

SAVE AFRICA

NEWS LETTER



Postulants with formators at their formation house in Ngong, Kenya

“Our life is in God’s Hands; He does Whatever He Wants; by an Irrevocable Gift We have Sacrificed Our Lives to Him. Blessed be Him”

St Daniel Comboni



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SAVE AFRICA NEWSLETTER (SAN) is a biannual publication of the Comboni Postulancy, Nairobi. We publish the most recent developments in the Catholic Church and the Comboni Missionaries in Kenya and South Sudan.

We educate people on the activities of the Postulancy as well as the trending issues in the Comboni Missions. Through this we journey together, with our families in discerning our vocation and making a difference in the modern world.

You can be part of us too, you can be part of our vocation.

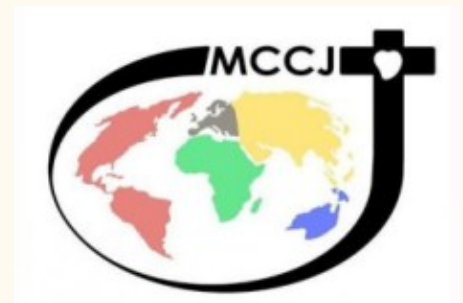
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Christmas Message From the Comboni Postulancy

By Fr. David Ahiro, Mccj

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Today a light will shine upon us, for the Lord is born for us; and he will be called Wondrous God, Prince of peace, Father of future ages: and his reign will be without end” Is 9:1.5: Lk 1:33.

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the postulant community would wish to extend our heartfelt wishes for a joyful and blessed Christmas to each of you. This is a season of great hope, where we are reminded that God, in His infinite love and mercy, came to dwell among us, bringing light into our world of darkness. This is a moment we commemorate the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. We are reminded of this important occasion when God took human form to live among His people, bringing salvation and hope to the world. Jesus' birth is seen as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, and His life and teachings form the foundation of our faith hence the need to allow the baby Jesus to be born in our hearts.

In the manger of Bethlehem, we see not only the humble birth of a child but the promise of salvation fulfilled. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is with us, and through Him, we are offered the gift of eternal life. In this season of giving, let us open our hearts to receive the greatest gift - His love, which transforms us and makes us whole. The birth of Jesus represents God's gift of salvation to humanity. We all know and believe that Jesus came to the world to save the humanity from sin and to offer eternal life.

His arrival is seen as the beginning of God's plan to reconcile humanity with Himself. Christmas is a reminder of God's love for the world. We view Jesus as the ultimate expression of God's love, and His message of peace and goodwill is a central theme of the season. The angels' announcement of "peace on earth, goodwill toward men" highlights the peace and joy that Jesus came to bring to the whole world.

As we reflect on the joy of the Nativity, may we also carry this joy into the world and let us remember of the profound love that God has for us and for entire world, embodied in the humble birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ's selfless love, this festival period encourages all of us to show kindness, generosity, and compassion to others. Let us be bearers of Christ's love to our families, our communities, and to all who need it most. This season should foster in all of us a sense of community and unity, as families and congregations come together to celebrate. It should remind us of the importance of relationships and the bonds of love within the body of Christ.

May the peace and joy of the Nativity inspire you to deepen your commitment in your various responsibilities and to be instruments of love, mercy, and service in the world. May this holy season renew your faith, strengthen your love for one another, and inspire you to live as true disciples of Christ. May the light of Christ fill your hearts with hope and guide you on your journey of faith. May His birth bring peace, love, and hope into your heart and home. As we reflect on the light He brought into the world, may we strive to share His love and grace with others and let that light fill your hearts and guide your steps in the coming year.

A blessed Christmas to you and your loved ones from all the members of the Comboni Postulancy Community in Kenya.



Increase of Vocation; a Great Sign of Hope for the Institute

By *Simon Lodai Amin*

The Comboni Postulancy Community initiated 16 promising young men who are discerning their vocation to become Comboni Missionaries. Such move has brought the total number of postulants to thirty (30) students. Of the sixteen (16) young people, 5 are from the Comboni missionaries' province of South Sudan while 11 are from the Kenyan province.

The sixteen young men include: Hilary Werung'a (a brother candidate), Joseph Odhiambo, Julius Kiambi, Abraham Wekesa, Pius Ashiundu, Mishael Meshack, Morris Muthoka, Stephen Oluoch, Emmanuel Shitula, Boaz Loshuru, James Aloo, Denis

Dino Auku, Mathew Poth, Angelo Botha, Michael Otongo, and Abraham Oyet Kanis. Of these, 15 are priest candidates while one, Hilary Werung'a is brother candidate.

At least for the last few years, the postulancy has not received such a good number. It is a good sign of hope when young people are able to express their desire to join religious life and become missionaries. This assures the continuity of the mission of Jesus Christ. More particularly, such increase demonstrates the possible guarantee for the continuity of the work of God which St Daniel Comboni started.

The initiation ceremony was ushered in by a one-day recollection. The recollection which was animated by Rev. Fr. Clement Mutie Mbithi MCCJ, who invited the postulants consider "*The Cross as*

a Symbol and Mean of Redemption." In his reflections, Fr. Mutie underlined the cross as signifying trios, "*Salvation, Sacrifice and Service.*" He thus invited the postulants to embrace the cross and give themselves at the service of others selflessly.

The Holy Mass commemorating the event was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Sylvester, a Comboni Missionary who is a Formator at the Comboni Uganda Martyrs Scholasticate in Nairobi, Karen. Fr. Sylvester in his homily urged the young people to fix their eyes on the cross and understand it. According to him, fixing our attention on the cross is an invitation from the Lord Jesus Christ. As "pilgrims on a journey, like the people of Israel from Exile to the promise land," we are all invited to seek God and follow Him

on our way. One must not lose focus and attention at the destiny.

Denis Dino Auku a postulant from South Sudan, with joy considered the initiation to this stage of formation as "sunshine in the lives of the first years" appreciating the prerequisite formation at

Moroyok, Juba as a great help which has precipitated to the event which unfolded before his eyes. Meanwhile Julius Kiambi, a Kenyan postulant express heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Comboni Missionaries reflecting the nice experience at Kario-bangi culminating into the initiation ceremony with great success.

Therefore, let us continue to pray for these young men and for the Comboni Missionaries. The missions of the Comboni Missionaries globally are demanding. They demand committed missionaries with deep faith and trust in God. Hence, with our soldered support the work of God will continue in the world. Because increase in vocation is the hope of the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries.



A Journey of Faith, Trial, and Resilience: From a Devout Catholic Family to Priesthood as a passionate Comboni Missionary

By Fr. Clement Mutie Mbithi, Mccj

My Journey as a Comboni Missionary

My name is Fr. Clement Mutie Mbithi, a Comboni Missionary priest. I was born and raised in Kenya, in the Diocese of Wote-Makueni, Sacred Heart Parish, Mbitini. I come from a large Christian-Catholic family and am the sixth child among ten siblings. My late father, a devout Catholic and a man of unwavering faith, passed away in 2020. My mother, who continues to be a source of strength and inspiration, is a woman of deep trust in God. Growing up in this faith-filled environment was a profound blessing, shaping the person I am today and laying the foundation for my vocation as a missionary.

My parents' dedication to faith was evident in every aspect of their lives. My father's steadfast commitment to the Church, where he served tirelessly, and my mother's quiet yet resolute trust in God, taught us children the value of faith and perseverance. Our home was my first "school of life," where I learned to pray, trust in God, and embrace Christian virtues such as love, humility, and community living.

Being part of a large family taught me many valuable lessons. My older siblings instilled in me respect and the importance of listening, while my younger siblings nurtured in me a sense of responsibility, care, and joy in looking after others. As the sixth-born, I experienced the dynamics of both learning from my elders and guiding the younger ones. These early family experiences gave me a strong sense of security, belonging, and love, all of which prepared me for my calling.

Early Signs of a Vocation

During my childhood, I was drawn to the activities of the Church. My father's example as a devoted Catholic who never missed Mass was a powerful influence. He was a living icon of the Catholic faith, always encouraging us to attend catechism classes, Sunday school, and youth group activities. My faith began to take deeper root during these early years, especially after I joined the altar servers' group in our parish. Serving at the altar awakened a profound desire in me to become a priest. At the time, I did not fully understand the dis-

A pivotal moment came in 2009 when my cousin, during a casual conversation, told me, "You are going to be our family priest." Her words echoed the deepest desires of my heart, though I did not openly admit it. This encounter gave me courage and affirmed the path I hoped to follow.

Meeting the Comboni Missionaries

A key turning point came two weeks before my final high school exams. A Comboni Missionary, Fr. Austine Radol, Mccj, visited our parish for a vocational promotion. His visit coincided with a Thanksgiving Mass at my school, where he shared stories of the Comboni Missionaries' work spreading the Gospel and serving the poorest and most abandoned. His testimony resonated deeply with me. After Mass, I approached Fr. Austine with a mix of fear and excitement and promised to contact him after receiving my exam results. His encouragement and openness gave me the courage to explore my vocation more deeply. The Gospel passage of Matthew 4:18-22, where Jesus calls Peter and Andrew to follow Him, became a source of inspiration for me. Like the disciples, I felt a call to leave behind my fears and uncertainties and trust in God's plan for my life.

Formation Journey with the Comboni Missionaries

Pre-Postulancy (2011)

In May 2011, I officially began my formation journey with the Comboni Missionaries. My pre-postulancy was at Holy Trinity Parish, Kariobangi, where I taught at St. Martin De Porres Primary School. Working with children from disadvantaged backgrounds; orphans, children of single parents, and those from poor families, opened my eyes to the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of faith. Despite their hardships, these children radiated hope and trust in God, teaching me invaluable lessons about perseverance and gratitude.

Postulancy (2012-2015):

The postulancy period in Ongata Rongai was a time of deep personal growth and discernment.

"Our life is in God's hands; he does whatever he wants; by an irrevocable gift we have sacrificed our lives to him. Blessed be Him"

St Daniel Comboni

I spent three years studying philosophy while living in community and immersing myself in the Comboni charism. This period provided opportunities for spiritual development through prayer, monthly spiritual direction, and pastoral engagement. I also became more aware of my motivations, doubts, and fears, but I always sought to



align my desires with God's will. The postulancy laid a solid foundation for my missionary journey, shaping my identity and strengthening my resolve to serve.

Novitiate (2015-2017):

In 2015, I joined the novitiate in Lusaka, Zambia. This two-year period was marked by intense spiritual growth, silence, and discernment. During the first year, known as the canonical year, I worked at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, ministering to the sick and their families. This experience taught me compassion and empathy, particularly in moments of deep human suffering.

The second year of novitiate included a four-month mission experience in Malawi, where I engaged with new cultures, languages, and methods of evangelization. This broadened my understanding of what it means to be a missionary and strengthened my connection to the Comboni charism. By the end of the novitiate, I took my first vows, officially becoming a member of the Comboni Missionaries.

Theological Studies and Challenges

After the novitiate, I was assigned to the Scholasticate in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, for theological studies. The four years I spent there were transformative, deepening my understanding of theology and the Bible while also exposing me to intercultural living within and outside the community.

However, this period was not without challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I lost my father. The inability to return home for his burial was one of the most painful moments of my journey. My father had been a pillar of support throughout my life, and I longed for him to witness the fulfilment of my calling. This experience taught me to trust in God's plan, even in the face of profound loss, and to find solace in prayer and community.

Pastoral Year and Ordination

Following my theological studies, I was assigned to West Pokot, Kenya, for my pastoral year. This period was a blend of missionary service and preparation for priestly ordination. I worked closely with the local community, embracing their culture and sharing the Gospel in ways that resonated with their lived experiences.

On February 30, 2022, I was ordained as a deacon, and on June 11, 2022, I received priestly ordination in the Diocese of Kitui. These moments were the culmination of years of discernment, formation, and prayer, marking the beginning of my life as a priest.

Post-Ordination Mission and Current Role

After ordination, I pursued further studies at the Gregorian University in Rome, specializing in vocational formation. This academic journey deepened my understanding of how to guide and mentor others in their vocational discernment. In June 2023, I completed my licentiate and returned to Kenya to serve in the Postulancy Formation House in Ongata Rongai. Here, I accompany young men from Kenya and South Sudan who are preparing to become Comboni Missionaries. This role is both a privilege and a responsibility, allowing me to share my experiences and support others as they discern their call to missionary life.

Reflections and Gratitude

Looking back, my journey has been one of growth, challenges, and deepening faith. Each stage, from my early family life to my current role as a missionary, has been marked by God's faithfulness. I have learned to embrace both the joys and crosses of this vocation, always relying on God's mercy and grace.

The people I have encountered along the way, the children at St. Martin De Porres, the sick at the hospital in Zambia, and the communities in Malawi and West Pokot, have profoundly shaped me. Their resilience, faith, and love continue to inspire my commitment to serving the poorest and most abandoned.

Today, I look to the future with hope and joy, trusting in God's providence and remaining open to His call. I am proud to be a Comboni Missionary, dedicated to spreading the Gospel and bringing Christ's love to the world.





St. Daniel Comboni: A Vocation and Service that Transcends Time

By Post. Faustino Tino Maloba

St. Daniel Comboni was a beacon of unwavering faith and mercy whose vocation transcended time and left an indelible mark on Africa. Born in Italy in 1831, Comboni felt a desire to serve in the African continent from an early age. He dedicated his life to improving the lives of African peoples, especially those suffering from poverty, oppression and exploitation. His unique vision was guided by the belief that Africans themselves should play a leading role in shaping their own future; a revolutionary idea at the time.

A HEART FOR THE MISSION

Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice,
 Devotion your heart core becomes,
 Knowledge born from experience,
 Visit to Africa new inspiration it's born,
 The Agape needed for the mission,

Not by mistakes the adventure resourceful becomes,

Dilemma leaving the parents it comes,
 Spiritual directions the solution offered,
 Africa heart purified ready for the mission,
 The Agape needed for the mission,

Downfalls on the mission way comes,
 Climatic complications he endures,
 Sickness sweeps away committed Fr. Oliboni,
 Strong energetic words he leaves,
 The Agape needed for the mission.

His mother's demise sorrows it inflicts,
 The power of cross courage he gains,
 Serious illness Comboni it attacks,
 Africa or Death motivation it becomes,
 The Agape needed for the mission,

**By Mauricio Muthoka
 Joseph**



Comboni's First Trip to Africa in 1857 was a Life-changing Experience. St Daniel Comboni encountered a continent facing enormous challenges, but recognized the potential and dignity of the people behind the difficulties. A typical African experience inspired Comboni's famous, "*Plan for the regeneration of Africa to 'Save Africa by Africans,'*" which outlined a mission based on empowerment rather than control. Unlike many missionaries of the time, who often sought to impose European values and customs, Comboni advocated an approach that respected African culture and traditions. He believed that real progress would come from the communities themselves, with missionaries functioning as collaborative partners.

One of Comboni's most important contributions was his holistic approach to missionary work. For him, spreading the message of faith was intimately linked to meeting people's physical and social needs. Comboni understood that faith had to be lived out through actions such as establishing **schools, health facilities and other programs**. His goal was not just to convert, but to touch lives, *to educate and empower* people to create a lasting impact that could last beyond his lifetime. Involving of catechists and laity in evangelization was a tremendous attitude of St Daniel Comboni. This philosophy formed the basis of the Comboni Missionaries, the religious order he founded to continue his work across Africa. Today, Comboni's legacy lives on through the Comboni Missionaries who continue to work across the continent. Functioning in evangelization, education, health care sectors, social justice and environmental sustainability, they address modern challenges while staying true to Comboni's original vision and desire. In areas where access to basic needs is limited, missionaries provide essential services and create opportunities for self-sufficiency. A focus on education and skills development helps communities build a foundation for a better future, promoting self-reliance rather than dependency.

St. Daniel Comboni's mission remains vital. As Africa faces new challenges such as climate change, economic inequality and political instability, the world is invited to reconsider the approach of St Daniel Comboni, "**To Empower Africa through Africa**" implied in his plan "**SAFE AFRICA WITH AFRICA**". Yet, the world leaders seem to be doing the exact opposite which is to exploit Africa for individual interest". Such is unfolding while Comboni's approach is being down-trodden. The principles he espoused **solidarity, empowerment and respect** - are essential to building resilient communities. It is clear that his legacy shows that a mission based on true **compassion and respect** can have a lasting impact.

In their ongoing work, Comboni missionaries embody a mission that will stand the test of time. Comboni's life and mission are a powerful reminder that faith, when combined with compassion and action, can transform lives for generations to come. Therefore, in every act of service, St. Daniel Comboni's spirit of approach continues to *soar and inspire*, leaving a lasting impression on Africa and the world. His vision of an *Africa for Africans* lives on, as does his enduring mission to celebrate the dignity, resilience and potential of the African people.

ZEPHANIAH CHERUIYOT'S VOCATION JOURNEY

By Zephaniah Kibet Cheruiyot

My name is Zephaniah Kibet Cheruiyot, born on September 2, 1998, to the late John Ngetich Kimeto and Safina Chepkirui Rono. I grew up in a loving family of nine siblings, whose unwavering support shaped my early years. I was baptized on December 23, 1998, marking the beginning of my faith journey, which has continued to be a guiding light in my life.

My story of faith began in my primary school years, particularly in the lower grades. I was drawn to the beauty of the church—the candles, incense, hymns, and the priest's and altar servers' vestments. In upper primary, I attended Sunday services alongside my siblings. Yet, there were moments when I resisted. Sometimes, I would intentionally delay laundry on Saturdays to make it a Sunday task, allowing me to skip Mass. This avoidance persisted until I reached Class Eight, when a new priest was posted to our parish.

In my family, attending church on Sundays was an expectation. Missing the service brought guilt and often led to discussions I preferred to avoid. As I approached my final primary school exams, faith took on a new meaning for me. It became common for candidates to turn to preachers for guidance and blessings. I started making silent prayers upon waking up, often driven by fear as I slept alone in a room about 200 meters from my parents' house. At night, I would find myself kneeling by the bed or praying softly in my mind, asking God for protection and the ability to wake up on time, as I had no watch.

One Sunday, during a homily, my parish priest's words struck a deep chord within me. It felt as though he was speaking directly about my life. This moment became a turning point. I began attending Mass consistently and felt that God was speaking to me through the priest. This experience sparked a desire within me to emulate him.

However, when I joined high school, that desire faded. About 90% of my schoolmates were Protestants, and I was appointed as a Christian Union (CU) representative for my class. Later, I became the vice-chairperson and eventually the chairperson, not necessarily for my spiritual qualification but due to the need for male representation in leadership positions. This responsibility helped me behave more responsibly and introduced me to numerous crusades and rallies that deepened my understanding of the Christian faith from a Protestant perspective.

In Form Four, I attended a deanery youth seminar, which proved transformative. It was my first time witnessing youths, particularly men, dancing during the procession, and hearing the song "Natamani Kuruka." The seminar's theme centered on vocations, especially religious life. This experience reignited my faith, and I transitioned from CU to the Young Catholic Students (YCS) group. After the seminar, I decided to pursue priesthood.

After completing my secondary school exams, I failed, largely due to a misunderstanding of how God works miracles. I recalled the preachers who prayed for us, invoking the Holy Spirit before exams. Many of us interpreted their prayers literally, expecting miraculous interventions during the exams. When this did not happen, I performed poorly.



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Determined to follow my calling, I repeated Form Four with a singular focus: to achieve the grades necessary to join the seminary. When the results came out, I had performed exceptionally well. I contacted the vocation promoter of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, who guided me on my journey until I joined the postulancy.

My postulancy life as expected has not been without challenges. I spent almost two years dealing with the problem of fear and anxieties. This was something which has been developing in me over time. Being brought up by strict teachers since my early childhood, my father (together with my elder siblings) being strict, and a literal understanding of the bible verse: *the fear of the Lord is the first stage of knowledge*; are just but a few examples of the contributing factors to the fear which was in me. This together with some other challenges have been dealt with seriously with my formators. Being guided by a phrase which have always been on the notice board in the Catechesis Room: (*"I already see and understand that the Cross is such a friend to me that I have for some time chosen it as my eternal and inseparable Bride. So the Cross will be my Beloved bride and my wise and prudent teacher"*), I have continuously embraced and accepted them as small crosses meant to guide me into a better person in the society. On the other hand, the philosophical studies that I am taking, is shaping my understanding of the world and teaching me on how to deal with certain issues in life. I can see things in a deeper understanding as nothing can be taken for granted.

Several other things which have not been mentioned here are not of a lesser importance, basically my postulancy story is a very proud thing which cannot be written entirely.

POEM IN HONOUR OF THE HERO

The Hero's Life

It was on 15th March, 1831,
Central African's savior born,
A humble and interior place,
T'is where hails Comboni,
St. Daniel the Hero,



First encounter with Jesus in Holy
Communion great impact he says,
Birth of his commitment for the service It bears,
Growth of his mission Don Mazza Institute contributes,
Arrival of Fr. Vinco Comboni's missionary vocation it's born,
St. Daniele the Hero,

A savior of the slaves Limone it gives,
The heart for Central Africa he reveals,
Following difficult career the passion he owns,
Going for the mission His parents Martyrs he makes,
St. Daniele the Hero,

By the influence of the retreat by Fr. Marani,
Dilemma the hero comes out of it,
Full of immense unexplored rivers and impenetrable forests
long journey was,
The strong mission zeal funds everything,
St. Daniel the Hero,

Behind success a painful history,
Africa or Death becomes his motto,
Fr. Oliboni last words of encouragement,
Deep impression to Comboni it becomes,
St. Daniel the Hero,

Following his mom's demise,
Devotion to the crucifix his strength restored,
Heart-felt for the slaves still the concern,
Regeneration of the Africa the plan born,
St. Daniele the Hero,

Saving Africans with Africa,
Verona institute he founds,
On 1st January, 1872, the new family born,
New followers ready for the mission comes in,
St. Daniel the Hero,

Hard work never goes unrewarded they said,
Appointment for the new office he receives,
1st Bishop of Central Africa from Pro-vicar Apostolic he be-
comes,
His history remains recorded,
St. Daniel the Hero,

I die but my words will not die his last words,
Heavy words many they inspire,
Holy and capable missionaries is what he calls for,
The mission still needs this,
St. Daniele the Hero,

At Ten O'clock in the morning marks his last breath,
On the 10th October his soul separates with the body,
Your Slogans the source of strength for many,
The missions need your intercession always,
St. Daniel the Hero,

By Mauricio M.uthoka Joseph



Samuel Mwangi (MCCJ) and Eight Others Ordained Deacons at Utawala

By Evance Otieno Odhiambo

On August 24, 2024, in a celebration held at Holy Family Parish in Utawala, in the Archdiocese of Nairobi, Samuel Mwangi a Comboni Missionary (MCCJ), alongside eight other members of the Congregation of St. Patrick missionary society were ordained as deacons in a ceremony marked by reverence, joy, and commitment to faith. The ordination ceremony was presided over by Right Rev. Rodrigo Mejia Saldariaga, Apostolic Vicar Emeritus of Soddo, Ethiopia.

The ordination, which is a significant milestone in the journey towards priesthood, was attended by family, friends, members of the Comboni missionaries alongside with those of St Patrick missionary society and the parish community, all of whom gathered to support and celebrates the ordained candidates.

The main celebrant, Rt. Rev. Rodrigo Mejia Saldariaga, former Apostolic Vicar Emeritus of Soddo, Ethiopia, delivered a powerful homily that highlighted the role of deacons in serving the Church and their communities with humility, love, and dedication.

He reminded the candidates of their calling to be "servants of Christ, describing it as a "perpetual ministry of service" not merely as a transitional phase but as a fundamental aspect of their lifelong ministry." he further emphasized the importance of their roles in preaching, assisting at the altar, and caring for those in need.

He encouraged them to approach their ministries with open hearts, embracing the responsibilities that come with their new roles. The moment was especially moving as the candidates laid prostrate in humble submission while the congregation invoked the intercession of saints.



Samuel Mwangi, along with the eight other candidates, responded with heartfelt commitment during the Rite of Ordination. Deacon Samuel Ngugi Mwangi (MCCJ) was assigned to Amakuriat mission in West Pokot, in the Diocese of Kitale, Kenya. This assignment marks the beginning of a new chapter in his ministry, where he will apply his newly acquired role to serve the people of Amakuriat. His placement in this mission underscores the Congregation's commitment to reaching out to diverse and often underserved communities, reflecting the broader mission of the Comboni missionaries to serve all corners of the world with compassion and dedication. Fr. Andrew Wanjohi, Provincial Superior of the Comboni Province of Kenya, took the opportunity to extend his heartfelt gratitude to all who participated in the event. He expressed deep appreciation for the support and presence of the Christians, acknowledging their role in making the joint diaconate celebration a success.

Family members and friends of the newly ordained deacons expressed pride and joy in witnessing this sacred moment. After the ceremony, a reception was held where the new deacons received blessings and words of encouragement from well-wishers and mentors, including seasoned clergy who shared their own experiences and guidance for the path ahead.

Samuel Mwangi, known for his dedication and compassion, has journeyed through years of rigorous study, spiritual formation, and pastoral service, preparing him for this moment of consecration. His ordination as a deacon is a testament to his unwavering commitment to serve God and His people. As he steps into this new role, the parish community joins him in prayer, asking God to guide him and his fellow deacons as they continue on their path toward priesthood.

This ordination celebration stands as a reminder of the enduring call to ministry and service in the Church. The community of Holy Family Parish, Utawala, extended its heartfelt congratulations to Samuel Mwangi and all the newly ordained deacons, praying for God's grace and blessings upon them as they begin their ministry journey.



What is My Personality Type: Discovering Myself Essential for My Vocation?

By *Simon Lodai Amin*

During the mid-semester break, the postulancy hosted a transformative workshop on the Enneagram, a powerful tool for self-discovery and growth. This workshop was facilitated by Rev. Sr. Mary Magdalene from the Order of the Incarnate Word Sisters. The highly anticipated activity was the first of its kind in the postulancy. Brothers shared many experiences on how the personality types work for them.

In fact, for many brothers, it was the first time they probed deeply into the intricate workings of their personalities. The Enneagram doesn't simply classify individuals; it shines a light on their core motivations, strengths, and areas needing grace. It became clear that understanding oneself is not just beneficial; it is essential for anyone discerning their vocation.

The Personality Types

In her presentation, Sr. Magdalene, outlining the nine personality types developed by Oscar Ichazo (1931–2020); went on to deeply identify features, dilemmas, defence mechanisms, symbols, and colours associated with the different personality types. These personality types include: The Reformer/Perfectionist, Helper, Achiever/Winner, Artist/Individualist, The Investigator, Loyalists, Adventurer, Challenger and The Peace Maker.

According to this teaching,

Type 1 (The Reformer): Principled, disciplined, and driven by a desire for perfection.

Type 2 (The Helper): Caring, generous, and focused on meeting others' needs.

Type 3 (The Achiever): Ambitious, adaptable, and motivated by success and recognition.

Type 4 (The Individualist): Creative, introspective, and in search of authenticity.

Type 5 (The Investigator): Analytical, curious, and values knowledge and independence.

Type 6 (The Loyalist): Responsible, cautious, and seeks security and support.

Type 7 (The Adventurer/Enthusiast): Optimistic, adventurous, and seeks new experiences.

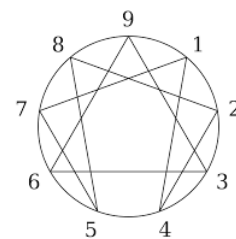
Type 8 (The Challenger): Assertive, protective, and driven by a need for control.

Type 9 (The Peacemaker): Easygoing, accommodating, and values harmony and peace.

The workshop revealed that each personality type reflects a unique aspect of God's image, offering specific gifts to the community and the Church.

For example, some brothers identified as Type 1s, driven by a deep desire for integrity, while others, like the Type 9s, embodied peace and harmony. Discussions were lively, honest, and often humorous as we unpacked how these traits play out in daily life. Yet, the sessions also challenged us to confront the shadows of our personalities; the tendencies that could hinder our spiritual growth and relationships.

Personality types do not work independently. Instead they are to be balanced by the wings i.e. the types on either side of each. This is to ensure that an individual gets redeemed from an extreme of their personality. For instance, Personality type 3 is balanced by 2 and 4. Moreover, to grow in one's personality especially when unredeemed, Sr. Mary advised to go against the current in the enneagram cycle as shown. Type 3s will have to try and embrace some aspects of type 6 in order to be redeemed but not to go to 9 as those can be dangerous with their personality type. All the others follow this similar pattern.



A Call to Action

Ultimately, the Enneagram workshop wasn't just an exercise in self-awareness; it was a call to action. To live out our vocations authentically, we must first know ourselves deeply, embracing our strengths while surrendering our weaknesses to God. This journey of discovery enriched our brotherhood, fostering greater empathy and understanding within the postulancy. As we continue this path, the insights gained remind us that self-knowledge is not merely personal; it's foundational to serving others in love.

Therefore, with this workshop more than half of the brothers in the postulancy were able to identify their personality types, embracing the positivities and negativities it embodied and understanding the trends to get redeemed out of an extreme personality type.



Such understanding of personality enables the brothers to be able to evaluate their vocation, embrace and understand other's personalities in order to live a truly religious vocation inspired by Love for God and neighbor.

Kenya Province Closes the Golden Jubilee at St Daniel Comboni Parish - Utawala

By Evance Otieno Odhiambo



The Comboni Missionaries' celebration of the Golden Jubilee in Kenya was a commemoration of 50 years of their presence in Kenya. It was a moment of reflecting on their journey since they established their missionary work here in the Country. The event that took place on October 13 at St Daniel Comboni Catholic Parish, Utawala highlighted the contributions of the Comboni Missionaries, who have focused on evangelization, education, healthcare, especially in remote and marginalized areas like Pokot, Turkana, Marsabit and even within Nairobi. The tremendous celebration was marked by thanksgiving mass which was presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya Archbishop Hubertus van Megen. The celebration was marked with liturgical songs, cultural performances and testimonies from communities and missionaries alike, showcasing the positive impact of their work and honoring the dedication of both past and present Comboni Missionaries.

This Jubilee celebration was also a time to reaffirm their commitment to the mission established by Saint Daniel Comboni, who envisioned bringing the Good News and transformative support to African communities. By celebrating their history in Kenya, the Comboni Missionaries led by the provincial superior of Kenya Rev. Fr Andrew Wanjohi invited communities to join in gratitude and prayer for continued service and spiritual growth in the years to come.

The Archbishop Hubertus van Megen, Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya who graced the occasion, encouraged those in marriage and in Religious life to have patience in the challenges they face, emulating St. Daniel Comboni who endured hard labor, unbearable climate, sickness, deaths of several of his young fellow-missionaries while he served in Africa.



Inauguration of the Preparatory School

In his address on Sunday, October 13, on the occasion of the double celebrations of inauguration of the Catholic Women Association (C.W.A) and Golden Jubilee of the Comboni missionaries in Kenya, Archbishop Hubertus van Megen said enduring challenges with perseverance and prayer is key to fulfilling one's vocation, whether as a missionary or a married person. The celebration was filled with various significant and symbolic activities that highlighted their contributions over the decades.

1. Support of Long-Serving Missionaries As part of the celebrations, the event recognized the dedication and contributions of several long-serving Missionaries not only the Comboni Missionaries but also other missionaries. These awards honored their enduring commitment to the mission and the people of Kenya and outside Kenya, acknowledging the sacrifices made to uplift and empower the communities they served. This segment served as an inspiration to younger missionaries and seminarians, showing them the values of perseverance and dedication. All this was made possible through the docket of the vocation promoter, Rev Father John Korir MCCJ



2. Performances and Displays The event included performance by the PMC from Makutano Parish in Kapenguria founded by the Comboni missionaries, reflecting the mutual respect and strong relationship between the Comboni Missionaries and the people they serve. Poetry presentations which they performed showcased the Kenyan heritage while celebrating the missionaries' contributions and history of the Comboni missionaries since their establishment.

3. Exhibition of Comboni Missionary Projects An exhibition displayed the different projects initiated by the Comboni Missionaries especially the pre- primary project that was opened officially on the very day at St Daniel Comboni School. This acted as a testimonial of their contribution towards the education sector without living aside health care, social justice, and environmental conservation and other pastoral work.

The exhibition highlighted the mission's achievements in establishing schools, health clinics, and community development programs, as well as its ongoing commitment to serving vulnerable populations.

THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY

By Samson Owino Odera

The Catholic identity is rooted deeply in Scripture and tradition, emphasizing the Church's role as the Body of Christ, the importance of the sacraments, and the mission to live a life of faith, hope, and charity. The Catholic Church, as a universal community, draws its teachings and practices from the Word of God, which forms the foundation of its beliefs and actions.

The Church as the Body of Christ

The Catholic identity is fundamentally connected to the Church as the Body of Christ. St. Paul writes, *now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it* (1 Corinthians 12:27). This emphasizes that each Catholic is part of a larger spiritual community united in Christ. The Church is not merely a human institution but a divine one, guided by the Holy Spirit. Catholics believe that the Church's unity reflects Jesus' prayer in the Gospel of John, *that they may all be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me* (John 17:21). This unity is central to the Catholic identity, promoting inclusivity and universality in faith. Therefore, the Catholic identity as connected to the Church as the Body of Christ, reveals a profound theological and communal reality. It is a call to unity in diversity, a recognition of the divine foundation of the Church, and a commitment to living as members of a global spiritual family. This identity challenges Catholics to embody Christ's love and to work together for the common good, always striving to fulfill the prayer of Jesus that all may be one.

The Sacraments as Channels of Grace

The Catholic is profoundly sacramental, with the sacraments serving as visible signs of God's invisible grace. Jesus instituted the sacraments as a means of sanctification and divine encounter. For example, in the Eucharist, Catholics celebrate the real presence of Christ, as affirmed in Jesus' words: *This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me* (Luke 22:19). Baptism is another cornerstone of Catholic identity, symbolizing the washing away of sin and entry into the Christian community. St. Peter proclaims, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:38). Thus, the identity is intrinsically sacramental, revealing the tangible and transformative ways God works in the lives of His people. Through the sacraments, Catholics encounter the divine, deepen their faith, and are empowered to live out their vocation as disciples of Christ. These sacred signs of grace stand at the heart of what it means to be Catholic, connecting believers to the mystery of God's love and the mission of the Church.



Living a Life of Faith and Good Works

James writes, "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). Catholics understand that while salvation is a gift from God, it must be expressed through acts of love, service, and obedience. This aligns with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25:40: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." Charity and social justice are essential expressions of the Catholic faith, inspired by Christ's example of serving the poor and marginalized. The Church, following Jesus' mission, is called to be a beacon of hope and compassion in the world.

The Authority of Scripture and Tradition

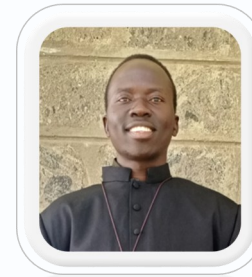
The Catholic faith embraces both Scripture and tradition as sources of divine revelation. St. Paul writes, "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). This dual approach reflects the belief that God's Word is transmitted not only through the Bible but also through the living tradition of the Church. The Magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church, serves to interpret Scripture and tradition authentically. Jesus entrusted this authority to Peter and the apostles, saying, "You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). This apostolic foundation underscores the Church's continuity and faithfulness to Christ's mission.

Hope in Eternal Life

The Catholic identity is imbued with a profound hope in eternal life. Jesus promises, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). This assurance gives Catholics a perspective that transcends the temporal world, guiding them to live in the light of eternity. Hope in eternal life transforms how believers view their earthly existence. Guided by Jesus' promise of resurrection, Catholics are empowered to live with purpose, endure hardships, and strive for holiness. This hope provides comfort in the face of mortality and inspires a life oriented toward the eternal, lived in faith, love, and trust in God's promises. In this way, the hope of eternal life remains a defining and sustaining element of Catholic faith and identity.

“Foster Hope Among the People of God” Auxiliary Bishop of Nairobi Simon Tells Religious

By Simon Lodai Amin



In October 26th, 2024, Priests, brothers and sisters together with students from various religious houses of formation held a religious walk in Karen. This walk was just but part of the launching of the Jubilee Year for Consecrated Life in Kenya. Officially opened by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, His Grace Phillip Arnold Anyolo, the religious women and men went through the streets chanting songs, reciting the rosary and having a nice encounter with God, nature and the people of God. After two and half hours walk, they settled at Regina Caeli Parish for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided over by Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, Rt. Rev. Simon Peter Kamomoe.

According to *ACI Africa*, Bishop Kamomoe urged both the religious women and men to foster hope among the people of God they encounter as they journey towards the Jubilee of Consecrated Life planned for 8th to 9th October 2025 in Rome. He made this call in his homily during the planned Consecrated Life Walk, which the Archdiocese of Nairobi (AND) realized on Saturday, October 26 as part of the preparations for the Church’s 2025 Jubilee Year, to be officially launched on Christmas eve.

On January 21, Pope Francis announced the start of a Year of Prayer in preparation for the Catholic Church’s 2025 Jubilee Year, the second in his Pontificate after the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in 2015.

On May 9th, the Solemnity of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Father solemnly proclaimed the upcoming Jubilee Year 2025 at a ceremony in St. Peter’s Basilica, during which he delivered the Bull of Indiction of the planned Jubilee, “*Spes non confundit*” (Hope does not disappoint). To be marked under the theme, “*Pilgrims of Hope*”, the Catholic Church’s 2025 Jubilee Year that is to officially begin on December 24 is to conclude on 6 January 2026.

The Comboni Postulants who participated in the religious walk shared meaningful experiences which had significant impact in their discernment of a religious vocation according to the Comboni way of life. For most Postulants encountering the diversity of religious congregations, men and women as well as fellow postulants from the different formation houses gave them a sense of pride, identity and solidarity.

They were overjoyed and optimistic about the Jubilee year for Consecrated life. Some were moved by the homily of Bishop Simon who invited formators in religious houses not only to make formees conform to certain standards and norms but also help them understand the standards they are undertaking.

This placed internalization of values at the core of formation. Bishop Simon believes in maturity of persons, doing things with integrity and conviction as opposed to acting out of fear, following a particular set rules and norms without understanding them.

Bishop Kamomoe takes the stand that is interesting. For him, women and men Religious are “beacons of hope”. In his homily he said, “The world watches us, and whenever we appear joyful, despite challenges, we continue to inspire hope,” reflecting on the contrary of a joyful religious the Auxiliary Bishop added, “Imagine if Priests, Bishops, or Nuns looked miserable; they would hardly inspire young people to join Consecrated Life.”

The bishop emphasized on the call to be role models to the young people. For him, role modeling plays a great role in discernment of vocations. Among which stands the aspect of being joyful, “That is why I always remind vocation directors: let them see you serving the Lord joyfully. Being joyful does not mean having no challenges – Jesus faced challenges yet bore the cross joyfully,” He further stated.

He emphasized the need for the religious to foster joy and make it part of their lifestyle, saying, “I believe in serving the Lord joyfully and in finding fulfillment through service because as pilgrims and consecrated people, we are beacons of hope.” Therefore, the religious have the ability to transform the world. This activity marked a significant moment in the life of religious in Kenya.



Small-Scale Farming as a Sustainable Skill in Seminary Education

By Bonaventure Matoke

Formation does not only focus on forming someone to become a religious brother, priest, religious sister, or the laity, but goes a little mile further to form one to become an integrated person. For instance, matters to do with economic, how to generate capital to make other things run without being too much over dependent on Christians who are also struggling, but to use the little resources and the skills to promote the community. Apart from divine providence, I always feel that this is one of the aspects that makes the Catholic Church sponsor and run its missions, for instance, schools, and hospitals, like for us Comboni missionaries (MCCJ), our charism is serving the poorest and most abandoned.

Why farming?

Small-scale farming among seminary students is a transformative effort that blends practical skills with the values of stewardship and self-reliance. It also has a social impact on the lives of those we minister to especially the poorest and most abandoned. Engaging seminarians in agriculture not only provides them with valuable life skills but also corresponds with their growth and development as leaders capable of positively impacting communities. This process requires patience, resilience, hard work, commitment falling and rising again, embracing changes with their advantages and disadvantages. It is a tool that can empower young people for a great living today and the future as Comboni missionaries.

Importance of Farming

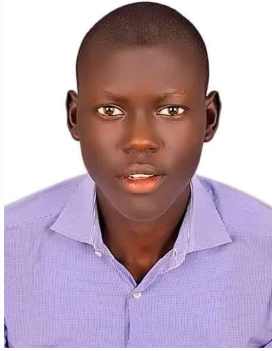
Seminaries that promote small-scale farming can build a greater connection with creation while emphasizing environmental stewardship and sustainable methods. As 'Laudato Si' (2015) *"On Care for Our Common Home,"* points out that, our neglect nature fosters environmental degradation and can diminish spiritual and emotional well-being, like the throwaway culture; we can curb such a challenge by promoting simpler, more sustainable lifestyles that prioritize conservation and responsible consumption.



Thus, farming practices in seminary come in as a tool to foster a renewed appreciation of creation and its sacredness through education, spirituality, and communal action to the seminarians who are also the future leaders of the community. This effort also helps to solve issues of food insecurity by teaching seminarians to see agriculture as both a vocation and a ministry. Farming also serves as a therapeutic and character-building activity, teaching discipline, patience, and a sense of success, for instance, the rearing of layers, broilers, dairy animals, crop plantation, sheep, and many others, not only train young people to be leaders or generate capital but is a form empowerment, offering back a hand in little ways and feeling a sense of belonging.

I personally find agriculture; farming, in my journey as a tool that helps me to discern in my vocation as it grants me a sense of belonging, I find myself at a point where I feel at home. I also deepened my faith and dependency on God, since all the harvest that we receive are beyond our understanding and capability, also the growth of the animals and plants gives me a picture of life and death, how plants are very attractive and productive when they are young, but they age and die, thus I am always grateful for the gift of life. Also, the aspect of sacrifice and service, whereby farming teaches selfless service; farmers labor not just for their needs but to provide for others. This is central in my vocation journey as God himself sacrificed his only son for the salvation of humankind. Farming allows me to partake in God's works of love. A seminary is like a nursery, where one is molded to be a responsible priest or consecrated brother in the future. Farming fosters many virtues in seminarians, thus making them all-around persons.





The Impact of Tribal Politics In South Sudan

By Denis Dino Clement

Ignorance of politics, is the ignorance of truest leadership. Tribal politics stems from the line that is not far from that unspoken truth. It can well be defined as a faulty politics that grow from the field of ignorance, fed by dark ego of getting power and possessions through tribal

influence. One may ask, is tribal politics, an ignorance of politics, and of truest leadership as such? Well, to answer that, it is inevitably important to first understand; the essence of politics and to whom it is directed, and secondly, how it is associated with leadership.

Basically, the central soul of politics, is the common society with a common interest, and it is to it that politics is directed. It wouldn't accept anything that is against itself unless it is manipulated by the custodians of tribal politics who are masters the art of division.

Whereas, politics and leadership are inseparable. In fact, bad politics expresses bad leadership, and good politics expresses good leadership. This means, if those we entrust with political positions fail to exercise politics for the common interest of the common society they lead, there's no doubt that, they are ignorant of politics and of truest leadership. The politicians fail to understand that, truest politics is the mother of truest leadership, enlightened by honest service and transformative voice that echoed the wellbeing of a whole society not just its part. They never realize that, good leadership is the fruit of good politics driven by the desire to unite not to divide, to build not to destroy and to serve not to be served.

Moreover, often they are ruled by selfish desires to get power and riches at the expense of others. When they look behind and in front like hungry eagles, yet never see a way to get what they are interested on, they, instantly delve into tribal politics. It's their easiest way and a major political weapon, to manipulate the people. They use it to cover the eyes of their people and poison their hearts. These political elites, are nothing but the fathers of deceptions, who carry the old mentality of "divide and rule strategy" through tribal misguidance.

Undoubtedly, tribal politics is one of the worse evils that has swept off South Sudan from the heavens of stability to deep political instability. It's evident in its current state, since the aftermath of 2013 and 2016 tribal conflicts. It has made many people lose the sense of nationalism, and get closed in the line of division, hatred, and micro-communal conflicts that sometimes seems unending. However, our people carry unimaginable pain. For long time, the rich elites in the political spectrum exploits the difference we had at our detriment. They have made the whole country get lost in the realm of deep hatred and division that results into unbearable instability. You can't imagine; the people living in the same country, blessed by God with a special gift of diversity, see themselves as enemies. It is sad.

These political elites win the trust of their poor tribe associates as they see other tribes as their problem. But, can a tribe be a problem to the other? They use the differences in our Godly-given rich diversity as a tool to instigate problems in the society for their own advantage and even gain pity, amidst his messy life from his blind tribemates. More so, this kind of people enjoy freedom of impunity- the ugliest face of injustice. When they cause scandals in the society such as; corruptions, injustices, and other serious abuses, they always have the back of their poor tribemates, who shouts, "even if he is a thief, unjust and an abuser, he is our own son". This clearly shows, no matter how bad a leader is, wouldn't easily be accountable for his insane acts out of the poison he spreads to his fellow tribemates who made him an untouchable god.

Consciously, one may ask the problem of nepotism. Who paves its road and paints it color in the hearts of South Sudanese? Is it not those who Prof PLO Lomumba calls popularly, "Mis-Leaders"? Those who rule by the sword of tribalism, not considering competence and equitable distributions of jobs and resources across the line? They are! They have made almost all the institutions in the country to hardly breath, as they are badly collapsing, like ship that lost its engine. The weakness of the country's institution, has ravaged the country's progress in all aspects of development. This is attributed to the incompetency and the mediocre fostered by the engineers of tribal politics out of the stores of nepotism they built. It's worth noted that, the root cause of all instability in South Sudan is, politics of tribal nature that ruins our social, economic and political prosperities, as it has normalized all forms of unquestionable absurdities, like: unconformity to the rule of law and fierce disunity. For it is a threat to the nation building, the sooner we realize the better.

But, a diagnosed disease without a search for its treatment, is as dangerous as it were not detected. Here, the question is, can tribal-based politics be eradicated? Yes. It may appear difficult but it's possibly easy. Rwanda after the darkest realm of genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, had swiftly dealt with it. Education on political morality and values and citizen's consciousness on laws and their civic rights are paramount to addressing tribal politics. These are unifying principles that guide the conscience of both the leaders and the lead. They will give rise to new plans and policies that will tackle the problem further, of which both the government and the citizens are conscious of. The issues of economic inequality, poverty and discrimination as some of the driving forces of tribal politics can be guarded. And if the government fail to do that, a new dawn of citizens cannot fail. Citizens who holds the light of patriotism and national values- who understand the beauty that lies in our God's rich-given diversity and, are conscious of any malicious plans carry by any vicious politicians against the will of the entire nation.

Additionally, in the fight against tribal politics, institutions must also be strengthened, to ensure transparency, accountability and equitable flowing of social service across the board. Therefore, if tribal politics are eradicated, a new South Sudan will arise..

COMMUNITY AND APOSTOLIC EXPERIENCE AT PALORINYA IN UGANDA

By Nelson Mandela Lodu

I am Nelson Mandela James Lodu, 25 years old, South Sudanese by nationality and birth. I am Pojulu by tribe, which is one of the 64 tribes in South Sudan under the Bari speaking. A third year Comboni Postulant studying philosophy at Tangaza University. Following the tradition of the Comboni Postulancy, that at the end of the second year postulancy, all the candidates are sent for a two-months mission and community experience in one of the missions of the Comboni Missionaries in order to experience more who the Comboni Missionaries are and what they do in their missions. The expectation is that at the end of the two months' experience, the candidates will make both community and mission experience while immersed in one of our communities. For that reason, I was assigned to the community of Palorinya in Uganda.

My Journey to Palorinya in Uganda

I left Nairobi on Saturday 11th May 2024 and after two days I arrived to Gulu where I stayed for four days with my aunty Agnes Konga, my mentor who sacrificed a lot to educate me from kindergarten till my secondary school level. Later I proceeded with my journey and I arrived at Palorinya community in Uganda, Obongi District Ukuni village on 16th May 2024. The community consists of five members namely; Fr. Janvier from Congo, Fr. Abraham from Ethiopia, Fr. Paul Idra, from South Sudan, Br. Lawrence Okello from Uganda and Br. Erick from Italy.

Community Experience

Four days after my arrival, I received an assignment to be the administrator of the Guest house within the community; my role was to ensure that I direct the visitors to their appropriate rooms and they had to sign in the visitors' journal or else if there's any inconvenience in the rooms, they report to me and I forward the case to the administration. I also used to help the community in orienting the new catechists in preparation for pastoral in various outstations.

On 18th May 2024, the outstations of St. Mathew, St. Martin the Pores and Christ the King gathered in order to bid farewell to Novice Selestina Moyo who had just finished her mission experience proceeding to the next level of formation. It was a nice experience for me seeing young girls who have offered their lives for the service of the church and being my first Sunday was so colorful. During my free time, I used to get engaged in manual work especially cleaning the compound and washing the cars after pastoral work. I could trim the flowers and slash the grass around the compound. Then sometimes, I could go to visit the homes of the catechists and Christians which were adjacent to the community house.

Pastoral Experience

During this period of two months, often I accompanied the two priests whenever they went for Masses, I could go along with one of them to the outstations as well attend mass in the Refugees camps. Through this, I was able to create awareness of the Comboni missionaries as well to promote vocations. One of the enriching experiences I got during this missionary experience was that I could join one of the priests who is a psychologist by profession whenever he visited the outstations.

Often, he accompanied and counselled those from South Sudanese who are traumatized due to the experiences they went through. The biggest percentage of the people are drug addicts and listening to the testimonies, most of them have the cry of not having enough food, land, good medication, lack of better education for their children in base camps has negatively impacted their lives.

My Visit to Sacred Heart Parish-Lomin

On 19th June 2024, the community asked me to offer a workshop to the Pontifical Missionary Holy Childhood (PMC) at Sacred Heart Parish-Lomin which is a Comboni Parish in Kajo-Keji county South Sudan. The main topic was on the roles of the PMC in the church. After my two weeks of being with the PMC, I realized that due to the conflicts in South Sudan they were left like sheep without a shepherd, therefore, at the end of the workshop, we chose leaders who were to continue with the PMC in order to direct them in their activities. The two weeks I spent at Sacred Heart Parish were very nourishing to me, it has helped me to figure out and to see the need of more servants to help in the mission. What drew my attention was that Fr. Paul Idra at Sacred Heart Parish in Kajo-Keji county was the only Catholic Priest in that County.

This called my attention to do my best in order to assist in the mission in the near future and appreciate the formation that I am receiving through my formators in the Postulancy.

The Lessons I learned during the Mission Experience

Prayer life and Meditation: This experience helped me to deepen my prayer life and meditation. During the two months, I was able to deepen that spirit of having my personal prayer for one hour every day. Often it was in the morning before Eucharistic Mass and in the evening before the community evening prayers. **Devotion to our Mother Mary:** The community helped me to deepen my devotion to our Mother Mary as every day after supper they always invited me for Rosary which I did and. At first, it was so challenging because I was used to praying rosary only on Saturdays. The new reality I found in the mission, is that Rosary can also be said daily as it helps us deepen our closeness to Mary.

The Impacts of the Experience to my Vocation

Looking at the perspective of the Comboni Missionaries in their Charism of serving the poor and the most abandoned, I feel motivated to continue committing myself to my vocational journey in order to offer my life in serving the poor and the most abandoned especially those in difficult places.



Celebrating a New Dawn for Greater Service to Church and Society.

By **Simon Lodai Amin**

Tangaza University has done an inaugural graduation ceremony. This is happening following the reception of the University Charter which has made Tangaza a fully-fledged University. More than 700 graduands pioneered this auspicious occasion in the presence of His Excellency Dr. William Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya.



The Vice Chancellor, Professor Fr. Patrick Mwanja CSSp was grateful to the government of Kenya for awarding the university charter without which such graduation would not happen. He, together with the others challenged the graduands to go forth and be beacons of light, illuminating the vision and motto of Tangaza which is “Teaching Minds, Touching Hearts and Transforming Lives”.

One challenge the VC Prof Mwanja put forward is an interrogative one. “What would the world miss if you were not born” He asked. This is a question which calls for an examination of one’s ambition and career. Instead of working on routines, graduands are dared to be innovative and bring out the most out of the knowledge they have acquired. The Vice Chancellor cited many revolutionary inventors of many things in the field of academics, and scientific research. Like them, the graduates can also work out something unique which the world would have missed without them.

Meanwhile H.E Dr. William Samoe Ruto invited the Tangaza University to be expert in a particular field. He cited many universities offering many courses, having many schools but remaining “Masters of None”. He therefore challenged the Management to specialized for what the other Institutions can envy.

Tangaza University was started in 1986 as a theological center hosting religious from different congregations. On the 30th of October 1987, His Eminence Maurice Cardinal Otunga formally blessed and inaugurated the college. When the Catholic University of Eastern Africa received its charter in November 1992, Tangaza College was recognized as its constituent College while remaining administratively autonomous, it was an integral part of CUEA.

The college continued to grow as years swiftly pass by with the Institute of Social Ministry in Mission (ISMM) approved in November 1995; Christ the Teacher Institute for Education (CTIE) accepted in 1996, Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation (ISRF) approved in 1996, Maryknoll Institute of African Studies now referred to as Tangaza Maryknoll Center for African Studies (TAMCAS) academically affiliated to Tangaza University College in May 1999. The Social Communication department of the School of Theology was upgraded to an Institute of Social Communication (ISC) in November 2002 and inaugurated in March 2003. The Institute of youth Ministry (IYM) was approved in November 2002. On the 2nd May, 2024 – Tangaza University College received its charter from the President of Kenya Dr. William Ruto and the juridical status by the Archbishop of Nairobi, His Grace Philip Anyolo earning a status of a fully-fledged University, civilly and ecclesiastically. Many other affiliations happened as Tangaza continued to shine in the scene of higher studies.

This memorable event marked the first graduation ever in Tangaza University Premises as a fully-fledged university with rights proper. It is worth “celebrating a new dawn for greater service to Church and Society”. Tangaza University remains committed to its mission statement, “to prepare ethical servant leaders for the Church and society in an environment of freedom and responsibility by providing quality education, research and community service.”

This mission statement is unfolding before our eyes.



Hope in midst of crisis: *Can lost hope be restored?*

By John Omondi Auma



The high rate of suicides in our country among youths makes us question the motive behind it. A week can't elapse without hearing of a sad demise of a youth with note left behind. Have we lost the meaning of our existence? How can we bring back the lost hope among the youths to see the significance of this life? Hope is the key to everything once lost we miss the direction.

Hope makes us remain positive and optimistic in the midst of the challenges and sufferings we're encountering in our daily life. All these brings us pain but by understanding the pain makes embrace it happily without looking for shortcuts. Pain is inevitable and it comes naturally, avoiding it makes us become more sensitive about it. The only solution towards pain is just to bear with it and embrace it. Life challenges are like pain which we have to encounter in our daily life struggles. The current situation in our country more so among us the young people is wanting. We tend to avoid pain by fearing to face the reality and this brings more pain and eventually leading to depression or even opting to commit suicide as the final solution towards the pain hence causing more difficulties to those left behind.

The problem is that we are not ready to come out of ourselves to face the reality of pain, little did we know that the earlier we acknowledge pain the lighter the burden since no one will ever come to help feel our own pain. Just like an African proverb state: nothing comes on a silver plate; it should be a guiding principle to help us bear the pain that comes our way. Moreover, the more we concur the more pain comes through but this shouldn't make us give up but instead keep on pushing.

Basing this article on the gospel of Mark 10:46-52, the story Bartimaeus the son of Timaeus, illustrates to us the importance of being aware of the pain we are undergoing through and accepting them since it is the first step of healing. Once you acknowledge the presence of pain, you'll start looking for solution. Bartimaeus recognized the pain he was undergoing through and decided to beat the odds in order to find the solution despite the discouragement he received from those who surrounded him.

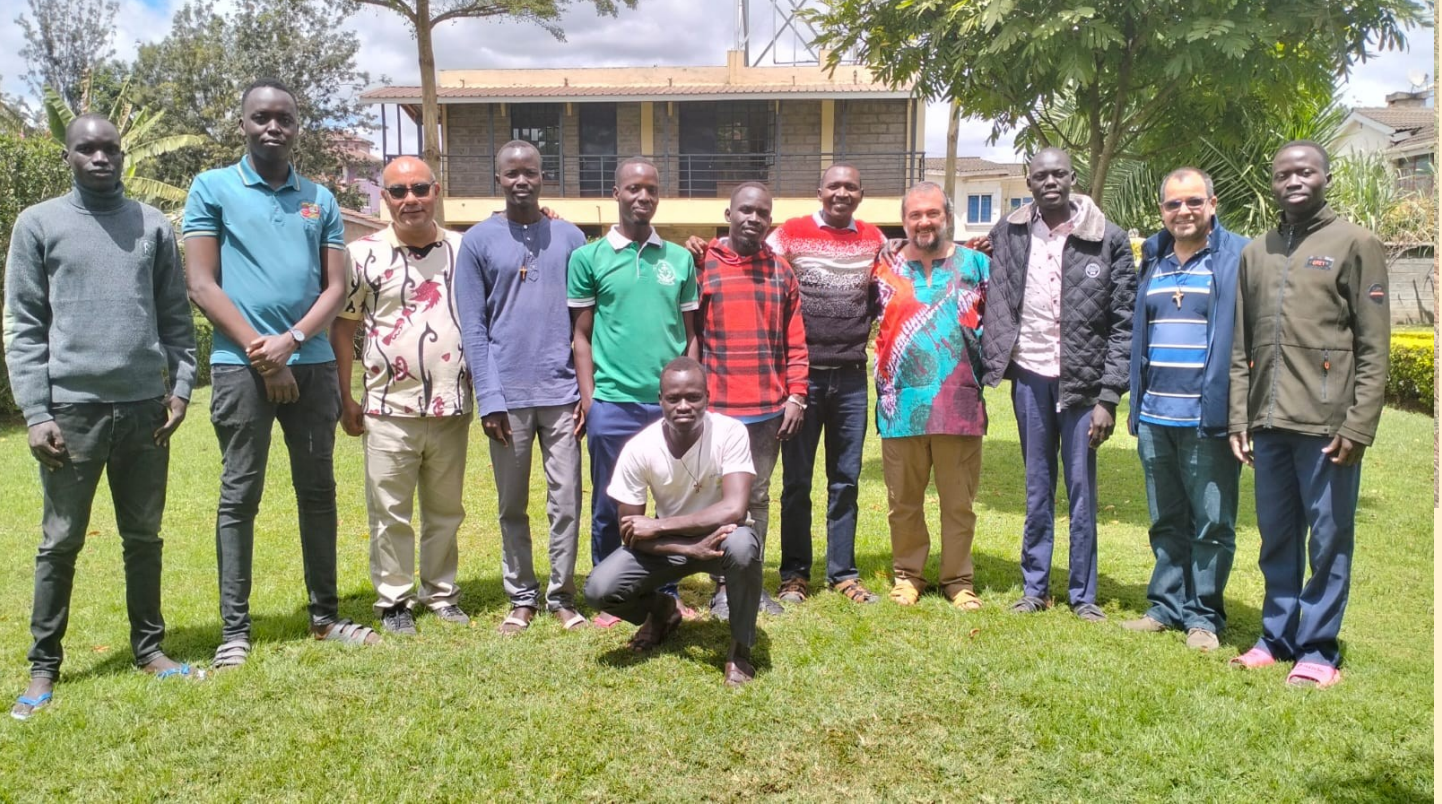
Just like gold has to go through intensive heat to become something worthy of praise. So, we as youths have to accept the pain rather than finding a way to eliminate it. This can be done by doing something right that is supposed to be done not to get appreciation. Example loving not expecting to be loved back or knowing that you can be betrayed but you still love.

Pain awakens us from our comfort zones, Moreso opening our eyes to realize the injustices going around us and react towards it. Our thought at times derives us away from the truth of pain and takes us to the world of illusion making it difficult later to accept the reality. An example a graduand student thinking that he or she will land into a well-paying job after graduating, only to later on realize that the reality is totally different from the expectation. It is only through hope that the individual after accepting the reality of the pain disappointment and working towards achieving his dream he will achieve it.



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