



MISSION AND SERVICE IN EASTERN AFRICA

On 3 December 2014, I will complete my service as Provincial of Eastern Africa Province. It's an auspicious date – the feast of St. Francis Xavier, the intrepid missionary to the Far East. A less known and little celebrated fact about the saint is his stopover in Malindi, Kenya, en route to India. Transitory though it was, he was the first Jesuit to set foot on our province of Eastern Africa. I wonder what he would make of the growth and progress of the Jesuits in Eastern Africa – since 1542!

As I look back over the last six or so years, I am amazed at the growth, progress and development that has taken place in our province. Quite clearly, the Jesuits have been busy – starting schools, creating formation programmes, developing local funding sources, strengthening our partnerships, consolidating our apostolates, and planning new ones! It would be presumptuous for the Jesuits of Eastern Africa to take sole credit for these successes. A single finger cannot catch a louse in the hair, nor can it clap on its own. The story of our success is the story of the generosity, support, prayer and kindness of our partners – friends, benefactors and donors across the globe!

At this time of transition the horizon of our future continues to expand. We are dreaming big dreams and planning innovative initiatives, like the Proposed Jesuit University of Eastern Africa, which we hope will be the first of its kind in the history of the Jesuits in Africa and Madagascar. We cannot dream big dreams or make great plans without the support and commitment of our partners and friends, for the person whose friend sits on top of a mango tree can expect to eat ripe and juicy mangoes!

Either way, looking back or looking ahead, we owe you, dear partners and friends, a debt of gratitude for what you have empowered us to achieve as a province and what you enable us to aspire to achieve in the future. Our new provincial, **Fr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, SJ**, is a seasoned administrator and astute planner. As he assumes leadership of the province he will need your support in even greater measure. I am consoled to think that he can count on you as well. For all that you do for and with us, dear partners and friends, thank you very much. May God bless you abundantly! Shukran!

Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, S.J.
Provincial



Schs. Boniface Okumu, SJ, Reuben Okwach, SJ and Thomas Athian, SJ, at a recent Jesuits in Formation meeting

AOR Province: Looking back with eyes towards the future

It is exactly 5 years since we launched our Province Apostolic Plan under the leadership of Fr. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator S.J. As he leaves office, it is in order that we express our gratitude to him for his ably leadership in the past 5 years. Being someone through whom God manifested his love and care for us, Fr. Orobator worked with others to achieve a lot.

The AOR Apostolic Plan 2010-2015, is a 5 year plan developed with an aim of steering the mission of the Province with specific goals to be achieved. The plan comprehensively addresses the needs of the Society of Jesus in the Eastern African Province. The key areas of focus during this 5 year period was on Formation, Education, Resource Mobilization and Development, service to the local Church and the African Assistancy and Faith and Justice.

In the 5 years, a number of goals were realized. For instance, the Province embarked on collaboration with other Provinces such as the North West Africa Province, where a tertianship program was established. The Province also established primary schools in Ethiopia and Tanzania and expanded the secondary schools in South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. This was in an effort to provide more education opportunities in the communities where we are involved. In addition, plans are also underway to establish a Jesuit University of Eastern Africa.

In view of local and international resource mobilization, the province invested in real estate developments in Tanzania and Kenya. These efforts were made to support Jesuits in formation and other development initiatives. There are also ongoing initiatives to establish a healthcare scheme for the Province.

Another area where the Province made significant strides is the formation of justice and peace commissions in Jesuit run parishes, in an effort to create awareness at grassroot level. Our Spiritual ministry also progressed over the years with improved facilities and consistent Spiritual guidance and retreat programs. This has continuously allowed us to serve the clergy, lay people and our collaborators.

Although a lot has been achieved over the years, the Province still has a lot to do. For instance, the Province aims to promote more effective application of Ignatian pedagogy in its schools. Training of more men has to be undertaken as well as the implementation of the Society's mission beyond the major cities of the province.

All in all, we thank all our readers, our collaborators and partners. Keep in mind that the end of one journey is the beginning of another. Thus, the end of Fr. Orobator's reign is the beginning of Fr. Afulo's reign as the Provincial of the Eastern Africa Province of the Society of Jesus. We appreciate your support and collaboration in assisting us to realize and achieve our vision.

Thank you!

Fr. Raymond Manyanga, SJ, Socius to the Director of Novices, Arusha

Fr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, SJ,

the incoming AOR Provincial, talks about his vision and plans for the Eastern Africa Province of the Society of Jesus



Who is a Jesuit Provincial?

A Jesuit Provincial is a major Superior of a Province appointed by the General to take care of the mission and the ministries of the Society of Jesus in that particular jurisdiction. The provincial is appointed by the General after the Province has gone through a process of discernment, proposal of names, considered by special or an extended Consult and finally a canonical consult considering the names that are proposed and a tenure is sent to the General who may then appoint one of the fellows in the tenure or some other person.

How did you feel when you received news that you were going to become the next Provincial of the Jesuits Eastern Africa?

At the end of July, the General asked me to be the next Provincial of Eastern Africa Province. When I heard this news it was overwhelming because of the enormity of the responsibility that it demands. It was also a level of trust in the Society that I could be asked to carry out this ministry on behalf of the Jesuits of this Province and on behalf of the Society of Jesus.

What are you currently involved in and what qualities do you bring to this position?

Presently am finishing up as Principal of Hekima College, Jesuit School of theology. Before that I was the Formation Assistant of our Province. I bring to this role, the dimension of educational administration and also personnel training. I will rely on the generosity of the companions and their availability for the mission, as well as the collaborators, including lay and other religious. This will be a great resource for accomplishing the mission

of the Society of Jesus in Eastern Africa.

What are some of the matters you hope to address during your term in office?

There is a dimension of continuity since my predecessor, Fr. Orobator, and other provincials before him have done a lot. Aside from that, our Society greatly relies on our men in formation. If we train them well, we will have Jesuits that we can rely on for the later mission of the Society of Jesus. Therefore giving our men training is very critical and is something that my formation assistant and I will follow up closely.

The other part is getting into new areas which may require discernment and identifying the greatest need in each country and how we can respond to them as Jesuits. A project that we have reflected on for a long time is a Jesuit University in Eastern Africa Province. Therefore we will work closely with individuals who are already assigned to those positions to facilitate the discernment process so that this project becomes a reality in the next few years.

We may also have to look at the issue of Faith and Justice. For instance How do companions in different parts of the Province make Faith and Justice their way of doing things? GC 32 and 34 emphasize that Faith and Justice are two sides of the same coin and therefore inseparable. This is therefore a dimension that we will look at.

We will look at collaboration with the local churches and find a way of working close with the Bishop, the local Episcopal Conferences so that the contribution of the Jesuits is brought

to the fore. We will also need resources to carry out our mission. Several Provinces and individuals have been generous to us, offering us resources to train our people and to carry out our apostolates. We will still rely on the generosity of these great men and women who have seen our mission as critical for the society, for the church and humanity.

What do you envision for AOR Jesuits?

There is a time somebody was preaching and he explained that 'whereas people train to be priests, you should strive to be a Saint.' In our own context, being saints or being good Jesuits is what we have to continue struggling towards. We are to try to see how we can achieve this; not through coercion but that it becomes part and parcel of our way of being, our lives and what we are doing day after day.

How do you unwind?

I engage in taking a good walk and relaxing, especially after work. I also keep up-to-date with current affairs because we have to preach the gospel with our feet and ears on the ground, so that we continue to see how relevant it (current affairs) is to the preaching of the gospel and how it affects the proclamation of the gospel.

Thank you and God Bless.

watch the full interview on our YouTube Page

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

St. Joseph the Worker Parish: creating opportunities for the youth and parishioners of Kangemi, Nairobi

Access to quality secondary education remains a challenge among youths especially in Kangemi slum, an area deeply characterized by human congestion, poor sanitation, poor house settlements and low income levels. Unemployment remains a key issue in the area which is partly due to the structure of the current education system in Kenya which focuses more on theory than practice.

To tackle these challenges, St. Joseph Kangemi Development Office, sought to collaborate with the AOR development Office, to develop a strategy to change the existing Training Centre into a Technical Secondary. It is envisaged that this school will equip students with both theoretical and technical skills for practical livelihood. Some of the technical subjects to be taught include *computer science, electrical works/ electronics/mobile repairs, tailoring/ fashion designing, beauty therapy/saloon works*, and so forth.

It is from this perspective St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Kangemi wishes to offer the youth a chance for critical education that can respond to their livelihood.

Currently, repairs and face-lifts are soon to commence and it is expected that by end of December 2014, all repairs and renovations will be completed. The school will commence with *form One* Class in January 2015 where 40 students are expected to be recruited. By 2017, it is anticipated that more than 160 students will have been enrolled and retained in all the four levels.

Aside from the Technical school, the parish also started constructing a bigger and permanent church at the Christ the King Outstation, located about 3km from the parish. This was due to the increasing population at Kangemi area, which is currently estimated to be 140,000 with 20,000 of these being Catholics. The church will have the capacity to accommodate over 1,000 parishioners and will be easily accessible to the disabled as well. Construction is currently ongoing and is at the roofing stage. Although only 50 per cent of the estimated total costs have been raised, the parish is hopeful that with support from well-wishers, this dream will be realized. Mass at the outstation is currently being held at a rented facility.



New Christ the King Church under construction

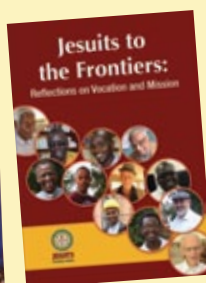
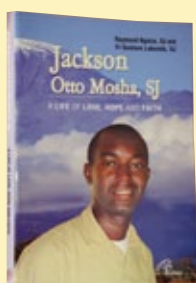
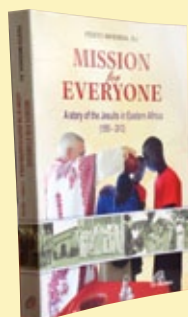


St. Joseph Technical Secondary School

Fr. Paschal Mwijage, SJ, Parish Priest, St. Joseph the Worker Parish, and Fr. Angelo Munduni, SJ, Director St. Joseph Development Programmes

Merry
Christmas
and
Happy
New Year
wishes

from the Jesuits
Eastern Africa



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Holy Transitions

“Everything’s a changing” our village poet would often recite and so right he was. Life is about changing and to live is to change often. The greatest change in our salvation history is the Christmas event: *The Word became flesh and lived amongst us* (Jn 1:14). The newness and awesomeness of this message of Christmas gets glossed over amidst the glitter and consumerism of the season. It is the time of celebrating the greatest transition of all – from the old to the new – from the law to the person of Jesus amongst us.



In Emmanuel a new creation commences. The words of St. Paul, speaking to the Gentile community in Ephesus, touch the depths of this change: *He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances that he might create in himself one new humanity in the place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross . . .* (Eph 2:15-16).

This new humanity in Christ is already there and yet to be fully realized. It is an ongoing mission. Celebrating Christmas is a source of strength and hope as we remember the great things God has done for us. He has come among us in order to be with us and lift us up. The faith and joy I have experienced in celebrating Christmas Mass with refugee communities in camps over the years has relayed this powerful message in stereo. For the poor and the downtrodden, the broken and the oppressed, it is a Magnificat experience. He has come to raise up the

lowly and set the downtrodden free and this is communicated in the lived faith experience of so many victims of conflict and violence in our world today.

The year that has passed has witnessed a broken humanity in need of reconciliation from Ukraine to Syria, from the Central African Republic to South Sudan. The powerless people hunger for peace and reconciliation. Every day is Christmas Day when we desire and join in this mission to build reconciliation and a new humanity, in and for our world. Small consistent acts of kindness and justice make huge difference in the struggles of our brothers and sisters. St. Ignatius taught that love is expressed more in giving than receiving, in actions rather than just in words.

Transitions are blessed and holy moments. We witness in our Church this year new breaths of fresh air in the efforts of Pope Francis to move our religious beliefs and pastoral practices

from being merely legal codes to more mystical interpretations, in order to ground all our actions in Jesus Christ and his compassion for those on the margins.

It is a blessed moment too for The Society of Jesus as it prepares for a General Congregation and the election of a new Superior General. The Province of Eastern Africa is also experiencing transition in a change of Provincials. It is a special moment of giving thanks for the wonderful service of Fr. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator to the Province and of prayer and solidarity with Fr. Joseph Afulo – the new Provincial.

As the Psalmist says: *The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy!*

Have a blessed Christmas.

Fr. John Guiney, SJ, Director Irish Jesuit Mission Office

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

Contacts:



JESUITS
EASTERN AFRICA

Kenya:

Jesuit Development Office
Loyola House
P.O. Box 21399, 00505,
Ngong' Road, Nairobi
(+254 20) 387 0436
Info.aor@gmail.com
www.easternafricajesuits.org

Tanzania:

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

Uganda:

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

Ethiopia:

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

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