



SAVE AFRICA MAGAZINE



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Ongata Rongai (Kenya)

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SAVE AFRICA MAGAZINE 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 sensitize 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. You can be part of us too, you can be part of our vocation.

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Easter Message from the Comboni Postulancy



Fr Lauro
MCCJ

"Our hearts, too are set ablaze with the fervor of his teachings"

In the jubilant spirit of Easter, we extend our warm greetings to you in the name of the Risen Lord, who triumphed over death to bestow upon us the gift of renewed life.

As we reflect on the profound words spoken by the Angel to Mary Magdalene and her companions at the tomb, we are reminded of the transformative power of faith. In the midst of confusion and fear, they encountered the undeniable truth: "He is not here; for He has risen, as he said." (Matthew 28:5-6) This revelation, though initially bewildering, became a source of boundless hope for all who believed.

At the Comboni Postulancy community, we embark on a journey of sharing our lives and vocational calling with you through this inaugural newsletter. It serves as a conduit for maintaining connections with our cherished families and friends, offering glimpses into our experiences and aspirations.

In embracing the Pascal Mystery, we find meaning and purpose in our faith. The Risen Lord, by conquering death, has infused our lives with hope and courage. Just as He reassured Mary Magdalene, we are reminded not to be afraid, for His presence brings joy and strength.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we walk alongside the Risen Lord, seeking understanding and enlightenment in the scriptures. Our hearts, too, are set ablaze with the fervor of His teachings, propelling us forward on our journey of service and discipleship. Amidst the challenges of life, we invite you to join us in rejoicing in the victory of the Risen Lord. His triumph over death assures us that He can overcome our fears, temptations, and weaknesses, ushering in a new dawn of hope and grace.

As the community of Comboni Postulancy, we aspire to extend this message of renewal and transformation to all corners of the world. With unwavering joy, we embrace the promise of a "new heaven and a new earth" (Isaiah 65:17) made possible by the Risen Lord.

In this sacred season of Easter, may the resurrection of Jesus Christ infuse your hearts with hope and courage, empowering you to face life's challenges with unwavering faith, *'For He is not dead, but alive, just as He proclaimed'*. (Matthew 28:6)



Family Day Celebration 2024



*A family that eats together,
Prays together,
Stays together and Loves one another*

Simon Lodai Amin, Postulant

Every Fruitful Vocation Must Be Lived in Humility

Every year, the Comboni Postulancy in Nairobi organizes a day in which the postulants meet with their families and friends to interact with them. While the dates can be varying, the celebration of this year fell on the 9th of March 2024. During this time, the postulants are asked to invite their family members and or friends. In compliance, more than 60 family members and friends graced the celebration in this year. The day began by talks and after which the Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Fr. Paul Kambo, a Comboni Missionary who works at St Daniel Comboni Parish, Utawala.

A Comboni Scholastic, Elisha, who studies Theology at Tangaza University College, ushered the participants to the day with a warm talk on vocation among other things. He invited families to be fully involved in the vocation of their children and provide for them the moral and material support which the postulants need in order to discern their vocation freely. For he believes that discernment should be done freely and consciously in a favorable atmosphere. Furthermore, four major vocations pointed by Elisha are equal and served the basic mission of the Church which is the proclamation of the Gospel. He outlined *ordained ministry, Consecrated life (Brotherhood and Sisterhood), Marriage life and lay ecclesial ministry* as the four major vocation in the Catholic Church. These vocations are equal in that none is greater than the other. Elisha called on families not to quench the fire of vocation burning in the Postulants but rather support them in any form they can.



Sharing experience in the Postulancy

It is also the tradition of the Family Day celebrations that two finalists from the Postulants share their experience of the Postulancy. For this year, Postulant Jespari Odek and Simon Kirui, who are completing their philosophical studies this year, shared their three years' experience of formation.

On one hand, Postulant Jespari Odek, a South Sudanese, outlined how the formation in this intercultural and international formation house has pivotally shaped his life, faith and vocation. He embraced the values taught in the formation house with courage while gradually dismissing the cultural prejudice which are prevalent in his home country. Odek found it difficult to accept activities like washing of plates and cooking from the very beginning, being influenced by the cultural norms of his Country. However, with courage, he testified that washing plates and cooking were no longer a problem to him. On the other hand, Postulant Simon Kirui, a Kenyan, was moved by the intercultural environment which he had to embraced in the postulancy. The Philosophical studies at Tangaza University College have shaped his life, faith and vocation. Kirui attested to the fact that the formation in the Postulancy has helped him to deepened his relationship with God as he discerns vocation to the Comboni Missionary Priesthood. Among other things, community life which candidates discerning their way to religious life are invited to



Virtue of Humility (Luke 18:10-14)

Supplementing the talk of Elisha, Fr. Paul added that any vocation can never be lived fruitfully without humility. Which implies that whether being a Priest, Religious Sister or Brother, Married Couple or whatever, must be lived in humility. Fr. Kambo believes that the virtue of humility is important in living genuine Christian life. He accepts the fact that this virtue can be elusive but that it is the role of the believer to make it practical by embracing the virtue of humility. Reflecting upon the attitudes of the two Jews (Pharisee and Tax Collector) as narrated in the Gospel of Luke 18:10-14; he praised the tax collector who went home justified because of humility other than the Pharisee who was blinded by pride in himself. However, while not asserting that something was wrong with the prayer of the Pharisee, Fr. Paul explained that he lacked humility. Whatever he said before God were factual as based on the kind of life Pharisees take. Yet, it appeared that most of the things they do are done for public recognition and not for the actual service to God. Therefore, it is ultimately clear that Fr. Kambo exalts humility as a virtue which enables every person to live a genuine vocation and fruitful Christian life.



Fr Paul Kambo MCCJ speaking during Family Day

The Comboni Missionaries and Families

The Comboni missionaries work closely with our families in many circumstances. When a person joins the Comboni

Missionaries, it is believed and should be the case that the family too becomes missionary in some way. In the late visit of two members of the General Council, they showed a sense of how the Comboni Missionaries are in solidarity with the families. Rev. Br. Alberto Lamana who came together with Rev. Fr. Tesfayee Tadessee, expressed that there is need for families to become somehow Comboni Missionaries. They were thankful to the families for allowing their sons to join the Comboni Missionaries. The Family day celebration which brought together families and friends of the postulants into one premises, is seen to foster a Comboni Identity of the Postulants which the families are to be fully aware. By getting to know the environment in which their children study, are formed, families can be very helpful and instrumental in fostering the discernment of vocation.

In his final remarks, Fr. Kambo invited families to be welcoming to their children. Most families see a child as a misfit or the like when advised to leave the Seminary. The candidate is sometimes despised from the family and faces stigma. However, Fr. Kambo advised families to recognize that the vocation their children are taking as a journey of discernment. He invited them to welcome them back in any case and help them to discover their vocation wherever.

Summary

The family day celebration as celebrated every year is a time for the Postulants to have fun with their families and friends. This year's celebration was well celebrated with a lot of interaction between families themselves and among friends. Families and friends get to know the environment in which their children are being formed as well as the kind of activities they carry out there. The participants had prayers together and shared a common meal together. That marked the end of this year's celebration of family day.



The Postulancy Annual Retreat



Zephaniah Cheruiyot, Postulant.

Each Academic New Year during the second semester in the Postulancy is often ushered in a three days' retreat. This according to Fr. Lauro, formator of the Postulants, is to enable the Postulants to start the new year with the Lord. Moreover, they are intended to help the students deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ as they discover their own vocation to religious life with the Comboni Missionary of the Heart of Jesus. Thus, a Comboni missionary is always invited to accompany them during those three days.

This year, Fr. Aaron Cendejas, a Comboni Missionary serving in the mission of Nakwamekwi among the Turkana in Kenya, journeyed with the postulants for three days with the theme, *'Just listen and let the Lord speak to you'*. The retreat that was centered on vocation and their dynamics, was based on the life and vocation of St Daniel Comboni, Founder of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.

According to the text ready by Fr. Aaron, Daniel Antonio Comboni is an Italian born Saint, who made a turn in his life on hearing about the situation of the Africa. His call to evangelize in Africa drew a mixed feeling from within and outside him, being the only surviving child of Luigi Comboni and Domenica Pace, who at the time were already aging. On the one hand, there was the need to remain and take care of his old parents and on the other hand, he was much in love with the African mission and people.

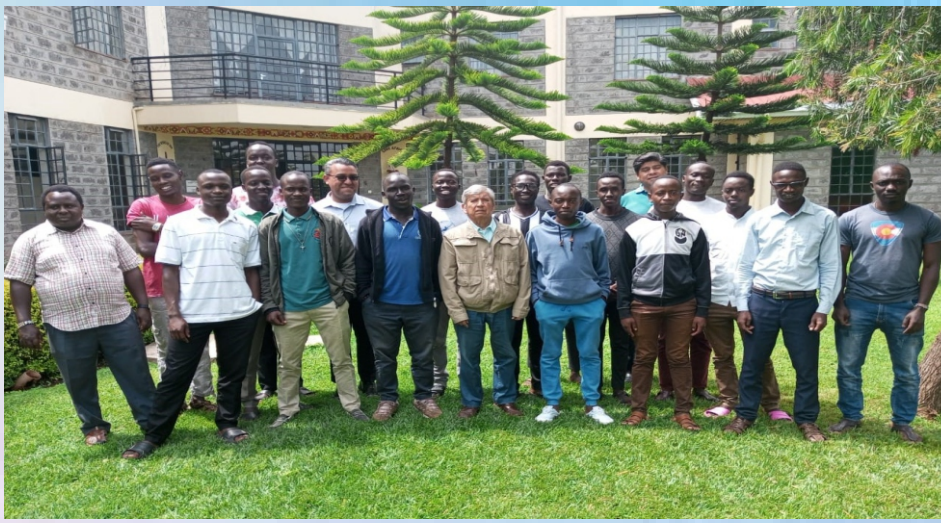
He wanted them to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be saved. Through a thirty days' retreat, accompanied by a priest, Comboni was able to discover his true vocation, the idea of preaching the Gospel in Africa in which he wrote *"After taking the counsel of God and men, I have discovered that the idea of the mission is my true vocation"*

The retreat, which was centered on vocation, further went on to explore the various vocations in the Bible. By reflecting on these personalities, who had a dramatic encounter with God as they were called to serve him, the Postulants will be able to understand that responding to God's call is not an easy ordeal but a difficult one, as it involves a dialogue, fidelity to the call as well as its crisis.

In the pursuit of these spiritual aspirations, the postulants were encouraged to cultivate the aspect

of listening, forging a new and enriched relationship with God, embracing a renewed way of living, achieving a higher quality of prayer, and attaining a genuine experience of friendship with Jesus Christ.

They were encouraged to embrace silence within their inner selves, transitioning from the realm of the mind to the heart, fostering openness to inspiration and seeking a better understanding of oneself. According to the retreat master, every vocation involves a dialogue between God and the person. In most cases, God initiates the call in the person, and he reacts either positively by accepting the task or negatively by trying to avoid the task. He added that, this encounter demands humility and charity where the persons called should be able to surrender to the will of God like clay in the hand of potter. They should allow themselves to be molded into what God wants.



Postulants pose for a group Photo with the Frs. David, Aaron and Lauro after the Retreat

Citing examples from the Holy Scripture, Fr. Aaron brought to light the vocation of Jonah (*Jonah 4:1-11*) who was asked to go and preach a message of repentance to the people of Nineveh but felt incapable of doing so. But God used all means to get Jonah do His mission and so, the people of Nineveh repented and were saved. He also cited Isaiah (*Isaiah 6:1-13*), who when called by God, said that he was not worthy to take the message as he was a man of unclean lips and lived in the midst of a people with unclean lips. God touched his lips and he was able to deliver the message from God.

Moreover, Jeremiah, when called by God felt that he was too young and did not have the confidence to speak God's words to the stubborn people of the time. But still God assured him and he went. Amos, who is famously known as the prophet of social justice, accepted God's call (*Amos 7:10-17*) to preach against the corruption and injustice of the time but he was opposed by the people and even some priests like Amaziah who remained steadfast in preaching against the social evils of his time. With these few citations, the Postulants were invited to discover their own vocation amidst resistance and forces of evil which might tend to distract them from the way of God. Given the different reactions of the Prophet to the call of God, it is important to note that the differences in reactions, means they are collectively called to different missions, underlining the uniqueness and purposefulness of their individual paths in the journey of faith. However, it is clear that when God calls a person,

irrespective of his former disposition (a sinner or not, incapable, young etc), He always transforms the individual into the kind of messenger he has desired. The retreat master highlighted the concept of vocational fidelity which invites those who have been called to remain faithful to their vocation. He explored how the people of Israel, who were a chosen nation, were invited to remain faithful to God. Divine fidelity can be found in passages such as Genesis 24:27, Exodus 34:6, Deuteronomy 32:4, and John 13:1 which highlight God's unwavering faithfulness to his promises. Human fidelity, as mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:13, reflects the call for steadfastness even in the face of human fallibility. It encourages believers to hold firm to their commitment and trust in God's reliability.

However, it is important to recognize the presence of crisis in the vocation to serve God. The crisis in vocational fidelity can be analyzed through three dimensions: **Identity**, emphasizing the struggle to maintain a clear sense of self in one's vocation; **Role**, addressing challenges in fulfilling assigned responsibilities; and **Totality**, reflecting the overall commitment and dedication to the vocational journey. Navigating these aspects is crucial to overcoming challenges and remaining faithful to one's calling amidst various trials.

The retreat was very much appreciated by the seventeen postulants who were able to give their own testimonies. It was concluded with a Holy Mass on Saturday.

Comboni Missionary Vocation in the Postulancy



Simon Lodai Amin, Postulant

A Multi-Faceted Path to The Comboni Missionary Vocation in the Comboni Postulancy, Nairobi”

“Formation is not just a mere phase of preparation but a transformative journey”.

Simon Lodai, explains into details the history and activities in the Postulancy which enables the Postulants to discern their vocation to the Comboni Missionary Priesthood. He highlights key areas of focus which are the core of the formation in the Postulancy. This nuanced exploration of the Postulancy reveals a multi-faceted rays of light which illumines the life, and heart of the Candidates to the Comboni Missionary Priesthood from different directions, enabling them to nurture a life of faith intertwined with a strong zeal and desire to serve in the mission of God.”

About the Comboni Postulancy, Nairobi

Structural Picture of the Comboni Postulancy at Ongata Rongai, Kenya



The Comboni Postulancy, situated in Ongata Rongai within Kajiado county in Kenya and under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Diocese of Ngong, has a rich history dating back to its establishment in 1983. Initially situated within the premises of St. Mary's Catholic Parish, which was under the Comboni missionaries until 2007 when it was handed over to the diocese.

On 25th September of 2015, a significant milestone was reached as the Comboni House-postulancy found a new home within the vicinity of Our Lady of Fatima Parish, still within Ongata Rongai. This relocation marked a joint venture between the two provinces of Kenya and South Sudan, solidifying their commitment to nurturing future missionaries. Since its inception more than 40 men who received their formation in this Postulancy have become Comboni Missionaries.

The journey to becoming a Comboni Missionary begins with a nine-month pre-postulancy phase, guided by the Vocations Director. Upon completion of this stage, individuals are welcomed into the postulancy stage, an integral part of formation. Here, amidst the nurturing environment provided, their faith and commitment are tested and strengthened, preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities ahead.

Community life: Our Heartbeat

The essence of our life here revolves around community as community life is not just a concept but a lived reality. This year, our community is blessed with seventeen postulants and two formators, from diverse cultures and backgrounds based on multicultural context of three nationalities; Kenya, South Sudan and Mexico. Despite our different origins and personalities, it's our shared desire to heed God's call that binds us as one. In our day-to-day interactions, we live out the values of sharing, understanding, and supporting each other, embodying the true spirit of brotherhood.

We also enjoy socializing as brothers in the community through participation in sports, social activities, outings/picnics, family days and festivals.

Commitment to Studies and Active Apostolic Engagement



Philosophical studies at Tangaza University College take our primary focus, equipping us with the necessary intellectual foundation for our future missionary work. As one of the interesting subjects, Philosophy is etymologically defined as love of wisdom. A philosopher is one who is a lover of wisdom, a fiancé of wisdom. It is a way of being than just a study of some pieces of material; it is a search for wisdom and knowledge in every aspect of existence including God, man, and universe. Therefore, philosophy engages us to question everything analytically, speculatively, critically, logically and be able to bring out pragmatic results in daily living. The church through the dogmatic constitution *Optatum totius*, declares that philosophy is a necessary study for seminarians who would like to become future priests, hence the indisputability of this study. It is also a preparatory course for studying theology in future. Our commitment also extends beyond the walls of the postulancy. We actively engage ourselves in the apostolic work across the neighbouring parishes of St. Monica, Our Lady of Fatima, and St. Mary's. From working with the youth and small Christian communities to participating in catechesis, Sunday school, and the P.M.C. group. Our involvement in these ministries prepares us for our future roles as missionaries. Spiritual Growth and Formation **Central to our experience is our**

spiritual development. We participate in daily Eucharistic celebrations, engage in monthly recollections and partake in yearly retreats. These practices, coupled with regular spiritual direction, are the bedrock of our spiritual life, continually nurturing our relationship with God.

A Formation stage of great importance

The Postulancy is of great significance to discovering one's call in light of the Comboni Missionary vocation. The Postulant clarifies his motivations to become a Comboni Priest. The Congregation of Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, in the same spirit of the founder welcomes with gratitude those whom the Lord of the harvest calls to be apostles and heralds of the Good news (Rule of Life n. 80) and gives particular importance to their formation.

The Congregation pays special attention to the formation stage called Postulancy, being this phase one of the most important of formation. In this stage the candidate, with the help of the formators, is invited to test the integrity and motivations of his call.

Our formation encompasses several key areas:

1. Human and Christian Maturity: Here, we focus on personal growth and spiritual deepening.
2. Vocational Clarity: We aim to solidify our understanding and commitment to our missionary calling.
3. Identity with the Comboni Family: We strive to embrace the charism, lifestyle, and methodology of the Comboni Institute.

We Celebrate Family Day Every Year

At our postulancy, there is a cherished tradition that brings joy, connection, and a sense of belonging to all involved - the Annual Family Day Celebration.

This special occasion is a time-honoured tradition where we open our doors wide to welcome our families and friends into our community.

The purpose of our Family Day Celebration is to serve as an opportunity for our loved ones to gain insight into our lives and the progress we are making in our formation journey. By inviting them, we aim to foster understanding, appreciation, and support for the paths we've chosen to follow.

Moreover, the event is a chance for us to share precious moments together, strengthening the bonds that unite us as a community.

Through celebration of the Holy Eucharist together, conversations, entertainment activities, and simply enjoying a meal together, Family Day provides a space for this genuine connection.

Importantly, as we welcome our families and friends, we extend an invitation to them to continue supporting us on our journey. Their encouragement, prayers, and unwavering belief in our aspirations are invaluable pillars of strength as we navigate the challenges and triumphs of our formative years.

“Our formation - not a mere phase of preparation”

Our journey in the Comboni Postulancy is not merely a phase of preparation; it is a transformative experience that molds us into the missionaries of tomorrow. In this serene setting, conducive to reflection and growth, we make pivotal decisions that will not only shape our lives but also impact the communities we will serve. United in our purpose and strengthened by our faith, we continue our journey, embodying the legacy of St. Daniel Comboni as we prepare to carry the Good News to the whole world.

Visit of the General Superior

“Your Vocation is a blessing to the Institute, to the Church and to the Mission” Fr. Tesfaye Tells Postulants



“Zephaniah Cheruiyot, Postulant

On 2nd February 2024, the Comboni Postulancy in Nairobi received two members of the General Council of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, an International congregation founded by St. Daniel Comboni and works for the poorest and most abandoned across the world. The General Council, headed by the General Superior, in the context of this missionary society coordinates and oversees the Provinces which are headed by Provincial Superiors. This year, the Superior General, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, MCCJ and a Council Member, Br. Alberto Lamana, MCCJ; made their visit to the Province of Kenya and were going to visit all the twelve communities where the Comboni Missionaries are serving. The visit comes after the 19th General Chapter that was held in 2022, in which they elected the current leadership. The first Comboni Community was the Comboni Postulancy, a formation House which host 17 Postulants pursuing their Philosophical studies at Tangaza University simultaneously with formative activities in the House.

In a meeting with the Postulants, Br. Alberto briefly expounded the structure of the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries. He says, the Institute “has 27 jurisdictions. Most of them are provinces and the small ones are delegations. There are 13 in Africa, 7 in America, 1 in

Asia and 6 in Europe. In total, we have 27. Each circumscription has either provincial superior or delegate superior with his council.” The General Direction, situated in Rome, serves as the coordinating body of the general council and three vital departments of secretariat: Mission, Formation, and Economy. With over 1,400 missionaries and more than 500 scholastics and brothers; 100 in the novitiate and 150 in the scholasticate spanning from various nationalities, the Comboni Missionaries stand as a testament to global outreach and diversity.

Fr. Tesfaye, originally from Ethiopia, has served in various missions across Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia. This is his second term as General Superior. Meanwhile Br. Alberto, who comes from Spain, served in various missions in South Sudan and Rumbek. He did his studies here in Kenya. They delivered words of gratitude and exhortation to the Postulants with a notable thanks to the families for their gift of love. Speaking to the Postulants, Fr. Tesfaye said, “Each person is a gift and each of you, you are a gift from the Lord. A gift given to the congregation and also a gift given to the mission., to the church. We know that you are in formation, in this process of discernment. Trying to know what God wants in your life. and for sure, what God wants for you or what God desires for you is positive and it has its own challenges. So, if it is God's will



that you become a Comboni Missionary priest or brother, it is a blessing for the Institute, for the church and for the mission. That is why we have confreres working with you here and that is why the provinces of Kenya and South Sudan invest resources, personnel. Because we believe the Lord wants this.” Drawing from personal experience, he encouraged candidates to embrace joy, spiritual growth, and maturity throughout their formation.

He encourages the Postulants to be joyful, asserting that they should not wait to become joyful missionaries at the end of the journey, but rather need to be already joyful in the journey. He further exhorted the Postulants to become good gifts while assuring them that their presence and being gifts cannot be underestimated. In a strong advice, Fr. Tesfaye, said, “It is my wish that you grow also in your faith journey, in your encounter with Christ. You don't become a Comboni for anyone. You become a Comboni for the sake of Christ and God's kingdom. It is good that there is a strong relationship with Christ during this moment of prayer, during this moment of formation in the postulancy. The novitiate will not be difficult.”

Message to Families

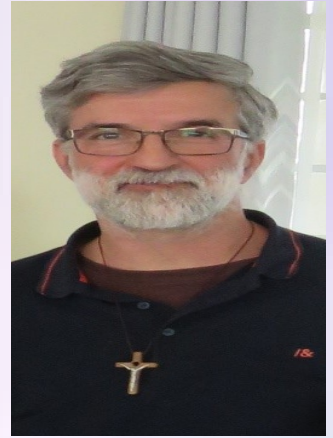
The Comboni Missionaries maintain close ties with the families of their Candidates and members. In that matter, Fr. Tesfaye extended appreciation to the families of the candidates for their unwavering support and emphasized their continued involvement in the missionary endeavour.



In an engagement with the Postulants, Fr. Tesfaye acknowledges the Postulants' vocation as a faith and gift from their families by saying,

“Tell your family that the Comboni missionaries are grateful for allowing you to join us. They let you discern your vocation with us. That they let you decide what God wants for your life. Remember, the faith you have is not yours but theirs. Whatever positive quality you bring a long with, we as Comboni Missionaries are grateful for that. So tell them that we are grateful for your faith, for your desire to become a Comboni missionary and ready to serve the people of God especially those who in need of the good news; those who suffer. We don't become missionaries for ourselves but for the service to the people of God. Tell them we are very grateful your gift in this congregation.”

He therefore urged the Postulants to cooperate with their families and with the grace of God. He invited the families to be involved in the vocation of the Postulants.



Br. Alberto on his part, invited our families to become in some way Comboni Missionaries. As a Comboni Missionary, one will not always remain in his home town, parish or village but will be invited to go and spread the good news somewhere else. Thus, it is on this ground that Br. Alberto told the Postulants, *“one day you will be far; you will be for instant in Colombia, China, Sudan etc; there will be no way you will talk to your family face to face, (means it will be difficult to have direct contact with the family). Somehow your family will also be missionaries with you. They will keep in mind your worries and your service. We want also our families to become somehow Comboni Missionaries.”*

The families of the candidates, according to the Comboni Missionaries are part and parcel of their vocation. They are invite to be fully involved in the discernment process of these young people and help them realize the potential hidden in them. Moreover, our families should not act as hindrances to our vocation, but should allow us to discover God's will for our lives in an environment of prudence and formal liberty. This explains why the Comboni Missionaries throughout the world maintains close ties with the families of the students and their own confreres

“Vocation is a mystery hidden in God alone,” Fr Tesfaye.



Homily of Fr Tesfaye

The visit to the Comboni Postulancy ended with the celebration of the Eucharist presided over by Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse. In his Homily, the Superior General emphasized to the candidates to take their vocation seriously while cultivating a deeper understanding of its essence. He reminded the Candidates that vocation is a mystery hidden in God alone. Despite the fact that, one is called, the human limitations and succumbing to sin remains intact with him. However, Fr. General urges the Candidates to thank God and often invoke his graces that makes them instruments of the good news.

He also assured the candidates that the journey of vocation is not a bed of roses but a rough one, *“there is something in the journey, Jesus demands from those who follow him. It is not a smooth journey. He invites us to participate in the mission of Christ. The mission is not ours. We ought to be together. That is why Jesus sent his disciples two by two. You have to know that I am called alone. However, I am not alone. There is a brother, a sister; who is called, who is there to encourage me. The formators' role is to remind the brother the value of the call. We don't have power over anyone. We are only spiritual instruments to say 'brother you are called like me, let us follow Christ.'*

The Comboni formation takes a period of more than ten years for the priest and brother candidates. There are several phases involved which are intended to equip the candidates to become strong missionaries who would be

able to resistant and without hesitation proclaim Christ in serving the *“Poorest and most abandoned”* in the world. It is a vocation which demands commitment, resources, time and real faith to be able to maintain a fixed eye on God while serving his own people. In this case, Fr. Tesfaye encourages the candidates never to despair but remain joyful to God who has called them. *“I encourage you, so that you may be happy and grateful of the call you have received; the call to follow Christ. Christ is always at the center and we just have to say to him today 'thank you Lord that you have called me, that you have saved me; that you are saving me with my brother; so that I will work for you and I will serve you.’”*

The Comboni Postulancy Community in Nairobi expressed gratitude and gratefulness to the Superior General and the Council member accompanying him. The Comboni Missionaries with the help of generous people spend a great deal of resources and personnel in the formation of young people who want to join them in proclaiming Christ to the Poorest and Most Abandoned in the world. Finally, the one-day visit of the General Council is hoped to awaken in the Postulants a strong missionary zeal to discern a specifically Comboni missionary vocation. The families are invited to cooperate with the Postulants in their vocation. The Comboni Missionaries acknowledges the efforts that the families are making for the students and encourages them to be missionaries as well.

Mission experience in Catholic Diocese of Lodwar, Turkana County

“An immersion into the depths of compassion, humility, and generosity”



Simon Kirui, Postulant

In the sacred tradition of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, the postulancy stage specifically in the second includes a pivotal missionary experience within a community where our mission thrives. Last year, from May 14th to June 27th, 2023, I was entrusted with this profound assignment at the Risen Christ, Nakwamekwi Parish, nestled amidst the vast and arid landscapes of Turkana County within the Catholic Diocese of Lodwar. Here, amidst the challenges of the desert, I embarked on a transformative journey of service and self-discovery.

The journey to Turkana from Nairobi itself was long and arduous, fraught with challenges at every turn. From the disturbing conduct of transport operators to unexpected delays along the way. As night fell, we reached Kainuk, only to be met with the sobering reality of a curfew imposed due to banditry - a stark reminder of the harsh realities faced by those living in remote areas. Despite these encounters along the way, I

finally arrived at Nakwamekwi Parish.

Turkana County, often misunderstood and misrepresented, holds within its rugged terrain a beauty that transcends the harshness of its climate. It is not merely a barren wasteland, but a land rich in history, culture, and tradition. Home to the Turkana people, who have inhabited these lands for centuries, Turkana County is a vibrant hub of resilience and strength.



Prior to my mission experience, I, like many others, held preconceived notions about life in Turkana - a place characterized by desolation and hardship. However, upon arrival, I was greeted by a community that defied these stereotypes. The Turkana people, with their warm



hospitality and unwavering spirit, welcomed me into their midst, offering glimpses into a way of life that is deeply rooted in tradition and faith.

As I immersed myself in the daily rhythms of life in Nakwamekwi Parish, I gained a profound understanding of the Turkana culture - a culture shaped by the harsh realities of the desert, yet imbued with a deep sense of pride and resilience.

From their colourful traditional attire to their rich oral traditions, the Turkana people exude a sense of identity and belonging that is truly inspiring. One of the challenges I encountered was the language barrier, particularly in mastering the nuances of the Turkana language. While it initially seemed straightforward, grasping the intricacies of pronunciation and tone proved to be quite difficult.



“In Solidarity with the Parishioners”



Moreover, my time spent with the Turkana community challenged my preconceived ideas about what it means to live a fulfilling life. Despite the scarcity of resources and the challenges they face, the people of Turkana find joy and contentment in the simple pleasures of life—a testament to their unwavering faith and resilience. My time at Nakwamekwi Parish has been an immersion into the depths of compassion, humility, and generosity. Witnessing the daily struggles of the local community, particularly their dire lack of water and food, I was humbled by their unwavering faith and resilience amidst adversity. The scorching sun and relentless drought served as poignant reminders of life's fragility, yet amidst these harsh conditions, I found solace in the solidarity and mutual support of the parishioners.

Sharing with the Youths

A significant aspect of my mission was the privilege of sharing the Word of God, especially with the Turkana people, particularly the youth. Whether through pastoral visits to distant outstations, serving during Masses, catechetical sessions with Sunday school children, or celebrating the liturgy of the Word, I journeyed alongside the faithful, witnessing the transformative power of faith in their lives.

Furthermore, serving in the community of Nakwamekwi Parish reaffirmed my vocation to the priesthood. The selfless dedication of fellow missionaries and the unwavering faith of the local community inspired me to deepen my commitment to serving others with boundless love and enthusiasm. Through these experiences, I grasped the true essence of priesthood—to be a servant



of God and His people, to walk alongside them in their joys and sorrows, and to share in their struggles and triumphs.

Indeed, my time in Turkana County was a crucible of growth and self-discovery. While the challenges of the harsh climatic conditions tested my resilience and perseverance, they also fortified my determination to serve with unwavering compassion and humility. As I look toward the future, I am filled with gratitude for the invaluable lessons learned and the profound relationships formed during my mission experience. I eagerly anticipate continuing my journey as a Comboni missionary, to serve and learn from the remarkable individuals I encounter, and to deepen my relationship with God through this sacred vocation.

Profound lessons Learnt..

As I reflect on my time in Turkana County, I am filled with gratitude for the profound lessons learned and the deep connections forged with the people of Nakwamekwi Parish. It is a privilege to have been welcomed into their community, to have shared in their joys and sorrows, and to have witnessed first-hand the resilience and strength that define the Turkana spirit. In the footsteps of the Risen Christ and Saint Daniel Comboni, may we continue to walk forth with open hearts and minds, embracing the beauty and diversity of God's creation, and striving to build a world where all are valued and respected.

Paul Modo's Vocation Journey

“From Catholicism to Protestantism and back to Catholicism” a call of God.

Paul Modo shares his vocation story which is so inspiring. With the tumultuous movement from the Catholic faith to the protestant church and later back, it is a clear indication of the working of the grace of God. Postulant Paul has undergone a lot of terrible situations in his journey. But it is interesting to see him conclude that he 'learned and enjoyed every moment of it.



Personal Background

My name is Paul Modo Guido. I was born on 15th February 1998 to Mr. Guido Onyango and Mrs. Zalika Achan Ali. My dad is a South Sudanese from the Logir tribe and my mother is a Ugandan from the Baganda tribe. I am the 6th born of a family of 9 children of which 3 are girls and 6 boys.

Loss of the Catholic Identity

I was born in a family of Dual religious affiliation, where my father was a practicing Catholic and my mother was a Muslim but not actively practicing her Muslim faith. Therefore, while growing due to the strong influence of my dad we all became Catholics following his footsteps.

While in Torit, I participated in the

nearest Catholic parish programs. Things turned round when I joined my father in Yei. I stopped going to the church because it was far and I lost interest in Church programs. So, while in Yei, I was enrolled in a Presbyterian church school and became engaged and active in leadership which in turn pulled me to attend most meetings as well as the scripture union meetings.



All this experience in the protestant atmosphere made me lose my catholic identity and became an active member of the protestant church. I attended many protestant outreaches, workshops and conferences. This in my humble opinion strengthened my faith in God. It provided adequate knowledge of the scripture which gave me a strong foundation of Christianity even when I came back to the Catholic faith.

From Obeying My Mother to Obeying Gods Voice.

Due to the outbreak of war in South Sudan, the situation in Yei became worse. This forced me to leave Yei in order to join my mother in Torit in 2017. When I reached Torit, I was just at home and even not going to the protestant church because it was far from where I was

staying but there was a Catholic Church very close to our home. My mother became worried of me staying at home and not participating in the church. She was worried that I could join the league of my old friends who were already considered the Gangs/Niggas of the area. So anytime she could see me at home, she could quarrel and even sometimes threaten to return me to Yei if I do not start going to church.



There were a lot of youth programs at the nearby Parish, Our Lady of Holy Rosary Catholic Parish. Games such as sports were played every day. Moreover, they also have a shelter for the street boys within the parish. Since, I wanted to please my mother and, of course not wanting to go back to Yei; Thus, I had to obey. Therefore, I started going to the parish just to play football which is my favorite game and on Sunday I can attend Mass and go back home. So, in the process I made friends and the street boys attracted me. So, during weekends I could go and help them to do some work in the parish and of course play football.



Back to My Roots (Catholic Faith)

Being with the street children and helping them in doing the manual work, the Parish priest saw me and liked the way I related with the street boys. Because I made friendship with the boys that took care of the street children, they introduced me to the parish priest and he asked me to join the boys in the parish to help take care of the street boys.

I enjoyed being with the boys, after willingly accepting to help them and to stay with them in the parish. Street boys had a program in the parish of attending catechism and doing other programs in the parish. However, I found it challenging when especially they used to come from catechesis and ask me questions about what they did not understand. For the reason that I was not deeply rooted in the Catholic faith, I could not answer to them precisely but tried my best with the Biblical knowledge I had.

Therefore, because I wanted to be of great help to them, I decided to be attending the catechesis so that I could be able to answer the questions that they would ask me.

That's how I came to understand more about the Catholic faith. In the year 2017 I was baptized and in December of the same year, I received my first Holy Communion. I was later confirmed by Msg. Thomas Oliha AJ on the 1st of April 2018.

The Voice of the Lord

After finishing my secondary school, I was in the parish working with the street boys. During this time, I was also

servicing in the parish while working with caritas, Torit child protection office. Moreover, I was teaching at Our Lady of Holy Rosary Nursery and Primary school. I served as the bursar of the school. I did not have intention to join the university. Because I was just lost in and motivated by the works of charity that the parish priest Fr. Noel Msp was doing and I really wanted to be allowed to do the same service and be of help to the needy. In that way, I starting thing of how I could become a priest but missionary.

I had a friend called John Lobi, who was staying with me in the parish with similar intention. We first wrote to St Patrick missionaries who were working in the diocese. However, they told us that they were not admitting people from South Sudan to their society. Some Comboni Seminarians who used to come for holidays in our parish helped me learn about this missionary society. Therefore, since we had failed with St Patrick, we decided to join the Comboni missionaries. With the help of our parish priest we wrote to the vocation director. We were admitted and began the pre-postulancy in 2021 and in August of 2021, we moved to the postulancy in Nairobi, Kenya.

It has been a journey of mercy and of growth, meeting different people and learning different cultures and languages has not been so easy. Experience of different weather and adopting to it has been hard but I learned and enjoyed every moment of it.

Pope Francis on Vocation

“The Renewed Priest”



Benedict Mumo, Postulant

When does God call? Is it usually the same as the call of Samuel? I don't think anyone who is totally honest with himself can ever pinpoint the exact moment he experiences the call of God. No one is given a vocation in a moment. That call may happen over many moments or sometimes it occurs late in one's life time. Vocation or call to serve God is experienced in God's mysterious works where He calls to religious vocation people with diverse personalities.

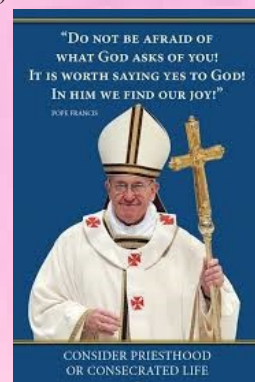
The question of vocation is not merely the issue of a call that is just too simplistic of a definition, or rather, vocation entails the call from God and requires a response to life and love commissioned by that graced moment. Therefore, it compels and requires us to make a decision about our future. In all cases, responding to the call of God as a religious or clerical or to marriage has always its challenges. All vocations have at their root of a life of joy through suffering. The one who is called is gifted with this call because the love of God and his holy will work in strange ways and with simple people like you and me.

Pope Francis on the worlds vocation day 2021 said, “God looks on the heart (cf. 1 Sam 16:7), and in Saint Joseph he recognized the heart of a father, able to give and generate life in the midst of daily routines. Vocations have this same goal: to beget and renew lives every day. The Lord desires to shape the hearts of fathers and mothers: hearts that are open, capable of great initiatives, generous in self-giving, compassionate in comforting anxieties and steadfast in strengthening hopes. Priesthood and consecrated life greatly need these qualities, in times marked by fragility but also by the sufferings due to the pandemic, which has spawned uncertainties and fears

about the future and the very meaning of life. Saint Joseph comes to meet us in his gentle way, as one of “the saints next door”. At the same time, his strong witness can guide us on the journey.



The call to religious and priesthood life is a call to sacrificial life. This is because the candidate hood of this call has no end, each and every time they live by their vocation. Thus they revive it through retreats and deep contemplation, following the example of Jesus who whenever he was to take any decisive step towards Calvary, sought withdrawal from the mainstream of the world, from the distraction of creation. He actually sought to be alone, to confront himself, to question his motives and to look at his commitments. Therefore, it is of an advantage for a religious to follow the same example today. For example, it was through deep meditation of three days that Fr. Daniel Comboni came up with a *Plan for regeneration of Africa*.





In contemplation, when one goes out to pray, he does so not to draw away from life nor pull himself back but to find himself and discover God. His goal becomes the new person he wants to be and therefore the effect of this is large such as a big volume of splashes of water after a diver dives in water, spreading all along even to those who are around him differently. Therefore, some will be able to say the splashes they got made difference in their lives - some more than others, some less intense and some more intimate, but all very true.

In addition, in contemplation, a religious person is able to bear fruits. In the gospel of John (Jn 15: 16) we read, “you did not choose me, but I chose you and commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last....” A good example is Paul an apostle who didn't owe his authority to men or his appointment to any human but who has appointed by Jesus Christ and by God and the Father who raised Jesus from the dead (Gal 1:1-2).

In conclusion, it is the result of contemplation that we gain self-knowledge on the themes of pride and humility which are at the heart of poverty. Through contemplation we are able to revive our humility and, pride slowly



fades. As in the story of the Pharisee and a publican, this theme contrast starkly. The Pharisee was a voluntarist, that is, he believed he could bring about that which he sought simply by willing to be holy. On the other hand, the publican was a man who recognized his sin, his failures and asked the Lord for forgiveness. He was aware that the grace was freely given by God and so does a Christian. Therefore, it is our duty to commit ourselves to the God and to the church, its living tradition, its promising future not forgetting those who went before us and act always in the view of those who are to follow. Remember without the church we are nothing and also without church, the sacrament of priesthood is impossible. We owe so much to our mother church and she expects great things from us. I can conclude by saying that this vocation to religious is not a fame but a love that is more famous than merit and humbler than success.



Climate Change

The Global Attention; Ecological Concerns



Evance Otieno, Postulant

What is Climate Change?

The stand of the Catholic Church on climate change is rooted in its teachings about the stewardship of God's creation. In 2015, Pope Francis released an encyclical letter entitled “*Laudato Si’- On Care for Our Common Home*,” which specifically addresses the issue of climate change. In this encyclical, Pope Francis states that climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, and political. He emphasizes that it is largely caused by human activities and that its effects disproportionately burden the poor and the vulnerable.

The Catholic Church recognizes the scientific consensus that climate change is primarily caused by the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, leading to increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. This increase in greenhouse gases is causing global temperatures to rise, resulting in various negative impacts on the environment and human societies. Pope Francis calls for an “ecological conversion” – a change in mindset that recognizes the interconnectedness of all creation and our responsibility to care for it. He encourages individuals, communities, and governments to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote renewable energy, protect vulnerable ecosystems, and support adaptation measures for those affected by climate change.

The Catholic Church also emphasizes the need for international cooperation to address climate change, as it is a global issue that requires a global response. In 2019, the Vatican hosted a conference on “The Energy Transition and Care for Our Common Home,” which brought together scientists, policymakers, and religious



leaders to discuss strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable development. The present climate crisis is being reflected in the dramatic rise in global temperature due, in large part, to the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that we have been producing since the Industrial Revolution. Such warming has devastating effects on many levels, including food production, extreme weather events, water shortages, and rising sea levels.

Scientists say a warmer planet will likely produce stronger and more devastating natural catastrophes of the kind we are already seeing today: historic floods, stronger hurricanes, and longer droughts, more dangerous wildfires, all of which cause death and displacement and overwhelmingly affect the most vulnerable. Throughout *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis points out that climate change is a moral issue in which all Catholics and the Catholic Church are called to act. “In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest” (LS 48). These effects will be worsened with a greater impact on developing countries if we do not take measures to prevent the temperature from rising by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.



Why are Catholics and the Catholic Church concerned about climate change?



Climate change poses a significant threat to the environment, which is seen as a gift from God in Catholic teachings. The degradation of the environment through factors like deforestation, pollution, and global warming not only harms ecosystems but also endangers the well-being of present and future generations. The Catholic Church emphasizes the importance of stewardship of the Earth, as outlined in the Book of Genesis where humans are called to care for and protect creation.

Furthermore, climate change has profound implications for human life and dignity. The effects of climate change, such as extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and food insecurity disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, including the poor, marginalized communities, and future generations. As a moral issue, the Catholic Church advocates for the protection of human life and dignity in the face of environmental challenges impaired by climate change.

In line with its social teachings, the Catholic Church also views climate change through the lens of social justice.

The unequal distribution of resources and impacts of climate change highlight existing disparities and injustices within societies. Those who contribute least to climate change often bear the brunt of its consequences. Addressing climate change requires solidarity and collective action to promote justice, fairness, and sustainability for all members of society.

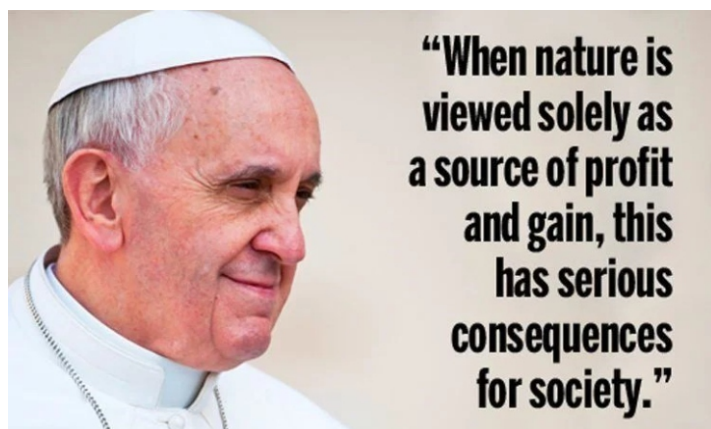
The Scriptures in Matthew 7:12 share the law of excellence of charity: “Therefore, whatever you would have men do to you, do also to them.” God's question to Cain is also imperative for our times: “Where is your

brother?” (Gen. 4:9). The Catholic Church worries about climate change because its effects have repercussions on all living beings, most seriously on the most vulnerable. The call is to act and enter into the communion of the Spirit for the well-being of our brothers and sisters in every corner of God's creation. It is also necessary to contribute our part in the preservation of our common home. Although, as human beings, we are made in the image and likeness of God, this does not make us superior to the rest of creation. Rather, this makes us responsible for it, since we are endowed with the intelligence to guide all things for good and thereby give glory to God.

The vision of nature as an object of profit is erratic in that it prevents us from feeling part of it, thus, we have allowed ourselves to cross its limits in the name of progress or particular interests. This has created all kinds of imbalances with the consequences that we are seeing all over society and throughout the world.

As Catholics, we are called by faith to care for creation, for it is a reflection of God's greatness and power, a power that is ceaselessly renewed. “In the Bible, the God who liberates and saves is the same God who created the universe, and these two divine ways of acting are intimately and inseparably connected” (LS 73). From the beginning there was a salvific plan for humanity. In the same way, through the Scriptures, we see that God has taken it upon himself to make known to us the immense dignity that each of His creatures has.

“Can you not buy five sparrows for two pennies? And yet not one is forgotten in God's sight” (Lk 12:6). Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them” (Mt 6:26).



What is the role of the Catholic Church in climate change?

The Catholic Church, as one of the oldest and largest institutions in the world, has a significant role to play in addressing climate change. The Church's teachings and social doctrine emphasizes the importance of caring for God's creation and promoting the common good, which includes taking action to protect the environment and address the impacts of climate change.

In 2015, Pope Francis issued an encyclical letter, "Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home," which called for urgent action to combat climate change and protect the environment. The encyclical highlighted the moral and ethical dimensions of the issue and urged all people, especially Catholics, to take responsibility for caring for our planet.

The Catholic Church has also been active in advocating for policies to address climate change at the national and international levels. For example, the Church has supported the Paris Agreement, a landmark international agreement aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting global temperature increase. The Church has also called on governments to adopt policies that promote renewable energy, reduce fossil fuel use, and support adaptation efforts in vulnerable communities.

In addition to advocacy, the Catholic Church is also taking action to reduce its own carbon footprint. Many Catholic institutions, including schools, hospitals, and churches, have implemented sustainability measures such as installing solar panels, reducing energy consumption, and promoting sustainable transportation. The Vatican has also taken steps to reduce its carbon emissions, including using renewable energy sources

and implementing energy-efficient technologies.

The Catholic Church's global reach and influence make it a powerful voice in the fight against climate change. By promoting sustainable practices, advocating for policy changes, and raising awareness about the moral and ethical dimensions of the issue, the Church can help mobilize individuals, communities, and governments to take action to protect our common home.

The Church has been a fundamental part in the development of thinking for humanity. In it we repeatedly find reflections that evoke love and compassion for our common home. The Catholic Church plays a critical role in addressing climate change through its teachings, advocacy, and actions. By emphasizing the importance of caring for God's creation and promoting the common good, the Church can help inspire individuals and communities to take action to protect the environment and build a more sustainable future for all.

What is my role as a Christian towards this issue?

All this is an invitation, not only to reflect, but also to take action for God's creation, the most vulnerable, and for future generations.

Always seeking to care for the planet, the ['Laudato Si Movement'](#), guided by the Holy Spirit, supports the various initiatives that emerge from the local level and promotes many others from the global level.

1. Support Renewable Energy:

Transitioning to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power is crucial in the fight against climate change. You can support renewable energy by installing

solar panels on your property, choosing a green energy provider, and advocating for policies that promote renewable energy development.

2. Advocate for Climate-Friendly Policies:

Get involved in advocacy efforts to push for policies that address climate change at the local, national, and global levels. This can include supporting legislation that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, protects natural habitats, and promotes sustainable practices in agriculture and industry.

3. Consume Responsibly:

Make environmentally conscious choices in your daily life by opting for products with minimal packaging, buying locally sourced goods to reduce transportation emissions, and supporting companies that prioritize sustainability in their operations.

4. Educate Yourself and Others:

Stay informed about climate change issues and share your knowledge with others. By raising awareness about the impacts of climate change and the importance of taking action, you can inspire more people to join the fight against this global challenge.

5. Plant Trees:

Planting trees in your community or supporting reforestation efforts can help sequester carbon and mitigate the effects of climate change.

The Last Path: A Moral Question of the Season

Can We Cry Over Spilled Milk?



John Omondi, Postulant.

Reflecting on Recent Tragedies

Recent events in Kenya have cast a shadow over our modern society, prompting us to reevaluate our values and moral compass. The loss of two promising young lives in separate incidents within Airbnb accommodations has left us grieving and searching for answers.

While we cannot change the past, we can learn valuable lessons from it. It's crucial to ask ourselves what led to these tragedies and how we can prevent



similar occurrences in the future, especially as young individuals navigating this complex world.

One key takeaway is the importance of exercising caution when interacting with strangers in private settings. Additionally, the allure of quick money often proves to be a deceptive path, leading to unforeseen consequences. As the common saying goes, nothing worthwhile comes easily on a silver plate; shortcuts often come with a hefty price tag attached.

As a generation, we must pause and reflect on where we may have veered off the course. The pervasive influence of social media and Western culture has reshaped our moral landscape, steering us away from the communal values that once guided our actions. Instead of prioritizing the collective good, we have become increasingly self-absorbed and

individualistic.

In Mark 7:20-23, we are reminded of the importance of guarding our thoughts and actions, as they have the power to shape our character. The passage cautions against succumbing to vices, emphasizing the need for self-awareness and introspection.

Therefore, I implore you, my fellow youth to take care of your lives and assess where we stand in terms of moral integrity. By confronting our shortcomings and striving for personal growth, we can collectively uplift our societal values and foster a culture of empathy and compassion. Let us embark on this journey together, mindful of the path we choose to follow.





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