

Visit to the R.D. Congo
January February 2009.
by
Fr Robert and Fr Jacob.

Part 3/5

THE KASAI
17th January to 31st January.

The Journey to Ilebo. Saturday 24th of January.

Fr Jacob had been in regular contact by means of his mobile phone with various people along the road to Ilebo. We had been informed that the road was impassable but Fr Jacob had enlisted the help of school children from Pembayambu to fill in the ravines in a effort to make the road passable.

We set out from Domiongo to Ilebo at 8.10 am. Fr Prosper Bena came with us for part of the way so that he could visit one of the distant villages and spend a day or two with the Christian community there.

The road from Kananga to Ilebo appears as Route Nationale No 1 on the map. There was a time when it was properly maintained and was a very busy road with lorries and cars traveling along it. Years of neglect have resulted in the disappearance of the road. Today it is more like a foot path. There was a time when the journey to Ilebo from Domiongo would take less than 2 hours. Now it will take all day if you are lucky.

The tropical rain cuts deep ravines in the road during the rainy season. Along the road we passed various village chapels which had all been constructed to look the same using railway lines in the construction of the façade. These chapels remain a memorial to the efforts of Fr Cyrille C.J. who built them some 40 years ago.

Fr Cyril was Parish Priest of Domiongo for 25 years.



On the way we stopped off at Pembeangu. It was sad to see the impoverished condition of the school especially the conditions for boarders. The demand for school places in intense and

even the most primitive accommodation is used to provide some sort of education. The pupils are courageous and anxious to learn.

Fr Jacob provided footballs for the boys and money to buy food for the girls



The journey from Pembeangu to Ilebo was very difficult. Deep ravines and a fallen tree had to be negotiated.

Fr Jacob and I took the opportunity of walking on ahead whenever a difficult ravine had to be negotiated.



As if our journey had not been difficult enough the police at the entrance to Ilebo caused us problems. Fr Jacob and I abandoned the vehicle and walked the last mile or so into the town centre of Ilebo where we were welcomed by confreres and parishioners.

To be continued.

RDH

<http://picasaweb.google.be/cjphotobank/2009ENROUTE>