



## A TIME FOR CELEBRATION!

Dear Friends  
Advent Greetings to you!

As we approach advent season, we cannot help but look back at the year in deep gratitude for the numerous blessings the Lord has bestowed upon the Eastern Africa Province (AOR).

Firstly, the Province recently got approval to take up an outstation, St. Charles Lwanga, in Malindi, Kenya. Malindi is predominantly Muslim with a small Catholic community. The diocese also has a limited number of clergy so the involvement of the Jesuits in Malindi is a great addition. By December 2017, two Jesuits will be missioned to the outstation while one more Jesuit will be missioned there in 2018. The parish is situated near the ancient chapel of St. Francis Xavier, one of the first Jesuits. AOR is also considering a possibility of taking care and popularising the use of this historical chapel. Recently, AOR successfully obtained all the necessary permits for expansion of the Galilee Spiritual Centre; it took more than 15 years to get all the papers from the relevant local authorities. The Galilee Spiritual Centre, in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia has been in operation for 42 years and most of the facilities were set up many years ago. The expansion will begin early 2018; it will involve the construction of a new accommodation block that will allow the Centre to take up more retreatants who come from all over Ethiopia.

In the month of October 2017, AOR joined in on the celebrations to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez. The 4 days celebration, held in Dodoma, Tanzania, begun on Friday 27th through Monday 30th October. Masses were held for the Youth, Small Christian Community, parishioners of the Airport Parish and for Jesuit collaborators, volunteers and partners. During Mass and the adjoining celebrations, Jesuit brothers gave their testimonies and talked about their vocation to the brotherhood. This event reminded us of the importance of the vocation to Brotherhood in the Society of Jesus. AOR currently has 10 brothers; some in apostolic works and others in studies.

The year has been marked with more celebrations as the Province has had 7 new priests; 2 diaconate ordinations, and 16 novices joined the Novitiate in Arusha. 1 Jesuit was ordained to the diaconate on 18th November in Innsbruck, Austria while 1 more deacon will be ordained to the priesthood on 16th December in Mwanza, Tanzania. In addition, 6 other scholastics at Hekima College have applied for ordination to the diaconate in February 2018. It is indeed a great time for celebration for AOR!

In view of the global apostolic preferences emphasized by General Congregation 35; particularly Africa and China, AOR is pleased to have learned and explored the unique perspectives of the Society's mission in the Chinese province through the visit of Fr. John Lee, SJ and Fr. Stephen Chow, SJ in September. We are grateful that they shared their profound experiences with us. The Universality of the Society of Jesus is expressed clearly in such collaborations and we look forward to collaborating more with other Provinces and partners across the world.

On behalf of the Society of Jesus, I thank you, our friend, partner, and collaborator, for your invaluable support, prayers, and contribution to the accomplishment we have had. I wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and abundant blessings in the New Year, 2018!

Fr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, SJ  
Provincial



Brs. Vincent Soreng, SJ, Cleophas Wekesa, James Edema, SJ, and Charles Kizza, SJ, on the feast of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez

## AOR celebrates the 400th anniversary of St Alphonsus Rodriguez, Patron Saint, and Model of Jesuit Brothers

For a few years, the AOR Province has celebrated Jesuit Brothers Day in Nairobi, Kenya. This year, the Provincial, Fr. Joseph Afulo decided that the celebrations should take place in Dodoma, Tanzania, where the majority of the Jesuit Brothers of the Province work. The Feast of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, SJ, is celebrated on October 31. However, in the AOR Province, the celebrations took place between October 28 and October 31. The celebration started on Friday 27, with the Holy Eucharist in the evening, with the Youth of *Kiwanja cha Ndege Parish*, Dodoma. During Mass, Br Charles Kizza SJ shared with the Youth the vocation of Jesuit brothers and his own vocation.

On Saturday, October 28, Fr. Eric Wanyonyi, SJ, celebrated Mass in one of the Parish's Small Christian Communities named after St Alphonsus Rodriguez. During Mass, Fr Wanyonyi gave a reflection on the life of St. Alphonsus. He challenged and encouraged the faithful to imitate the life of the Saint, particularly his simplicity and humility, as a way to transform their lives.

On Sunday 29, Fr. Provincial, accompanied by Frs. Jerome Manyahi and Raymond Manyanga celebrated the First Mass at *K'ndege Parish*. The Provincial gave a brief introduction to the life of St. Alphonsus and invited Br. Charles Kizza to share the Jesuit Brothers vocation and how it differs from the vocation of a Jesuit Priest.

On Monday evening, Fr. Provincial celebrated the Holy Eucharist attended by Jesuits in Dodoma and from other places - Fr Leo Amani, Fr Raymond Manyanga - and Jesuit collaborators. During Mass, Br. James Edema gave a beautiful reflection on St. Alphonsus and on his vocation as a brother. Br. Edema said living the vocation of a brother can be frustrating if a person is not well

convinced of it, or if it is not truly a call from God. Other participants present also gave a reflection on the vocation of brothers, and the impact brothers have had in the AOR Province and in the Society of Jesus at large. Fr Leo Amani called the vocation of a brother a special vocation in the Society of Jesus, especially these days when the numbers of brothers continue to diminish. He reminded and encouraged Jesuits to continue to uphold and protect this special call. "*Brothers have become a rare species in the Society. So we ought to treasure the few brothers that we have by supporting them always for they are part of what identifies us as Jesuits*", he said.

After Eucharist, visitors had refreshments and dinner. Our collaborators, Sisters of St Gemma, who works at St Ignatius Preparatory and Primary School, surprised the Brothers by giving each of them a gift of an African Shirt.

By Sch. Kimario Africanus, SJ, Operations Manager at St. Peter Claver High School in Dodoma, Tanzania

# The Simplicity of Brotherhood

I joined the Society of Jesus in the year 2000 as a brother Candidate. My desire to join the Society as a brother stems from my experience growing up with the Comboni Missionary brothers in my local Parish in Arua Diocese. The brothers at the parish were engaged in various activities such as working with the youth (YCS), catechism, helping the choir, teaching altar servants, working in the carpentry workshop and garage of the Parish, working as constructors, and nurses. I, therefore, grew up knowing a lot about brothers and came to admire their lifestyle and work in my local Parish.

As I went to high school, my desire to become a Comboni Missionary brother continued to grow. When I met Jesuits years later and discovered that they also had brothers, without thinking twice, I decided that I would join them as a brother. When I began my formation

in the novitiate, I was the only brother Novice. The rest of my fellow novices were scholastics. But that didn't bother me because I had already decided what I wanted. The only other brother in the Novitiate was a formator, Brother Vincent Soreng. Novitiate experience

was good. There wasn't much difference between me and the other scholastics. We attended the same classes and pretty much took part in the same activities like manual work, and going out for Friday apostolates etc. After taking our vows on the 2nd of July, 2002, we went to different places of formation. I was sent to study at Tangaza College.

Tangaza College deepened my vocation as a brother because it is there that I studied with so many brothers from different Congregations and I just felt at home. Tangaza College made me realize the reality of different vocations in the church: brothers, priests, Sisters and lay missionaries who studied together freely and happily. It was a great moment to be at Tangaza.

When I look back, I feel happy that I chose to become a brother because it is still the simple kind of life that I always dreamt of as a little boy growing up. I like the simplicity of brotherhood. I see that simplicity and Joy in the life of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, a man who dedicated his entire life, joyfully serving the church by doing simple tasks of attending to visitors and keeping doors, till his death.



Left: Br. James Edema with Br. Vincent Soreng' (middle) and Br. Wekesa, on the right

By Br. James Edema, SJ, Assistant Headmaster, St. Peter Claver High School, Dodoma, Tanzania

## 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 4 vibrant parishes and 3 outstations all having 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](http://www.easternafrijesuits.org) for more information on our work



# The life and times of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, SJ

Born in Spain (1532-1617), St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, SJ, set out on the road at the age of 38 after the loss of his family. As a teenage boy, Alphonsus had helped his mother run the family business following the death of his father when he was 14 years old. At twenty-three he married, but his wife and children died. Within a few years, his mother and son also died. On top of this, his business was failing, so he sold it. His journey took him from Segovia to Valencia, in Spain.

There he began a time of discernment as he sought work that would allow him to live in poverty and prayer. Feeling a call to religious life, he wanted to consecrate himself to God by serving others and living in the community. He decided to join the Society of Jesus. However, he was considered not suitable, especially because of lack of education. Undaunted, Alphonsus returned to Latin school, humbly bearing the ridicule of his adolescent classmates. Finally, in 1571, the Jesuit provincial accepted him as a lay brother because of his profound human and spiritual life - he was 40 years old.

After making the thirty days of Exercises, he was sent to Palma de Mallorca, where he pronounced his vows. For the next 46 years, Alphonsus served as a gatekeeper at the porter's lodge of the College of



Montesión in Spain. There he became a role model of service, humility, love, and holiness to all people he encountered. His fruitful apostolic activity was sustained by a spiritual life rich in interior movements. The porter's lodge of the College was the place that allowed him to counsel the city's "important folk," accompany many and help all those in need. His assignment allowed him to minister to many visitors and he became the spiritual adviser to many students. He exerted wide-reaching influence, most notably in guiding St. Peter Claver

into his mission to the slaves. Well known are his conversations with Peter Claver, to whom he was able to transmit the missionary fervor of Peter Faber and the first Jesuits. His writings, which he penned in obedience to Superiors, reveal the Jesuit Brother as a mystic who embodied the Ignatian ideal of being a *contemplative in action*.

As Patron of the Brothers and model Jesuit, Saint Alphonsus lived to the full his vocation to the Society of Jesus, showing it to be a call to untiring service that is founded on a deep experience of God and a rich spiritual life. Fr. General, in his letter dated ... said that 'the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the death of the Jesuit Brother Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez provides us the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of our common vocation to the Society of Jesus, the vocation by which we, filled with joy, leave all behind to follow the Lord Jesus (Mt 19, 16-22), becoming friends in the Lord in order to collaborate in his mission of liberating all humankind.'

On October 31, 2017, the 400th centennial of the death of St. Alphonsus was celebrated.

Excerpts from Ignatian Spirituality.com

Jesuits Eastern Africa wishes you a

*Merry Christmas and  
a Prosperous New Year  
2018!*

# Amidst the Pain of the World

The Year 2017 has been quite eventful, and equally crisis laden, from the Middle East to Myanmar; from Kenya to Zimbabwe. The events we have experienced have brought to life the brokenness of humanity and the cracks that run deep into the social relations of the contemporary societies around the world. We have come face to face with a state of the world that has moved further from the ideals that we espouse in daily reflection. Our experience tells of firsthand degeneration of the human condition through war, hunger, oppression, ethnic hate, dishonesty, unreflective use of power, gender violence among other ills that burden us. What questions do these events present to us whose trade is salvation of souls? What new perspectives ought we to think about in birthing a world that is being continuously brought to completion by God?

This year, as has been since his pontificate, Pope Francis has insisted upon a search for encounters; social, spiritual, inter-religious and cultural encounters that will shape the direction of the future. Our world, in his view, must be a world that is in constant companionship as we search for collective meaning amidst the brokenness we experience. Ironically, the course this year has been in the opposite direction, especially in the countries in AOR Province and her neighbors. We are a more divided world each day, seeing one another as strangers who should be avoided rather than sought to be understood. We have espoused more injustice and revenge than the steps we have taken towards meaningful reconciliation. We have sought to be understood more than to understand.

In my first few months as a regent, I have become accustomed to mothers and children walking for miles, barefoot at



sunset, from Burundi into Tanzania in a hopeful search for a livelihood. I have seen such destitute families being sent back home with the promise of a better life, yet with the fear of emptiness and death. I have encountered the pain of families whose children have been blown

to pieces by weapons while picking up scrap metal to earn them an extra coin. Stories abound of young people whose future is just as bleak as their past, with little or nothing to place their hope upon; yet with a whole life ahead of them to maneuver.

The kind of commitment this brokenness demands of us can only be imagined by a world in search of completeness and unity. We must ourselves own that search for completeness and unity; we must make it our project to imagine the world whose creation we want to contribute to. It is a lifetime process that we must bind ourselves to, and because we are part of that same broken universe, we must accept to feel the pain of the world.

"It is of little or no use to raise our voices and run about to find weapons for our protection" says the Holy Father, "what is needed today are peacemakers, not fomenters of conflict; fire-fighters and not arsonists; preachers of reconciliation and not instigators of destruction." In all this, we must gaze upon Christ, whose incarnation is a result of a merciful gaze on our broken world.

By Sch. Tobias Dindi Ong'aria, Radio Kwizera, Ngara, Tanzania

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) 020 2444781/3/5/6  
[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)787824816/765914276  
[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  
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)

### Sudan:

Jesuit Development Office  
P.O. Box 00505,  
Ngong Road, Nairobi  
(+254) 020 2444781/3/5/6  
[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)

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