

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Jean Thierry Ebogo was born on February 4, 1982 in Bamedá, northwest of Cameroun, the second child of Renè Bikoula and Marie Thérèse Assengue Edoa, religiously married, convinced and fervent Christians. Since he was a little child he manifested the desire of becoming Priest. He was attracted by the candor of the missionary habit of Fr. Eddy, whom he identified with Jesus. Becoming a Priest meant for him becoming Jesus. A day he would confess to his brother Maurizio: *“The Priest had something special, he was handsome in his habit and the cross reposed pleasantly on his heart. It was the cross of the Lord, so beautiful, not because of the material it was made, but I found it beautiful, very beautiful and I did not know why...”*

When he was 13 years old he entered the minor seminary of Guider. Afterwards he continued his studies at Montelé high school, until he graduated in science. He justified his choice of studying science with desire of being able to help his people also in the social field, without renouncing to his first ideal.

Different events in these years reveal indeed the determination of Jean Thierry of being faithful to God’s call. He would gather persons of his age and improvise liturgies and small choral liturgies. He was active in his Parish and directs a vocational group; he was an altar boy and he did not get tired because of the difficulties caused by his duties.

In order to help his parents, who worked so hard to support ordinary life and the whole small family tribe, he prepared ten gallons of frozen lemon juice, like icicles, in order to sell them in the market. He returned home under the hot sun of north Cameroun with a dry throat, without having had an icicle.



His character was sociable, happy, humorous, he attracted children of his age, intelligent and always the first one in his class, he helped others who were not as talented as he was; brilliant in composing little poems, organizing feasts, and very much admired. To her mother, who one day expressed to him her preoccupation at seeing him always surrounded by girls, he said: *“I know what you are thinking, but I can assure you that I keep intact my purity. I have prayed to Jesus for the gift of chastity and I have no doubt that I will be heard... I want to become Priest and I want to arrive pure to Priesthood.”*



At the writing-desk after the operation

Confronting an unjust school protest against him before the rector, his mother made him notice that it was injustice what Jesus, whom he wanted to imitate to save the brothers, voluntarily accepted at moment of His passion.

After a brief experience with the Oblates of Immaculate Mary in Mokolo, a vocation to this order was not recognized and was directed somewhere else. On July 28, 2003 he entered the Teresian Carmel in Nkoabang. In this religious family, Jean Thierry discovers with joy that this was the place prepared for him by the Lord to become Priest and religious. The life of prayer and fraternal life, studies, apostolate and manual work, essential elements of the Teresian Carmel, found in him an enthusiastic postulant, who wanted to attain his goal by being faithful to the ordinary life that community rule and obedience demand.

He offered himself with joy animating the Catholic Action movements, which have been assigned to him in St. Joachim and Anna’s Parish, directed by the Discalced Carmelite Fathers in Nkoabang, making flourish the youth and liturgical groups.

On June 29, 2004 he was admitted to the novitiate and was destined to go with two more companions to Burchina Faso. But some week later, a tumor manifested itself all of a sudden in his right knee putting in danger his belonging to the novitiate; he began his cure and his painful way from hospital to hospital.

At the General Hospital of Yaoundé, on November 18, his right leg was amputated, and as he would write in one of his most beautiful poems, he accepted with joy to contribute with his sacrifice to the birth of new religious and priestly vocations in Carmel and in the whole Church. He consoled Fr. Giorgio Peruzzotti, prior of the convent of formation and his spiritual father, affirming that *“At the end the Lord was just asking from him the offering of a leg that does not serve anymore.”*

Some time before in one stupendous, little poem in which Jean Thierry dialogued with Wisdom and chose her as fiancé. The poem finished with these words that Jean Thierry put in the mouth of Wisdom, identified with the word of God. *“Only my father does all, and all is fine. You do not have the need to penetrate in his thoughts: be like the little boy in his mother’s arms. He is not pre-occupied about anything, he goes where his mother takes him, he is occupied in taking his milk at the established moment and do not asks if is going to be some for tomorrow.”*

The Mission of Cameroun, founded in 1984, is part of the province of Lombardy of the Discalced Carmelite Friars. On August, 2005 Fr. Provincial, P. Gabrielle Mattavelli, who for years had been responsible of religious formation of the first Carmelite local vocations, coming back to Italy after a visit to the African convents and monasteries, brought with him Jean Thierry so that he may begin his canonical novitiate at the convent of Concesa (MI) and at the same time so that he may be taken care of by medical competence, after the application of a prosthesis to his right leg adapted to him.

The first verifications at the Hospital of Legnano (MI) reveled immediately the seriousness of the situation. By hospitalizing him for two month at the Hospital of Candiolo (TO) they tried to take away from death this young life, but the treatments did not work as they were expected to. He was taken back to the Hospital of Legnano (MI) and he was helped through a pain therapy to face the last stage of his painful way.

On December 8, 2005, once obtained the dispensation of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated life and the Society of apostolic life, with the consent of Fr. General, Jean Thierry had the joy, in the presence of his mother Marie Thérèse, of pronouncing his solemn profession in the Teresian Carmel. The act of religious profession was signed: **“Friar Jean Thierry Ebogo of the Child Jesus on of the Passion.”** The mysteries of the infancy and the passion of the incarnated Word have marked the brief life of this young boy from Cameroun who had consecrated his youth to Christ.



Taking leave of his parents to reach Italy

The Hospital's room had been transformed into a temple, into mystical Carmel. Hundreds of people, especially young, priests and religious, sick, friends were attracted by the serenity and the joy of sick patient who hid to all his sufferings and who was concerned only for others.

The boy who wanted the white tunic to become Jesus, dressed again with the white mantle of Carmel, offered himself in holocaust to the Love and to the will of the Father *“for the religious province, for vocations, religious and priestly particularly for Carmel, for the sanctification of priests.”*

In his heart his last wish, expressed many times to Fr. Giorgio: *“I would like to heal just to become a priest. You will take me on the wheelchair and I will rest all day long to accompany Jesus and administrate the sacrament of forgiveness. In the evening, you will come to take me...”*



With his mother when he took his vows

On January 5, 2006 Friar Jean Thierry of the Child Jesus and of the Passion, Discalced Carmelite, entered into heaven. A few hours before he had received the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist that had been celebrated in his room at the Hospital. The last sacrifice had been asked from him a few days before: the reentry of his mother Marie Thérèse in Cameroun, whose permit of stay not renewable had expired on December 26, 2005. She had attended the religious profession and the sacrament of unction of her son, united to him in the offering and adhesion of faith to the will of God: *“May God’s will be done.”* This was the answer of Jean Thierry to those who visited him in his last days, to Fr. Giorgio, and to the brothers in African Carmel who reached him by phone.

His last words were addressed to a very dear friend, whom he called “Mamma Anna,” a few hours before he entered into coma, pointing out to the image of Merciful Jesus on the front wall: *“How beautiful Jesus is.”* Dressed again with the Carmelite habit, the white mantle which enveloped his body as a caress of peace after suffering so much, reminds the vision of the Apocalypse: “This are those who, enveloped in candid vestments, have come from the great tribulation and have washed these garments turning them candid in the blood of the Lamb” (cfr. 7,14).

The marriage with Wisdom had been consumed. Identified with Jesus, and Jesus crucified, Jean Thierry could start his mission on earth: “I will not do as Therese of the Child Jesus, who promised a shower of roses from heaven, no, I will send a downpour of vocations.”

His funeral in Legnano (MI) on January 11, 2006, saw the presence of his Carmelite brothers and an immense crowd of friends wanting to be with him, but above all in his native land Cameroun it was marked by joy and triumph. At the arrival to the airport of Yaundé, a crowd of relatives and friends received and carried him in triumph, and for two days, hundreds and hundreds of people have accompanied him from the NKOabang Parish to school convent of Nkolbisson (Yaundé).

Now his body, as its waits for its resurrection, reposes in the garden of the school convent “Edith Stein” of Nkolbisson (Yaundé). His tomb is always covered with flowers and illuminated by candles, the Carmelite community gathers there each Saturday to pray the rosary and to sing “Salve Regina.” Many are the groups of friends, especially young, who come to his tomb attracted by his testimony of life and faith.

Friar Jean Thierry of the Child Jesus and of the Passion each time more, reveals himself as a gift from God to Carmel and for the Church in Africa and, why not?, according to his immense desire, for the whole Church and for the whole world.



Funeral ceremony at Nkolbisson

In order to meet the requests of those who would like to know better and more about the human and christian adventure of Jean Thierry, we are preparing his biography.

This leaflet is to keep his memory alive with our theresian Carmelite family and with a lot of friends invoke him and testify favors and graces received.

In Nkolbisson, works for building a chapel annexed to the student convent with an external entrance for the people, are going on. In this spot our brother Jean Thierry dreamed to carry out his religious and sacerdotal apostolic mission; whereas, if it is Will of God, we would like to transport his mortal remains.



Jean Thierry’s present grave with Fr. Giorgio and the students in Nkolbisson convent

For requests of leaflet, notifications of favours.

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Fr. Provincial and Superiors ocd in African Mission

THE BOY WHO WANTED TO BECOME JESUS

FR. JEAN THIERRY
OF THE CHILD JESUS AND OF THE PASSION
DISCALCED CARMELITE
(JEAN THIERRY EBOGO)

(☆.04 .02.1982 Bamenda - Cameroun ✕.05.01.2006 Legnano Mi – Italy)

