



RAFIKI



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EDITOR'S NOTE



find God in everyone regardless of their faith or denomination for that matter. Our own 'Karl Rahner' here in the novitiate, he pays a visit to the magi in an allegorical way explaining how discernment helps us to dialogue with others outside our flock so that they may have a deeper understanding the Church to ultimately know and love Christ in return. Basing his reflection on the same line, another writer tells us to throw away our egos and imitate Christ who labours to unite the whole world especially those who bear the name Christian. Then comes the great comeback of our longed for writer who exhorts us not to be happy on our neighbour's fall always to do the best for everyone. Bonne lecture!

Domnic Pande nSJ

Welcome again to our second issue of this fledgling year. We are grateful to all those who sent their feedbacks on the January issue. We encourage more feedbacks as this helps us to know the mind of our readers and motivates us and our writers on sharing our experiences with you.

Inside this issue, our writers contribute towards their thoughts of reaching out to others, what others would call ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, based on the Spiritual Exercises. Reflecting on the contemplation to attain love, one writer expounds on how to

FORMATOR'S DESK



Seasons come and go, but our Christian lives and the faith we proclaim in Christ remain because they are never seasonal. Different seasons in the liturgical year are put forth by the Church to help us the faithful to be mindful of how we live our Catholic faith and more importantly to deepen the understanding of the mystery of our Salvation which attains its fullness in Christ.

We have commenced the Lenten season through which we are invited by the Holy Mother Church to reflect on the passion

and death of our Lord Jesus with the anticipation of his glorious resurrection on Easter. Thus, the Church urges each one of us to fulfil our Lenten obligations: prayer, fasting and almsgiving so that we can celebrate Easter with blissful hearts. The tendency in most of us, however, is to wait for the Lenten season to begin self-abnegation for spiritual renewal—to live a life worthy of the faith we proclaim in Christ—and afterwards forget about such practices once Lent is over. The Lenten season comes once a year and it is limited to forty days; however, our lives and faith in Christ are never seasonal, meaning that prayer, fasting and almsgiving should not be limited to the Lenten season only but should be extended to our day-to-day lives because they are fundamental pillars that guide our Catholic faith. Let us pray that God will give each one of us that grace to fulfil our obligations as Christians with joyful hearts on daily bases without counting the cost nor awaiting for a season.

Mapunda, Amon Christopher, SJ.



The Novitiate community congratulates our brothers on their diaconate ordination!!!

THE MAGI AND DISCERNMENT



Reflecting on the feast of the Epiphany, I conjure up the imagery of a pilgrim. An image very much dominant both in Catholic Liturgy and in our spirituality. The Magi story, so popular amongst children, is far

from a bedtime story. It is a quintessential testimony of the incarnation that offers essential prerequisites of discernment in our world of today as a pilgrim Church. The first of these is dialogue. The wise men are convinced of the birth, yet seek to know where it happened! Their entrance in the King's court triggers a dialogue between them and King Herod, and also between Herod and his nobles and the whole of Jerusalem. Dialogue is an essential part of discernment today. We have to dialogue with each other, and with the world. Only this way can we succeed to explain the Church to the world and the world to the Church.

Tradition depicts them as having been three. Amongst other symbolisms, this represents the role of community in our faith and our discernment. Community life offers a chance to seek the star together, to discern together. Communitarian discernment nourishes our union of hearts and minds and help us to grow in union with God through Christ who calls each and every one of us. The star disappears on the Magi's entry into Herod's court, throwing them into a temporal disarray as they maneuver the tricks of Herod. Similarly our discernment too is prone to 'Herod moments,' which invites us to go deeper in our prayer.

On resuming their star trek they got to the Inn, where the Lord lay, fragile and harmless on a stable. The Inn, symbolising places where we find Jesus today, has its own characteristics: the good and not so good, the promising and not so promising. Succinctly, the Divine and the Human. Discernment aids us to deal with the Inn of today. The Magi 'saw the child

with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.' Our discernment begins, progresses and is brought into completion by prayer. The contemplative and meditative prayer that help us to call to mind, to ponder, and to embrace the truth with love and joy.

In their state of adoration and gratitude, they opened their treasure chests and 'offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh'. Our pilgrimage of faith is a quest of sharing impelled by the incomprehensible mystery of the self-giving Love of the God Incarnate. Discernment aids us towards making choices that make us call to mind that our lives are gifts received freely from the Lord who expects us to share them freely. It matters not how much one is gifted since to be truly gifted is to be a gift to others.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. Our choices and actions made in freedom and responsibility in an environment of Ignatian discernment helps us not to return to the old way but rather to join the Magi on the boulevard of faith towards the Eternal light.

Mureithi Victor nSJ

GOOD TO REMEMBER



When I was in standard II, aged six, at that time, I remember getting right only one question out of 25, that made me to have 4% of the total marks. However, I was inexpressibly

happy. Getting back home, my mother saw me coming towards her with a big smile. Surprised though she was [why I was so happy], I handed my exam to her. Looking at it, her face changed, I continued laughing and told her that, "mama yaani bora mimi, bora mimi, wengine wamepata mayai, mayai" meaning that "mom I am better; others got eggs (zeros)." She laughed and left me laughing too, unknowingly laughing at my own

ignorance.

It is a wonderful memo to me anyway, reminding me how illogical I was, enjoying death not because it is good but because, many of us are dying together, and not looking for a way out forgetting that even among many I can be alone. There is often a temptation to uniformity with others for relaxation and superiority over others for dominance and control (power), being appreciated and accepted, and being loved and recognized.

This leads to competition which often blinds us. It leads to pulling others down and steeping on others instead of holding hands and moving together. Often in competing we tend to forget that we can be deep in shallow (like I was), resulting to all ending in the same destiny of

failure.

I then suppose that it is good to remember we should not compare ourselves with others—oftentimes it leads to dissatisfaction and malice as Carl Jung asserts "where love rules there is no will to power, and where power predominates there love is lacking". We should not enjoy the fall of others, each one is created in a unique way. We can be equal but not the same entailing that we should support each other with love in all possible ways.

We should not enjoy being blind because we are all in the same state for the uncertainties might come when one of us is enabled to see. Thus, "do everything for the greater glory of God"

Teophile Chakwe nSJ

MODERN ECUMENISM



Ecumenical dialogue is much more needed at the moment than during the time of Jesus and the first Christian community. Ecumenism is being embraced

by most Christians as the response to the call of the second Vatican Council across the Christian divide. Coming to the knowledge that we share a common heritage of the Holy Scriptures and foundation and comprehending the purpose of the coming of Christ among us to be part of the human history is one of the major facts which has facilitated this move.

More has been done and still more should be done for the full unity of all who bear the name of Christian. Everyone who bears that name have the mandate of achieving this goal which was also the role of Christ when he came to us in the form of man. It should not be left absolutely to the hierarchy of the Church but all should support and embrace this noble idea. We should not exacerbate this situation of division but we should try our best to ameliorate it and to bring that unity which Christ Himself desires among his disciples; that 'we be one as they are one;' for he says, if a house is divided among itself it cannot stand. It follows therefore, that anytime we try to create division among us we are scattering instead of gathering with Christ and thus Jesus warns us 'whoever is not with me is against me.'

Sometimes we feel that when someone is not in our flock they cannot do anything good. We feel superior to others and belittle those who do not belong to us. This is not something new as it had existed from the time of Jesus: Some of his disciples reported to him 'some people are casting out demons in your name,' [...] this was triggered by fact that they were not part of the twelve (Mk 9:38). This is what we do today, we believe that if someone is not a Catholic faithful neither know the will of God nor heal nor save the souls of others. Others also think that one cannot be saved if one is a Catholic faithful. These accusations-and-counter-accusations exacerbate our Christian rift. This notion that we are the final arbiters of the truth and will of God is very wrong and it's one of the main roots of this division.

After the resurrection, the disciples were uncertain with regard to whether non-Jews should also claim salvation through Christ and whether they should also be preached to and believe in Him. Some section of them insisted that for one to be baptised and claim salvation they had to be circumcised. However, when the apostles held the first council in Jerusalem and proclaimed that now there is neither Jew nor Greek [there is no Israelite nor Gentile]. This is what the Third Vatican Council would say; that even

though we are Catholics or separated brethren, we are all Christian and one needs not be a Catholic to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. A Catholic does not need to be an Anglican or a Lutheran or a member of any evangelical denomination to be saved. Salvation and inspirations are free gifts of the Holy Spirit which can be endowed to anyone as long as they believe and are properly disposed to receive it.

We should therefore unite with St Paul in proclaiming that, even though we were once far off and were strangers to the covenant of salvation, we are no longer strangers nor sojourners to that faith and salvation, but we are now fellow citizens of heaven together with the apostles and saints (Eph 2:19 ff). Christ is the capstone and the scriptures are the foundation of the Church which we belong to now. We all now belong to the same Church. There are no final arbiters who decides who is saved but God alone since Christ is now all in all.

If we develop and embrace this attitude of equality in being instruments of God, then, we will make a major step in reconciling the Church as Christ intended. But if all of us, like long ago, follow the imprudent counsel of our ego, we will all go astray—each to his own way wandering about like sheep without a shepherd. Christ is the mediator between humans and between humanity and God and so He is the chief shepherd. No shepherd should therefore claim superiority over others. Christ teaches us that whoever wants to be great among us should be our servant (Mt 20:26-28). Therefore, anyone who is great is he who upholds and respects every Christian regardless of their denomination.

Domnic Pande nSJ

I LEARNT TO FIND GOD IN ALL THINGS!!!



Ignatius of Loyola?" asked curious Tom.

There is a fallacy believed by many companions that cramming the 360 numbers in the book of the Spiritual Exercises is a sign of mastery of the same. This reminds me of a famous saying in law school that "a good lawyer is not the one who crams the law but one who knows where to find the law and one who knows the Judge."

By now I know that sometimes we strain our heads to memorize all the annotations in the Exercises and make little or no effort in seeking God in all things—in our Fifth week. I do not hate procedures, but I am not comfortable when I hear that what ought to be the form is esteemed at the expense of the

"Apart from 'the Principle and Foundation', 'Positive Interpretation' and 'Contemplation to Attain Love', what else did you learn from the 30 days' Spiritual Exercise of Saint I

substance which is 'finding God in all thing'.

Now, to answer companion Tom, my greatest gift from Ignatius is disposing me to receive the grace of seeking God in all things. I am neither saying that I am a saint nor I am not struggling. I know for sure that following Christ is not always taking 'wine at Cana'; there are moments of tears, like in the garden of Gethsemane and at Calvary. Truth be told, Saint Ignatius prepared me to receive the grace to be 'a contemplative in action' looking at the world with the eyes of God and to always seek freedom and detachment.

Before I was exposed to the spirituality of Saint Ignatius, I was some sort of a fanatic Catholic, one who only sought and found what I knew as God in Catholics. Despised living and interacting with people of other faiths and beliefs, I worked with Catholics, my friends were Catholics, I listened to only music from people of my faith, when I wanted to buy goods or to get services I preferred Catholics. I remember one classmate of mine at the university referred to me as a member of the 'Democratic party' known to have been founded on Catholic values by the late Benedict Kiwanuka in the early 1950s in Uganda.

Today, like Saint Ignatius, I labour to seek

and find God in all things, I listen to music from all people irrespective of their faith and beliefs; I read books from our separated brothers, I watch their films and I have friends from all walks of life. My new philosopher is that 'good is good irrespective of where it comes from.' I believe there are no Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, traditionalists, Buddhists, Hindus, Atheists and the scientists; we are all sons and daughters of Abba-Father.

Let us continue to ask for the grace to see all things in the eyes of God. If you are struggling to imitate Christ, imitate the Vicar of Christ and our own companion Pope Francis who has demonstrated 'what it means to seek and find God in all things'. Just the other day, he flew a dozen of Muslim refugees to Rome. For Him as for Ignatius, God dwells in all things, and there are no Muslims, Catholics, Lutherans, or atheists, but all are human beings. When we heed to this call the Kingdom of God will come where we are all one like the Holy Trinity.

Ronald Magoba. nSJ

BE WITH US JESUS



hatred and anger
Jesus brings us back to the Cross' banner.

Before the crack of dawn I awake,
Back in my apprehension I lie down and shake.
Bible Scriptures I read and to me He spoke,
Better I am now never again should I be sick.
Be merciful to sinners; give to them

A Jesuit is known to be pardoned sinner,
Jesus Christ is our sin's cleaner.
Just when we were in darkest corner,
Judged with

what they seek

Left to itself, inclined to fall restore your grace
Long ago and now I find His Love and Grace,
Like cattle in a green fresh pasture I graze.
Looking through the window I gaze,
Love and joy in all His Creatures amaze.

Come to Him all you who thirst,
Collect the fresh and clean waters that last.
Continue with life forget the past,
Consolation, comfort and relief they find the just.
Cover us with hope and give us rest

He made our own St Ignatius pure and righteous,
He needs us to be loving, caring and

joyous.

He never lived life luxurious,
He raised from the dead Lazarus.
He made, guide and protect the Society of Jesus

You and I are called to journey together with Him,
Young and old to be missioned by Him
Youths and adults to experience His love to the brim
You hear the cries of the dying; return them home.
You're always caring for us Lord be our deem

Come near and see my plight,
Cover me with your light.
Call me once to your sight,
Carry me to the highest height.
Claim me once more as your own; make me a saint

Kwenya Johnbosco, nSJ