



ANSWERING THE CALL

"We each have our own vocation - the thing to do is answer the call..." Dorothy Day

During the celebration of the final vows of Br. Elias Mokua, S.J., Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya, encouraged parents to assist their children discern their vocation to priesthood and to allow them to lead religious lives. From this, it is clear that the role of the Christian family in vocation promotion is critical. While each person is called individually, it is the responsibility of the family and all people of goodwill to inspire children to discern their vocation and encourage them to pursue it. It is therefore upon the family and the local community to provide spiritual support to its members who feel called especially to consecrated life.

As Jesuits, we aspire to form men and women for others; who will give retreats, engage in intellectual apostolate, teach catechism, preach the word; people who are always ready and available for the mission of the Church. Our way of living attracts men who are humble and offer themselves to live a consecrated life. We aim at getting men who will live an exemplary life and follow in the footsteps of Jesus, as Jesuits. Pope Francis reminds us that "The consecrated life will not flourish as a result of brilliant vocation programs, but because the young people we meet find us attractive, because they see us as men ... who are happy". It is such a life that has recently seen men as old as Br. Vincent Soreng' celebrate their 60th anniversary in the Society of Jesus.

In addition, our formation programs are aimed at forming well rounded men who are well-rooted in the word of God; Men who respond to the different needs of those at the margins of society; Men who are always available and strive for the Magis; Men who are sensitive to and are affected by the situations of the people around them. These are the men who truly respond to the call, "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ". Hence, as we continue journeying as co-workers in God's Kingdom, may our vocations show us the will of God in our lives.

As a Province, we wish to thank parents and guardians who have generously allowed, encouraged and supported those interested in pursuing vocation as priests and brothers in the Society of Jesus. We also offer special thank and assure continued prayers to all our benefactors, teachers and collaborators whose invaluable support make Jesuit formation and training as well as Jesuit apostolates possible. We request you too to keep us in your prayers. Thank you and May God bless you abundantly!

Fr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, SJ

Provincial



Jesuits in training at the novitiate in Arusha

Vocation is God's call to each person

"We must promote vocations as widely as possible, so that we might reflect the culture and experience of those we seek to serve. With special sensitivity and encouragement, we need to seek possible vocations among the minority cultures, immigrants and indigenous people" (General Congregation 34, d.10, n. 4). All Jesuits and Jesuit apostolate are invited to promote and nurture vocations. Besides, each of the six countries of the Province is assigned a vivacious Jesuit to guide the youth and promote vocations to the Society of Jesus. The vocation promoter offers career guidance to the youth in view of assisting in the discernment process of those who feel 'called' to join the Jesuits.

Our 'come and see' programs help candidates know who we are and our way of life. Our passion, enthusiasm, and collaborative spirit reveal our communal and apostolic life to potential Jesuit aspirants. We recruit candidates who will be able to carry out the apostolic preference of the universal Society. To become a Jesuit is a long and grace-filled journey of rigorous formation, training and prayer, leading to holistic growth and maturity for 'the greater glory of God.'

As religious, we are reminded that we are precious in God's eyes and God counts on us. "In calling you God says to you: "You are important to me, I love you, I am counting on you" (Pope Francis, *Rejoice*, D 10). Thus, vocation is God's call to each person to live joyfully and fully the

unique life that God has planned for him or her. Consequently, since vocation comes from God, knowing Him and following Him is a gift that He gives; we can all open ourselves to it.

Two major challenges to vocation promotion in Eastern Africa Province:

Firstly, personnel – although each of the six countries has a vocation promoter, it is difficult to allocate ample time to the vocation promotion and discernment activities as each of the promoters (with exception of Kenya) has one or two additional tasks. Secondly, accessing the youth – each of the six countries that constitute the province is geographically big. Thus, it's costly to visit schools, parishes, and institutions of higher learning across the province for vocation animation and career guidance.

Nonetheless, we are slowly adapting modern methods of communication such as the use of social media platforms to reach out to those interested in becoming Jesuits. In addition, we disseminate printed vocation promotion materials at our parishes. If you are keen and interested in becoming a Jesuit, we encourage you to reach out to any of our vocation promoters using the contacts published at the back of this newsletter. May God bless you as you discern your vocation!

Fr. Buberwa Karongo, SJ, Vocations Promoter, Kenya

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 Hakamani center, African Jesuits Aids Network (AJAN), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Radio Kwizera.

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

Enabled to serve God

My vocation journey to the priesthood started way back in my childhood when my friends and I played mock Eucharistic celebrations. Then, I was nicknamed 'Fr. Mapeera' because we used guavas as species instead of bread. However, in Ugandan Catholic faith history, Fr. Simon Lourdel - the pioneer Catholic priest to set foot on Ugandan soil - had been popularly known as Fr. Mapeera (a corruption of Mon père) in Uganda.



AOR scholastics at the 2015 Jesuits in Formation meeting

At the end of my high school studies, I opted to join the university. It was while at the university that I developed a deepened thirst for Christ, which led me to a kind of awakening of my faith. Consequently, I became an active member of the University chaplaincy and took up several leadership roles. Together with a group of friends, I formed a lay group that regularly met to share the Word of God and prayer. We also went out to strengthen the faith of other students, visited prisoners and the sick in hospital. This new encounter with Christ prompted me to seriously start my search for ways to serve God and his people as a priest. While talking about vocations, a friend told me, "...you will be fit for the Jesuits." At the time I had scanty information about Jesuits and so began the search that took me to St. Francis Xavier Jesuit Community in Kampala. There, I met Fr. Jack Morris who gave me literature about the Jesuits. It was not until 2003 that I became an aspirant and in 2004-2005 I was a candidate.

In July 2005, I joined the Jesuit Novitiate in Arusha, Tanzania, where I was introduced to more methods of prayer, the rich Jesuit tradition, and value of companionship/community, the richness of silence and the experience of the Spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola in the 30-day retreat. This further deepened my encounter and personal knowledge of Christ which

continued to stir my thirst for deepening my faith. The novitiate experience had a profound mark in my life and in 2007, I took the three evangelical vows in 2007 in the Society of Jesus.

After the novitiate, I was sent to study Philosophy in Harare Zimbabwe. This enabled me to appreciate and find God in my studies. Thereafter, I was sent to Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) for my regency, which helped me to live my faith and religious experience as a Jesuit. Thereafter, I studied Education and then theology for 3 years before being ordained a deacon. I am currently starting my second cycle of theology, in August 2015, at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University in Berkeley, California.

In my vocation journey, personal prayer and the Eucharist, Companionship (community life) and other formational inputs have been vital for my spiritual growth and development, and integration as a human being. I am grateful to the Society of Jesus which has continued to provide me with the necessary tools so that I am enabled to serve God and his people better. Above all, I thank God for his merciful-love and goodness to me. 'He who changes not, to Him be glory, honour, praise, worship and thanksgiving' (Rev.1:6, 8).

By Dec. Michael Ochwo, SJ, Jesuit School of Theology Berkeley

Where I am destined to be

Growing up, I wanted to live a consecrated life. I admired priests and would spend most of my Sundays at the local parish in Dodoma. This interest however took a back seat when I went to Uganda for my A-level studies. I joined the Institute of Rural Development Planning upon my return to Dodoma. Immediately after, I was invited to join St. Peter Claver High School, where I served as a teacher and students' patron from 2011 to 2014. Part of my responsibility as a patron was to assist students, especially the male students, in the dormitories to ensure cleanliness and their promptness for class. From time to time, I also assisted in extracurricular activities.

After working for more than a year, I realized money was not everything. I was not getting fulfilled and I felt that I needed more than the money. At that point, my initial interest in priesthood became stronger. I was however worried about my mother as I was the one who was taking care of her. I took time off to pray. One time I went into the chapel and stayed there for two hours. When I came out, I had made up my mind to join the priesthood. I realized that any other of my siblings could support my mother.

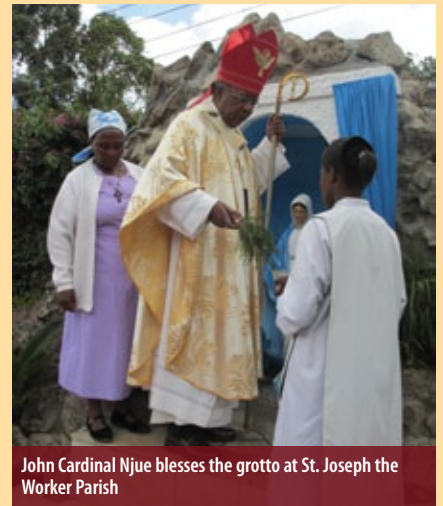
I then contacted the vocations promoter in Tanzania and thus began the candidacy program. I was given material to read on the Jesuits and had regular contact and guidance from the vocations promoter. After my official application, I remember anxiously waiting for the results. I constantly checked my email but there was no response. I was later contacted by the Vocations Promoter who informed me that I had been accepted to join the Jesuit novitiate in Arusha. I was overjoyed. The first thing I did was resign from my teaching position at St. Peter Claver and inform my family as well as my students. Some kept asking when I would return and why I had decided to quit teaching. It was a sad moment as they didn't want me to leave. Still, they bid me farewell.

On joining the novitiate, we were welcomed by the director of novices and the novitiate community in Arusha. It was such a warm welcome and I felt like I had arrived where I was destined to be. I am enjoying the learning experience here especially the prayer life and having to attend daily mass. I also had an opportunity to work with the Sisters of Mother Teresa, in Dar es Salaam, for my experiments. Part of my work was doing laundry, helping the elderly and assisting in the children's home.

In my journey to priesthood, I realize that there are obviously high and low moments; but if one really has that desire and with prayers, one tends to overcome the challenges. I believe one has to be open minded and serious about the decision to live a consecrated life. Personally, I am happy I decided to lead a religious life.



Jesuits during recreation at the AOR Novitiate in Arusha, Tanzania



John Cardinal Njue blesses the grotto at St. Joseph the Worker Parish

St. Joseph the Worker Parish:

Celebrating 30 Years (1985-2015) of Ministry

It was a great day of joy and celebration on 3rd May 2015 as parishioners of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Kangemi, marked 30 years since its inception. The Parish has experienced numerous developments, both spiritual and social, that have necessitated its growth. For instance, the small Christian Communities have grown from less than 15 to 30.

The mass, celebrated by His Eminence John Cardinal Njue, saw the confirmation of 122 children and the opening of a Grotto of Our Lady, Blessed Virgin Mary, mainly supported by all the Parish Women. Cardinal Njue later officially launched St. Joseph Technical Secondary School, which started its operations on 26th January 2015.

As the parish celebrates 30 years, more developments are being realized; for instance, the ongoing construction of a new Church for Christ the King Outstation, to which the parishioners have generously contributed. Similarly, St. Joseph the Worker Dispensary had an expansion that included a Dental Unit and new maternity ward that operates 24 hours.

We thank all the parishioners and partners for making these development initiatives possible. God bless and thank you for your continued support.

Fr. Paschal Mwijage, SJ, Parish Priest, St. Joseph the Worker Parish

Julius Sajilo, 2nd year novice

Your Faith has made you well

Now on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him – and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner? Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:11-19)



A little while back, I worked at the St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Kangemi, where dozens of people would come in for assistance. Very few ever came back to say a simple 'thank you.' One such is a woman who had been affected by fistula. On that particular morning, she walked in and shouted, "Sister, naomba unisaidie" (Sister, please help me). I could see that she was in writhing pain and her whole body trembled as she lifted her dress for me to see. I was in shock. Not knowing how to assist her, I took her to the Parish Priest and tried to explain her situation. After a brief talk with the Parish Priest, we took her to the dispensary for First Aid, before she was referred to Kenyatta National Hospital for surgery. I never thought I would see her again. A month after the incident, the same woman walked in to the parish offices and in a loud voice, exclaimed, "Sister, nimepona,

asante sana, Mungu awabariki! (Sister, I have been healed. Thank you very much. God Bless you all!). I was very happy to have been of assistance to her.

That incident always reminds me of Jesus and the ten lepers. These ten lepers believed in Jesus' ability to heal and therefore obeyed him without a doubt when told to go to the priests even before they were healed. However, only one of them, when they learned they were healed, returned to praise Jesus. Often, we seek assistance from God and fellow human beings but fail to appreciate what has been given to us. The truth is that the ungrateful spirit of the nine lepers lies in all of us. That is why we have to constantly search ourselves and see the good that the Lord has accomplished in our lives. We have to ask ourselves what excuse we have for not returning to give

thanks to Jesus, or simply examine how gratitude impacts our life; mind body and spirit.

This passage from Luke's gospel not only talks about gratefulness, but also about faith. Without faith, we would not be able to achieve what we have or even to take risks for instance with our jobs or businesses or other personal endeavours. The faith in our hearts gives us the belief that we can achieve with Christ on our side. Thus, as much as we are grateful for what we have been granted, we should be aware that without faith, we probably would not have achieved the same. I therefore encourage you to always take time off your daily schedule to reflect on the things God has done for you and be grateful for them. It is only in acknowledging our ungratefulness that we become thankful.

Ms. Lucy Kironi, AOR Administrative Assistant

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