



# RAFIKI

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A Publication of Gonzaga Gonzaga Jesuit Novitiate, Arusha Tanzania.



Noel Tumaini, nSJ

Editor

Pax Christi!

We are witnessing progress in Rafiki Newsletter over time from 2013 to this year which is quite impressive. No matter what it takes to be a writer but most people would agree with me that, the Jesuit culture of sharing life experience is firmly rooted and it is so rich and deep in our daily lives.

Robert Lewis once said, *'keep your fear to yourself, but share your courage with others'*. This reminds me of my first days at Korona. Though I had a lot of expectations, fear reigned in me for a while. Over-time I became part of the men of the fifth week with a lot of courage, zeal and hope after my Spiritual Exercises. Therefore, I have learnt to conquer my fears by sharing my life experiences both orally and in writing.

Dear readers, this issue contains the stories of lives of new men in the Novitiate together with the humble and loving 'Secundi' celebrating their lives by giving us the glimpse of their experience of one month experiment around Arusha city.

Many gratitude to Our God, to the formation team, the Novitiate Community and others for your generous support. In a more special way, I welcome new Rafiki Team members; Fr. James Moro, SJ and Bernard Onyango, nSJ and a visiting friend, Br Bwesige, SJ. *Bienvenu mes frères!*

Lastly, let us partake of this issue as in, we are breaking bread together in communion and love. I thank our readers for your responses, pieces of advice and I welcome anyone who wish to share his experience or any other thing that patterns to our spirituality to forward their articles to Rafiki at any time. I end up with this quotation from David Hume saying, 'the truth springs from arguments amongst friends'. Thanks all of you!



## HUMILITY AND PATIENCE AS A RESULT OF LOVING CHILDREN

Frank Obat, nSJ

On March 3, 2014, in the good company of my two brothers John and Odinga, I was missioned to a one month experiment at St. Joseph Orphan Centre in Kiseriani. The center is under the care of Sr. Mnate and is a home for about 41 children who are orphans, and homeless. The center is 8 km from our novitiate and each day, we rode there on our bicycles.

Before leaving the novitiate, we were anxious to know what kind of work we shall do. At the center, we were informed that, we shall assist in teaching the children in class one. Never in my life had I ever dreamt of teaching class one kids, yet there, I was, teaching them mathematics, personality development and sports. At first, the pupils saw me as a stranger and were afraid. When I looked at them, I too was afraid and confused, the backside of my pink polo tee-shirt, was completely wet from my shoulder to the waist with sweat. I could see the children surprised, wondering if any water remained in me. However, with time, I wonderfully bonded with the children and I, was more relaxed.

Teaching mathematics was somehow challenging because of repetition. Today, I would teach  $3+2=5$  they get it very well, but shortly after they have forgotten everything and there I am repeating again and again. I think, since my childhood, I have had a little to do with patience, thus teaching during the first week of the experiment was too hectic for me. However, in the proceeding weeks my God gave me the patience, which I lacked for long time and I, adapted to the system quite well. In my class, there was also a 'knotty' boy causing all sorts of problem. When instructed to do anything, he would do the contrary and even to the extreme. Often he was being punished by other teachers but, I had to bear with him patiently and with time he began to change. This however, required a lot of humility which God provided in abundance.

There was also a boy called Moses who was good in mathematics, and even when others were not getting anything, Moses was getting something and he actually, was a source of my consolation.

*Cont. page 2...*





The search for the 'Magis' what is for God's greater glory, permeates our entire Jesuit lives as we strive to find God in everything. It is the motivation that moves us in our service to those around us and indeed to the whole world, especially to the poor.

This Rafiki issue brings to us all, the Magis experience as lived at our novitiate in Arusha. Here, we all strive to grow closer to Christ in the Society of Jesus. We want to share this experience with great love and humility with you all. You are our companions making this wonderful experience in our lives possible through your generosity. We are forever grateful to you.

We thank our Rakifi Team lead by Noel Tumaini, nSJ for generously putting this experience together and making it nice to share with the world. Our novitiate community wishes you all a great moment as you share in our experience through this Rafiki.

Br. Bwesigye Thaddeus, S.J.

**BEING A JESUIT NOVICE IS A CAUSE OF JOY**

Lalisa Assefa Runde, nSJ

I was born in 1990 in Dembi Dolo, Ethiopia to a family of six; my one brother, two sisters and our parents. I am the fourth and the last born. My upbringing and education was in Dembi Dolo and I always desired to be a priest like my parish priest.

After my secondary school studies, I was admitted to St. Paul Major Seminary, in Addis Ababa. When I was in the seminary, I did philosophy (diploma) and a little bit of theology (for one year) at Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology. The Jesuits happened to be teaching us at the institute. Slowly, I came to appreciate the Jesuits' commitment, simplicity, friendship, confidence, world view, and apostolate. The effect of this was my attraction to Jesuit missions and eventually I decided to join the Society of Jesus.

Nowadays, I am a Jesuit novice with gratitude for having been admitted to the Society of Jesus. It is surely a cause of joy for me to be in Gonzaga Gonza Jesuit Novitiate. Being a novice is not out of my own merit, but the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and never an end in itself but a means to realizing God's greater glory in my life. In my point of view, the novitiate is a school of service where I would learn how to labor well in the harvest of the good Lord. I feel united with Christ Jesus by the words of this scripture: "I did not come to call the righteous but sinners," (cf. Mark 2:17). Dear readers, I request your prayers!

- In THIS Issue.....**
- \* A three day retreat that ended the first probation
  - \* The Joy of Searching for God – Psalm 122
  - \* More for Christ at Canossa Dispensary
  - \* Being a Jesuit novice is a cause of Joy
  - \* The gift of one another's uniqueness
  - \* Humility and patience as a result of loving children
  - \* My journey to the Novitiate
  - \* Nous abattons la chèvre ensemble



On the right is Lalisa

Continued from page .1

Many times, seeing the innocence of those kids in their eyes, I would ask myself a lot of questions; why did they have to go through this? What have they done to deserve this? A case which struck me most was the two children of the same mother, who saw their mother being raped and then murdered by a gang of unscrupulous men. Moses, too my mathematic genius, been abandoned by the fire placed and his forehead burnt when he was young. Although, they have undergone through great challenges, these children were calm, happy to have a home and a chance to live. The meekness of these children was also visible.

By the end of the experiment, I had fallen in serious love with the children. They were my friends filling me with great joy. Through the children, God had given me the virtues of humility and patience, the most important things I have gained during the experiment. I have discovered their importance in life. I developed strong bonds with the children and my daily riding to their home was not in vain. I am grateful to God and to all who make this experiment possible. *By. Frank Obat Augustine, nSJ*

## DOING MORE FOR CHRIST AT CANOSSA DISPENSARY

Oyet Patrick Abwola, nSJ

When my Novice Director missioned me for a one month experiment at Canossa dispensary, I was given a job descriptions that included: diagnosing and management of diseases, providing counseling to the clients, follow up of patients, referral of patients whose conditions can't be managed within the unit, carrying out minor surgical procedures and to be ready for any new assignment. Oh, I wondered how, I would manage to carry out the responsibilities given. It was not that I do not know what to do, but it was the challenges of communication with patients, since I did not know their language and they too did not understand the languages I knew.

The first two weeks were very stressing that I nearly sought treatment, due to my shortages of Swahili vocabulary to communicate with my patients. This resulted into the slowing down of work, but God too had designed that there would be few patients during this time. The staff too helped me to communicate with patients. However, with time, I managed to memorize few useful Swahili expressions and slowly I started to enjoy more my service delivery to patients that improved tremendously. Then, I remembered the principle and foundation in the spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, realizing that the means to serve God and his peoples are so many; knowledge of their language was one of them in my situation.

St. Ignatius encouraged Jesuits, to work as if everything depended on them and to pray as if everything depended on God. This means for me to go beyond what is expected of me; giving my best, hence as it is "there is no room for mediocrity in the society of Jesus." St. Ignatius still requires each one to ask oneself, "What have I done for God? What am I doing for God? And what MORE can I do for God? During the experiment; together with the staff members, we decided to do more in our service to the patients by our commitment to their care. All in all we were trying to do MORE for God. During the experiment time, I remembered Jesus saying something important, "from now on I will be manifested in the poor, in the weak, in the broken. I will be crucified, rejected and I will return to the Father. With the father we will send the spirit and you will come out from your grave and discover that I am present in the poorest, in the weakest, the broken and in the lost". It is during experiment that I discovered Christ, meeting him in the poor and sick and feeling like them. My encounter with Christ, gave me great strength to do more for the patients according to my capacity. The experiment has made me to become more human, more loving, and I think a better disciple of Jesus also through the power of the Holy Spirit.



**Nous abattons la chèvre ensemble !**

**Noel Tumaini, nSJ**

Les plus importantes affaires dans ma culture sont faites avec la grâce spéciale de Dieu à travers nos ancêtres. C'est notre spiritualité. Les questions de mariage, d'initiations ; donner un nom ou enterrer et beaucoup d'autres choses plus importantes de notre vie culturelles nécessitent cette grâce.

Abattre la chèvre ensemble est un service sacré. Il est accompli pour réconcilier des parents ou rapprocher l'harmonie entre les familles. Ceux qui disent que le continent africain est obscur ignorent ses cultures. L'Afrique n'est pas et n'était pas païenne. La foi en Dieu et les autres croyances sont profondément racinées partout en Afrique.

Abattre la chèvre signifie presque rompre le pain ensemble, comme prescrit dans l'évangile. Donc, ce n'est pas une ignorance. Je ne sais pas pourquoi le Christianisme de l'Occident a déclaré que nous adorions nos ancêtres, les animaux et les arbres, mais sans jamais condamner ses propres pratiques païennes. De toute façon, ce n'est pas vrai. C'est oublier la pointe. Nous trouver Dieu dans toutes les cultures et partout.

Alors, abattons la chèvre ensemble pour préserver, conserver et garder nos identités et nos cultures où Dieu est fondé. Merci beaucoup mes frères !



## The Joy of Searching for God Psalm 122



John Siyumbu, nSJ

Searching for God in my life as a Novice is a grace-filled occasion. It is anything but an exercise in futility. My Novitiate experience keeps unfolding by the day; in signs and ways that makes me grateful to my God. I identify with pilgrims in ancient Israel in their ascent to the Temple in Jerusalem. I give thanks to God for His constant shepherding.

With the Psalmist in the African Bible, I sing the 122<sup>nd</sup> Psalm with joy and thanksgiving:

*I rejoiced when I read my letter of admission:*

*'Notification of acceptance...'*

*And now my body and soul are here*

*Within and about the Novitiate*

*The Novitiate is built as a fortress,*

*Engulfed by the providence of God*

*Here, my God has led me*

*a beloved of my Lord and God*

*whom He chose and knew*

*and has an ordained purpose.*

*Here is my probation and formation*

*So my God may mould, and by his will, place me*

*For the peace of my companions, pray with me:*

*"May Adonai watch over you!*

*May the Joy of the Gospel infuse you all*

*In your quest for the 'Magis'*

*For my family, friends and benefactors and all of goodwill I say,*

*'Gratitude'*

*May all my intentions, actions and operations*

*Be ordered*

*For the praise, reverence and service of the Divine Majesty.*

*AMDG*

**PS:** Listen to a rendition of this Psalm (Psalm 121 in the Catholic Digtlot Bible, Kindle edition by OSNOVA) incorporated with the *In Paradisum* by the Cistercian Monks of Stift Heiligenkruz (You tube is your friend). Sublime!

## A JOURNEY TO THE NOVITIATE

Sajilo Julius Mark nSJ

The day before I came to the novitiate, was really busy one with my friends calling me left and right to share with me their time and yet I had to submit the examination results to the school, St. Peter Claver High school where I was teaching. I started with the submission of results to the school where my students were excited to see me. When I told my students that I was leaving the next day, their faces lost all the excitement at once and I left it. We were so close and they demanded why I was leaving them. After a long time of explaining to them about my desires to join the Society of Jesus, they understood me and promised to pray for me. My friends too, were surprised that I was quitting job and joining religious life and wondered if that really was a wise choice, but later their accepted my choice and happily bid me farewell.

Back at home, I had prepared myself and my parents had agreed with my choice to join the Society of Jesus. However, I slept so late, anxious of what lay before me. Fortunately, I was able to wake up early enough ready to travel and off I started my journey. Throughout the journey, I was praying and imagining how life is in the novitiate. As I prayed, something kept on telling me it is ok. After some 8 hours of travel, the bus arrived in Arusha town and I alighted, boarded taxis to the novitiate. I found the novitiate such a wonderful, cool and quite place. I was welcomed and later my friends from Uganda, Kenya Ethiopia and Sudan also arrived. We were all happy to meet each other as it was our first time.

Once in the novitiate, the formators and second year novices, our angels, assisted us to get used to the new environment, sacrificing their time to explain to us a number of issues concerning prayers and the general novitiate life. After a wonderful period of initiation that ended with a three day retreat, we successfully finished our first probation. We were then officially initiated into the novitiate proper or second probation that is the two years in the novitiate . I pray that God who started this enterprise in me may graciously bring it to full fruition as I learn more and more from the experiences I go through and those I meet.



## A THREE DAY RETREAT THAT ENDED THE FIRST PROBATION.

It was not only wise choice of the themes to be used in the retreat but also that selection was traditional and done with great care!

For the first day, the theme was God calls and I am called, and reference was on the humble calls of Moses Ex: 3: 1-6 and that of Mary to be God's mother. Lk: 1: 26-38.

God's love and God's love is personal and tender. So I am loved by God. And this was a second day's theme for reflection.

God sends and I am sent was a theme for the last day of reflection. It was not an accident that the first theme captured the Moses's call. So Bravo to us who are called Moses within and without province of Eastern Africa.

But why do I have to attend a retreat like this? And again, why was the holy hour the center of above retreat? But why..... In an attempt to answer of the above two questions, a triduum was just a short time for me.

Christ is the focal point and the mode of our religious life. Therefore, our religious life must be an attempt to portray Christ otherwise it remains a dream. And in a retreat, we have a personal experience of Christ through reflection in the gospel, exposition in which we experience Christ reality in the Eucharist.

It is not enough to be born in the holy spirit but to live in the holy spirit and to be led by it (growth in the holy spirit) and this was my second thought "why a retreat and holy hour." Brotherly love in the community helps us to grow deep in personal relationship with Christ. This is slow but it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. We should therefore ask for this grace- that calls for more effort hence a retreat.

A retreat above all, helps a person to give to others what he has received. But, one can not give what he doesn't have. Having therefore is a condition of giving. But what do we give? Love of Christ and if Christ has a place in our life, we should be able, to recognize him in the "brothers" that we meet (formators, unto the youngest members of community and doing this, Christ become our leader and we his disciples (companions of Jesus).

It is therefore, important to portray religious life as a way of following Christ. Being a disciple of Christ is renouncing every thing that draws us away from Christ. Our religious formation at Gonzaga Gonza is Christocentric. Following Christ is not only to imitate him but also having personal relationship with him (intimacy with him) hence become friends of Jesus.

**Moses B. Onyango**



## THE GIFT OF ONE ANOTHER'S UNIQUENESS

**Andrea Paul Uduma, nsj**

Imagine how beautiful the flowers are, when arranged in different colors, likewise we are when united. St. Ignatius encouraged us (Jesuits), to live together as a community, despite our differences; weaknesses, and strengths and to refer to them as gifts from God. Let's, therefore, embrace the gift of one another, accepting the other as he is; since this uniqueness could help us to discover the greatness of our creator. Our differences are but gifts from God, strengthening us in our service of humanity.

Since we are friends in the lord, who accept our strengths and weakness, it is also possible to welcome one another as he is, thus cementing our unity that is vital for our progress. As a young Jesuit, I find it very interesting that God calls each one of us to serve Him in a personal way, but with others. Therefore, we should appreciate the beauty of each other's uniqueness as our strength, strength not to gain fame, or honor, or wealth but strength to gain the entire world for Christ.



*To the Editor!*

Leo Amani Massawe, SJ

May 30

Thank you very much Noel Tumaini for taking up the relay of RAFIKI from your elder brothers who have now finished the foundational stage of Jesuit formation. Your turn will come faster than you think!

Great work! Keep it up! And God bless you and all the team for this wonderful work.

Agbonkhianmeghe E. OROBATOR, SJ

May 28

Asante sana na Hongera!

# **BIG UP to**

## **Fr A. Shirima, SJ**

*By: Augustine Obat, nSJ*

In remembrance of our beloved outgoing Fr Master!!!

You will always be in our minds!!!  
*(Psalms 139 modified...)*

Oh Shirima you have searched and probed me. You know when I am on the wrong side and catch me.

When I came late for the Breviary, I found you standing between

Manresa and Kizito, it was dark already but you saw me.

When I took a 'drink' in my room even there your spirit directed you, you came and found me with nothing to say except to say it is a soda.

When I missed choir practice, even there you demanded an explanation.

When I went to the gorge to take a rest, even there you peeped through the

barbed wire fence.

When I went to harvest mangoes in our farm, the temptation was too strong and I decided to taste one. Abruptly you appeared and gave this direction "I thought you are mature enough to know that mangoes are only eaten in the refectory" suddenly the mango turned bitter.

When I hanged my few patched cloths (being ravaged by the vow of poverty) on the blocks, trying to maintain their colour because the sun was too hot, even there you issued a bull "this is not a public apartment"

Where can I run from your face oh ,  
Shirima?

When I went to Kisongo to help the Sub-Parish youths to play a match on Sunday, on Monday morning you issued a bull "this is not a football club"

On the same day (Monday) in the evening when I celebrated by laughing aloud the goals I had scored with my companions at Kizito block, central square past 6pm. The following day in the morning you issued another bull "this is not a public school"

Oh Shirima, if you counted all my faults would I have stayed in the Novitiate one more night?



From left: Br. Bwesige Thadeus, SJ, Noel Tumaini, nSJ,  
Bernard Onyango, nSJ Ayele Shalamo, nSJ

*Picture: Mebratu Lubamo*

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