



WE ARE PROUD OF OUR SENIOR JESUITS

"What a young person sees from the treetop an elder can see from his bamboo bed!" Senior Jesuits have a special place in the Society of Jesus. Their lives tell inspiring stories and their memories are full of extraordinary deeds. The achievements of senior Jesuits in various ministries of the Church and the Society of Jesus are immense. The long road that they have walked as Jesuits and the fulfilled life that they have lived qualify them to assume the exalted status of elders and role models for young Jesuits. We look to them for good counsel. They are a repository of experience, wisdom and depth.

Recently we inaugurated the Ongoing Apostolic Formation Programme for members of our province who are 70 years and older. It was an opportunity for them to relive and share the various moments of their lives as Jesuits and to look forward still to a future full of hope and joy. When a Jesuit becomes infirm and retires from active ministry he receives the unique mission of praying for the Church, the Society of Jesus and all our friends, partners and collaborators who support our mission in various ways. Several of our senior Jesuits live at Pedro Arrupe Community, Nairobi, Kenya, where their physical and spiritual needs are provided for. To meet the needs of senior Jesuits who are no longer in active ministry we rely on the contribution and support of our partners. We are grateful for your generous contribution towards the care and wellbeing of our senior Jesuits, who pray unceasingly for you and your families.

As we come to the end of another successful year in Eastern Africa Province, we are happy and honoured to count you among our friends, partners and collaborators. Without your generosity and invaluable support we would not have achieved our goals this year. On behalf of all the Jesuits of Eastern Africa, I wish you and your loved ones MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator, S.J.
Provincial



Fr. Cardoz Francis with Sr. Ida

Pedro Arrupe Community (PAC): Caring for our elderly Jesuits

1 Timothy 5:17: 'Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.'

Our Jesuit life requires that we give ourselves fully to be men and women for others by preaching and teaching the word of God. We work for God in this life and save retirement for the next. But with age, our bodies become feeble and we wither, quite literally. When advanced age, frail health or another need for special care arises, like our fellow humans, we require special attention and care.

The need to offer special care to our elderly Jesuits led us to the realization of the value for having a care centre. Pedro Arrupe Community (PAC) named after our former Jesuit General, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, was blessed by Fr. General Kolvenbach on August 5, 2003. It opened shortly afterwards as a health care centre for sick and aging Jesuits. Fr. Arrupe, who had been the General until a debilitating stroke led him to step down from leadership, became a role model for elderly and sick Jesuits. From his retirement, he wrote, "More than ever I find myself in the hands of God. This is what I have wanted all my life from my youth. But now there is a difference; the initiative is entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in God's hands."

In 2001, the Provincial at the time, Fr. Masawe, asked Fr. James Strzok, SJ, to bring the health care dream to reality. With a team of Jesuits, nurses, and lay collaborators, the initial concept was refined and developed. PAC was completed two years later

courtesy of the Jesuits of Wisconsin Province. Located near the Ngong' Hills, PAC is in a serene environment, conducive to prayer and graceful aging. It consists of 20 rooms for Jesuits and 5 cottages for guests.

Professional health care is provided by a full time resident nurse, Sr. Ida Akeyo Akall. Together with Sr. Tereza Brancolliani, Sr. Ida is assisted by thirteen young-at-heart, talented, auxiliary staff. Their love for Jesuits, their personal concern, care and friendships are an important ingredient in creating an atmosphere that fosters wellness at PAC. The centre also has an on-call doctor, Ajay, and a physical therapist, Jacinta Musau. Fitted with a library, internet access and exercise equipment, the centre ensures that the elderly are always engaged in something.

According to Sr. Ida, it means a lot for her to care for elderly Jesuits. "One has to dedicate oneself completely to the care of the elderly. I am challenged to keep an open heart and to accept the elderly and sick as they present themselves. Sometimes, paying attention to them is as important as medication."

"To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors." (Tia Walker, 'The Inspired Caregiver: Finding Joy While Caring for Those You Love.') The care offered to our elderly Jesuits allows them to be apostolically available and always ready to say mass or offer retreats despite the old age. They pray daily for the Church, the Society of Jesus and for all who partner with us in mission.

Fr. Jim Strzok, SJ, Director, Our Lady Queen of Peace Educational Centre,
Dodoma, Tanzania

A deeper encounter with the Lord

I have been a Jesuit for 53 years now and it has been a wonderful journey. Coming out of an Irish Catholic family, it was part of the tradition that priesthood was held in high ideal and so obviously I was confronted with the thought of becoming a priest at an early age. At first, I wasn't comfortable with that idea but when I went to the university, I met a community of Jesuit priests and was slowly attracted to this life.

My first mission in East Africa was at Hekima College where I taught for 8 years. I was then missioned to Salvatorian Major Seminary in Morogoro, Tanzania where I taught for 12 years and was also involved in retreat work. Thereafter, I was missioned to Pedro Arrupe Community (PAC) where I am involved in spiritual ministry. I am grateful each day to the call to live more simply and more available

to what God wants. I am grateful that I am not attached to any particular place or position. Thus, I am freer to depart whenever a new mission comes calling.

Life at PAC is a blessing and it's a challenge. It's a blessing in that it is situated in a beautiful location, almost like the countryside with great scenery and environment. It is a challenge in

that it is not as accessible to many of the apostolates that we were used to. However, this is a period of subtraction in life; a period of letting go. Although there is a natural hesitation that life is coming to an end, it is actually just entering a new phase with a new beginning.

If PAC did not exist, it would be a real impoverishment as it gives opportunity to older Jesuits to continue to be active without the burden of teaching and correcting papers or a parish with all its obligations. On a small scale, it allows us to share the wisdom of the years and to be enriched by the people we have here. Our small community is enriched with its diversity and the retreatants who come all the time are a blessing to us as well.

Though am older now, am still available for spiritual mission. Life after 70 is okay: it is like mathematics of spirituality in that for those 70 years and beyond, there is more subtraction & division: we are divided from the ordinary comforts, pleasures and things that have been our security in the past. Whereas the earlier years were more of addition and multiplication: we wanted more, better, longer and higher. Still, we have a deeper encounter with the Lord.

Fr. Bart Murphy, SJ, (left) is a retreat guide and is also involved in spiritual ministries at Mwangaza Jesuit Spiritual centre



About the Jesuits

The Society of Jesus was founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1540 and is today the largest religious order of men in the Catholic Church. We serve in 127 nations on six continents and are organized in administrative regions called Provinces.

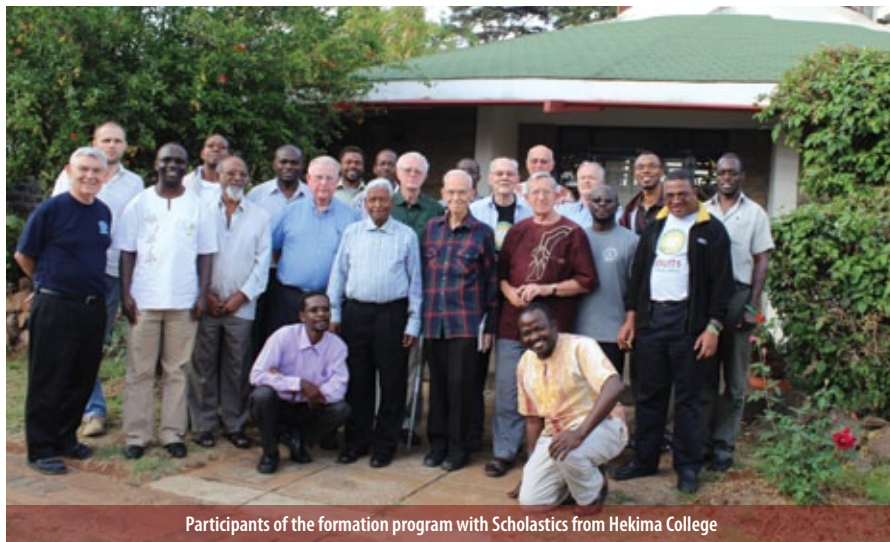
The Eastern Africa Province consists of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, North and South Sudan. Though the province was established in 1986, the earliest missions date back to the times of St. Ignatius in 1557 in Ethiopia.

Our works in Eastern Africa include:

- **Education** - through our educational institutions we form well rounded and competent persons committed to a faith that does justice. Our students are aware of the social ills that are present in Africa and they generously give of themselves to put an end to these ills. We train 'men and women for others.' We currently run seven schools and plan to establish 5 more.
- **Retreats** - for more than 470 years, Jesuit spirituality has led countless women and men to a greater intimacy with Jesus Christ and to a dedication to serve those most in need. We maintain retreat houses in Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia. In addition, we run mobile retreats in all countries of our province.

- **Parish ministry** - we run 5 vibrant parishes with a variety of pastoral, formation and service programmes. All our parishes give emphasis to 'community' and have dynamic Small Christian Communities.
- **Social Justice and Communication** - we aim to transform unjust structures and offer hope to the marginalized in society. We reach out especially to refugees, those affected or infected with HIV/AIDS, poverty and violence. Our justice and communication ministries include: Jesuit Hakimani center, African Jesuits Aids Network (AJAN), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Radio Kwizera.

Visit www.easternafrijesuits.org for more information on our work



Participants of the formation program with Scholastics from Hekima College

A time of *mellowing and hope*

Jim Rohn, an American entrepreneur and author, once said, 'One person caring about another represents life's greatest value.' For this reason and more, we have continuously found new ways of taking care of our elderly Jesuits even spiritually. Our Province recently hosted the first ever ongoing formation for members of the province who are 70 years and older. Fourteen members met at the Pedro Arrupe Community Library to share stories and to take part in the formation program. Most of them have served for more than 50 years as teachers, retreat directors, parish priests, school heads and spiritual directors.

Fr. Mike Lewis, president of the Jesuit Superiors of Africa and Madagascar (JESAM), led the Fathers and Brothers through reflection on the milestones and rocky bumps in their Jesuit lives. The group also sought inspiration from how their peers had found new meaning in their later years in the Society of Jesus. For many, the prospect of declining years that looked so bleak had turned around completely. They developed new opportunities for growth in community living. They rejoiced in exploration of long-neglected talents and learning. They found richer understanding of the Jesuit mystique and its invitation to personal

growth and apostolic inspiration. These elderly Jesuits were surprised to find their later years full of enriching opportunities for growth in their Jesuit vocation and apostolic fruitfulness. Although they have encountered the usual aches and pains with declining strength, being overlooked by friends, deaths in family and friends, they have not been discouraged. Somehow the Lord has come across as more meaningful than ever before. For many, this is a time of mellowing and hope.

By Fr. Ted Walters, SJ, superior of the Jesuit Community in Dar es Salaam



Support the care of elderly Jesuits

Pray for our elderly Jesuits who have been generous in their past service of teaching, retreat guide and spiritual ministry. Kindly consider a gift to support the care of our elderly Jesuits.

Make a donation by cheque in favour of '**Society of Jesus Kenya**' or a transfer in favour of '**Society of Jesus Kenya, ACC No: 6517490029, Swift Code: CBAFKENX.**

M-pesa donations can be sent to **+254 713 387 252**

Many thanks and God Bless you for your kind and generous support.

Merry
Christmas
and
Happy
New Year
wishes

from the Jesuits
Eastern Africa'



Christmas Joy

Christmas all over the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with great joy... and rightly so. Because Jesus Christ, God and man, the long promised Redeemer and Saviour enters our world to renew and bring it to its pristine state as God had willed it. Because of this solemn and unique event, God's promise of renewing the world begins. Henceforth, man's heart and soul will be renewed and transformed into a new person capable of heavenly salvation and glory.



Jesus Christ enters our world as God and man in a unique manner never known or seen before in the history of the world. He comes from all people irrespective of race, color, creed or country. He comes with a message of peace, love, unity for all people for all time. He comes as a little child just like an ordinary little child. As a little child is most welcome into a home, Jesus comes to enter our hearts and so give divine love and joy.

His coming into our world gives new meaning and understanding to our sinful lives; it gives a fresh understanding to our spirit and encourages every person to enter into a new life that is divine; a life with the almighty God.

This is a beautiful opportunity for people of good will to welcome him in our hearts, minds and to cherish and spread his love, Joy and continued call to follow him in our personal lives.

By Fr. Gerry Rebello, SJ, involved in pastoral ministries at PAC.

Pray with us

Send us your prayer request to prayer.aor@gmail.com



To Subscribe to our newsletter, send your email/feedback to shukran.aor@gmail.com

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