



Dear Friend,  
Greetings to you.

As we continue towards the realization of our mission in Eastern Africa, one of the goals that the Province seeks to solidify is education in all aspects especially in our schools. Our obligation to provide quality education in all our schools is ensuring that our students perform exceptionally well. In this regard, I am very proud to report that St. Peter Claver High School in Dodoma, Tanzania, sat for its first 'A' level national examinations and performed outstandingly well. The school was ranked 187th out of 449 schools offering 'A' level studies in Tanzania. Besides this great accomplishment, Ocer Campion Jesuit College in Gulu, Uganda, is currently making preparations to take in their first 'A' level class. This goes to show our commitment to providing quality education in Eastern Africa with special attention to people on the margins of society.

Furthermore, Goal 5 of the Province Apostolic Plan promotes formation in Jesuit religious life and apostolic competence. As we work towards achieving this goal, I am pleased to report that in July 2017, 7 of our men were ordained to the priesthood. The seven now join many other priests as they continue the Society's mission in Eastern Africa. In addition, since February this year, 2 other Jesuits have been ordained to the diaconate and are currently completing their Theology Studies. The Jesuit novitiate in Arusha also admitted 13 new novices who are presently engaged in their initial formation. Before the end of this year, we shall have one more Jesuit ordained to the diaconate and another ordained to the priesthood. As indicated in the Province plan, we intend to give our young men in formation a deep, strong and vibrant human, spiritual and intellectual formation to enable them effectively serve the people of God in the world.

Aside from these and many other achievements, our Province has not been without challenges. A prolonged drought is currently being experienced in the East and Horn of Africa. Our efforts to support those affected by the drought especially in South Sudan and Kenya where we work saw many families receive relief aid in the form of food, clothing and water. In South Sudan, we especially provided relief aid to our students at Loyola Secondary School and their families. We also collaborated with the diocese and other religious and relief organizations to provide support in Rumbek. In Kenya, through the Jesuit Hakimani Centre and in collaboration with other religious congregations, we delivered relief support to affected areas in Northern Kenya. We sincerely thank all the organizations and individuals who made and continue to make our famine relief efforts possible. We invite you to continue helping us implement programs that uplift lives and restores hope in all people.

I thank you for your continued prayer, support and generosity.

May the Lord God Bless you abundantly.

Fr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, SJ  
Provincial



Fr. Augustine Ekeno, SJ, at his thanksgiving Mass.

## From herds-boy to Jesuit Priest

*"To all men, therefore, priests are debtors that the truth of the Gospel, which they have may be given to others. And so, whether by entering into profitable dialogue they bring people to the worship of God, whether by openly preaching they proclaim the mystery of Christ, or whether in the light of Christ they treat contemporary problems, they are relying not on their own wisdom for it is the word of Christ they teach, and it is to conversion and holiness that they exhort all men." (Presbyterorum Ordinis, 4)*

My journey to priesthood started in the early 90s when the life of shepherding our goats and cows failed to meet my heart's desires. Spending many hours in the bush with animals and being constantly on the move in search of pasture and water raised fundamental questions regarding how I ought to live my life. Besides nomadism, the issue of cattle rustling and the extent to which banditry and fighting for scarce resources had become normalized reinforced my resolve to reconsider a better path to a satisfying life. This path led me to realize the value of going to school and church. Going to school gave me hope for a better future and the church opened a new horizon that showed me how serving God and the church as a priest is what would make me live a happier life. For me, living a happy life meant providing people of God some kind of direction that leads to God.

As a young man, I witnessed how the high rate of illiteracy and constant tribal clashes blinded the people in the region from realizing what it takes to live a decent life. I felt they needed some guidance and accompaniment for they were like 'sheep without a shepherd'. This experience ignited my desire to take the place of a shepherd

in order to lead, not only people in northern Kenya, but others as well in other parts of the world affected by the same challenges to realize how to live the kind of life that pleases God. This is the call that my ordination to priesthood reaffirms. I see my ordination as a confirmation that I have been called "in the light of Christ" to address the various problems affecting the human body and soul, and by so doing "exhort all men" to holiness (Presbyterorum Ordinis, 4). In the words of the General Congregation (GC) 36, such kind of problems "saps the hope and joy that God proclaims and offers through the Gospel." Mine has been the desire to relive my old role as a shepherd, under the true shepherd, Jesus Christ, through reigniting people's hope and joy, dampened by spiritual malnourishment, socioeconomic and political problems.

What I now desire is the grace to be that kind of shepherd that is capable of gathering together as one family the people of God and guide them to become perfect in God's kingdom. This remains my desire and source of

# Becoming a Jesuit Priest



## FR. CHRISTOPHER MAPUNDA, SJ

I am the sixth born in a family of 7 (3 boys, 4 girls) siblings. I was born and raised in a Catholic family in Manzese – Dar es Salaam. Manzese was an unpopular township because crime and gangs were common. Under such circumstances, my mother raised me and my siblings in a strict manner. She would not allow us to play far from our compound or at the nearby Manzese Parish compound as it was safe for us; as I reflect now that is how my vocation journey commenced.

Even after being ordained to priesthood, there is still a lot to learn and discover about God, myself, the Society of Jesus, the Church and the priestly ministry. So far as a Jesuit, my formation has enabled me to look at the past with gratitude despite my ups and downs. The graces of God have sustained me this far and I strongly believe they will strengthen me all through in my ministry as a Jesuit priest.

I have grown to know that I am not perfect; 'I am a sinner yet called to serve.' With such an understanding, I considered all the challenges which came my way not as stumbling blocks but the means towards mental and spiritual maturity. Three things were central in my vocation journey: first, the life of prayer which entails participating in the daily Eucharist, faithfulness to my personal prayers and spiritual accompaniment. Second, community life referring to availing myself for the other(s), taking initiatives in the community and taking my mission and responsibilities with love and generosity. Third, the apostolic life in the Society meaning the life of vows and service to others. As Jesuits, we are called to serve; thus, each is invited to cultivate a sense of agency, respect and valuing the other person. Such an attitude would help us to see Christ in the people we serve.



## FR. PATRICK NGAMESHA, SJ

I grew up in a strict Catholic family. This humble family helped me to know and love God. My parents ensured that we attend daily mass and we prayed together at home. Also, being a mass server in our parish for many years inspired me to be a priest. As a little boy, I learned a priest is someone who loves everybody in a community and renders his service to

all community members. This little understanding of who a priest is inspired me to be a priest. As a Jesuit scholastic, the words of Jesus "...do you love me?" were my light in this journey (John 21:17). Such words together with daily prayers, examen, and the help of my fellow Jesuits helped me to be who I am today.

My humble request from you is to pray for me and my fellow priests. May we be priests of prayer, humble, obedient, faithful and available for a mission. May we carry out God's mission with great love. In this ministry, my consolation comes from Jesus himself, who says, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

## FR. BERNARD OMONDI, SJ



I come from a family of nine children; I'm the third born to the late Charles Nyandiwa and Jenipher

Mwangale Nyandiwa. My desire to join the priesthood commenced when I finished my high school. Though I had been a diligent altar boy when I was young, I suspect my fidelity to the altar largely stemmed from the fact that I was assured of a seat in front of the altar and that my parents would be happy seeing me seated next to a priest every Sunday during mass. But I believe these impure motives got purified along the way and the desire to the priesthood got nurtured during my times as a committed youth member at Webuye Parish.

I have had numerous insights that sustain my faith and vocation from reading Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter, *Misericordiae Vultus*, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. One among many insights in Pope Francis' encyclical that expresses in depth the grace and the mercy of God is, "Yahweh who has brought us out of Egypt" (Exod. 20:2, Deut 5:6, Ps 81:1; 114:1). An emphasis is made in the prior encyclical by a quotation from Exodus 34:6 that God's being is revealed in his mercy. It states, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." I admire the title of Pope Francis' latest book, "the name of God is mercy."

## 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, Sudan 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. We train 'men and women for others.'
- **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.

Visit [www.easternafrijesuits.org](http://www.easternafrijesuits.org) for more information on our work

# 50 years as a priest

A souvenir emerges clearly from my childhood when I was 7 years old. On the vigil of Christmas 1941, I went for confession. At the end, the priest asked me what I wanted to do later in life. Being a student at the school of the Lasalle Brothers, I told him: "I want to become a Brother". He added: "Did you ever think of being a priest?" This call deeply touched my heart and I do not remember having, after that, thought about another way of life.

This call was confirmed five years later when Uncle Joseph came back from Congo. I enjoyed living with him for six months. I was 12-years-old, an age open to generosity. Uncle Joseph was a priest, a Jesuit and a missionary in Africa. I would become a priest, a Jesuit and a missionary in Africa.

Soon after, studying Latin at the secondary school of the Jesuits in Tournai, my home town, I typed the texts of mass in Latin to "celebrate" at home with an old aunt. Surely, she faithfully prayed for me.

My spiritual director told me, someday, that the Society of Jesus would perfectly fit to me in response to the call. It has been true; from the novitiate till the ordination day and till now, I thank God, and the many companions who helped me, for a blessed life! As a Doctor in Physics, the Superiors intended to send me as a professor to the new Jesuit University to be opened in Bujumbura, Burundi. The Board of the University decided to open it one year earlier than planned when I was still in theology. To be sure to keep the chair, the Provincial invited me to write to the University proposing to come for two months. They answered: "no need, come next year!". That is when God intervened again directly in my life. In 1967, the mercenaries of Schramme were disturbing Eastern Congo. The Belgian government by then, for security reasons, blocked the return of professors to Congo.

A professor who was teaching in Bujumbura and in Lubumbashi, considering the situation, wrote to me: "you said that you could be free for two months. In Bujumbura, they do not need you but we, in Lubumbashi, need you. Come!" In March 1968, I thus landed in Lubumbashi for 2 months ... and I

stayed there for 17 years! That was my first ministry: fulltime lecturer and full-time chaplain. How did I manage both? I learned how to rely on the Catholic Students, encouraging their creativity and supporting their initiatives. And it worked! After 15 years, we had a strong Catholic community with a church built, prayed and blessed. The Holy Spirit University Parish of Lubumbashi was born. In 1999, God again intervened: I was elected by the assembly of Pax Romana as the Chaplain for their Pan-African team that is based in Nairobi. It was not the vision of the Provincial but he endorsed the mission. I came to Nairobi. During two mandates as Chaplain, I organized 8 one-week encounters for University Chaplains all over Africa. A time of discovering (35 countries visited) and rich sharing with Students and Chaplains.

Allow me now to share how God spiritually fashioned me as a priest. The ministry of reconciliation has always been an important part of my service. I discovered from it, through some hard events, the destructive power of evil and also the power of reconstruction of the mercy of God. But the mercy of God has a price. According to Heb 9:22, "without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness!" The blood that was shed is the blood of Jesus that we celebrate at mass. Both are linked: the Eucharist and the reconciliation.

One Eucharistic prayer proclaims that mass is the 'sacrifice of perfect reconciliation'; reconciliation, yes, but at the price of a sacrifice! More recently, the message of the Vision at La Storta struck me. Jesus, bearing his cross, accepting the invitation of God the Father and saying to Ignatius: "I want you to be my servant." How can I, as a Jesuit, every day, serve the Lord bearing his cross if



not celebrating every day the sacrifice of the perfect reconciliation? There is my faithful commitment as a priest. What can I add to such a life? With the Psalm 116, I proclaim: "How can I repay the Lord for all the good done for me? 'I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord'. This is my gratitude and my joy on this day. Let us praise our merciful Lord. I will conclude with a confidence, another way the Lord is making our life.

On the entrance day to the novitiate, I was not with the new novices. I came 8 days later, because on that day, I was in Fatima. This is because, after the Second World War, a statue of our Lady of Fatima was passing from parish to parish to invite Christians to praise God for peace and to pray for the conversion of Russia. In our parish, the presence of two people per day and night was organized. My mother allowed me to book for a night. I was there but the second person did not come. I stayed alone in the church at night with Mother Mary, the Lady of Fatima; for me it was a strong spiritual experience. That is why the Novice Master allowed me to join a pilgrimage to Fatima with my mother and sister before becoming a Jesuit. This experience fashioned me to prayerful Jesuit life. Therefore, I am grateful to my family and to the Society of Jesus. For 50 years, it has been a journey of service and joy. Celebrating a Jubilee is a duty of gratitude to God and to all those who made my life.

By Fr. Etienne Triaille, SJ



# Kenya Elections; Advocating for Peace.

As a social centre one of our works is to conduct research. Over the last 1 year we have been conducting research specifically on the preparedness of the August 2017 general elections in Kenya. Our focus has been on the process itself; how credible, fair and likely it is to produce a legitimate outcome and so make it less tense and peaceful both during and after the election.

One of the steps we have taken is to advocate for issue based campaigns in the media: newspapers, radio and television as well as hold talks with government agencies on the same. This has seen an improvement as the last 3 months has had campaigns focus more on issues than personalities. Our hypothesis has been that if an election is issue based, the likelihood of personality and tribalism clashes will be much lower.

Secondly, we have tried to let the government know that it is important to conduct a credible election. We have directly reached out to some members of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), members of the National Cohesion Commission, members of parliament and other stakeholders, to stress on the fact that it is very important to ensure the process is credible. We have added our voice to other non-state actors including the Catholic Justice and

Peace Commission who believe in a fair, transparent and democratic process. We have also lately raised concerns on what we think has been shortcomings of the process itself including corruption; there has been a lot of bribery of voters, the youth and a bit of violence at different levels.

Moreover, we realize that there is a lot of uncertainty, tension and a bit of fear. The fact that people are planning to travel out of the city due to fear is a concern despite the government putting in a lot of security arrangements to counter any shortcomings. In addition, the fact that the two main contenders are preparing their supporters either for victory or victimization also adds to the tension.

To diffuse this tension, there has to be a lot of civic education. Unfortunately funding for civic education has been lower this time than before. It is however

very important to conduct civic education even in the church itself. We always assume that pastoral agents understand civic duties or obligations as well as the catholic social teachings but that may not always be the case. There are quite a number of pastoral agents who do not have a fair grasp of what it means to be prophetic. As a church it is important to understand that having a prophetic voice, being involved in social action; the question of change, leadership and accountability, is important. Additionally, there are new socio-political dynamics that emerge that the pastoral agents need to update themselves. The gospel doesn't change but all other things change.

As a centre, however, we are much more interested in the promotion of fair and just systems. Because of the 2007 elections in Kenya, our main emphasis is on peace. If there are any disputes or dissatisfaction in the outcome all contenders should do it in a peaceful manner and not incite their supporters to destroy property. We call on all Kenyans to keep in mind that peace is important.

Interview with Br. Elias Mokuu, SJ, Director, Jesuit Hakamani Centre

Continued from Pg.1

## From herds-boy to Jesuit Priest

consolation. With this hope, I look forward with excitement to take up a new mission in Rumbek in South Sudan. This mission fulfills my heart's desire to serve the vulnerable such as the South Sudanese people who

have experienced violent conflict for more than 50 years; a country where generations have grown up knowing nothing but war. I wholeheartedly embrace this mission with confidence and joy recognizing so well, as

the GC 36 companions remarked, that by offering myself, I will be contributing to "the strength and efficacy of the Society all over the world."

By Fr. Augustine Edan Ekeno, SJ

To Subscribe to our newsletter, send your email/feedback to [shukran.aor@gmail.com](mailto:shukran.aor@gmail.com)

## Contacts:



**JESUITS**  
EASTERN AFRICA

### Kenya:

Jesuit Development Office  
Loyola House  
P.O. Box 21399, 00505,  
Ngong' Road, Nairobi  
(+254 20) 2444 78/1/3/5/6  
[Info.aor@gmail.com](mailto:Info.aor@gmail.com)  
[www.easternafricajesuits.org](http://www.easternafricajesuits.org)

### Tanzania:

Jesuit Development Office  
P.O. Box 1140,  
Dar-es Salaam  
(+255) 22 244 3600  
[Info.aor@gmail.com](mailto:Info.aor@gmail.com)  
[www.easternafricajesuits.org](http://www.easternafricajesuits.org)

### Uganda:

Jesuit Development Office  
Xavier House  
P.O. Box 7310,  
Kampala, Uganda  
(+256) 414 510 340  
[Info.aor@gmail.com](mailto:Info.aor@gmail.com)  
[www.easternafricajesuits.org](http://www.easternafricajesuits.org)

### Ethiopia:

Jesuit Development Office  
Xavier House  
P.O. Box 30105,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
(+251) 11 123 6650  
[Info.aor@gmail.com](mailto:Info.aor@gmail.com)  
[www.easternafricajesuits.org](http://www.easternafricajesuits.org)

### Republic of Sudan:

Jesuit Development Office  
Ignatian Spiritual Centre  
P.O. Box 1629,  
Khartoum, Republic of Sudan  
(+249) 85 341855  
[Info.aor@gmail.com](mailto:Info.aor@gmail.com)  
[www.easternafricajesuits.org](http://www.easternafricajesuits.org)

### South Sudan:

Jesuit Development Office  
St. Peter Claver, Jesuit Community  
C/o Bethany House  
P.O. Box 211023, 00505, Nairobi, Kenya  
(+249) 944 286 719  
[Info.aor@gmail.com](mailto:Info.aor@gmail.com)  
[www.easternafricajesuits.org](http://www.easternafricajesuits.org)

Follow us on Facebook  @ Eastern Africa Jesuits and Twitter  @ AORjesuits