

## **LE PAPA...LE PAPA...**

Driving five days ago to Nkayi, the fourth largest town in Congo-Brazzaville, I passed through Dolisie to fetch the local Parish Priest who was to accompany me to Nkayi, beloved Fr. Pavlos, Director of the "St Efstathios" Orphanage. However, I also wanted to use this opportunity to spend two hours only with the little orphans, as no one knew – deliberately – that I would be passing through the city.

"Father...father...." the little ones called when they saw the car stopping at the entrance to the institution and spontaneously ran to hug me, pulling on my cassock, trying to climb onto me!

«Le papa»! Father!! What a magic word for an unmarried priest, who may not have children of his own, but to whom God gave tens of little children to raise and some thousands.....older ones to shepherd. These children, orphans, poor, abandoned in the streets or even unwanted in their broader family environment and pushed aside from it....."Here am I and the children God has given me" (Isaiah 8:18).