



JESUITS
EASTERN AFRICA



EASTER, A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

Dear Friends,

Easter Greetings to You.

As Mahatma Gandhi put it, the Easter season reminds us of 'A man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.' This perfect act shows us the kind of love that the Risen Lord has for us that we continue to get a chance for a new beginning each day; a beginning that allows us to draw nearer to Christ in our everyday life.

May 2018 will mark the beginning of religious life for a significant number of candidates who are expected to start their first year as novices. At the same time, Gonzaga Gonzaga Jesuit novitiate in Arusha, Tanzania, are preparing for the First Vows. The novices who will be taking their vows have been formed in Jesuit religious life and have done different experiments including working in hospitals, children's and elderly homes and in schools. It is my hope that God will grant them steadfast hearts to continue in their vocation. Likewise, 3 priests have in the last 3 months, made final vows in the Society of Jesus and at least 1 more will make final vows later this year.

The months of June and July will usher a season of great harvest for the Province as some of our deacons will be ordained to the priesthood while others will start their Licentiate studies. 13 Jesuits from different Provinces are also expected to finish their Tertianship program, which is currently ongoing at Mwanga Spirituality Centre in Nairobi, Kenya; 3 of them are from the Eastern Africa Province. At the end of February, one of our companions completed his Tertianship program in Sri Lanka and has returned to the Province with great enthusiasm for his next mission.

Furthermore, St. Charles Lwanga Catholic Church, located in Malindi, Kenya will be officially inaugurated by the Province. This is the most recent endeavor and I'm hopeful that it shall produce great fruits. The Jesuits missioned at the Church will be involved in Inter-religious Dialogue and fostering peace and reconciliation, which is a great need in the area.

In February 2018, Ocer Campion Jesuit College, in Gulu, Uganda, initiated Advanced Level studies. This is a great achievement in our mission especially in offering quality education to the people of Northern Uganda. *Hongera sana Ocer!*

As the year progresses, let us remember that Easter gives us the chance to be reconciled with God and to seek Him in all aspects of our lives. As we mark these celebrations, let us remember that the power and beauty of Jesus' resurrection is that it reunites us with the Risen Lord and gives us hope for a better tomorrow.

May the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you and your dear ones blessings of Prosperity.

Wishing you a Blessed Easter Season!

Fr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, SJ
AOR Provincial

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Shukran

Shukran:
Swahili/Arabic
for Gratitude



Fr. Protas Okwalo, SJ, during Mass. Right: Christians of St. Charles Lwanga Church.

St. Charles Lwanga Catholic Church

St. Charles Lwanga Catholic Church, the latest apostolate of the Jesuits Eastern Africa Province, and an initiative of the late Bishop, Emmanuel Barbara, OFM, Cap., is located in the Diocese of Malindi, Kenya. The church can comfortably sit 260 adults, though it serves a population estimated at 600 people. To solve the problem of congestion, and that of children sitting on the sanctuary during mass, Fr. Albert Buijs, MHM, the Parish Priest of St. Francis Xavier, - of which St. Charles Lwanga has been an outstation - together with the Christians of St. Charles Lwanga, decided to put up a bigger Church. The ongoing project will see the church have a capacity of at least 600 people. On Sundays, the Parish has three masses; two for adults (one at 6.30 am, and the other at 10.00 am), and a third mass for PMC (Pontifical Missionary Children), PMY1 (Pontifical Missionary Youth - Junior Youth) and PMY 2 (Senior Youth).

Besides pastoral ministry, seminars have been organized on five pillars of the life of the Church: life in Community, Prayer, religious education, service and leadership, Ignatian Spirituality, and a reading of the Joy of the Gospel by Pope Francis. In addition to the above, Jesuits working at the parish intend to share Ignatian pedagogy with the catechists and religious educators of the parish.

Another project that the Church requires is setting up a residence for its ministers. Currently, the Jesuits working at the Church

rent a house courtesy of the Christians at St. Charles Lwanga. A site for putting up the presbytery has, in the meantime, been located and plans are underway towards securing support for construction.

In addition to the Parish ministry, plans are underway to engage in and establish a Centre for an inter-religious dialogue. This is one of the greatest needs across the coastal region of Kenya.

By Fr. Protas Okwalo, SJ - Parish Priest, St. Charles Lwanga Church

Ocer Launches Advanced Secondary Education

In a short span of its history, Ocer Campion Jesuit College in Gulu, Uganda has evolved from a pre-secondary school to a fully-fledged high school. A school that started seven years ago with 35 pupils in the pre-secondary class now boasts of over 710 students.

On 26th February 2018, the long awaited advanced secondary section was unveiled. One by one, students streamed into the school to start their high school academic journey. The look on their faces explained it all: the new students were full of wonder at such a magnificent school located in an area that had once been torn apart by war. The former students who were here for their ordinary level education were filled with inexplicable joy to be back at the much loved and prestigious school.

Currently, there are 30 students in 'A' Level, 20 of whom are girls. Once a week, students are privileged to receive fundamental Christian teachings from the Jesuits. In a lesson referred to as Contemporary Christian Living, students are educated on crucial topics such as human rights, justice, morality and dynamics of life among others. In less than a month, students have been touched and transformed. Lilian Akumu, who's studying MEG/ICT (Mathematics, Economics, Geography and Information Communication Technology) attests to this. She has learnt that she has to fight for the rights of her people. It is truly undisputable that Ocer is training men and women for and with others.



Fr. Tony Wach, SJ, Project Director, OCJC, talks to the 'A' Level pioneering class

Innocent Okello is one happy student who doesn't hide his delight to be back at Ocer where he did his Ordinary Level studies. With a wide smile, he speaks with a lot of pride of being an Ocerian, *"It feels good, I am proud of Ocer and I love being here,"* he says. He continues to say that he's happy to be a pioneer and feels so privileged that he's part of the students who are creating a culture that their successors shall embrace. Like Lilian, Innocent is studying MEG/ICT and his desire is to become an auditor. The ongoing Christian teachings have also impacted on him, *"I had thought this lesson would be like Christian Religious Education but no, it is different. It is about putting one's faith in action,"* he says. *"I am learning to work hard and smart. From these teachings, I have learnt that I have to reach out to the poor and disadvantaged people in my community and beyond, that's the Christian way of living,"* says Innocent.

It's not only the students who are fascinated with this subject, the teachers are equally interested. Fr. Tony Wach, SJ, the school director speaks passionately about this 'unique' subject. *"We are Ocer and we are different, we are here to offer something unique to these students that other schools don't offer"* he says. Father Tony continues to emphasize that these teachings are not designed to turn these students into Jesuits rather to nurture them into morally upright and responsible citizens.

For now the school only offers Art Subjects at A level. The subjects offered include; Mathematics, Economics, History, Geography, Literature, Divinity and Information Technology. Science subjects are currently not offered due to lack of a well-equipped laboratory for A-Level students though the Ordinary Level students are taught Science subjects.

By Idah Leah Nabunnya, Communications Officer, Ocer Campion Jesuit College

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 for more information on our work

With God in South Sudan

One sleepy afternoon in March 2012, I was sitting in a computer room at Arrupe College Jesuit School of Philosophy and Humanities in Harare, Zimbabwe chatting endlessly with friends and browsing the internet. I was coming to the end of my philosophy training as a Jesuit, and I was looking forward to moving to the next stage of my training: Regency. Regency is a period between philosophy and theology studies. It is usually two years, but sometimes it could be three or more. As a member of the Jesuits Eastern Africa Province, I was ready to go to any of the six countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sudan, or South Sudan).

That day, as I was enjoying my unhurried conversations at that computer room, I received an email from Fr. Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator, SJ, who was my provincial superior at the time. It read: “based on the conversation I have had with you over the last few months, and trusting in your abilities and God’s work in you, I am going to send you for Regency to teach at Loyola Secondary School Wau, South Sudan.” I shuddered, went mute, logged out of the email account, and silently left the computer room with fear and trembling. I knew that South Sudan was not going to be an easy mission, yet I accepted to go eventually.

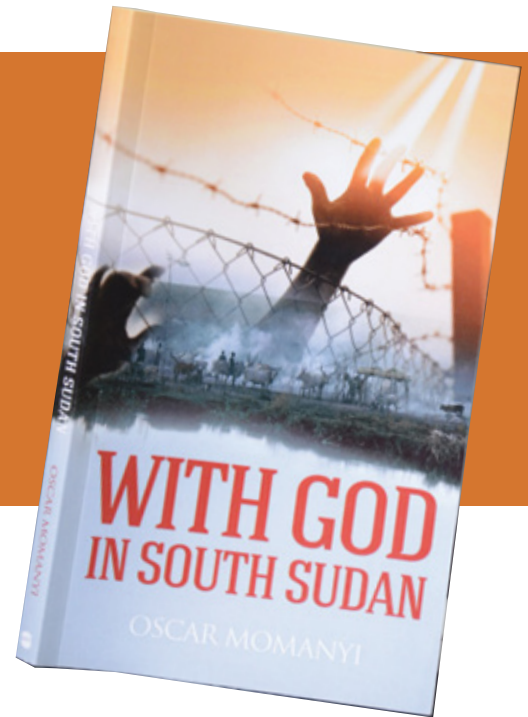
The story in this book is inspired by the experience I had in South Sudan at Loyola Secondary School. I arrived there at a time when the country was struggling to make a difficult transition. South Sudan got its independence from Sudan on July 9, 2011. One year later, in July 2012, I found myself immersed in the post-independence South Sudan.

In 1969, Pope Paul VI, while on a visit to Uganda, said, “By now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil.” As an African, I had never thought of mission in that way. I assumed that missionaries only came from Europe and America to work in Africa as I had observed in my native country Kenya. This book narrates some of the experiences I had when I responded to the call to be a missionary in South Sudan.

Pope Francis, in his first exhortation titled *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), urged Christians and all people of good will not to forget the people living in the margins of society such as South Sudan. As a member of the Society of Jesus, I was happy, although frightened, to be sent to South Sudan. The story that unfolds in the book is one of faith, hope, and love in the midst of uncertainty and the threat of war and violence. What unfolds in this narrative is not a single story but rather an amalgam of stories. This book narrates my journeys, joys, challenges and the experiences of other people of faith as they accompanied the South Sudanese people. This is a story of a desire to be a witness to the values of the Gospel in a difficult situation.

The book not only narrates the goings on at Loyola Secondary School but also what was taking place in other Jesuit educational institutions in South Sudan such as the Multi-Educational Agricultural Jesuit Institute of South Sudan (MAJIS). MAJIS is found in the outskirts of the town of Rumbek in a little village of Akol Jal. I narrate the humble beginnings of MAJIS, the challenges that that small Jesuit educational institution faces and the courage of the Jesuits who worked there.

The enormous needs of South Sudan cannot be accomplished overnight. The presence of people who are in solidarity with the South Sudanese is more important. Witness to the Gospel



values through a positive presence in the midst of many challenges is what Christ continually calls each Christian to do. Christian friendship and hospitality are the most important gifts that the people of South Sudan need. The people of South Sudan exude humanity full of dignity and warmth. They welcome you as a stranger who must become a friend. According to my lived experience in South Sudan, education seemed to be the greatest need for the country. Education is key in transforming post-conflict situations. I was happy to contribute to the education of future leaders of the new country. During my time in South Sudan, I met men and women dedicated to the service of the people in great need. Their lives and enthusiasm for the saving work of God gave me a lot of encouragement and hope for the new country. I met many men and women who left their comfort zones in order to be with the poor people who needed their presence. Sometimes it was only that presence and not much material assistance that the local people needed. ‘*With God in South Sudan*’ narrates the stories of these faithful men and women alongside my own experience.

By Oscar Momanyi, SJ

The Joy of Easter

At the culmination of Lenten period, we enter into the Easter Triduum which commemorates the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. We are invited to be aware and contemplate on the mystery of God's immeasurable love for humanity. Jesus Christ, who had a constant Obedience to the Father, took on human nature with all its weakness, except sin, takes on the humiliations, Passion and death on the cross. This is the supreme sacrifice offered for the sins and inadequacies of humanity so that we may be strengthened in our hope and "approach the throne of Grace" (Heb 4:15) with confidence. This is the expression of God's decision to show us the fullness of His love for eternity.

On Holy Thursday Jesus gave himself to us as food and in the washing of the feet, He sets an example of the need to be a servant. Jesus exemplifies a way of loving. Jesus humbles Himself as a servant of all. This is where Jesus demonstrates His Servanthood and He continues with His Servant mentality throughout His passion. Jesus remains Obedient even to death (Phil 12:8). With the commemoration of the last supper we recall the institution of the Eucharist, a way of worship and entering into the mystery of God. In the Symbolism of bread and wine, in a real way, Christ's body was given and His Blood was poured out and he asked His disciples "do this as I have done in remembrance of me."

When we participate in the passion and death of our Lord on Good Friday, sharing in His suffering through fasting and penance, we commit ourselves in following the example Christ Jesus set before us, of remaining faithful and true to our vocations as Christians; of being Christ-Like. God is full of love and through

Christ, He wants to reconcile humanity to Himself and "establish peace through His blood on the cross" (Col 1:20). Through His death on the cross, we come to experience the Lord's perpetual divine love that embraces all humanity. This love summons each of us to love one another and to cultivate a spirit of caring and concern for others.

As we enter the solemn Easter vigil on the night of Holy Saturday we proclaim the resurrection of Christ which is His definitive victory over death and sin. We are called to place our trust in the perpetual love of God which turns death into life. Through the death of Christ Jesus, God gives us life and through His resurrection, God renews humanity by giving us a new and transformed life. "One who believes... has eternal life; he has passed from death to life" (Jn 5:25). The solemn vigil Holy Saturday invites us to "stand firm on the foundation of our faith" (Col: 1:23) and remembering our baptism "which unite us to Christ"



(Rom 6:3-5). Jesus calls us to continue His mission of revealing the perfect love of God to the world.

The Easter Triduum places us right in the third and fourth weeks of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. In the Fourth week of the Spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, we are asked to share in the joy and peace of the Risen Christ. This joy, like any grace we pray for, is a gift from God; we cannot earn or force it. We simply try to be open to receiving the joy of Easter by contemplating Christ as He shares the joy of the Resurrection with others. In the words of His Holiness, Pope Francis "in reliving the sacred Triduum, let us pray for the grace to welcome God's will in our lives".

Rev. Victor Awiti, SJ

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