

## *After a Holy Child Education - What Then?*

*Our African Old Girls (Alumnae) branch out into many different fields. On these and the following pages are examples of what they are doing.*

### **CHRISTINA - a Medical Student in ROME**

Ever since she can remember, Christina Akpagu has wanted to help the sick and suffering of her country. Her father had charge of the local dispensary under the District Council in Obudu (Eastern Nigeria) and Christina used to tag after him whenever she could, asking questions, watching wide-eyed as he dealt with each patient. But he would not let her come too close because most tropical diseases are contagious.

Christina has eight brothers and sisters and family ties are very strong. It was not easy for her to leave home to travel by lorry

and train the 376 miles to Uyo to attend the Cornelia Connelly Secondary School after finishing Standard VI at Afikpo. For four years she worked, studied, played - and dreamed dreams - on the beautiful rolling compound. Then, early in 1959, she went as a teacher to another Holy Child school, in Ogoja. And she waited, while the weeks slipped by, for the results of her Cambridge G.C.E. Examination. It takes some time before such results can be posted, but when they finally came Christina found herself in the First Division. Her Certificate was one

Chris-  
tina  
lives  
at the  
'Cross-  
roads'  
hostel

30



and  
spends  
much  
of her  
time  
in  
study.





... Showing a friend from Ogoja, Mother M. Flavia, the medical section of the great University.

of the best awarded in that section of Nigeria.

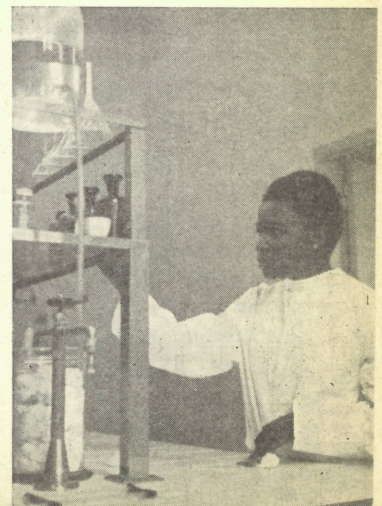
She had an acceptance from the College of Science and Technology at Enugu for preliminary science studies when a throat infection altered her plans entirely. At the hospital where she went for treatment, a lay medical missionary from Italy, Dr. Marini, became interested in her plans. Through him she obtained a Catholic Action Scholarship to the University of Rome to study medicine. Further aid was given her by the Bishop of Ogoja, the Right Reverend Thomas McGettrick, S. S. P., and on October 9th, 1959, Christina arrived in Rome.

For many a traveller, Rome has opened a new world. For Christina

it meant learning a new language immediately and adjusting to different customs, different food. The six-year course at the University must have stretched out interminably in the beginning. She was one of five hundred students in the class and the whole thing might have been overwhelming if it had not been for one happy factor: the warm, spontaneous friendship of the people around her. Members of the Catholic Action offered every assistance; Italian students at the University invited her to their homes - sometimes as far away as Venice and Rimini - and asked her to join their Catholic Youth organizations. (At one of their meetings Christina

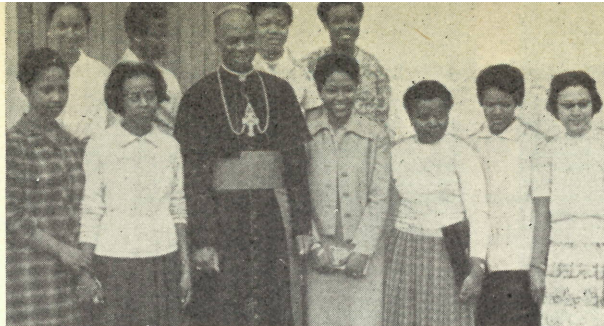
In the laboratory  
of the  
'Blue Nuns'  
at Calvary  
Hospital.

THE PYLON





With  
Cardinal  
Rugambwa.  
Christina  
is behind  
His Eminence  
(left).



Lucy Usen  
and Roselyne  
Edem (back  
row, right),  
Old Girls  
who are  
now social  
workers.

gave an address on Nigerian civilization, its art, history and social life. Young people from Asia and India also spoke).

Visits to the Generalate of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus on Via Boncompagni are a link with all she has left in Africa. "They are my Mothers," she says simply. When Missionaries arrive on leave, the distance between Rome and Nigeria seems to shorten considerably.

Christina is a member of the Lay Medical Missionary Aspirants, an international group sponsored by the Italian Catholic Action. "When we finish our studies, we will return home and work under the direction of our Bishop," she explains. Once or twice a year the group holds conferences in different parts of Italy. At Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Dolomite mountains the conference lasted for a week; it was under the direction of Padre Magni, and the chief subject was Science and Religion. "We had the point of view of

a priest, a psychologist, psychiatrist, biologist and philosopher on the topic, *Can a scientist, from his work alone, arrive at a knowledge of God? . . . I wish,*" says Christina, "that every scientist in the world could have been there . . . In between the talks we went sight-seeing on the mountain tops, and the evenings were usually given over to folk dances, Ethiopian, Korean, and other kinds, including Nigerian!"

Christina has made a number of close friends in Rome, among them a young girl from India and one from Korea. Another friend is from a Communist country. When she told about the sad conditions of life there, Christina was appalled. "How different that is from what the Communists try to tell us in Africa!"

The girls live at international centres which are under the auspices of Italian Catholic Action. There are about thirty students from the University at the "Crossroads" hostel where Christina resides. It is conducted by members of a

A  
visit  
at the  
home



of  
friends  
in  
Venice.





At St. Peter's for the Canonization of St. Martin de Porres, O. P.

secular institute and they arrange pleasant diversions for the girls – including picnics to such places as Ostia and Naples – to offset the intensive study.

Physiology, Pathology and Anatomy are all a part of Christina's curriculum. She is just completing her third year in which students begin preliminary work in the clinic and observe operations. Following her examinations she hopes to make a visit to her home in Obudu; then back to Rome for five more

years because she plans to specialize in pediatrics. This will take two additional years.

It is a long road that Christina is travelling in order to help her people. Perhaps the poet had someone like her in mind when he wrote,

*Step softly in the darkness  
dispelling doubt,  
dispelling pain.  
Step bravely, for Christ  
has walked this way.*

A  
moment  
of  
prayer  
before



the  
confer-  
ence at  
Cortina  
d'Am-  
pezzo



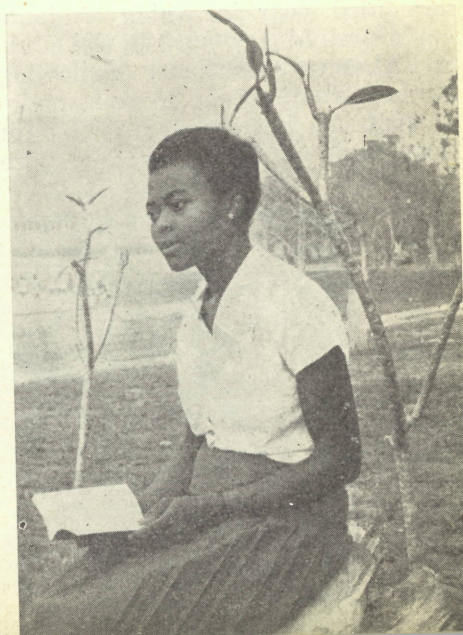
*A Religious  
Vocation...  
The greatest  
gift...*

*In 1960  
Agnes Anto  
was Head of  
the School in  
Cape Coast.  
Teaching...*



*Now she is  
Sister  
Maria Alberta,  
Novice, H.H.C.J.  
Her sister (left)  
finishes at the  
University  
of Ghana  
this summer.*

Patricia Hogan Bassey, B. A. (Hons), following her graduation from University College, Dublin, returned to teach at her Alma Mater in Nigeria, the Cornelia Connelly Secondary School, Uyo. "After being away four years," she says, "it is a joy to come back to my own country and find an atmosphere of steady progress everywhere."







**Marriage...** Mr. and Mrs. P. O. Nwakoby (Martina Osude) are representative of those young African couples who plan to build their family life on solid Catholic foundations.

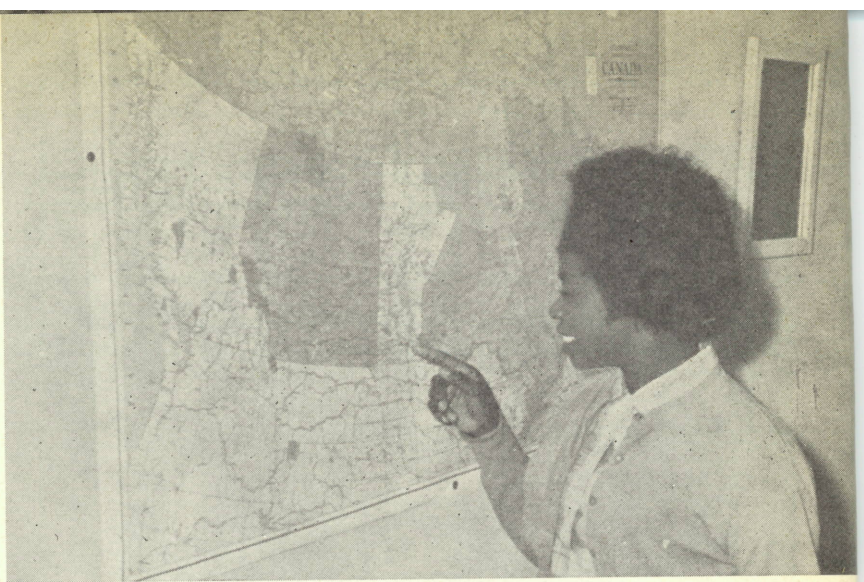
*"Woman's true vocation," wrote His Lordship Bishop James Moynagh, S.S.P., "is to love in the home, in schools, hospitals, in Welfare Services everywhere in fact where she can exercise her God-given faculty of love in dealing with her fellowman. She can never exercise such influence in impersonal jobs."*

**Nursing...** More than sixty Old Girls from Holy Child Secondary Schools are in training at the University College Hospital, Ibadan. Many more are in training with the Medical Missionaries of Mary.





**So  
much  
snow!**



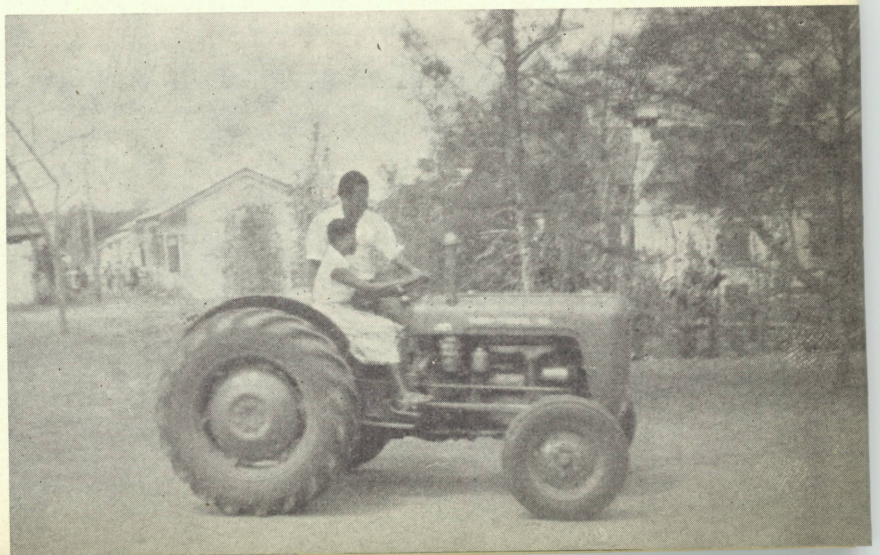
... Agnes Aidoo is pointing on the map to Winnipeg, Canada, where she is attending the University of Manitoba. She is a member of the Newman Club, sacristan of the College Chapel, and treasurer of Our Lady's Sodality. Agnes is an Old Girl from Cape Coast, Ghana.



... Two more former Cape Coasters... Lucia Amenuvor and Agnes Addai are studying in the U. S. at Notre Dame University in Indiana. They are benefitting from scholarships offered to His Grace, Archbishop Amissah during his American tour.

... Learning to drive a tractor at the School of Agriculture in Umuahia, Nigeria... Eugenia Akpan plans to use modern methods of farming to help her people. She attended C. C. S. S. in Uyo.

**Nigeria  
is  
largely  
agricultural**







Mother Marie Thérèse, who is on the Council of the H. H. C. J., has been spared by her Reverend Mother General to work for a degree at University College, Cork. She joined Sister Mary Joseph who will soon be returning to Nigeria as a Geography specialist. This is not the first time they have gone to Europe for higher studies. Both of them previously attended Endsleigh Training College in Hull, England.

*Below* — Sister M. Immaculata and Sister M. Joseph (right) visit the tomb of Mother Cornelia Connelly at Mayfield. Sister M. Immaculata is working for a special Diploma in Education at the City of Leicester Training College.







Hundreds of relatives and friends crowded into the parish Church at Ifuho for the Solemn Pontifical High Mass which inaugurated the ceremonies.

#### H. H. C. J. CELEBRATE SILVER JUBILEE

For the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, May 20, 1962 was a day of prayerful rejoicing for they celebrated the Silver Jubilee of their congregation.

The ceremonies began with the Solemn Pontifical High Mass sung by His Lordship, Bishop James Moynagh of Calabar in St. Anne's parish Church, Ifuho. Promptly at 9:30 a.m. the beautiful notes of the *Ecce Sacerdos* were intoned and a long procession entered the Church composed of His Grace, Archbishop Heerey of Onitsha - the Metropolitan Bishop, Bishop J. Moynagh, Bishop D. Ekandem, Bishop Okoye, C. S. Sp, Monsignor Nwanebo and many priests from various parts of Nigeria. In his sermon, Archbishop Heerey paid special tribute to the first four Sisters of the Congregation whom he had known before they had entered religion. He also read a cablegram of congratulations from the Holy Father, a crowning glory of the day.

Following the Mass, luncheon was served for 130 people in the big hall of the Holy Child Training College.

*The Pylon* wishes to extend heartfelt congratulations to each and every Handmaid of the Holy Child Jesus and to wish them the continued Blessing of the Holy Child on their great work.

Sister M. Joseph and Sister M. Immaculata with some of the Mayfield Community near St. Dunstan's Well.

