



PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE
Brother Jerry's Letters from the Congo

For several years, Saints Peter & Paul has sponsored the Pendjua Catholic Mission located in the equatorial rain forest of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

There are 40,000 inhabitants divided into two races, the Bantu and the pygmies called Batoa. The Batoa are the majority yet live in servitude to their Bantu masters as victims of discrimination and oppression.

In 1978 the Pendjua team was asked to promote liberation of the Batoa through increased efforts in evangelization, education, village health care and economic development. The Pendjua Catholic Mission is staffed by two priests and one brother, Brother Jerry Galloway, who is a medical doctor.

The next several columns will be dedicated to Brother Jerry's letters. Excerpts describing his days as a doctor, teacher, administrator, guardian, priest, advocate and friend show one man's faithful dedication to a life of social justice.

Dear Mom,

February 2002

Well, I have recovered from the malaria and amebas. Last Sunday night I had several thousand visitors. I woke up at 3:00 a.m. and went to the front room to pull the curtain shut. I was suddenly covered with creatures biting me. I new right away they were bafumba—African red ants.

Monday morning, I went with the nurses who do well baby clinics in three villages. We had over 150 infants under 5 years of age. I got home and crashed into bed.

Tuesday morning, I worked in the office making orders to send to Kutu. I'm not going as I have too much work here. In the afternoon I did bookkeeping for the boarding homes and in the evening I did the bookkeeping for Fr Dan's agricultural projects. I will be glad when he gets back.

Wednesday, I made hospital rounds. We are having monetary crises. There is almost no money in circulation. The patients are unable to pay their medical bills even though we only charge 50% of the cost. Teachers and nurses have not received their government salaries in nearly a year! I wonder if we will have enough money to pay the personnel at the end of the month.

In the evening a Batoa hunter was brought on a stretcher from a village 15 miles from here. He had fallen from a tree and had a gaping wound. It took the surgical assistant and me over an hour to close it. Otherwise, surgeries were relatively light.

Thursday, I made rounds and outpatient consultations, finished my medication orders and left for the village of Kiri. I visited the hospital since their doctor is almost never there. I also visited a friend of mine to ask if he knew one or two good French teachers as we have a need for two. He promised to send at least one.

I returned to Pendjua Friday afternoon and worked all Saturday a.m. at the hospital caring for our 50 patients.

Today, Sunday, we had liturgy of the word and communion. I also received donor slips for the last several months. (He lists each donor by name) I wish to once again express my gratitude for your continued sacrifice to help bring development to the poor of Pendjua. You and your intentions are remembered in our prayers.

Love and prayers, Jerry