



JESUITS
EASTERN AFRICA



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Shukran

Shukran:
Swahili/Arabic
for Gratitude



HOPE IN SOUTH SUDAN UNDIMMED BY VIOLENCE

After more than five decades of civil war, South Sudan attained independence on 9 July 2011. On independence day, hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese thronged the streets of Juba undeterred by the scorching heat, hoisted the national flag, danced and sang "Freedom!" Determined to be one of the key players in transforming and reconstructing Africa's newest nation, the Jesuits of Eastern Africa placed South Sudan at the top of their priority list.

Little did we know that the joy and celebration that greeted the independence of South Sudan would be short-lived. Violence erupted late last year, claiming hundreds of lives, causing destruction of properties, displacing thousands of people, and leaving the country tottering on the brink of civil war. The conflict between the warring factions continues to threaten the stability and development of South Sudan.

However, the town of Wau, where Loyola Secondary School (LSS) is located, and the town of Rumbek, where Multi-Educational and Agricultural Jesuit Institute of Sudan (MAJIS), aka "Farm School" is located, have largely been spared the brunt of the recent clashes. Thanks to the generosity of our partners, we have started the construction of three science labs and a computer lab in LSS. We have also secured funding for MAJIS to start a rural livelihood diversification and food security program. The MAJIS program is aimed at boosting food security by increasing crop production and teaching modern farming practises.

As we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, we invite you to join us in praying for the people of South Sudan, so that the warring parties may stop the carnage and embrace dialogue as a means of finding lasting solution to the latest wave of violence.

As always, we are grateful for your invaluable support without which we cannot accomplish our mission in Eastern Africa. May God bless you and your family for your generous support. HAPPY EASTER!

Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator, S.J.
Provincial



Students of St. Al's at a library lesson. Inset: Samuel Kuria



Faith can move mountains

Samuel Kuria was orphaned at an early age. 'My father died when I was born and my mother followed eight years later. Instead of celebrating Christmas in 2002, we buried mum. I later ended up in a children's orphanage but was evicted in 2007 after the presidential elections. The headmistress (at the orphanage) pointed at me and said, 'You go.' So I packed my books, my one pair of trousers and a shirt for Sunday. She however refused to let me leave with those items saying they were not mine. Thus, I left with nothing in the bag. While at the orphanage, I had heard about St. Aloysius Secondary School. So I decided to go for an interview. I kept praying and through the grace of God I was accepted. I now know that Faith can move mountains.'

Kuria, currently in Form 3, is like many of our students at St. Aloysius Secondary School. Despite difficult and humble backgrounds, they still dream of one day making something good out of their lives. Affectionately called St. Al's, the school opened its doors in January, 2004, to serve the vulnerable youth of Kibera slums, who had lost their parents due to the AIDS pandemic. Majority of the students have lost both parents and live with an aunt or uncle or an older brother or sister. Some have found homes with well-wishers while others live in groups of 2 or 3 students with support from the school. All this had been made possible by our friends, well-wishers and benefactors.

As St. Al's enters its second decade of service, how do we see the future? First, we have the responsibility of fundraising in order to sustain our 280 students on scholarship and a like number for whom we provide support in colleges and universities. In order to achieve our vision we are always reaching out to new benefactors, friends and other means of support.

Second, we dream of raising the money to build a boarding facility. This would make such a difference for our students not only in their ability to dedicate themselves to study but also in providing a positive environment where they can develop and mature. It would also assist in eliminating the challenges faced especially by our female students when they return to the horrendous conditions of Kibera each night.

Despite these challenges however, the fact that the school exists is a blessing. A combination of our enhanced facilities, our dedicated staff of administrators and teachers, and the committed work of the students have been yielding better academic results. For instance in 2013, 46 of our 60 graduates attained the entry requirement in Kenya for studying for a Bachelor's degree. This is an improvement of only 11 graduates who achieved this mark in 2012. Still, St. Al's work does not end with the completion of secondary school. To further Jesuit ideals of education in forming "Men and women for others," we invite our graduates to six months of community service. We also raise funds to support their tertiary education and many have completed their tertiary studies and become productive members of society.

On a personal note, journeying with our students has been the blessing of a lifetime. Hearing a student's sad circumstances or seeing the obstacles they face often brings a tear to my eye, but their resilience, their success in overcoming obstacles and the very strength in our St. Al's community brings such joy to my heart. We are truly blessed!

Fr. Terry Charlton, Socius AOR

The first wings to fly

My name is Jackline Mwendu and I am 16 years old. Due to my humble background, I joined Upendo programme in 2006 when I was 9 years old. After I lost my father in 2003, I was forced to drop out of school because my mother could not afford to pay my tuition fees due to financial constraints. At that time, despite having no stable job, my mother had to take care of my grand mother who was suffering from breast cancer. Upendo programme came to my rescue by enrolling me in St Joseph's Primary School. The programme took care of my school fees for my entire primary education. I have never lacked school fees since that time and I had to put more effort in my studies because that was my only hope. At one point in life, school was far away in my imagination but through Upendo program I got my hopes back. The school gave me the opportunity to build my dreams. My primary school education has been a success, thanks to Upendo programme. The seminars I attended in Upendo helped me to grow well physically, emotionally and spiritually. They mentored me, and made me understand myself better. They also assisted me in nurturing my talents. I will always consider Upendo as my second home. Despite the challenges I faced at home, such as lack of sufficient reading space and a favorable environment, I managed to attain 374 marks in my Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E) Exams. This opened another door for me for I was lucky to get a scholarship with Equity Bank Wings to Fly Foundation. For this reason, I will always take Upendo as my home since it is Upendo that gave me the first wings to fly with. I promise to give back in any way that I can especially through mentoring the younger Upendo children in terms of moral, spiritual and psychological support. I will always be a role model to them so that together we can fly to greater heights.

Thanks so much to all who support the Upendo Programme because they helped get my hopes back.

Jackline Mwendu



Upendo Intensive Vulnerable Care and Support Programme is a project of the Jesuit run parish (St. Joseph the worker parish located in Kangemi, Nairobi). The centre aims to provide education and psychosocial care and support to vulnerable children in Kangemi.

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.' We currently run seven schools and plan to establish 5 more.
- **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.easternafricajesuits.org for more information on our work



AOR Province Assembly

Jesuits normally gather whenever there is an issue of greater importance to the Society. It is against this background that 59 Jesuits from various parts of Eastern Africa Province (AOR) gathered for the Province Assembly from 11-14 December 2013 at Chemchemi Institute in Karen, Nairobi. The issues that were discussed were threefold: review of the Province Apostolic Plan (2010-2015); special apostolic issues: proposed Jesuit University of Eastern Africa (JUEA), proposed Health Insurance Scheme and the status of development office; and, finally, some matters of apostolic discernment. Though the delegates represented but a fraction of the Province, the whole Province was part of our discussion and in our prayer.

In his welcoming address, the Provincial, Fr A.E. Orobator, said that our major task was renewal - renewing the bonds of our companionship and renewing AOR's goals and objectives, especially because we will soon begin the process of appointing a new Provincial (who will be named in 2014 and take office in 2015).

Fr. Orobator said that if we left with nothing but a good time together, then the gathering would still be a success. Based on people's glowing evaluations, we certainly had a good time together, but there was also substance to our discussions.

The participants reviewed the AOR Apostolic Plan (2010-2015) and gave suggestion on the elements for the next Apostolic Plan of which eight possible issues were raised: ecology and the environment; work with collaborators; digital evangelization or e-evangelization; dialogue with other cultures and religions, especially Islam; training in spiritual direction; resource mobilization; regular evaluation of our apostolates; and training in administration and management.

Presenting on JUEA, Fr Fidelis Udahemuka (executive director of JUEA), reiterated that there is a demand for competence and highly specialized skills in Eastern Africa which is confronted with the increasing demand for higher education, condition of poverty, corruption and human rights violation. The treasurer of the province, Fr. Kabutta, gave a presentation on the proposed Health Scheme which will be entrusted to a trust fund Manager. The interest generated from this fund will be applied to the cost of providing healthcare for all members of Eastern Africa Province. The director of development, Michael Ochieng, also shared with the participants the success stories, challenges and opportunities of the development office.

Thereafter, we gathered for rich discussions regarding the possibility of AOR Jesuits taking over as the administrators of the teachers' training college in Cuibet, South Sudan. There were also meetings based on apostolic sectors and a meeting for superiors and directors of works. While there was a diversity of opinion, there was also great consensus on several issues.

Active prayer and lively liturgy complemented our meetings and deepened our union. We joyously celebrated jubilarians for 2013 and the final vows of Fr Elias Omondi. Despite being in the middle of their examinations, the men of Hekima College graciously hosted us for the vow celebration and made sure we left after praying, dancing and feasting. We had every reason to be grateful for our gathering, and now it is time to live it out.

By Michael Rossmann, SJ, Teacher at Loyola High School, Dar es Salaam
and Michael Ochieng, SJ, Development Office Director

Upcoming Events

- 16 May: Vow day at Gonzaga Gonza Novitiate
- 25-29 May: Jesuits in Formation (JiF) meeting
- 10 July: Priestly ordination of Corbinian Kyara in Moshi, Tanzania
- 26 July: Priestly ordination of James Moro and Angelo Munduni in Uganda
- 31 July: Priestly ordination of Zachary Macharia and Feast of St. Ignatius in Nairobi

More things are wrought by
PRAYER than this world dreams of

~ Alfred, Lord Tennyson ~



*Pray
with us
today*

Send us your prayer request to
prayer.aor@gmail.com

LENTEN APPEAL

SUPPORT OUR SOUTH SUDAN MAGIS GROUP to attend a 3 day leadership workshop in Zimbabwe in August 2014.

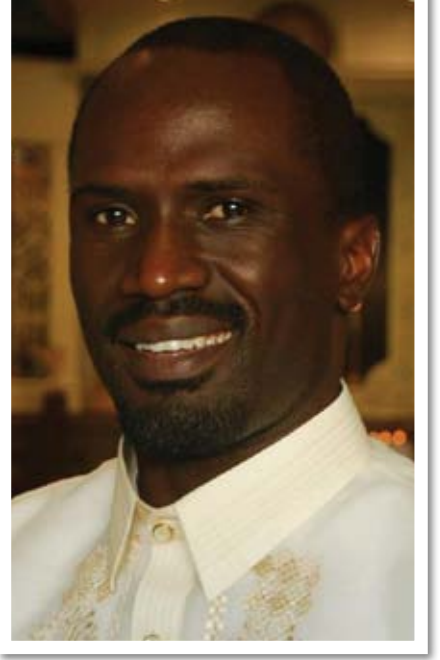
The workshop seeks to form and train young leaders in Ignatian leadership and is a networking platform. Magis is an Ignatian program for young adults and is mainly composed of secondary school and college students.

To support our Magis youth group, please make a **donation by cheque** in favour of 'Society of Jesus Kenya' or make a **transfer** in favour of 'Society of Jesus Kenya, ACC No: 6517490029, Swift Code: CBAFKENX

Easter Season:

A Celebration of New Life and Contagious Joy of Victory

In the history of our lives, many things beyond our religious and intellectual imagination happen to different generations. Yet successive generations continue to retell and reconnect with some of those unique things that cement newness and joyfulness of life. One of the greatest unique things that happened in the history of our lives is what emerged from those dark moments of Jesus' life. It is an absurd history yet something unique from it continues to challenge and nourish human lives century after century.



The intriguing Easter Season brings forth new life of victory. Something new emerges out of the devastating situation of horror and terror of injustice. Something new is born and victory is brought forth. It is Jesus' victory over fear and pain of insecurity, betrayal, suffering, desperation, death, and emptiness. The expected tragic end of Jesus' mission turns out to be a life changing experience. Rejoice, rejoice Jesus is alive. The tragedy bears new life of victory over what scares you and I in daily life.

Easter Season gives proponents and opponents a religious surprise that seems to be too good to be true. It is beyond the imagination of scientific and postmodern mind. Jesus is alive and he has reappeared to his disciples. It is truly new life of God's and human victory. Easter Season reaffirms Jesus' unceasing life which is taken for granted by his detractors and admirers. Jesus' resurrection cannot be verified in any

scientific laboratory yet Easter Season is a celebration of Jesus' amazing mystery of new life that continues to flow in the veins of his followers. It is God's power over things that threaten life.

Easter Season brings forth contagious joy of victory. Jesus' resurrection gives birth to gracious and contagious joy of victory in the lives of his disciples. While the guards are frozen in shock and high priests hold onto a conspiracy theory of stolen body, Jesus' resurrection breaks a new dawn of contagious joy amongst his disciples. It is a new joy in the lives of the scattered and frightened disciples. It is Easter contagious joy of redemption that transforms the lives of distracted, mournful, doubtful, and terrified disciples.

Easter season is an invitation to share the contagious joy of victory. The Easter contagious joy brings hiding disciples together to celebrate together the

new infectious joy. The Easter gracious and contagious joy gives the disciples the urgently needed new hope, new confidence, and new energy to proclaim, witness, and pass on the joy to each other. What seemed to be lost now has been found with great joy.

We too are invited to share and celebrate with each other the spring of new life and contagious joy of victory. We are invited to live a resurrection life, a resurrection joy. It is time to reach out to those living in tombs of insecurity, betrayal, suffering, desperation, death, and emptiness. It is a moment to help each other roll away those heavy stones of life. We invite you to join us in celebrating new life and contagious joy of victory given to us by the Risen Christ!

By Fr. Eric Wanyonyi, SJ, Vocations Director

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