

**Jambo** - November 4, 2009

It's been over a month since my arrival in Tanzania and my experiences so far has already had an huge impact on me. before leaving England, I knew I was about to experience something special, I just didn't know what it was or what to expect. It was only until I stepped out of the airport in Dar el Salaam that it hit me how lucky I was to be here and what a journey I was about to take. That and also the heat hit me pretty hard too.

So thank you CTK parish, The Salvatorians, the Catenians, my family, and all who have helped contribute to my being here. This wouldn't have been possible without you.



Last weekend I had the pleasure of being taken to Fr Lazarus' home. Now, when Lazarus first told me he would be taking me to his home in the Uluguru Mountains, in my mind I pictured a lone house on the side of a mountain, not too high up, and maybe a few neighbouring houses. Instead I found that we had to drive an hour or more almost right up to the top of one of the peaks, also it was not a few houses, but a whole village.

This is a photo of a “street” in Homboza. Lazarus' house is on the far right.

The village (Homboza) has a school and a church. Lazarus' family house is the only one with solar electricity, and everyone in the village goes there to get their mobile phones charged, they had a pile of at least 15 phones, one went off during dinner, and Lazarus decided to answer it to tell the person that the phone is "on the charge" and to try again later.



So many things happened in those few days, meeting the children after church and they all sang for us, meeting the church choir, Lazarus' energetic sermons, tasting the local alcoholic beverage (pombe), the amazing sunset and so much more I could talk about them forever.

In Homboza, life is very different to where I am currently staying in the huge city of Dar El Salaam. it's in this small mountain village that I felt a real community spirit, everyone here was so welcoming, and they were really happy to have visitors.



After mass, the village children have lessons. We met them and they all sang for us.

Last week I completed my course in Swahili, I had a real tough time studying, but I feel that I have now grasped the basic concept of how the language works, with sentence structure and all of that. Now, my task is to practice. It shouldn't be too hard to find anybody to talk to, since I can't walk down a street without someone greeting me.

One example of a simple sentence is. "Wiki kesho nitakwenda Masasi" which roughly translates as "next week I am going to Masasi" which just so happens to be what I am doing. I am very much looking forward to staying at Masasi in the south; I really want to start working with the people there as soon as possible. Already I have worked on a few small things in Dar el Salaam and Morogoro, like design a calendar and help show how some new equipment works. I have even given lessons in Photoshop to a student at the seminary and already he is working on making invitations and things. so I'm glad what small things I have done so far have been helpful. However, I am really itching to work on some larger projects with the Salvatorians in Masasi.

After a month of being here, I have discovered that it's not the landscape or the sunsets and the beaches that make this country special, but it's the people. I am learning new things here almost every day.

So, now that I have my blog all set up, I hope to keep it updated about once a week or so. Please keep in touch and do let me know how things are going on your end.

Mpaka Baadaye, Kwaheri. (Until next time, goodbye)

- Lewis

## **Dancing To Masasi** - November 20, 2009

My trip to Masasi was a very long one. The first half of the trip went pretty smoothly, as the roads were made of tarmac. We travelled 600km in around 8 hours.

There is a section of road 70km long which Fr Lazarus so rightly dubbed “dancing road” this bad stretch of road is simply a mud track. The bumps are so frequent and horrendous that forced dancing ensues. Bums are in contact with the seat for only 30% of this time. Lazarus felt it necessary to play some music to add to the occasion. This short section of road took around 2 of the 8 hours to pass.

In Masasi I have now settled into my room with the Salvatorian Brothers. Already I have been getting many people asking for me to help set up a new PC or fix their old computers or printers and also to help them with particular software. I am also getting requests from Salvatorians in other villages to teach them in computing.



This view is only a 10 min walk away, it always amazes me.

I am really enjoying my stay in Masasi, every week they have a mass in English, which is a bonus, though I am starting to learn the mass in Kiswahili.

Here they have such beautiful rock formations. Behind the House are two small mountains, one has a cross near its peak. I went up with one of the brothers and another volunteer and we all said the rosary together up there. It was wonderful experience.

Thanks again for all your contributions –  
Lewis



## Lukuledi Village - December 5, 2009

A few days ago I made a visit to a neighbouring village called Lukuledi.

I have been told lots of stories about Snakes and Scorpions in the south of Tanzania, but had only seen one small scorpion until now. In Lukuledi however it was a different story. One evening on a short trip from the church to the house, I came across many scorpions. They are so huge, I couldn't believe it. Another night Br Anton took me out to have a beer, and in the path we came across a huge python. After that, I was a bit jumpy. If I were to see a bendy stick on the ground I'd be nervous.



Whilst in Lukuledi I went to visit a school for disabled children. The teachers were really welcoming, and we learnt some of the sign language that they use. When walking through the village, they would greet us with the sign language and we would give the proper response, which I think made them really happy.

Here in Tanzania I am finding the time to grow spiritually. I can go to the chapel every day and I feel I am becoming much closer to God, not only because of prayer, but because of the people, especially those like the poor children at the disabled school.

Leaving Lukuledi, we had to return to Masasi by “dala dala” (bus) we sat by the bus stop, which is basically just a large tree, and waited. After a while, we decided that we would just hail the next vehicle passing even if it wasn't a bus. An hour later we decided, ok, maybe we should say a few prayers to pass the time, but pretty soon we were interrupted by the sound of an approaching vehicle.

We quickly arose to hail the vehicle, which was nothing more than a Toyota pickup truck. By the look of it, it was already full with people in the back (which is in fact a common occurrence). We managed to squeeze on somehow. Even though our earlier prayers were interrupted, I was pretty much praying for dear life the whole trip back. We were pretty much hanging off the back on the corner of the truck.



It seems that almost every day there is adventure on every corner.

“Kwaheri” – Lewis

## **New Year, New Clothes, new Hope** - January 11, 2010 by

Its 2010, I hope all had a happy Christmas and I wish you all a good new year. I really enjoyed my Christmas more than anything so far. It was extremely different from my usual ones, and I do miss the snow. But to be able to spend it within the religious community made it extra special, I felt really accepted as part of the family. Also the main event, which is the Mass, and the celebration of Jesus Birth, was really wonderful.

I spent this Christmas in Namungo, here all the people wanting to become priests or brothers spend their first years. I was there for 3 weeks, teaching some of the brothers computing, to prepare some for their studies in Morogoro. Some of them have never even touched a Computer before in their entire life. So It was quite something teaching them, and they were really appreciative.

I got to know a few really well, They also took my to get my haircut as it was about time I did. I bet the barbers must have had a shock when I walked in. it took a while, by the time he completed my hair, the other barber finished 6 african heads easily.



Two nights before Christmas we had a lot of rainfall, and this caused all the termites to spread, there were tonnes flying everywhere, and some of The Brothers collected them up to fry for Christmas dinner. I can certainly tell you it was a Christmas dinner like no other. I was given a football shirt as a gift, and we all had a good time partying in the evening. I really love the African style of dance.



Jamie Oliver, eat your heart out!

New Year's Day was another huge celebration, not just because of the New Year, but also because there were ordinations that day of some of the noviciates. I'm now starting to get used to how Tanzanians organise their celebrations, they really do put on a grand display. But I still prefer the good old English Buffet. Ha ha

After the New Year, the other volunteers organised a trip to Zanzibar and invited me along, So I certainly soaked up a lot of sun this week. I really enjoyed myself, but I am looking forward to joining my community again. I feel at home there. Who knows what I will feel when I have to make my return journey home back to England.

This New Year is a big one for me; The New Year really is centred on Hope for all people. For me, I am lucky as I am in a new land. My old ways and thoughts are being changed just by my mere presence here, and I am being clothed anew. (And I don't mean the football shirt the brothers gave me for Christmas) My hope for the future right now is at an all time high, and I can't thank you all enough for placing me here.

So, I return to Masasi on Thursday To start on a new project. A website for the Salvatorians here in Tanzania, I think it's something they are really missing, and will be a great tool for them.

Until Next time,



## Final Update - March 27, 2010

Ok, so this update is long overdue by now. Father Alex arrived a few weeks ago, and he's been putting my nose to the grindstone. It's was nice to hear the English accent again. The website is mostly completed. It's taken a great deal of work. I had to do a lot of travelling in order to take many photographs, and had to learn new skills in order to build it. Now I'm just waiting for the amendments and the Kiswahili translations from Morogoro. It should be online in the next few weeks.



A couple of weeks ago in Masasi, Alex and I had a bit of excitement. We were working away in the computer room whilst there was a thunderstorm raging outside. lightning struck a nearby palm tree, and ran through a telephone wire which runs from outside the window right into the room. Sparks flew, and I even felt an electric shock in my hand that was holding the mouse. Unfortunately one of the computers here is now bust, Alex and I were fine though.



Recently we spent a few days on the beautiful island Mafia. We travelled there with a Polish Brother, Albin. The house is located right on the beach, about 15 seconds away from the water. We had an afternoon of snorkelling, on a fantastic coral reef, and saw many beautiful fish. One night we went swimming whilst the sea was full of bioluminescent algae. It was amazing to see what looked like glowing sparks flowing around us due to our movement in the water. Another evening we got the chance to see the unique and very large fruit bats flying overhead.

Brother Evance is in charge of looking after the house there. He's doing an excellent job. He taught me how to ride on the Piki Piki (motorbike) it was surprisingly simple and great fun.

So, I have bit of an announcement to make, though some of you probably know already. The main reason for Father Alex's visit was to discuss my vocation. I have been having thoughts about the priesthood. It is something which has been on my mind for quite some years. I've never been able to escape it really. My visit to Tanzania has been such a huge blessing to me, as it has given me time to think and pray about it. In fact, in the first week of arriving, I decided that I would make discerning my vocation one of my main goals.

At lunch, one Brother asked if I had a vocation to the religious life. Well, I couldn't say no as it has been something I have been thinking about for many years, and told them my thoughts. I asked them not to mention it, as I was planning to tell Fr Alex myself. Not long after, I got an e-mail from Fr Alex asking me if it was true that I had a vocation, as Fr Richard was saying that I had "discovered my vocation in Tanzania". Well, it shocked me that he found out. It took me ages to think of a response. (I found out that I gave myself away due to a previous blog update, and they sussed me out)

So, Alex and I planned that we would talk about things upon his arrival. He was very helpful in guiding me, explaining the religious life and the formation process. The plan is for me to start my noviciate in September. My time as a novice will be spent in exploring my vocation

further and experiencing life in the religious community (and learning to cook apparently). With Father Richard as Novice Master, I'm sure I will get the support I need.

I'm very excited to start. The fact the novice house is in my home town should be interesting. My parents have already taken the news well, though I'm wondering what my friends and other relatives will think. I guess I will find out soon enough eh 😊



Wish me all the best. I will see you all in less than two months.

Tutaonana Baadaye