

Friendship will remain

After two years in the parish of St. Christophorus in North Krefeld, I will dedicate myself to my research at the Ruhr University in Bochum from 1st June 2015. At the same time I have the opportunity to get me involved in the work of the Chair in dogmatics and history of dogma of the Catholic Theological Faculty.

Within these two years I've settled in well in Krefeld. During this time I gained a lot of experience: in baptisms, holy masses, school services in the Montessori School, at weddings, in hospitals, visits of condolence and at funerals. On all these occasions I have taken the parish of St. Christophorus and the people of Krefeld to my heart and they are very familiar to me. I could provide my pastoral ministry with all my heart, because I felt supported by the trust of our five congregations.

I will conclude with a laughing and a crying eye my priestly duties on 31 May 2015 in the parish of St. Christophorus. I certainly look forward to my new responsibilities, but I know that I am going to greatly miss you my friends in Krefeld, in the communities of St. Gertrudis, Herz Jesu, St. Josef, Christus König, St. Hubertus and the Episcopal Montessori School. Even now I look forward to every meeting with you after leaving Krefeld.

I am grateful for the warm welcome and valuable encounters, which made it possible to me to found the Association Kongo Social-Care e. V. to help the needy people in The Democratic Republic of The Congo. What did move me to found in 2004 a Congo project and to be so committed? The dramatic and catastrophic situation after the Second Congo War 1998-2003 touched my heart. The churches were the only institutions that possessed a functioning infrastructure. I could not complete a Doctorate Degree in Theology at the University of Bonn without worrying *while a malaria sick child dies because its parents can not afford medical care*. I could not enjoy time *knowing that a pregnant woman in The Congo does not survive the birth of her baby, because there is no adequate medical care for them*. That was and still is sad daily life in the DRC. And that's why I decided in July 2004 to start with the Congo Project.

I ask you for a prayer that gives me the strength for my priestly ministry in the Lord's vineyard in Bochum and for my scientific work. May the Blessed Virgin Mary watch over and protect you and your families and lead you to her beloved Son Jesus Christ.

Finally, I would like to pick up only a single word from my preaching I held during the festival service on 26 April 2015. Then I said:

"It starts with T."

The Assembly answered:

T H A N K S !!!

A warm thanks for accepting my friendship. I hope that we continue to remain friends.

And I would like to express a big thank that you allowed yourselves to be touched by the special accent of this church service and opened up your hearts and hands so generously for the people of The Congo.

At the Congolese Mass I realized, how global the Catholic Church is and how it flourishes through the diversity of its members. From an old hymn: "I thank the Lord who called me from grace in his Church. I will never leave you." Amen.

Pater Jean-Bertrand Badi OP