

Now back in Malawi after four months in Canada and Ireland. Somewhat tired as the fundraising gets wearisome and the time comes when, No! I don't want to beg anymore. Yet so many were beacons of encouragement with their generous support and kindness, especially I am grateful to a number of brother priests who opened opportunities in their parishes. For sure friends and family and people I encountered; were overwhelmingly supportive in their generosity and love. Besides "fund-raising", I was to Medjugorje as chaplain, boned up on spiritual direction and also on Anthology which I have been asked to teach next semester, took some time for a retreat in a Cistercian abbey, was on "an icon writing workshop", and had a holiday.

My family are well TG, however as with all of us, and our kinsfolk, for sure prayers, in particular for my oldest brother Tim who is slowly failing with cancer.

Now back in these pre-Christmas days, the busyness isn't over the top, the students are on retreat. After which those from Zimbabwe and Zambia will be at our Postulancy house for Christmas, and the Malawians at home.

I want to write to you, on behalf of the Spiritan priests and students here at ICS, and in southern Africa, as we owe you dear friend a big thank you with assurance of prayer and remembrance in our daily community Mass. It is a form letter and yet I try to have you present to me as I am sure I'll be present to you as you read it. I like words of St. Bernard in a letter to a friend in 1127; "we find rest in those we love and please God, we provide a resting place in ourselves for those who love us." Most of all as the season that is upon us proclaims: God's incredible love for each of us.

"For God so loved you and me that He gave us His one and only Son." –Jn3: 16.

Here is a poem, entitled: "Instructions" by Sheri Hostetler, it has Christmas overtures: like desiring simplicity aware, that that, the first Holy Night held no pretensions.

**Give up the world; give up self; be alert, stay awake.
Find God in rhododendrons and rocks, passers-by, your cat.
Pare your beliefs, your absolutes.
Make it simple; make it clean.
No carry-on luggage allowed.
Examine all you have with a loving critical eye, then
throw away some more.
Repeat. Repeat.
Keep this and only this: what your heart beats loudly for
what feels heavy and full in your gut.
There will only be one or two things you will keep,
and they will fit lightly in your pocket.**

**Wishing you and yours a blessed Holy Season and New Year, full of peace and joy.
Warmest regards,
Fr Locky (Flanagan CSSp).**