

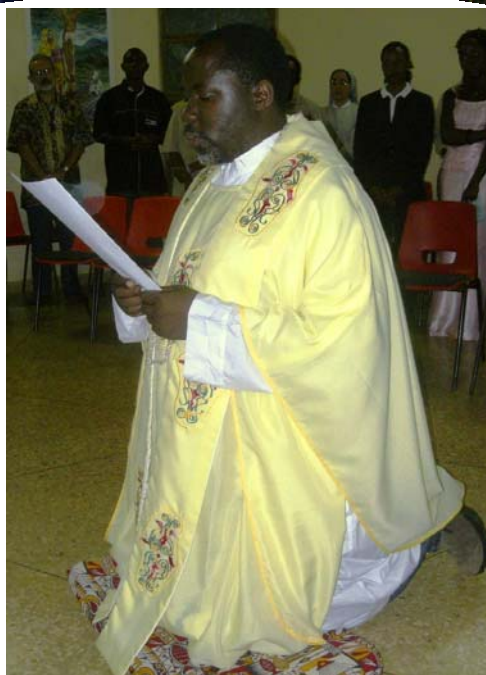


OCTOBER — DECEMBER 2007



# RAFIKI

A PUBLICATION OF THE JESUIT NOVITIATE OF THE EASTERN AFRICA PROVINCE



## INSIDE

Primi on Long Retreat

Secundi on Experiment

Fr. Mwijage takes Final Vows

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



# EDITOR'S DESK



## A day worth remembering

There were a myriad of events in the novitiate between the months of October and December 2007. No sooner had the secundi arrived from their second and last experiment than the primi left for their 30-day retreat. Perhaps this gave the secundi time to gain energy lost during their experiment. The primi are back from their 30-day retreat - loaded with enormous graces - pre-requisite for their experiment due in early January. In the second half of the month of December the novitiate was a beehive of activities in preparation for the Christmas celebration.

But December 25, 2007 will always remain a red letter day not only in the annals of the novitiate, but also in the entire Society of Jesus. On that day, the Novitiate Minister, Fr Paschal Mwijage, S.J., took his final vows in La Storta chapel. He may well be the first Jesuit in the history of the Society of Jesus to take his final vows on a Christmas day. Bravo!

The Novice Master, Fr Isaac Kiyaka, S.J., is accompanying Fr. Provincial, as delegate at a very important event of the Society of Jesus: the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation scheduled for January, 2008, in Rome. They will be joining more than 200 Jesuits from all corners of the world to consider as Saint Ignatius wanted, *issues of greater importance* for the apostolic wellbeing for the Society. We wish them success.

I would like to thank the outgoing officers of Rafiki for the support they have given us in making this issue.

Michael Ochien'g Otieno  
Editor.

Oct-Dec 2007



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5. **GENERAL CONGREGATION 35** Novices share their expectations

### LEISURE

#### Editor

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Paul Kalenzi

Joseph Thomas Mboya

#### Front cover:

Novice Mboya with primary school children while on experiment, the serene grounds of Mwanganza Spirituality Centre where the primi did their Long Retreat, Fr. Paschal Mwijage pronounces his Final Vows.

### NOVICE MASTER'S COMMENT

## From Rome ...



Courtesy of Fr. Don Doll SJ at GC 35

Fr. Isaac (with arrow) and fellow delegates at the Opening Mass

Dear Editor,  
Peace and Greetings from Rome. My hope is that you are all doing well. It has been getting warmer here and the rains have ceased for the moment. I did not make it to Loyola as planned. I will make arrangements for March after the Congregation. How is life in the Novitiate? I hope you will enjoy the seminars in February. Keep us in your prayers and my greetings to all.



7<sup>th</sup> October: Fr. Rui, SJ, Scripture scholar on sabbatical from India, visits the novitiate

8<sup>th</sup> October: Primi attend seminar on *Discernment of Spirits* with Terry Charlton, SJ. Novices from MSOLA, Augustinian sisters, Carmelite sisters, Canossa and Little Brothers of Jesus also attend

31<sup>st</sup> October: Secundi return from their second experiments

13<sup>th</sup> November: Primi start the Long Retreat at Mwangaza Spirituality Centre in Nairobi

23<sup>rd</sup> November: Fr. Gaspar, delegate for formation, visits the novitiate to meet

with secundi

3<sup>rd</sup> December: Feast of St. Francis Xavier, Fr. Don Ward from Dar-es-Salaam visits the novitiate

6<sup>th</sup> December: Secundi day out in Moshi town

14<sup>th</sup> December: Primi return from the Long Retreat

21<sup>st</sup> December: Novices Aldo Kilas and Joseph Wasike leave the novitiate

25<sup>th</sup> December: The novitiate celebrates the Birth of Our Lord and the Final Vows of Fr. Paschal Mwijage, the novitiate Minister (See story below)



**Secundi, frolicking in a pool in Moshi**

## The Festive 25th

By Nathaniel Lubanga

It was a tranquil afternoon; large clouds drifted slowly across the deep blue sky as guests made a procession to La Storta, the novitiate chapel. It was the 25th of December and Fr. Paschal Mwijage, S.J. had chosen this, of all days, to take his Final Vows in the Society of Jesus.

In his homily, Fr. Provincial opined that Fr. Paschal chose Christmas day as a radical way of affirming that he is ready and

willing to give up himself wholly in serving God.

Fr. Paschal was then accepted as a solemnly vowed member of the Society of Jesus and cast off the label 'JIF' (Jesuit In Formation). As if to bless Fr. Paschal's vows, God sent a light shower towards the end of Mass.

After the Mass, we all proceeded to the Recreation Building for dinner and entertainment.

The novices shook their hips in Kiganda dance while Fr. Paschal's family performed a Kiswahili praise song and a vigorous traditional Haya dance.

The presentation of the gifts from family and friends followed. Fr. Master and the novices presented a Maasai shuka/cloth, a staff, a club and a three legged stool - all symbolising Fr Paschal's new status of elder.

The ceremony was concluded by speeches: Fr. Paschal, thanked everyone, "How do I prove my heartfelt joy?" was his loud thinking. He was amazed that many had cancelled their holiday plans to make his day.

In his speech, Fr. Master explained the meaning of one of the gifts: the African three legged stool. The three legs stood for the three vows: poverty, chastity and obedience. He thanked Fr. Paschal for the service he renders the novitiate community. Congratulations Fr. Paschal!



**Fr. Paschal, the jovial African elder**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editors of Rafiki, both incoming and outgoing, Congratulations for this wonderful and expert display of Rafiki. It shows how literate and up-to-date you are in both computer and internet technology. Most heartening! Keep it up!

Leo Amani in Abidjan

*(Fr. Leo Amani SJ, past Novice Master, is Rector of the Theologate at Abidjan - Ed)*

Dear Editor, Just read through Rafiki, and what a wonderful work! You make me feel we were playing those days. Congrats for the job well done, and this extends to all those Who contributed.

Festo

*(Fr. Festo Mkenda SJ, a past staff member of Rafiki, is now pursuing a Ph. D in African History at Oxford University - Ed)*

Dear Editor, I am impressed with the contents of the new Rafiki; I will be mean if I do not congratulate and thank you for unveiling what happens deep in your hearts and in your apostolates. Rafiki has reached a stage where, when you start to read you can't put it down!

Brothers, keep up this spirit!

Patrick

*(Patrick Ngamesha SJ took first vows in July 2007 and is now studying in Nairobi - Ed)*

## Apostolates: Catechism at Moshono Primary School

By Charles Pastory Kulwa

Teaching catechism to children is one of the apostolates which St. Ignatius left to us, his followers. I was surprised when the Novice Master assigned me to teach at Moshono Primary School.

I asked myself, "How am I going to teach primary school children?" I had no experience in teaching young children.

My first two weeks were a nightmare. The kids were unruly: jumping about and walking in and out of the classroom during the lessons.

My fellow novices helped me discover a trick to control the children: to carry sweets or other small gifts which kids like. Just like magic, they stopped making noise, crying and playing in the catechism class. They are now attentive and answer my questions.

I usually arrive at break time, and set about gathering the pupils for the lesson. This would be an impossible task were it not for some teachers who help me settle them down. It often



Children in a catechism class

takes a while to organise the messy classroom: arrange the desks and collect papers scattered all over.

I was expected to teach the common prayers and basic teachings of the Church. However, catechism is not only about teaching the common

prayers and God's commandments. Catechism is also an opportunity for the catechumen to know himself/herself better and to know how to relate with God. In reading the Bible, the person learns more about God and the work that He accomplished when He came to earth to be one of us. I believe that if catechumens know that Jesus' actions have an impact in their lives, they would live their Christian lives more faithfully.

In my class, I try to help the children to live their lives as Jesus lived: with humility, love for others and availability to help or simply listen to the problems of others.

On my part, the apostolate has helped me to develop different abilities. I have learnt how to interact with children and to know their preferences. I enjoy listening to their stories. In this way I have grown in my love for children. I always look forward to seeing the children every Friday morning and I am really pleased to teach them since they are the future Church.

## After the Novitiate

By Allan Ggita

Christmas is round the corner...yet this will not be 'one more Christmas'. It will be spent writing course works and preparing for exams. I will also renew the vows I pronounced just six months back.

I wonder if the new-born Child will find a home here in Kimwenza. The rains are busy washing away the entire plateau, leaving deep gutters and cutting us off from the city centre. Temperatures swing from very hot to too cold within the same day

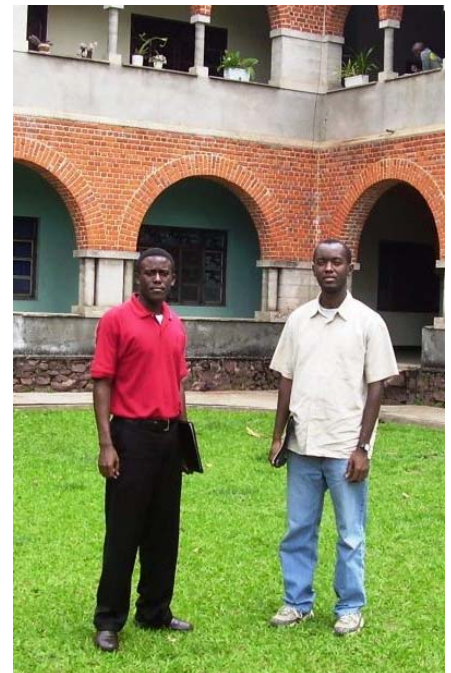
St. Peter Canisius is a 53 year old Jesuit philosophate belonging to the Central African Province (comprising only DRC with 365 Jesuits). The College accommodates all the Philosophy scholastics from the Western African Province and a handful from the Anglophone provinces, namely our very own and North West Africa.

Every day is an opportunity to learn. The little French background I came with was a mere drop in the ocean and so I had to become a listener. I don't think I have ever used my

ears this much! St. Canisius is a community of about eighty Jesuits and so from morning till evening, I am bombarded with new vocabulary. Yet no where else have I known such caring people. They are always conscious of my language difficulties and encouraging my progress. I have an apostolate with members of Legion of Mary at our nearby parish. Here I have to pray in *Lingala*, the local language!

It is a whole new world: new languages, new diet, new culture, new ways of proceeding, yes, even new ideologies. The country is struggling to come out from the doldrums of abject poverty. Few things seem to work, be it transport and communication systems, the health sector, business and economy. And the ripple effects are felt at the College.

The community is divided into smaller, semi-independent communities where we sleep, have breakfast and dinner. Being close to my fellow scholastics has helped me cope. The Jesuit identity here is amazing. There is a sense of oneness and brotherly love that we read about in the Acts of the Apostles. There is no way one can forget he is a Jesuit religious while in these great walls. I thank them all for showing me daily that despite obstacles, the Lord is still inviting me to labour in His vineyard and is patiently waiting for my response; for sometimes, He writes His works in dust!



Allan, left, with Jackson Moshia, the other Eastern African at Kimwenza

(Allan was Associate Editor of *Rafiki*, 2006-2007 —Ed)



# Experiments

## Christ Among Us

By George Macharia Njeri

I was missioned to a home for the destitute and dying in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The home is managed by Missionaries of Charity (MC) Sisters commonly known as Mother Teresa Sisters.

I had no prior medical knowledge so the start was especially difficult. With the help of the workers and fellow volunteers, I was able to learn some basics especially wound-dressing.

I can still remember many shocking cases. One was a 17-year old girl whose cancerous breast had grown bigger than her head. Inside it was a hole filled with maggots. As we cleaned it the pain made her lose consciousness. A month later she passed away. I think it was a great relief for her since the pain was unbearable.

I helped in other areas: nail cutting, feeding and bathing patients, and some times I led prayers for the dying. Dying in this home is a common phenomenon; every day we removed at least five bodies from the wards.

One lesson that I learned from this home is that the hungry, the sick, the dying and all the poor people are witnesses of Christ, who is present

among us, and is in need of my help. My main mission in this home was to accompany Jesus in his passion. The agony and pain that the patients were going through was so great that they needed someone to accompany and console them.

According to St. Ignatius Loyola ingratitude is the most abominable sin. This experiment helped me to be aware that all my gifts (including health) are a privilege from God. I ought to be grateful everyday.

Even though I faced a number of challenges: poor lodgings, the language barrier and lack of expertise, I feel that the spiritual benefits that I received in the experiment outweighed the difficulties I encountered.



Novices George (left) and Thomas (right) with MC sisters

## Salima: God's Glory?

By Paul Kalenzi

I met Salima, a middle-aged woman, in the psychiatric ward of Bugando hospital while on experiment in Mwanza. Salima had brought herself to the hospital, in a state of depression and mute.

No one knew who she was or where she came from. No one knew what had caused her depression. Perhaps it was AIDS-related (she tested HIV+).

Salima was too weak to feed herself and so I helped to give her porridge. I returned one day to find she had dragged herself to a cell designated 'STRONG ROOM' for the more aggressive patients. She still took the porridge but she was not consuming anything else besides heavily sedative drugs. She probably had a premonition in dragging herself to the strong room. The following day, only her body remained, Salima had moved on.

Salima died abandoned, with little dignity, perhaps unaware of where she was or even who she was, let alone who God is. Because of this supposed separation from God, I find mental illness a particularly frightening prospect.

I still find it difficult to see God's glory in suffering such as Salima's. I am left with the choice of denying that a good God exists or admitting that God is God; He knows what He is about. I, a mere created being, who am I to question Him?

## I Satiated Thy Thirst

By Boniface Okumu

I did my second experiment at *Mji wa Furaha na Amani* (MFA) in Dar-es-Salaam. MFA is a home for the elderly, the disabled and abandoned children. It is run by the Missionaries of Charity.

My encounters were moving and enriching. I was impressed by one elderly blind man. With the rest of us, he washed and hang clothes to dry everyday. He confided in me that he always tells Jesus that he wants to see, and he hopes that one day he will see - even if it will be minutes before his death.

Some of the workers' appeared more miserable than the patients. One *Mama* (lady) was rejected by her husband while pregnant, and after three years, he died of HIV/AIDS. "I tried to sell *Karanga* (groundnuts) but there was not

much profit. I would collect seven hundred shillings on a good day. No paraffin, no salt, no food and yet the children depend on me. I came to work here because I had nothing else to do," she said, smiling.

I felt and experienced God's mystical presence in my prayer, apostolic and community life. By loving him and being close to him, it became easier for me to love and be close to the people I was serving.

One day I was speaking to a Missionaries of Charity sister. She said, "The cross is the heart of the following of Christ. Without the cross there is no life." I appreciate being with Christ at all moments, sharing in his joy as well as his suffering. This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus: being ready to satiate the infinite thirst of God for souls.

### Time now, to say goodbye

By Paul Kalenzi

Baby,  
Just a foot tall  
Tampering with the stove,  
Now your little soul  
Flutters in clouds of clove.

Lady,  
Here comes oil to bless,  
But where are your kin?  
Sprawled in your mess,  
Was yours the seedier sin?

Many  
Must take that bow.  
I stay on, to cry  
And sigh, "Why?" Time now,  
To say goodbye.

# Spirituality

## Encounter with Christ

By Patrick Ngan'ga

The Spiritual Exercises - done in a thirty-day retreat - was a transforming experience for me. It renewed and deepened my relationship with Jesus.

I encountered Christ in a profound way through meditation and contemplation based on the scriptures passages as stipulated in the Spiritual Exercises. Placing myself, for example, in the scene of the woman at the well (Jn 4:1-42), I was troubled by many things that were happening to me. But Jesus insisted on telling me that he is the living water and even named those things that were bothering me. I was attracted to him, and more attentive to what he was telling me. I felt a deep sense of peace and joy in my heart. Finally, as I left the well, I could feel my heart burning with desire to share the living water with others I am called to serve.

It was not all smooth going, however. The prayer was punctuated with challenges. There were moments when I felt

tired; I felt as if nothing was happening. The hour allocated for prayers seemed like eternity. I was tempted to shorten it or give up all together. At other moments my mind wandered far from the object of contemplation. Eventually, I managed to contain this particular temptation by persevering and remaining in prayer.

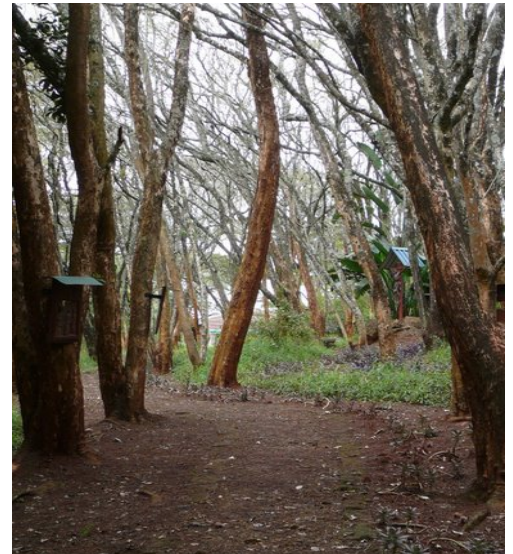
God uses various elements of nature to communicate to us even if nothing seems to be happening in prayer. One night, as I was meditating on sin, I felt a great urge to go out and look at the sky. Sitting on a bench gazing at the sky, I could not see the moon clearly because it was covered by clouds, yet it was bright. The message I felt God was communicating to me was, "Despite your sinfulness and sinful tendencies, I still love you, and I am always present in your heart even in those moments when you do not feel my presence." This message made me feel a great sense of peace, joy and reassurance of God's unconditional love.

By doing the Spiritual Exercises, I learnt that that prayer does not depend on my effort but it is the Lord who initiates and mine is to respond. I am looking forward, by God's grace, to living what I encountered during the retreat.

## My new Attire

By Jean-Baptiste Musitwa

I went to Mwangaza Jesuit Spiritual Centre naked but came back wearing spiritual attire that I am jealously guarding in my fifth week.



## A Saint Next Door

By Natnael Samson

I believe every incident calls for a moment of reflection, where one is called to grow and have a meaningful life.

"Bwana awe nanyi (the Lord be with you)," the priest proclaimed and the congregation responded, in readiness for the Gospel. As the priest started reading the Gospel, seconds later, my attention was won by an old woman on the front pew who started reciting the same Gospel passage by heart.

As I watched this old woman, my mind was filled with questions. Doesn't she look like a saint? Who are saints, really? Where do they live? How do we sense their presence?... I tried to look back on this woman's life in my imagination. A mother who struggles to live for her children, fetching water, collecting firewood, washing clothes, boiling pots, eating leftovers from her children, waking up early, sleeping late. Her only satisfaction is her

children's progress and family's security.

I felt like crying which would not have been a problem since we were attending a funeral Mass. I then wondered how many funeral Masses this old woman had attended. How often had she experienced God calling her loved ones? And still she is grateful to God by embracing his will, standing in the front pew, in her Sunday best.

I remembered how often I had looked forward to being one of those 'dressed in white, singing Hosanna'. It occurred to me then that saints are amongst us, living just next door. Take a walk in your neighbourhood and see this woman that society depends on. She is like the pillar that holds up the cottage, and yet like the stone rejected by builders. A woman whose eyes are blinded by smoke, whose hands are rough to the shake, as shabby as soot but as warm as sunshine. Even after all the injustices that have been done to her, she is grateful in return.

At the end of the Gospel, the faithful responded, "Sifa kwako Ee Kristu (Praise to you, O Christ)". Owing to my poor Swahili, I had not been able to follow the Gospel well but God communicated to me through the old woman's act of faith.

## The Way of the Cross Walk at Mwangaza

During the first week, I saw God guiding me through my life. Even those moments that I considered dark, He had a positive explanation for them. I looked back on my life and sought God's pardon for the times I had taken His generosity for granted.

The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary was my best contemplation of the second week. I saw it as a rescue mission. God was completely fed up with people dying and going to hell. Jesus accepted the responsibility of coming to save humankind. I felt God inviting me to help souls and fight against the injustices of today's world.

In the third week, I was disturbed when I contemplated Jesus suffering because of my sins. I prayed for the spirit of courage, not to be afraid of confessing my sins.

In the final exercise, the 'Contemplation to Attain Love', I saw myself as the most helpless and insignificant person and yet the most loved. I was seated under a tree contemplating and a question came to me: "Can people find rest in you like the rest you are enjoying under this tree?"

How have the spiritual exercises changed me? My love for others is no longer conditional, it comes from deep within. I am now aware that I do not determine my destiny and this has given me interior freedom.



# The 35th General Congregation

On the 7th of January delegates of the Society of Jesus convene for the 35th General Congregation. *Rafiki* sought the views of randomly selected novices:

**David**, expects the new Superior General to attract more men to the Jesuits and to pay more attention to the marginalised groups in the world today. He should visit the provinces and listen to his fellow Jesuits.

**Bul**, hopes the decrees of the GC will be appropriate to the cultural diversity within which the Jesuits operate. He expects a spiritual man for General, one who will empower the laity to be active in the church.

**Pallister**, has mixed feelings about the GC. He feels that Jesuits have not paid adequate attention to the vocation of brothers



**Cardinal Franc Rodé, Prefect for Religious, flanked by ex-Father General Kolvenbach at the opening liturgy of GC 35**

Courtesy of Fr. Don Doll, SJ at GC 35

and expects positive decrees concerning brothers. He is optimistic that the Society is headed for good times and expects current topical issues such as globalization to be discussed during the GC.

**Boniface** would like the delegates of the GC to look back at the charism of the Founders and find out how far Jesuits are true to it. He expects the delegates to revisit the vows to discuss how best they can be lived in the modern world. He expects a new Superior General who is good at discernment and one who will be able to communicate with the Church.



## humour

Fr. Tim went to Mombasa on holiday. He immediately sent an e-mail to his superior back in Kampala (Superior@jesuits.org.ug). Unfortunately, he misspells his superior's exact e-mail address and the e-mail ended up going to a superior in Britain (Superior@jesuits.org.uk), whose community member, also called Tim, had just passed away. The superior in Britain took one look at the e-mail and promptly fainted.

When he was finally revived by another community member, he nervously pointed to the message, which read:

"Arrived safely, but it sure is hot down here."

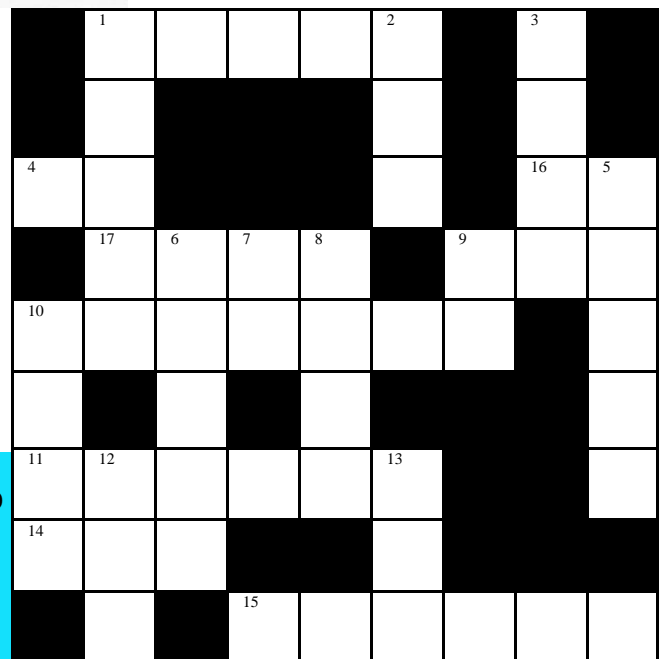
## CROSSWORD By Cedric Galia

### ACROSS

1. Horse run in England [5]
4. In Europe [2]
9. Information [3]
10. Informative speech [7]
11. Aaron's lineage [6]
14. Preceding [3]
15. Annoy [6]
16. Prefix [2]
17. Currency unit [4]

### DOWN

1. Have a look [5]
2. Domesticated ox [3]
3. Manner or way [4]
5. Injection to clear bowels [5]
6. Sacred tree [5]
7. Remain [2]
8. Miss out [4]
9. Highest authority of SJ [2]
10. Native of Poland [4].
12. Span of time [3]
13. Sensory organ [3]



### ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE

- ACROSS: 2. TOO 3. MEN 7. DISCERN 13. EMU 15. OM 16. TECTIO  
 17. ERR 18. REAM 19. ANOINTED 20. ATE 21. NOAH  
 22. PATE 23. TOR 24. KEN  
 DOWN: 1. DEM 2. TERTIAN 3. OR 4. ON 5. MEDITATION 6. Nsj  
 7. DONNE 8. CURIA 9. ENT 10. DICEY 11. ROM 12. UN  
 14. ARK 25. ME



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