



JESUIT'S
EASTERN AFRICA



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Shukran

Shukran:
Swahili/Arabic
for Gratitude



THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR JOURNEY!

Dear Friends,

Advent Greetings to you!

In the early morning of 15th November 2018, we received news of the brutal murder of Fr. Victor-Luke Odhiambo, SJ, who was the founding Principal of Mazollari Teachers' College (MTC) in Cueibet, South Sudan. He was very dedicated to our mission in South Sudan where he spearheaded education initiatives for over 10 years. Fr Victor first served as the headmaster of Loyola Secondary School in Wau, then went on to teach English at St. Peter Claver Ecological Centre and Holy Cross Out-Station in Rumbek, and finally moved to MTC. We fondly remember him for his courage, committed service to the underprivileged, and his humility. Thank you for the support and condolence messages we have received from across the world. The Province condemns all forms of violence and prays for lasting peace in South Sudan. May the Lord grant Fr. Victor eternal rest!

Despite this unfortunate incident, we are grateful that on 27th October 2018, two of our companions were ordained to the Diaconate, alongside 13 other Jesuits from other Provinces at Ateneo de Manila University, in the Philippines. May the Lord bless them as they continue their ministry as Deacons. At St. Charles Lwanga Parish in Malindi, construction for the Church is ongoing. At Galilee Centre in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, more residential facilities are being constructed to allow for the expansion of Spiritual Ministry. In Gulu, Northern Uganda, Ocer Campion Jesuit College is in the process of starting the construction of an additional girls' dormitory. We are deeply grateful to our benefactors who have enabled us to make these steps in serving the people of God more effectively.

The annual evaluation of the *Province Apostolic Plan 2017-2021* is ongoing. It is our hope that the evaluation will generate the needed 'analytical depth' of various programs being carried out. The upcoming Province Assembly in January 2019 will provide us with a platform to deliberate more on the plan, analyze ways to achieve our goals, and how better we can deepen collaboration with others in an effort to achieve more growth. The Province also participated in the Discernment of the Universal Apostolic Preferences for the period 2019-2029. A special thank you to all for making these processes a success.

To all our friends, partners, and collaborators, a big THANK YOU for your continuous support, friendship, and prayers. Thank you for being part of our journey. As we look forward with hope for your continued support and collaboration, I wish you a Happy and Prosperous New Year, 2019! Please be assured of our continued prayers. Advent Blessings to you and your dear ones.

Fr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, SJ


Provincial



A Priest Forever; a tribute to Fr. Victor-Luke Odhiambo, SJ (1956-2018)

When a great man dies, for years the light he leaves behind him lies on the paths of men.

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) U.S. Poet.

This is true for Fr. Victor-Luke Odhiambo, SJ, whose life was tragically cut short by unknown assailants who attacked the Daniel Comboni Jesuit Residence where he lived. At the time of his killing, in the early morning of Thursday 15th November 2018, Fr. Victor-Luke had been the Principal of Mazollari Teachers College and Acting Superior of the Jesuit Community in Cueibet, South Sudan. He had been in the living room when the assailants attacked. Four of the other Jesuits in the community were in their rooms; when they heard the noise and gunshots, they raised an alarm making the attackers flee.

The late Fr. Victor-Luke, SJ is fondly remembered as a gentleman, true to his mission in Christ. His impact on many lives is seen from the time he worked as an English teacher (1995-1997) and later as the headmaster of Loyola High School in Dar es Salaam (1997-2003), to his time in Loyola Secondary School in Wau (2008-2012), South Sudan. In his condolence message Valentine Okwero, nSJ, (his former student) recalls how Fr. Victor-Luke impacted his vocation to join religious life. Valentine attests that "by relating to us simple stories about the reality of life, he helped us search for the truth and the light. By his action, he moved our hearts to a wonderful world full of hope and light. Fr. Victor was a man for others; he came down to a lower level to lift up high those who were lower, so concerned and generous for others rather than for himself".

In Rumbek where he taught English at St. Peter Claver Ecological Centre (2013-2016), he is remembered as a selfless, intelligent, committed, and hardworking priest. Caroline Opok remembers him as a jovial and humorous priest who always put a smile on the

many faces he interacted with; a knight in shining armor. When he moved to Cueibet in 2016 as the founding Principal of Mazollari Teachers College, his impact was even deeper. He was a firm believer that education can bring positive change and always worked hard to ensure education initiatives, especially in South Sudan, which he truly loved, were a success. Fr. James Moro, SJ wrote, "... he was a selfless Jesuit, an educationist who cherished the intellectual apostolate. He was a Jesuit who believed that education is the surest way of social transformation."

His impact on his fellow Jesuits is also notable. Fr. Bernard Mallia, SJ, who lived with him in Wau recalls him as a man whose character was shaped not just by his nature but especially by his spiritual development so that he was truly exemplary as a Jesuit. "He truly was a good community man just with his unobtrusive but pleasant and effective presence." We remember with gratitude all that God has done through Fr. Victor-Luke's life.

Fr. Victor-Luke was sixty-two (62) years old, forty (40) years a Jesuit, and a priest for thirty-one (31) years. He was the first Kenyan to be ordained as a Jesuit Priest. Though he went too soon, the 'light' he has left behind will be remembered for many years to come. We continue praying for lasting peace and for our brothers and sisters living in difficult parts of the world.

May the Lord grant Fr. Victor-Luke Odhiambo, SJ eternal rest. Amen!

By Ms Diana Karua, AOR Communications Coordinator

The glory of young men is their strength - Proverbs 20:29

Our challenge is how to find God in the hearts of the young, even those who don't come to Church, and even those who don't even believe in Christ, - Adolfo Nicholas, SJ

Among other priorities, General Congregation (GC) 35 looked into the importance and characteristics of youth ministry in today's context. It was observed that the young look for guidance which is often not available from parents or teachers. Besides, the GC 35 affirmed that while schools mostly focus on providing intellectual skills, today young people are looking for other skills more than mere intellectual instructions.

In Eastern Africa Province (AOR), we work with youths largely through our parishes and established schools, to foster socioeconomic and cultural change and to encourage youths to strive for more than just academic excellence. Experiential learning activities, combined with reflection and faith sharing, are used to help students recognize God's presence in their everyday life. Whether through sports, music, a movie clip, technical training, or a new method of prayer, the youth are equipped with practical skills and tools for their daily lives. Our aim is to accompany, encourage, and strengthen the youth with various skills that will enable them to be good leaders in society.

Presently, the province has 3 formal youth centers. The Jesuit Youth Centre at the Blessed Maria Theresa Ledochowska Parish, in Dodoma – Tanzania supports 450 youths. The Centre is equipped with recreational facilities for sports and games, elementary computer skills, tailoring school, and car wash facilities. The Centre also runs frequent seminars for youth from different backgrounds. These activities allow the youth to network and develop personal skills for their own empowerment. The Centre has a very significant impact on the youth. For instance, some graduates of the sewing school are self-employed, while some of the basketball players have become players under corporate companies during regional games.

St John the Baptist Parish in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania has just completed a construction of youth center facility. Some of the ongoing youths' empowerment activities in this Center include tailoring lessons, computer lessons, and handcraft. The youths also have access to a hall which they use for their meetings and seminars. In the coming days, the center will also host kindergarten classes for up to 45 children and will be used to host preparation classes for First

Communion and confirmation, as well as parish meetings. To ensure better sustainability and maintenance, the halls will be rented out for use by the local community.

Lubango Youth Centre under St. Francis Xavier Parish in Mwanza, Tanzania runs various activities including cookery, tailoring, jewelry making, and homecraft training. The center also has a cafeteria run by the youth. The center aims at empowering the youth with abilities that will enable them to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life. The Centre also offers seminars and days of recollection to create awareness among the youth on spirituality and life skills.

In Kenya, St. Joseph the Worker Parish located in Kangemi, Nairobi serves approximately 6,000 young people. The youth activities at the parish include sports, arts and music, income generating activities, and formation and training in spiritual, social and political skills. The youth ministry targets a larger community beyond Catholic faithful thereby promoting inter-religious dialogue. Through networking, the youths involved in the ministry identify other youth who need various supports. The newly established St. Charles Lwanga parish in Malindi is in the process of setting up youth activities to cater for the youth at the parish and its surroundings.

In Rumbek, South Sudan, St. Theresa Parish also engages in various activities with the youth including formation seminars and peace and reconciliation talks, sporting activities and life skills. These activities are aimed at creating awareness on the present social realities and human rights among the youths. Thus, the St. Theresa Parish youth center is a platform for youths to discuss issues affecting them and South Sudan at large, and come up with local solutions that they can easily implement.

It is our desire that more youths will take advantage of these programs to empower themselves and uplift their lives. The exchange programs that we have among the parishes also encourage networking, peer learning, and sharing of opportunities. We hope that the AOR youth ministry will mold the youths into agents for social change.



1st row: Dodoma and Kangemi 2nd row: Dodoma and Rumbek

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 6 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

Jesuit Eastern Africa Province (AOR): Primary School Education Initiatives



1st row: Gonzaga Primary School, Abay Mado Catholic Academy, Upendo Program 2nd row: Memkwa program, MAJIS literacy program, Ignatius Primary School

For more than 450 years, the Society of Jesus has been striving to provide education for social transformation and integral human development, especially to the marginalized and those at the margins of the society. Throughout the world, Jesuit education trains students on how to be analytical, self-critical, analyze prevailing assumptions, motives, and attitudes, all for the betterment of the world. Students are supported to attain growth in faith and deeper understanding of God's purpose in their lives. In order to achieve the goal of forming well-rounded women and men, Jesuit education aims to educate men and women, from a young age, as leaders who strive to build a better world.

Like most Jesuit provinces, one of the most prominent ministries in AOR province is education. The Province has 3 formal primary schools (1 in Ethiopia and 2 in Tanzania) with a collective total of 1,500 pupils and 3 informal education initiatives (1 in South Sudan, 1 in Kenya, and 1 in Tanzania) with a total of 210 students. These educational initiatives are holistic and are part of a global mission to create a supportive educational environment that strives to give students endless possibilities for growth and leadership.

Jesuit Primary Schools in Tanzania

Over the last 10 years, Gonzaga primary school, in Dar es Salaam has served needy students in Luhanga area and beyond. The school currently has a population of 510 students (242 girls, 268 boys). Since its establishment, approximately 500 students have completed their studies at the school with a yearly graduation of approximately 50 students. In 2018, 48 students (24 girls, 24 boys) sat for their primary national examination and attained an average score of 201.31 out of 250 maximum scores. The school was ranked 194th out of 10,090 schools in the country and 7th out of 102 schools in the Dar es Salaam region.

Likewise, Ignatius Preparatory & Primary School in Dodoma is making a great contribution to education in the region. Established in 2003, the school has an average graduation of 50 students per year - more than 500 students have graduated since

its establishment. 59 students sat for their primary national examination in 2018, and the school attained an average score of 207.12 out of 250 maximum possible scores. The school was ranked 135th out of 10,090 schools in the country and 8th out of 486 schools in Dodoma region. Although the school has a need to increase the number of classes in order to cater to the growing demand, it still manages to take in a good number of students in the area. Currently, the school has a population of 494 students (244 girls, 250 boys) with plans to have a higher intake.

Abay Mado Catholic Academy, Ethiopia:

In 2012, the AOR Province established the Abay Mado Catholic Academy, in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. The school has a kindergarten and primary section with a total of 851 students (439 girls, 412 boys). In July 2018, Abay Mado held its first Grade 8 graduation with 58 students (35 girls, 23 boys). The 2nd Grade 8 graduates class, 2018/2019 has a total of 64 students. The school offers scholarship opportunities to needy and intellectually promising students to assure them access to good quality education. Over the coming years, the school hopes to establish a secondary school facility to cater to the demand for good secondary education in the area.

Other primary education initiatives

At St. John the Baptist Parish in Luhanga Dar es Salaam, Memkwa program gives an opportunity for children who have never

gone to school to undertake their primary education. The students aged between 9 and 20 years are mostly from underprivileged families. The school currently has 29 students (11 girls, 18 boys) and on average, about 9 students complete their studies each year. Although the students receive free education, most of them are able to successfully complete their studies and are enrolled in different secondary schools in Dar es Salaam.

The Multi-educational Jesuit Institute of South Sudan (MAJIS), located in Akol Jal village initiated a literacy program targeting lower primary school children who are unable to access the public primary school which is 9 kilometers from the village. Following the closure of the government school 3 years ago and due to the demand for education, MAJIS initiated the program with the aim of providing basic education. Although the program has inadequate resources and facilities, it serves 176 pupils (71 girls, 105 boys) from Akol Jal village.

Despite the numerous challenges faced by the different educational institutions in the province, our aim is to continue providing an opportunity for students to be able to excel academically and to forge a life that will bring change to the society. Our schools strive to provide the best education that encourages the spirit of Magis (more), that forms men and women for others (sharing gifts, pursuing justice, and having concern for the poor and marginalized), an education that cares for the individual person, and that develops a unity of heart, mind, and soul. All students are given a chance to discover and excel in their God-given talents and are armed with skills and knowledge to transform the world around them. To find out how you can partner with any of the schools, contact develop.aor@gmail.com

The True Meaning of This Season!!



*For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this! **Isaiah 9:6***

During the Christmas season, my primary school had a long-standing tradition of holding Christmas Carols. The carol entailed a 'play' on the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was very exciting and I remember being chosen to act as one of the angels, joining angel Gabriel and reciting the words, "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and his name shall be called Wonder-Counselor, Prince of Peace, and Son of God..." Did I deeply understand these terms? No! Once the Carol session was about to end, the teacher in charge would explain to us the importance of the birth of Jesus Christ. How wonderful it is today to exalt his name and live according to his teachings! This name 'Jesus Christ' is powerful and mighty, and when we pray believing in him, our prayers are answered according to His will. We are reminded to reach out to those in need, sharing a meal, offering a listening ear and being kind to one

another, just as Jesus Christ did while on earth.

When I started working with the Jesuits Eastern Africa Province (AOR), I was pleased to realize it is involved in various projects aimed at assisting the vulnerable or needy; just like the son of God who interacted with people who were neglected and suppressed in the society, despite His reverence. I am happy and satisfied that I get a chance to positively impacting the needy.

Every Christmas season I reminisce my childhood days when the community around me associated Christmas with eating 'sumptuous' meals like chapatis (unleavened flatbread) and chicken, a time for receiving new clothes and shoes from parents, exchanging gifts and sending beautiful cards with memorable messages to family members and friends. By then, Christmas was a time when we

were drawn to our worldly pleasures of eating and drinking and making merry, forgetting the vulnerable and those who require our assistance.

As I grew older, my perception of Christmas changed. I have come to know that it is a time of reflection; keeping in mind that the son of God, Jesus Christ was brought to this world and died on the cross for the sake of our sins. That is simply a blessing to our lives, from the 'Wonder-Counselor' and 'Prince of Peace'. Today, for me Christmas is a time to remember those in need, just as the Prince of Peace did. May the true spirit of Christmas inspire you to be present for others!

Have a blessed Christmas and a prosperous new year- 2019!

Ms. Pamela Konya-Odimmasi, AOR Programmes Officer

Season's Greetings

*Thank you for your friendship, prayers and support!
Wishing you all the joys of the season and a Prosperous New Year 2019!*



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