



# RAFIKI

A PUBLICATION OF THE JESUIT NOVITIATE OF THE EASTERN AFRICA PROVINCE



**Experiments**



**New Recreation Building**



**First Vows**

**ETHIOPIA ♦ KENYA ♦ SUDAN ♦ TANZANIA ♦ UGANDA**



Jan – June 2007

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## Goodbye Secundi, Welcome Candidates

*Rafiki* really should be a quarterly but this issue covers the half-year: January to June. It is not that we decided to take a break off writing. The first quarter found the primi (first years) away on experiment and the secundi leading an existence out of which few stories could possibly be told. So we held off till now, to enhance your reading pleasure (if you can call it that).

The primi came back from the experiments having encountered Christ in the suffering. It would appear they too went through painful experiences and yet their stories are filled with hope and gratitude.

The secundi (second years) finally made the decisive step in entering the Society of Jesus. On 2<sup>nd</sup> July, the Eastern Africa province received into its ranks 10 men ready to wield the standard of Christ. Congratulations to the new scholastics and brother. *Rafiki* is grateful for the support you have rendered it and special thanks to Allan Ggita (formerly Associate Editor) for his hard work and ideas.

The primi have only to wait a short while before they can be 'promoted'. 10<sup>th</sup> July sees 15 candidates joining the novitiate, and doubtless bringing with them many talents and potential for adventure that *Rafiki* will only be pleased to report on. So, welcome!

Paul Kalenzi

### NOVICE MASTER'S COMMENT



## A young cow learns to bellow when her offspring dies (*M'adi proverb*)

Luidja my cousin was in her early teens when she became seriously ill and everybody, particularly her parents, thought she was about to die. She was often thrown into convulsions and frenzied seizures. During those attacks she emitted noises and speeches that prompted her parents to seek help from the government hospital. The consultations with her doctor yielded little result and she continued to be tormented by her illness.

Luidja was transferred to a traditional healer who quickly diagnosed a powerful *ori* (ancestral spirit) that possessed and designated her to be an *Ojo* or healer. Her initiation started and lasted several months. The healer who initiated her said that it was necessary for Luidja to suffer and experience torment and sickness and overcome them as a way of learning in the process of becoming a healer. Luidja is now a prominent practitioner in the traditional healing profession.

The novices, on one hand who just accomplished various experiments agreed it was necessary to experience pain and helplessness and overcome them on their own, in order to begin to understand the pain of sickness, rejection and despair in the patients they cared for in the home of Mother Theresa in Addis or at Bugando Medical centre in Mwanza.

I thank the novices for the articles in this issue of *Rafiki* and I encourage them to continue sharing their experiences by writing. I recognize that some personal experiences are sometimes difficult to put in words.

### Editor

Paul Kalenzi

### Associate Editors

Allan Ggita and Joseph Thomas Mboya

### Associate Editors, Art

Aldo Kilas and Natnael Samson

**Front cover:** A child at Rhino Camp during the experiments; the new Recreation Building; the Vow men with Fr. Valerian Shirima, SJ, Provincial Eastern Africa Province



# NOVITIATE DIARY

By ALLAN GGITA

18 January: Novices attend a court session at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha town.

19 January: The primi are missioned to various places in the Eastern Africa Province (EAP) for their first experiments.

13 - 16 February: Secundi attend a seminar on Inter-religious dialogue at the Canossa Sisters'.

19 Feb-11 June: Secundi attend 'Wholeness Living' seminar on awareness with Fr. Bonaventure Balige, SJ.

24 February: Fr. George W. Quickley, SJ (Provincial of N/W Africa) pays the novitiate a brief visit accompanied by Fr. Valerian Shirima, SJ (Provincial EAP).

31 March: Primi return home from their experiments.

8 April: Easter celebrations are disturbed by the sad news of Fr. Brady's sudden death in Nairobi.

9 April: Picnic day at the magnificent Ngoro Falls, Moshi

26th April: Jesuit novices impress at Umoja Day celebrations that bring together novices in Arusha

13 May: Primi visit L. Manyara National Park with collaborators

6 - 10 June: Fr. Provincial makes canonical visit

6 - 13 June: Fr. Peter Titland, novice director-designate for Zambia-Malawi province visits the novitiate

7 June: Secundi 'graduate' after one year of learning French



**Fr. Ikonza's First Mass**

13 June: Fr. Ignatius Ikonza, SJ celebrates his First Mass at La Storta chapel

17 June: Scholastic Titus Pacheco, SJ joins novices for a month spell before returning to Arrupe College, Harare (leaves a week early following death of his brother Joseph Pacheco).

19 - 23 June: Secundi go on 8-day retreat in preparation for Vows

2 July: Secundi make their First Vows in a moving ceremony celebrated by Fr. Provincial. Fr. Shirima also blesses the new Recreation building

3 July: The new scholastics and brother leave the novitiate to visit family and friends before first studies.

## The Roving Companion

A Fisherman is Fished Out ...

With some anticipation, the primi (first years) waited to learn their experiment destinations. The secundi braced themselves for six long months that would culminate in professing their simple vows in the Society. Long, because, the days tend to coalesce in the steady stream of English, French and 'Constitutions' classes, *manualia* (indoor and outdoor works) and sports.

The primi got to know their experiment destinations the night before they travelled (we like a bit of suspense). Elsewhere in this publication you will find better stories on the experiments. We must mention, however, a certain novice who went fishing in Mwanza and *dropped into* Lake Victoria (complete with imaginary crocs). It took a spectacular rescue operation by the Superior of the Mwanza Jesuit community to bring our brother back to land. Many thanks, Fr. Jonathan.

Diving at Ngoro falls ...

The primi joined the secundi in the novitiate-grind, punctuated by a trip to Ngoro Falls near Moshi town. The more daring novices took no time in stripping to their shorts and wading in the stream,

but they kept well away from the falls that fell from a height of some 50m. A young German tourist in the company of three Belgian ladies seemingly had a point to prove. He launched himself, fully clothed, into the falls. Our boys took the hint, swam over and posed for some scenic pictures.



**Novices frolicking at Ngoro Falls**

## Jesuit drama ...

26th April was Umoja Day and as is now tradition, the novices of religious communities in Arusha meet to celebrate. We had Holy Mass, lunch and then 'entertainment'. A lot of the groups imagined that singing a lullaby, telling an excuse of a joke and presenting a disjointed play qualifies as entertainment; but not the Jesuits.

Forgive our self-congratulation but we put on a truly dramatic performance: an African chief allows two squabbling servants - a cripple and the fastest warrior - to compete in a race. The cripple wins, using his wits. We finished with a vigorous folk dance that brought the house down.

Farewell, new Jesuits ...

The secundi took their vows in a moving ceremony on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July and, bravely holding back tears, left the novitiate the following day. The primi, for their part, could look forward to the arrival of fresh-faced companions on 10<sup>th</sup> July.



# VOCATION

From the time of its founding during the Reformation to modern times, the Society of Jesus continues to attract men from diverse backgrounds to the Lord's harvest. The novices at Gonzaga Gonza bear witness to this and here, two share their vocation journeys.

## Along Came the Jesuits

**By Christopher A. Mapunda**

Before my Advanced Level education, I had never heard of nor met any Jesuit. As I waited for my O' Level results I read many books to pass time and improve my English. One day my father gave me a book, Men of God, Men for Others.



**Chris (left) with High School friends**

and way of proceeding. I was interested in learning more about the Jesuits but didn't know how and where I could find help.

In 2002, having performed well in my exams, I joined St. Peter's Seminary in Morogoro, Central Tanzania. I carried along with me this book and read it over and over again.

When I returned to Dar-es-Salaam for my holidays, I went to my parish, Manzese, to see the 'guardian' of the vocation club. I told him about my desire and he gave me a book with addresses of various religious congregations. So I wrote an application letter to the Jesuit Vocations Director in Mwanza. The response was surprisingly quick and the return address was a few metres from my home, at Loyola High School! Having been born and raised in Manzese, I knew Loyola as a Church affiliated school. Little did I know that this Company of Loyola was the brains behind it. Fr. Edmund Mallya, the Vocations Director, would be the first Jesuit I ever met.

Fr. Mallya encouraged me to study hard and to keep in touch during the holidays. When I finished my studies in May 2004, I visited him often and he gave me many books to read on the Jesuits: The Three Friends, The Pilgrim and Slave of Slaves, among others. Fr. Mallya also visited my home and met my family.

When I excelled in my A' Level exams, he challenged me, "Since you have done well in the exams and having been in the diocesan seminary for six years, you can go and join University and 'experience' the world. Then come and join us."

It was difficult to decide immediately and so Fr. Mallya gave me one week to think about it. In me, there was a burning desire to serve God that kept on growing each passing day.

So I told him, "No, Father, I wish to join now. I feel eager and enthusiastic to serve God right away!"

He agreed and on 10 January 2005, I came to Arusha for my interviews. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, I joined the novitiate with twelve others.

The two years of my noviceship have been a remarkable time for me; a time of discovering and knowing Jesus and thereby knowing myself a lot better than before.

## A Pebble in the Waters

**By Joseph Thomas Mboya**

A story is told of a young man who was once walking along the lake shore and picked up a stone from the waters. The stone was shiny and beautiful and had been there for many years, perhaps centuries. All this time it had been surrounded by water. Yet when the young man broke it, he was surprised that inside, it was completely dry.

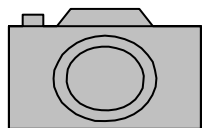
I grew up at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Nairobi, a short distance from Hekima College (Jesuit School of Theology). I was taught during confirmation classes by a Jesuit Scholastic. I served Mass as an altar boy for close to six years under a Jesuit priest. I knew at the age of 10 that I wanted to become a priest, yet I had only a vague idea about the Jesuits. All I knew was that they took a very long time training. I told myself that there was no way I was going to study for 10 -15 years to become a priest.

At the age of 20, a Jesuit Scholastic working with the youth choir at Guadalupe Parish asked me, "Have you ever considered the Jesuits?" My response was a quick "No". "Find out something about them," he continued. I quickly forgot that conversation.

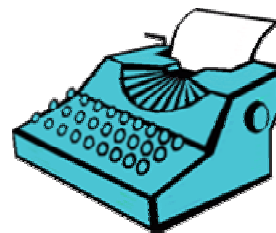


**Mboya, at Gaudalupe with Fr. Kyungu, SJ from DR Congo**

Continued on Page 5



## FROM THE ARCHIVES



# Beginnings

It is always difficult to trace the beginnings of anything good. Yet we can confirm with conviction that all good things we see today began as small movements in some heart. Our history tells us how on a number of occasions St. Ignatius had wished to come and work in this part of the world (Ethiopia then) had he not been tied down to his office as General in Rome. Soon, the small inarticulate movements in him, for the love of Ethiopia, stirred into a force ... On July 31 1992, this force in Ignatius took on a material bearing: the EAP Noviciate was inaugurated in Arusha, Tanzania. DEO GRATIAS! The colourful occasion was presided over by His Lordship Fortunatus Lukanima, Bishop of Arusha, together with Fr. Provincial.

Today the work on the buildings started by Fr. Jean McCarthy is continuing and nearing completion in the efforts of

Bro. Joe Shubie [Shubitowski]. Concurrently, the place is taking shape in the hands of Bro. Maurus Mlelwa and the novices. Altogether, 23 novices from five different countries, and five staff members, not forgetting the couple that cook for us, occupy the place.

We have found a home in Arusha. Thanks to the benefactors. Our environs are peaceful and quiet. So far our neighbours are mainly peasants, but foun-



Fr. Leo Amani SJ, first Novice Master (standing, fourth right) with some of the first novices in Arusha. The writer (Fr. Kizito Kiyimba SJ) is squatting, second right.

dations of mansions are cropping around us, soon to immerse us in a middle-class residential area. Mount Meru and the snow-peaked Mt. Kilimanjaro are nevertheless still visible: a beautiful sight North-East of the Noviciate.

Every long journey begins with a first step, and already the novices of the first and second years are criss-crossing in and out of the noviciate for experiments. Please remember to pray for the success of the Long Retreat of the first years. All is a grace-filled and hope-filling **Beginning**.

Kizito Kiyimba nSJ  
Editor  
RAFIKI, November 1992

(Fr. Kizito is currently pursuing a PhD. in Philosophy of Science at the London School of Economics - Ed)

## A Pebble in the Waters (Continued from Page 4)

A month later little voices began chanting choruses in my head, "Have you ever..." "Find out something..." I tried to push the thoughts out of my mind but the more I tried the more I heard the voice. Like Jonah, I finally gave in. The more I knew about the Jesuits, the more, so to speak, I fell in love with them. It was clear I had found my Rachel. But I had to wait for seven years like Jacob.

While at Egerton University, I experienced five closures and other unforeseen holidays due to students' and lecturers' strikes. I wanted to stop the course midway and join the Jesuits. I felt I was wasting time. As I look back at all of it now, it was God teaching me patience, persever-

ance, leadership and above all, to trust. My spiritual life took a new turn when I joined The Christian Life Community (CLC) in February 2000. My involvement with CLC brought me to the realization of God's unconditional love for me. Those seven years were precious. I would never substitute them for anything. I was transformed from a shy little boy to a brave man who met and experienced the liberating love of Christ.

After joining the Jesuits, I now understand what is important is not the many years of formation. It's all about living the joy of the present moment in the Lord. And in each of these moments being the best man I can be, with Christ by my side. For all the young men pondering about all those long years, I will say, live for today and let Christ worry about your tomorrow. Be patient for the harvest is great and the labourers few - the Jesuits need you, Christ needs you even more.

### Pebble

By John Engle

A single pebble  
of love,  
cast into a pool  
of mind,  
sends ripples  
of feeling  
from centre to edge -  
growing,  
widening,  
repeating,  
its meaning,  
catching light  
and shadow,  
making music  
of motion.

Courtesy: St. Anthony's messenger



# CONGRAT



**Sylvanus T. Ambani, 23** Born in Kakamega-W/Kenya. Went to Shibuye Primary School & St. Peter's Minor Seminary. Thereafter worked with street children as a volunteer and taught in Mukuru Primary School. He worked as a cashier in a supermarket in South B. before joining the Jesuits July 10, 2005. Sylvanus likes playing football, hokey, lawn-tennis & scrabble. After the novitiate, he will be at Arrupe College in Harare studying philosophy.



**Victor Okoth Awiti, 24.** Born in Kenya and completed both primary & secondary education in Nairobi. Worked in a hospice for abandoned persons in Nairobi and then took courses in typing, computers and English. Thereafter, he joined the novitiate July 10 2005. Enjoys sports, writing & hiking. Will start Philosophy studies in Harare in August.



**Allan Ggita, 25.** Born in Mityana District-Uganda. After Secondary School at Namilyango College, he joined Makerere University where he studied International Relations & Diplomacy with Advanced French before joining the Jesuits July 10 2005. Fond of reading widely, writing, jogging & playing lawn-tennis. Hopes to study Philosophy come this October in the D.R.Congo.



**Benedict Emmanuel Leyan, 28.** Born in Ngarantonim, Arusha, Tanzania. Attended Mbuyuni, Emari & Kimnyaki Primary Schools, Kimnyaki, Milambo & Arusha Secondary Schools. For 1 year, he taught Mathematics at Kimnyaki Secondary School. Then joined the novitiate July 10 2005. He's interested in meeting people from all walks of life, traveling, playing basketball pool & mini-soccer. This August he joins Arrupe College-Harare, for Philosophy.



**Christopher Amon Mapunda, 23.** Born in Dar-es-Salaam-Tanzania. Studied at St. Peter's Junior Seminary-Morogoro, where he did History, Geogrphay, Economics and Divinity. Joined novitiate July 10 2005. Enjoys all kinds of sports, reading books & listening to music. Hopes to study Philosophy at Arrupe College-Harare this year.



**Godfrey Masereka, 32.** Born in Kasese District-Munkunyu Sub-County, Western Uganda. Teacher by profession. Taught at St. Joseph's Secondary School -Kigando for 2 years before joining the Jesuits July 10 2005. Likes agricultural practices, plays football, lawn-tennis & volleyball. Intends to continue with Education at Tangaza College-Nairobi this year.



**James Moro, 28.** Born in Koboko-North West Uganda. Attended Pokea Minor Seminary, Alokolum National Major Seminary where he did a B.A. in Social & Philosophical Studies before joining the novitiate July 10, 2005. Enjoys listening to music, playing musical instruments, lawn-tennis, football, reading novels, swimming & watching movies. Intends to do Post-Graduate Studies in Philosophy at Arrupe College-Harare.

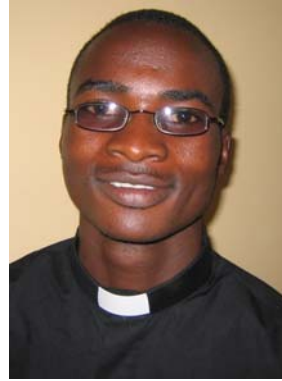


**Patrick Aidan Ngamesha, 25.** Born in Morogoro-Tanzania. Attended Mang'ula Primary School, Kilosa Secondary School & Maua Seminary. Thereafter attended a course on Initial Teacher Education at Morogoro Teachers Training College & taught at Mngeta Secondary School for a year before joining novitiate July 10, 2005. Plays basketball, likes reading, travelling & watching movies. Hopes to join Arrupe College-Harare this August.

# collaborations



**Michael Ochwo, 29.** Born in Kampala-Uganda though home is in Bugiri (Eastern Uganda). After secondary education at Jinja College, he joined Mbarara University of Science & Technology for a BSc.Educ. (2000-2003). Taught for a year in Sacred Heart S.S in Bushenyi (Western Uganda). Worked in Ahuriire Community, a subsidiary of Mbarara Archdiocese spiritual centre. Thereafter started his journey with the Jesuits July 10 2005. Likes riding, gardening, lawn-tennis, singing & playing music instruments. Intends to pursue Philosophy in Harare.



**Bernard Kweyu Shitemi, 25.** Born in Naifarm-Trans Nzoia District, Western Kenya. Attended Naifarm & Kietkei Primary Schools, Saboti Secondary School & Mitume Centre for pastoral and catechetical studies. Thereafter worked as a catechist at Maridadi, Kalongolo Parishes, Kitale Diocese & 1 month's teaching at St. John's Korogochu Informal School before joining novitiate July 10 2005. Likes reading, writing, basketball & bike riding. Begins Philosophy at Arrupe College, Harare in August.

## Two Years on the Road

By Allan Ggita

You may have heard of that popular description of a Saint: one who lives an ordinary life in an extraordinary way. I think it wouldn't be any different as regards life in a Jesuit novitiate and that is what has made these two years seem like eternity. Times always occurred when I asked myself what I was doing here; whether my faculties were still intact! Before joining, I was convinced I was joining great men, a great family, the avant-garde of the Church. Yet here I was quietly executing simple tasks, doing my prayer in such calm environs as if I were a cloistered monk. Only busying myself with our small garden, feeding the pigs, tending flowers, washing dishes. The only intellectual rigours that I can reminisce over are a few French verbs we conjugated, English poems that I failed to put to memory, oh, then the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus with their Complimentary Norms backed up by the recent General Congregations.

It hasn't been an easy walk, more so adjusting to this slow-paced life. There was a kind of faith, different from the one I had that was demanded of me if at all I were to make it to the shore. That faith is in Jesus, whose name this least Society bears. The Jesus that the *Spiritual Exercises* presented me was near me and so gentle that the rest became history. And so, I started living one day at a time, letting tomorrow worry about itself. The *Companions* with whom I have journeyed gradually became my sort of *joie de vivre* with whom I shared my delights and low moments. Yet this too was not that easy because we all come here with varying



**Allan, in a shuka, performs a play with Michael Ochwo (right), in the Novitiate chapel**

backgrounds, temperaments, ways of perception and I dare say, even attitudes. But with God's grace, we formed a homely family and I felt I really belonged. I felt I was slowly integrating myself in this Company of Loyola.

The two long experiments at *Nyumbani Children's Home* in Nairobi and at *Bugando Medical Centre* in Mwanza opened to me vast horizons to the realities of life outside the novitiate walls. I was only required to accompany the suffering, not conjure up solutions. I came to understand that religious life lies first and foremost in being than in doing. The clock has never moved this slowly in my life. Little did I know that this is how Jesus passes across his great lessons; that this was what it meant for the apostles to stay on the lake overnight without a single catch of fish!

The times spent in quiet isolation helped me to be in touch with myself and I discovered very interesting personality traits within me that I don't think I would have recognised anywhere else. It was as if I had been on the run since I was born and then I had reached a finality that helped me assess the years gone by, more so coming to see how God has been around me at every moment of my life. I saw my potentials and behold, my 'areas of growth.' We were told to 'dream' about the future as Jesuits and I dreamt big. That was such a consoling pastime!

As this preliminary stage of Jesuit formation draws to a close, I ask Jesus only one thing more; to grant me a grateful heart. For as the psalmist marvels, who am I that God should hold me in such high esteem; mortal man that He should keep me in mind? □

# Experiments

The second [experiment] is to serve for a month [or longer] in one or more hospices, eating and sleeping there or spending some hours daily, according to circumstances of time, place and persons, assisting and serving all, ailing and healthy, as may be required. This is in order to progress in humility, and to give proof of a total rejection of worldly pomp and vanity, so as to be entirely available to the Creator and Lord, who for us was crucified.

**The Constitutions, *Examen*, No. 66**

## Home of Love      Miracles at Cheshire Home

**By Boniface Okumu**

From the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January to the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2007, I lived and worked at the Missionaries of Charity (MC) home in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This is a home which cares for the sick and dying destitute; most of whom come from the streets of Addis Ababa and its surroundings. It has about 800 patients.

My activities at the home included: dressing wounds, feeding and playing with the disabled children, visiting and consoling the sick and praying for the dying. I was available for any work I was called upon to do. I tried to dispense my service with love and this enabled me to turn the hearts of the patients to God. Reflecting back, I realize that it is God who was serving his people through me.

The experience was often challenging - I came close to the most dreaded realities of life; ill health, helplessness and death. However, I profited immensely in realizing that love is stronger than pain and suffering; for love is God himself. I saw myself journeying together with the suffering Christ. Christ the poor, sick, destitute and dying.

The experiment enabled me to know myself better (especially how I react in different situations) and to be aware of the presence of God in every one. I came to appreciate the profound dignity of every human person - a dignity that comes from God our Creator and that no amount of pain or suffering can remove for we are always precious in the sight of God.

Though the MC home is a place of suffering, a house familiar with anguish and pain, a home for the sick, destitute and dying, I also found out that it is a place of hope, a house built on courage and faith, a home where love reigns, a home filled with love.

At the end I was happy that I had been able to "preach the good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18) and had also fulfilled the commandment of Christ, "Love one another as I have loved you." (Jn15:12)

**By Evarist Shigi**

At Miyuji Cheshire Home in Dodoma, Tanzania where I did my experiment, Jesus dwells in the mentally challenged children.

Cheshire Home enrolls children with mental disabilities from all over Tanzania. Currently there are about 63 children. Children with disability suffer undue discrimination and stigmatization as a result of cultural and attitudinal reproaches.

Listening to the children's history was very touching. Some are out of their minds: they do not know what is happening at all. They fall asleep while walking, get injured but start laughing.

There was Sammy\*, a boy of 6 years, who looked like he might be 6 months old. Speaking to his mother, she said, 'Sammy was born out of wedlock. He was premature and considered a curse to the family.



**Shigi with a young friend in Dodoma**

I was not allowed to take him out or tell anyone about him.' And so Sammy was locked up in a room for 6 years. His growth was impeded; he cannot talk, walk or feed himself. He hardly knows what is going on around him.

My main work was teaching the children English; how to count; to name a few things like mother, father, table etc. I also taught them how to brush their teeth, walk, dress and go to the toilet. In one on one activity, I gave children with behavioral problems exercises to increase their concentration. I fed the kids as nearly 80% of them needed assistance. I washed their clothes, cooked, slashed around the compound and taught some basic catechism.

Everywhere I looked I saw God working miracles in the suffering children through the hands of his people. I felt God was with the children, He was with me and with all the workers and volunteers who were working at Cheshire. My presence in Dodoma was itself a miracle as I did not ask to be missioned there. The volunteers who travel from far, the low-wage workers are all miracles.

Before the experiment I had done the spiritual exercises and contemplated how Jesus was kind, forgiving, feeding the hungry, curing the sick and so on. Moreover, Jesus was meek, poor, humiliated, rejected and suffering, especially in the Passion.

I had neither silver nor gold but what I had I shared with the children: love, compassion, availability, consoling them and attending to them. At the end I came to discover that these children need more than money. They need to be loved, someone to listen to them and care about them; in essence to be Jesus for them. To be true followers of Jesus we are invited to do the same.

**\* For purposes of confidentiality names have been changed - Ed.**



# Experiments

## A Voice In the Wilderness

By David Okerenyang'

To be a refugee is to live at the margin of society, being excluded from political, social and economic importance. Each refugee is a former somebody: husband, wife, a civil servant, a farmer, a catechist and so forth. Each is now a person dependent on others' decisions and vulnerable to the threats of hunger, sickness and death.

In January 2007 I was missioned to Rhino Camp, a refugee settlement in Northern Uganda. While in the camp, I listened to their personal stories - of suffering, injured human dignity, diminishment and humiliation. I could see from their emotions that these sad memories tormented their psyches.

I heard the heartbeat of sorrow and grief, the pulse of a sad people whose tears drop slowly into the wilderness. While doing door-to-door missions, I met one old woman whose six siblings had died mysteriously within a year. Two had died in Sudan and I saw the fresh graves of the other four in her compound.

Looking into her tear-stained eyes, I understood, as from a revelation, why God had sent women like her into the world. Through suffering, the women are a great example of indomitable courage and determination to live.

My mission was not on how much I could do, but how I could keep and live my vocation as a Christian, as a novice. How I could value the worth, dignity, rights of refugees and help them strive when hope is banished; live when life's salt is gone; endure and move on to Calvary.

To me the refugees' cry in the wilderness is a warning sign of the deep tensions that afflict us all. Jesuits have taken on the responsibility of journeying with them to freedom. It is our duty to take another giant stride up the road of social and spiritual nourishment for all refugees, paying special attention to the new generation. Let us open our hearts, listen to the echo in the wilderness and be prepared to walk in the eternal sunshine with Christ for the cause of peace and justice in the world.

## Christ Suffering in the Sick

By Thomas Athian Daniel

St. Ignatius of Loyola envisioned the Jesuits as a religious community sensitive to the movements of the Holy Spirit and free to respond to God's will. As individuals we are expected to be

available for any work, anywhere.

In the Eastern Africa Province, Jesuit novices are usually sent to work in schools, homes for orphans, refugee camps and health care centers like Bugando Medical Centre in Mwanza where I was.

I saw the experiment as a time for me to verify whether my deepest desire and aspirations have coincided with my call to follow Christ as a Jesuit by serving the suffering, poor and dying. In the end, the experience inspired me to surrender my life to Jesus my savior.

My companion and I spent two hard weeks in the kitchen after which the hospital Matron assigned us to the pediatric ward. Many of the children had broken bones and serious burns from fires; some had hydrocephalus, a disease that causes their heads to grow larger and larger.

I was especially moved by a little school girl called Elizabeth who was seriously burnt by a lamp which she was using to study. When I met Elizabeth, she was crying in pain, asking the nurses not to dress her wounds. A voice within said, 'Thomas, take courage'; and I spoke to Elizabeth, 'Vumilia, usilie,' (Persevere, don't cry). As I dressed her wounds, I felt pain in my heart. But I found strength in her faith and, I think, she too was consoled by my presence. A week later, Elizabeth was able to sit and walk.

Seeing the suffering Christ in children like Elizabeth taught me the importance of sharing in the suffering of others and to be with them in their time of need. Above all, it helped me to overcome some of my natural inclinations in order to serve even when it is not very easy and unpleasant like at Bugando Medical hospital.



**Martin (English student), Thomas and Elizabeth's mother attend to Elizabeth**



**The Rhino team, left to right: David nSJ, Fr. Thibodeaux SJ (USA), Raymond Perrier SJ (UK), Max (Polish volunteer) and George nSJ**

# Everyone is poor

While on experiment at the Missionaries of Charity (MCs) home in Addis, novices Paul Kalenzi, Joseph Wasike and Boniface Onyango Okumu interviewed Sr. Benedicta, 48, the Regional Superior of the MCs in Ethiopia and Djibouti.

R: How did you decide to become an MC?  
 Sr. B: My family lived in the former East Germany. It was difficult being a Catholic during the Communist era, but our parents taught us to profess our faith fearlessly. Dad died when I was 16 and I began asking myself what life was really about. I joined university to study medicine but had to work part-time to help support my family. At university, I was involved with Catholic students; I learnt to make social relationships and was keenly searching for 'truth'. It was devastating when a close friend, who everyone thought was my boyfriend, died of leukaemia.

On graduating, I worked for two and a half years as a dental surgeon. I had to make a decision about my vocation and so joined the Benedictines with Mum's permission. I was happy in the monastery, but I didn't feel I was in the right place, something bothered me, something was missing. Later, I realised that I was missing the human touch.

I was still a postulant when one day in 1986 while on duty as Infirmarian, I saw a book on a corridor shelf. It was a book about Mother Teresa. It was a book I had seen many times before, even at home, but I had never read. Now I felt a strange attraction to it, but even when I borrowed it, I didn't read it. I just looked at the pictures and asked myself, "How can I get there?" But I struggled with scruples of being seen as 'special' or 'extraordinary' if I were to join the MCs. After 3 months, I saw this call was from God and I got much peace from the decision.

I was allowed to visit the MC home in E. Germany and said farewell to the Benedictines. But the MCs had merely invited me on a 'Come and see' basis. So it was very embarrassing returning to the Benedictines! I stayed another 6 months at the monastery and on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1987, joined the MCs. I was shocked by the contrast between Benedictine and MC life, but realised externals are not important. I still keep in touch with my Benedictine friends. After my novitiate, I was sent to Ethiopia.

R: People often think the MCs only work with the dying but we were surprised to find you do much, much more. What is



Staff and patients at the MC home in Sidist Kilo, Addis Ababa. In the middle of the picture (with a black shawl) is **Sr. Nirmala**, Mother General. To her left is **Sr. Benedicta**, Regional superior. **Mikael nSJ**, then a candidate, is squatting on the right.

the scope of MC activities in Ethiopia?

Sr. B: We have 16 houses in Ethiopia and one in Djibouti. The charism of the MCs is whole-hearted service to the poorest of the poor; those who are rejected or marginalised. So our main work continues to be with the sick and dying, those with HIV/AIDS, TB, malnutrition and so forth. But we also take care of abandoned babies and children brought in by the police; drug and alcohol addicts and the physically and mentally challenged. We help the latter with rehabilitation and skill development. In areas of poor educational facilities, we provide non-formal education i.e. slum schools. The MCs also do catechetical work, especially in villages. Hunger is still a big problem in Ethiopia and so food distribution is a big operation especially in the countryside for the handicapped, single mothers, HIV/AIDS patients and others who are unable to sustain themselves. We support orphans in local communities and visit prisons. In essence, we enable the poor in every way.

In all these activities, our principle is never to ask for money. We rely on God's providence. And God is 'pouring'.

R: This is the third time Jesuit novices are working with you in Ethiopia. How do you feel about our contribution?

We are appreciative of the work Jesuits do. It is your first time to experience suffering at this level and you are very sensitive. This helps the sisters to remember that each patient is an individual. It is an occasion for Jesuit novices to make someone feel cared for and loved. For the sick poor, it is never enough and the sisters cannot do everything. So it is good that novices are able to help individual patients.

Novices also learn that no one goes to God alone. We need each other. There is no distinc-

tion between the poor and us. It is a life of mutual sharing and there shouldn't be a 'Helper complex'. The greatest gift is to know I need help and to accept it. Everyone is poor and yet, there is much we can give in our poverty. On the first look, we see misery but on the second, we see joy. Life is a sharing. Before God we are all the poorest of the poor and privileged to be God's children.

R: For our part, we find it difficult to cope emotionally with so much suffering; yet the sisters are always cheerful. How do they do it?

Sr. B: Simply, prayer. But what do we mean by prayer? Accept the helplessness and in that find faith, hope and love to live. Leave it to God, realise it is God's work, even to console the patient.

R: What would you say is the greatest consolation, in your vocation and as a superior?

Sr. B: It is most consoling to see patients go in peace, knowing they will continue praying for the MCs.

As superior, when I don't know what to do and problems are piling up; in my brokenness to hear God speak, to still be able to pray, is a great consolation. I have learnt to be more on my knees; to allow God to work and not to be a hindrance to his work. A big temptation is to be hard-hearted in the face of many problems but God changes our hearts of stone and gives us hearts of flesh. I feel I have grown more soft-hearted as a superior.



### A Jesuit goes for a shave

There was an old man who ran a barbershop. One day he came late and found a Franciscan waiting to be shaved. He shaved him and told the Franciscan never to mind paying, he was doing it for the Lord. But on the following morning when the barber came to work, he found beads of rosaries and gifts of small crosses by the door, signed: THE FRANCISCAN COMMUNITY.

Then came a Dominican. And as usual, the barber noticed he was a religious and told him it was for Jesus and not to pay. The following morning the barber came to work he found a basket full of rolls of bread and a bottle of wine, signed: THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY.

One day there came a Jesuit for a shave. As usual, discovering that the dude was a Jesuit, the barber said, "Please don't pay me anything. I am doing it for Jesus. Please don't pay." The Jesuit went home happy and whistling. The following day the barber found 10 hairy Jesuits at the door of his barbershop waiting to be shaved.

### Saturday Sharing

It is Saturday evening and Novice Timit is up on the pulpit to give a 'homily' (locally known as sharing). But Timit dreads speaking in public. With knees trembling, he faces the novices and says, "Do you know what I'm going to say this evening?" "No," answer the novices. He then says, "Neither do I," and rushes back to his seat.

The next Saturday he is told to try again. He asks, "Do you know what I'm going to say?" This time, the novices reply, "Yes." So Timit says, "Then you don't

### The Unforgettable Adungu boys



Many thanks to Wilfred, Richard and Kizito from Uganda for the superb animation of the First Vows

need me to tell you." And again rushes to his seat.

He tries a third Saturday, saying, "Do you know what I'm going to talk about?" Half the novices shout, "Yes!" and half shout "No!" "Ah," says Timit, "then those who know tell those who don't know," and again he flees to his seat.

### POETS' CORNER

#### Him and I

When I open my eyes  
To the beauty of life,  
And the treasure  
That each moment  
brings,  
I thank my lord  
For his goodness  
towards me.

All that I do,  
And all that happens,  
Is because of him.

In me I see him,  
In you I see him,  
In us I see him  
In him I see us.

And so I live,  
Each day at a time,  
For yesterday is gone,

# CROSSWORD

	1		2		3		11			4		5
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By George	12							6				
	14									15		
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	16									17		
	18		7							9		
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	20						8					
										21		

### DOWN

- Work of French Jesuit evolutionist[11]
- Stay silent [3]
- Written by popes[11]
- Largest 4 footed animal[8]
- Preparing for priesthood[10]
- Encourage[4]
- Narrow Valley[4]
- Rugby Union[2]
- Condemn[4]
- Bird of prey[3]
- Trouble in body or mind[3]

### ACROSS

- Cardinal virtue [10]
- Perfectly right[10]
- Untrue[3]
- Murder[8]
- Honourable[3]
- Mass for dead[7]
- International body[2]
- Deeply fixed[9]
- Eternity[4]
- State of violent confusion[9]

### ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE

ACROSS: 1. IGNATIUS 2. KORAN 3. BREVIARY 4. PEN 5. MONK 6. NONE 7. ST 8. IHS  
9. TWO 10. FREEDOM 11. CATHOLIC 12. NOEL 13. DOM 14. EPIPHANY

DOWN: 3. CONCUPISCENCE 13. DON 16. ANTIPHON 17. INCENSE 18. ARK 19. MARTYR  
20. MONOTHEISM 21. NUN 22. GENERAL 23. DECREE 24. ALMS 25. EXAMEN







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