fruits: pineapple, banana, papaya, watermelon, lemons, coconuts and many wild jungle fruits whose English names we couldn't even guess at. There are also various kinds of roots which are eaten like potatoes are eaten in the USA. Also the gardens now have sweet potatoes, green beans and a type of tapioca.

Meat is sometimes fresh from the bounty of the jungle too. The delicious wild boar or pig meat tops the diet. This kind of pork is an expensive delicacy in European restaurants. Also there are wild birds of all sorts (including the crowned pigeon which is the world's largest pigeon) and (more rarely) crocodile meat. Various eggs from jungle birds (cassowary, jungle chicken, etc.) are eaten as well as eggs from the domesticated chickens which the mission has introduced into most of the villages.

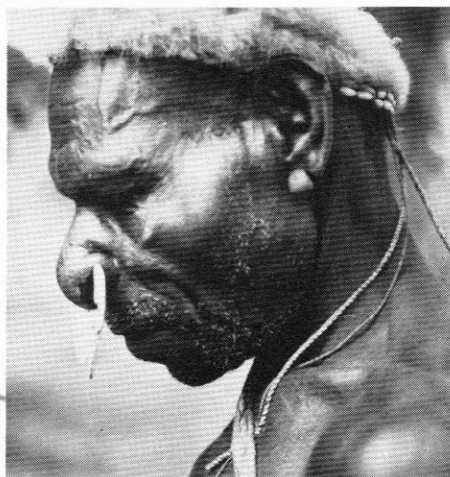
Sago, which is the staple food of the Asmat people, is also often eaten by the missionaries. More exotic foods which the people eat, such as the sago worms, are rarely eaten by most missionaries although some of them, like Fr. Emmett Zachmann of Jaosakor, often enjoy even these exotic foods!

Although the missionaries try to keep their expenses low by relying on what the people and the area can produce several typically American things are shipped into Asmat as "luxury items"—popcorn and peanut butter.

Any donations should always be mailed to the Hastings address, as it is unsafe to send money (cash or check) through the mail to Agats. The missionaries are informed of donations made to the Mission Director's office.

Old Headhunters Die

Until 17 years ago all of the Asmat men were able to survive in their society only if they had managed to kill another human being. A man would not be able to enter the "adult world" until he had actually taken credit for at least one killing. Only then could he be initiated into the adult society. The leaders of the society were those who had excelled in the art of killing. These were tremendous men of great talent, humor and dignity.



Pinim of Atsj.

The missionaries had to put a stop to this killing. As they succeeded in slowing down and finally stopping this headhunting and cannibalism, they challenged the dignity and leadership of the society. Much of the missionary effort has been directed at prevention of a societal collapse after the cessation of headhunting. To make sure that the transition was smooth the missionaries made close friends and allies with the old headhunt leaders—these dignified and talented men of the "old order."

Recently two of these men have died. Warsekomen of Sjur was one of these warriors who had first met the mis-

sionaries and befriended many of them. Because he had many wives he had never been baptized. But as he lay dying recently his family called Bishop Sowada to the death house. Surrounded by several hundred people (who eventually collapsed the house entirely) Bishop Sowada baptized the dying old man.

Several months later another such leader died. He was Pinim of Atsj. Pinim had lived next to the pastor's house since the missionaries first came to the village in 1959. While the pastor was out of the village he guarded the house and the pastor's yard. He sat on the pastor's porch and visited for hours with the pastor. As he lay dying Father Louis Mraz came to baptize him—and gave him the name Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles. Pinim had killed 19 men before the missionaries began their work in Asmat and was known and dreaded throughout the area.

Missionaries in School

Since the mission to Asmat was first opened in 1958 the responsibility for the future of the area has been partially fulfilled by making certain that all of the missionaries are trained before going into the area for their pastoral work.

The fall Semester of 1971 at the University of Colorado finds four missionaries preparing for this work. Father Frank Trenkenschuh is continuing his graduate studies there. Father Jim Remmerswaal, of the Syracuse Indiana Crosier Community, is involved in the Anthropology department preparing for departure to the missions early in 1972. With him are Father Dale Redwanski and Brother Jim Scher following courses in Anthropology and Psychology. Father Dale and Brother Jim will depart for the missions in the summer of 1972.

Crosier Missions
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