

HISTORICAL NOTES ON
THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GHANA

SECTION I. THE BEGINNINGS

(Taken directly from the records – *Ubique*, the official organ of the Liberal Catholic Church, Province of the United State of America).

Uncoordinated (?) Preparations for the Start (September 1961 Issue of *Ubique*).

“A MISSION FOR GHANA

“On the morning of Saturday, July 8th, in the Oratory of Our Lady at Toronto, we ordained to the Priesthood Isaac Kodzo Zaney, a citizen of Ghana, a country long associated with the British Commonwealth and one of the most recent to acquire full self – government within that far – flung family of nations. We were assisted in the sanctuary by the Revs. Hugh Jackson and Leslie Dadswell of Toronto.

“The Rev. Mr. Zaney has been in Toronto for the past year taking his Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree in Pedagogy. He will return to Ghana this Fall to join the faculty of the Government Teachers College at Peki. As the first Liberal Catholic priest to be domiciled in Ghana he has before him a virgin field of service in which we, and, I am sure, all readers of *Ubique* will wish him well.

“+*E.W. Jackson*”

“Sequel

“A few weeks after the above recounted ordination, Mr. K. Ketosugbo of the Ghanaian Embassy staff at the United Nations approached Bishop Pitkin with the request that he be placed in training for the Priesthood of the L.C.C. He will receive training under the Bishop’s supervision at St. Michael’s Church in New York.

“Mr. Ketosugbo was delighted on being informed that, all unknown to him, his friend Mr. Zaney had received the priestly Order. Both of these gentlemen have long been students of the Ancient Wisdom, which is the heart of Liberal Catholic teaching, as the Sacraments are the heart of its worship.

“And after the foregoing had been set in type for printing, word has come from Bishop Sykes that a third gentleman from Ghana, Mr. Affram, is now in training for the Priesthood at St. Mary’s Cathedral in London! Truly, in view of what our Presiding Bishop says in his **Page** in this journal, *the Lord must intend that this Church shall play a part in the development of this new Nation!*

“ + *Editor*”

Preceding

“On Sunday April 16th, 1961 Isaac Zaney was baptized (conditionally) and confirmed by Bishop E. W. Jackson

“On Saturday April 22nd, the Rev. W.S.Harley of Montreal (who had come down early for the occasion) celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the presence of the Bishop, and at this service Bishop Jackson conferred the Minor Orders on Isaac Zaney of Ghana. On the following day Mr. Zaney received the Subdiaconate along with George Duguay from Montreal”.

THE START

“The Rev. Isaac K. Zaney, the first Liberal Catholic priest in the new nation of Ghana, writes that the Church of Our lady has been opened in Accra, capital city of Ghana, in a suitable room made available by a friend (at Liberty Press, Tudu, by its owner, Mr.Yiadom Kumi). The first Eucharist was celebrated on October 14th with a dozen worshippers present, and on the following Sundry there were 18 in the congregation. Strictly speaking, he is the only member of the Church as of that date, but on the 28th he expected to have some baptisms and the formal admission of some who were baptized in other Catholic Churches.” (8 people baptized and one formally admitted, marking the real beginning of the Liberal Catholic Church in Ghana).

“A copy of the Musical Liturgy has been obtained and a musician is now studying the music and it is expected that within a few weeks at least part of the service will be sung.

“Two additional clergy are being trained for Ghana – the Rev. Michael Affram who is now ordained Deacon and serving in St. Mary’s Cathedral in London under the tutelage of Bishop Sykes, and the Rev. Kwami Ketosugbo, also ordained Deacon and serving in St. Michael’s New York under the guidance of Bishop Pitkin.

Ubique, December, 1962

SETTLING DOWN

Church of Our Lady, Accra

“The new Church in Ghana sends through *Ubique* her greetings to all the sister Churches. We also send to them the greetings of the Christmas Season.” (The editors regret that this message was received too late for the December *Ubique*, but our people around the world will be just as appreciating.)

“Father Zaney reports that under the impetus of the initial enthusiasm his first congregations numbered around twenty, but have now settled down to an average of ten, with an enrolled church membership of ten. The services are much enjoyed by those who attend them and a joyous atmosphere is being built up around the church.

“The Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday, with a Healing Service on the first Sunday in each month”.

From the March 1963 issue of *Ubique*.

INCREASE IN CLERGY STRENGTH

Father Kwami Ketosugbo, ordained in New York by the Rt. Rev. W.H. Pitkin on 2nd June 1963, returned to Ghana in March 1964 and joined forces with Father Zaney. He celebrated his first Eucharist on 3rd May 1964. The enthusiasm of this dedicated worker imparted a new life to the church. He also brought with him some useful church equipment.

SECTION II. DEVELOPMENTS

1. The New Church Received a Boost

The Rt. Rev. Sten von Krusenstierna, Regional Bishop for Australia, paid a week's visit to the Church, accompanied by his wife, Rie, in September (10th – 16th) 1964 on his way back home from the 5th General Episcopal Synod of the LCC held in Holland.

The visit of the Bishop to the two – year – old church was a great event. Eight people received confirmation and one person received minor orders. The largest congregation was recorded during the visit – 40 at the Holy Eucharist, and over 50 at a Healing service. The occasion was used to bring the existence of the Church to the notice of a wider circle.

The visit was also seen as carrying a deeper significance – of a confirmation of the Church in Ghana. Several members remarked that there was a certain “extra something” at the services conducted by the Bishop, and that the atmosphere was particularly highly charged at the healing service. One of the ladies even remarked that in the Bishop she felt that the true “owner” of the church had at last come. All in all, the visit was regarded as the young Church's Pentecost.

2. A Women's Movement Within the Church

One other outcome from the visit of Bishop Krusenstierna was the formation of a *Society for the Service of Womanhood*. It was born from a meeting of a handful of women from the Church with Mrs. Maria von Krusenstierna in her hotel room in the afternoon of 14th September 1964 to consider what role women might play in the progress of the human race. The Society described itself as “a voluntary spiritual organization of women dedicated to the upliftment of the race through the culture and upliftment of womanhood”. Promoted and aided by Fr. Zaney, the Society adopted the following three tenets.

(1). Just as God has a paternal aspect, so also is there a maternal aspect of God, which shows forth as the receptive, formative and protective side of Nature and which, in turn, is enshrined in womanhood.

(2). In womanhood are enshrined certain powers, virtues and qualities derived from the maternal aspect of God, which form a perfect complement to those of men and which have an equally important role, though different in kind, in the perfection of society, in the progress of civilization and in the fulfillment of the goal of humanity.

(3). Only as woman is uplifted and brought to realize and to play her proper role in her true way, and only as she exercises her peculiar and especial qualities with increasing understanding, can a civilization be built that will be both strong and beautiful.

In accordance with the above tenets the Society's declared objects were as follows:

(1). To seek and propagate knowledge about the spiritual significance of the functions of womanhood in nature and their role in human progress.

(2). To promote the cultivation of the qualities of the ideal woman.

(3). To work for the spiritual upliftment of womanhood.

(4). To foster mutual respect and honour between the sexes.

3. Further Increase in Clergy Strength

Father Micheal Affram, ordained in London, returned to Ghana just before Christmas 1966 to bring the number of priests to three serving a congregation of about thirty at the time.

4. Relocation of the Services

In March 1967 it became necessary for the church to move out from the Liberty Press premises, where it had held its services regularly for the first four and a half years of its existence in Ghana. The services continued thereafter to be held as regularly as before in the residences of one or other of the three priests.

5. Incorporation

The Church was incorporated on 29th July, 1967 under the Trustees (Incorporation) Act, 1962 of Ghana as The Liberal Catholic Church in Ghana and was issued with Certificate of Registration No. X0022 of that date. On this note ends the first five years of the Liberal Catholic Church in Ghana.