



MAKING STRIDES IN ETHIOPIA

The history of the Jesuits in the Eastern Africa Province began in Ethiopia, when St. Ignatius of Loyola sent the first missionaries. Although most of the first attempts to start apostolates in Eastern Africa failed. In 1945, Emperor Haile Selassie welcomed Canadian Jesuits to Ethiopia with a view of them taking up the administration of the government schools.

More than 30 years later, our mission in Ethiopia continues to be strong. We are sending more men to take up the mission of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia. We have Jesuit regents and priests teaching in primary schools, high schools, major seminary and at the Catholic University in Addis Ababa. Others are working with Jesuit Refugee Service.

Over the course of the 30 years, we have steadily maintained the running of Galilee Centre, in Debre Zeit, which is a Spiritual Centre open to both lay and religious persons and to people of different faith. Although the centre cannot accommodate a big population, its running has overseen the training of Spiritual and Retreat Guides who then offer these services to other faithful in different parts of Ethiopia.

Our continuous partnership and collaboration with the Archdiocese has also seen us start a Peace and Justice Centre, Pedro Paez, in Addis Ababa. The centre offers resources for Peace and Justice issues and oversees the publication of an advocacy magazine toward the same.

The same collaboration has also seen us open a new school in Bahir Dar. The school, which is currently offering primary education, is in the process of expanding to a secondary school. These efforts continue our desires to be present at the margins of Society and to be available where the need is greatest.

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we would like to remember our brothers and sisters at the frontiers working tirelessly to bring hope to the poor. This is indeed the mission to which we are called. We appreciate all who have made our efforts in Ethiopia a wonderful success and we can only hope that we shall continue to do more.

May the resurrection of our Lord Jesus grant blessings of prosperity to you and your loved ones

May the Lord bless you abundantly

Fr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, SJ
Provincial



Left to Right: (i) Refugees at a sporting game (ii) Ms. Hannah Petros, Director Refugee Community Centre, with one of the teachers (iii) Refugee students during an English Class (iv) The computer room

Journeying with Refugees

The Jesuits in Ethiopia are involved in similar missions as different Jesuit Provinces across the world. They are mainly located in Addis Ababa, Debre Zeit and Bahir Dar where they work in education, spiritual ministry and social justice.

In Debre Zeit, they run Galilee Centre, which is a spirituality Centre open to both religious and lay people. Thematic retreats and spiritual training courses are some of the programs offered to those aspiring to be Spiritual Guides and Retreat Directors.

Bahir Dar is home to the first Jesuit school in Ethiopia; Abay Mado Catholic Academy was established in 2013 and has since grown to have more than 200 pupils. Plans are currently underway to complete the construction of the Secondary school section.

Lastly, in Addis Ababa, Jesuits teach in different primary and high schools, and at the Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology. Besides education, they are involved in Social Justice, through the Pedro Paez Centre, where they collaborate with the Archdiocese' Peace desk to produce publications on environment and peace and justice issues. The Jesuits are also involved in running the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Refugee Community Center.

JRS

The Jesuit Refugee Service in Ethiopia was established in 1996 with the aim of welcoming refugees from neighboring countries and all over the world. It has 3 main areas of operation including emergency needs support, education and community service.

Under Education, the Centre offers English language training (for pre-beginners to intermediate), computer lessons (basic to advanced level), library, and internet services. The Community Service section offers daycare, sporting activities, music, and vocational training, while the Emergency Needs

section offers financial assistance, and distributes basic items like blankets, rice and oil. It also offers weekly group counselling and 8 different workshops throughout the year. The workshops are usually on natural family planning methods, life skills, entrepreneurship and awareness creation on human trafficking. These services are mainly offered to refugees registered with the UNHCR. However, the sports, library and internet services are available for both registered and unregistered refugees.

According to recent UNHCR reports (September 2015), the total number of registered refugees in Ethiopia is approximately 650,000. Out of this, urban refugees are approximately 7,002. There are about 22 different nationalities including Eritreans (majority), Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis. Others are from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Kenya. On a daily basis, the JRS Refugee Community Centre caters for more than 250 refugees.

Challenges

The main challenge the Centre faces is tribal conflict amongst the refugees. This is managed through the weekly group counselling and the availability of JRS staff within the compound to help solve such incidences. Other challenges include delays in processing work permits for the refugees, which increases their dependence on the Centre, and limited financial resources for the Centre to support the refugees. Due to the rising number of refugees financial assistance is only offered to new arrivals.

Aside from the urban program, JRS also works in camps such as Mai Aini (mainly for Eritreans), Melkadida, and Dollo Ado (mainly for Somalis). These camps offer activities similar to the urban program.

By Ms. Diana Karua, Communications Coordinator

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. 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.'
- **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

"I have seen Miracles happen"

I am originally from Malta, the second born in a family of 4 boys and 6 girls. Coming from a very Catholic family, it was a great desire for the family that some of us would lead a religious life. My grandmother used to visit the sick around her home and take care of them. In a way, I learned the beauty of service from her. I grew up admiring priests and was a Catechist up until I joined the Society of Jesus at 22 years old. I also attended a Jesuit school and as a result interacted a lot with Maltese missionaries and Jesuits.



I did my Novitiate and Regency in Malta and was then sent to Belgium for Philosophy. Thereafter I was sent for Regency in Tanzania, where I was involved in formation and teaching. I then undertook my Theology studies in Rome. Upon the completion of my studies, I went to Sudan where I worked for a year with refugees, before going to Lubumbashi, Zaire (currently DRC Congo) for 2 years.

In 1997, after my Tertianship, I was sent to Ethiopia. I spent the first year studying Amharic language and 6 years teaching at the Seminary. After a Sabbatical break, I was assigned here, at the Galilee Centre, on 1st July, 2005.

Galilee Centre

The Centre started in the 1990's as a place for Jesuits to rest. At the time there were only two extra rooms and the Jesuits there decided to start giving retreats. At first they would go out to give retreats but as the need increased, they desired to start offering longer retreats which required retreatants to be accommodated within the venue. Although they started out small, the Centre can currently accommodate a small number of retreatants in the

compound. Most of the rooms are old so plans are underway to build more rooms and to renovate the old ones.

Aside from the retreats, we also offer courses for Spiritual directors from various congregations and also to lay people interested in becoming Spiritual Guides.

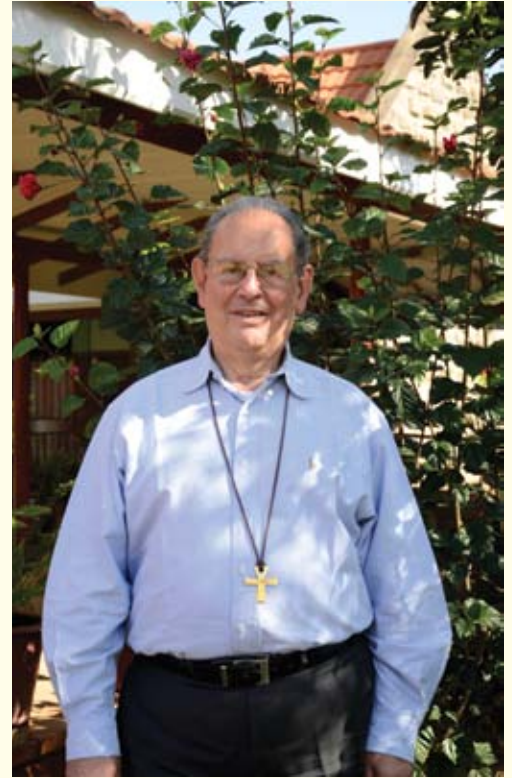
Importance of Retreats

Retreats are a time to become in contact with God and with oneself. It is important to be aware what God wants from us, how God is looking at us, or how God feels about us. It is also important for the gift of Self-knowledge and for the gift of changing ourselves and our values, not just to follow peer pressure. I have seen miracles happen not only with relationships with God, but also in coming to know ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses. Retreats offer an opportunity to be truthful and honest with oneself. Retreats are also a blessing to the guide because you are not only accompanying others but God is talking to you through them. I therefore believe that financial difficulties must not stop anyone from coming to pray.

Fr. Joseph Pulicino, SJ, Director Galilee Centre

Bishop Rodrigo Mejia, SJ; Retired but not tired

I entered the Society of Jesus at the age of 18 years in 1956. Two of my brothers were Jesuit priests. After studies in philosophy, I was sent to Congo in 1963. Being a former Belgian Colony, all Jesuits in Congo were Belgians. Fr. General at the time, who was also a Belgian, decided to make the mission international and thus called for volunteers from Loyola in Spain and Colombia. I offered myself as a volunteer and was sent for regency in Congo; nobody from Colombia had been sent to Africa before. We learnt the local languages and had 3 years of regency. Since there was no Jesuit Theologate in Africa at that time, I had to go back to Colombia for my Theology Studies. I returned to Congo as a Jesuit priest in 1984 and started teaching at the Major Seminary in Kinshasa. A little later, I moved to Hekima College on October 1984 as one of pioneer Professors of theology. Later, Cardinal Maurice Otunga requested Jesuits to take up St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Kangemi. So, while teaching Pastoral Theology at Hekima, I took opportunity to be involved in pastoral work at the Parish in Kangemi.



After 10 years in Kenya, I was sent to Ethiopia and had only been there for a month when I was appointed Provincial in 1995. At the end of the third year, I was turning 60 years old and I really wanted to be in Ethiopia. There is a law that if you are beyond 60 years you cannot get a resident visa. So, I requested to continue the mission in Ethiopia and another Provincial to be appointed. In 1998 I returned to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. After language studies, I worked as Pastoral Secretary for 3 years. Later, I was sent to Galilee Spiritual Centre in Debre Zeit. As I was preparing myself to leave Debre Zeit to the Jesuit Theologate in Abidjan, the Nuncio informed me I was going to be appointed Bishop. I was consecrated in 2007 as Bishop of Soddo-Hosanna. I served there for a little over 7 years. When they appointed a successor, I came to Mwangaza in Kenya, where I am currently based. Here I give retreats, work with Small Christian Communities and I am also involved in the Promotion of Justice and Peace.

The Catholic Church in Ethiopia:

The history of the presence of the Jesuits in the Catholic Church in Ethiopia started after the death of St. Ignatius. St. Ignatius had always been interested in Ethiopia. By reports, he knew that there were

many Christians and most of them were Orthodox. So he sent Jesuits to Ethiopia. Some arrived, others died at Sea. That mission lasted until 1700 when they were expelled. In 1945, Emperor Haile Selassie asked the Pope to send Bilingual Missionaries to Ethiopia. He wanted to move from French to English language. The Pope requested Fr. General who sent Canadian Jesuits. They took up a government secondary school and later started the University of Addis Ababa. Although they were prohibited from doing pastoral work, little by little the Catholic Church started to grow. Presently, Ethiopia has about 93 million inhabitants, out of which only 0.7% are Catholics. The Protestants went to the South of Ethiopia, which had been less evangelized. Today,

Ethiopia has about 93 million inhabitants, out of which only 0.7% are Catholics. The Protestants went to the South of Ethiopia, which had been less evangelized. ... The Catholic Church in Ethiopia is diminishing statistically because it does not grow with the population increase. ... There are many vocations in Ethiopia but more for women than for men.

majority of the population are Orthodox. The Catholic Church in Ethiopia is diminishing statistically because it does not grow with the population increase. There are only 11 dioceses in the country despite the very religious nature of the Ethiopians. There are many vocations in Ethiopia but more for women than for men.

Celebrating Jubilee, 60 years, in the Society of Jesus:

Since my childhood, I dreamt of coming to Africa, not as a missionary but as an explorer! I was attracted by the fauna and the animals but then I discovered the church and the people and the possibilities, and so I came. I am very happy. I have never worked in my own country as a priest and have been particularly blessed in my 52 year of work in Africa. I have offered seminars and workshops in 17 African countries and I really enjoy the variety and richness of the continent. I must say it's very difficult to talk about Africa in singular! My wish especially to young Jesuits companions is for you to have a strong Spiritual life and be close to the poor so that you may know the real challenges of the church.

Interviewed by Ms. Diana Karua

“Ethiopia shall lift up its Hands in Prayer to God” (Psalm 68:31)

At the time I am writing this reflection, Ethiopia is in the Fourth Week of the Lenten Season. This small detail is quite significant since it demonstrates Ethiopia's unique ways and complex diversity. Ethiopia is indeed lifting up its hands in prayer to God: in praise, in thanksgiving, in supplication, in petition, and in welcoming millions of people that keep flocking to the land--fondly and mythically referred to as the land of “Prester John.” If the narrative of “Africa Rising” is to be believed, then Ethiopia is a living embodiment of this optimistic narrative about Africa. It is therefore not surprising that here in Ethiopia, one can both be in Lenten and Easter seasons. It is a place where fasting and feasting happen concurrently, depending on your rite.



Ethiopia shall lift up its hands in prayer to God” is also a continuation of the Jesuit narrative that started way-back in the 16th Century, with all its trials, tribulations and triumphs. This calls for magis - doing more for the Greater Glory of God. Investing in the education of the youth is the surest way to keep the vision of Africa rising alive and realistic. We are indeed committed to the education apostolate and having the General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Adolfo Nicholas, S.J., visit our apostolates and bless the foundation stones of the anticipated construction projects, is a great blessing.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) held the

African Development Week from March 31, 2016, at its headquarters in Addis Ababa. Over 1,000 participants engaged in a debate that is aimed at promoting Africa's structural transformation through green industrialization. At stake are the strategies for meeting the goals of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. For the first time, Africa is being considered as a unified political and economic entity that should have an integrated and coherent approach to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are steps in the right direction. A continent's collective development vision is the way to go if Africa is to claim

the 21st century. Some conditions are however vital for this vision to come true: inclusive and participatory development, good governance, rule of law, greater regional integration allowing free movement of peoples within the African continent and intra-African trade. If this is done, indeed not only Ethiopia, but the entire African continent shall lift up its hands in prayer to God, in praise and thanksgiving.

By Fr. Odomaro Mubangizi, S.J., Superior of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, and Dean of Philosophy at Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology

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