

Winter 2013

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Recommended Citation

Ayeni, A. (2013). The bridge called Thank You. *Spiritan Magazine*, 37 (1). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-tc/vol37/iss1/8>

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The bridge called Thank You

Ayodele Ayeni CSSp

“**T**here is a time for every matter under heaven.”
Ecclesiastes 3:1

For me, it is time to say Thank You. After six years of studying at Dominican College, Ottawa, culminating the studies I began in Primary One, 1978, in Nigeria, I liken the successful defence of my thesis to a symphony. There is more to a symphony than its individual melodies. Likewise, there is more to education than its individual successes. It embraces each of them to produce the symphony called education.

I have a song — thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit who chose to become my friend, and whose love I try to respond to every day. Indeed, he grants gifts of wisdom and knowledge, joy and courage. He grants the gift of tongues — the language of faith, hope and charity. A big Thank You to the Holy Spirit!

I have a song — thanksgiving to my parents. As a child, I was their delight; as an adult, a dream come true. And for me, they are a paragon of parenthood: accomplished disciplinarians, luminaries of Christian life, star teachers and educators. Mom and Dad: ese popo!

I have a song — thanksgiving to Spiritans worldwide, but in particular, the members of the TransCanada Province. In the vagaries of an irreligious world, the Spiritan family has remained a beacon of light guiding and nudging me forward. The Quebec Spiritans paid my way through the junior seminary in Nigeria; the TransCanada Province has paid my way through doctoral studies. To you all, I say Thank You.

Thank You bridges the gap between the past and the present among those who will always remember their affiliations to a family that goes beyond them — the Spiritan family. Thank You warms the heart because some Spiritans who believe in their Congregation dare to dream.

Past, present and future

There is no future without a past. The bridge called Thank You takes seriously the idea that human beings are social animals who are interdependent and support each other. We all have predecessors, and by that same token, we anticipate having successors. All will not end with us.

Past, present and future are played out vividly in the family — the boy is the father of the man, as we say in English. Families care for each other: if they do nothing else for each other, at least they bury one another! But there are good things families do for each other: they share love, happiness, sorrow and dreams. It is like a relay — each person has his and her turn, his and her time.

Like genes, families are projected willy-nilly into the future. Some DNA may disappear for a while, only to reappear in the future. The Holy Spirit is no different: the only thing predictable about him is his unpredictability in maintaining goodness! The Spiritans too are only predictable to the degree that the Holy Spirit is mastered — an effort in futility. But one fact remains unassailable — the future is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit in spite of human frailty and pessimism.

To say Thank You is to acknowledge my dependence on and indebtedness to my predecessors. To say Thank You is to realize that I am part of a family, a Spiritan family. To say Thank You is to admit that there will be a future, with or without me; that whatever I do in the present either makes or mars the future of my Spiritan family, and, by implication, my future and legacy — I should say, our Spiritan legacy.

It is time for us to ask once again, “Where is the Spirit leading us?” To my mind the unquestionable answer is, “The Holy Spirit is leading us irreversibly into the future!” Rejoice — brighter days are coming. The Spirit is alive! ■

