



# RAFIKI

May, 2014

A Publication of Gonzaga Conza Jesuit Novitiate, Arusha Tanzania.



It was a home of

Learning



Tanzania



Uganda



Sudan



Kenya



Ethiopia



S.Sudan



# CONTENT

## Content

- \* It was a home of Learning
- \* Memories of Gonzaga Gonza
- \* My novitiate Experience
- \* Heri Nawatakia
- \* Searching for Meaning
- \* The glory of God resides in a man who is fully alive
- \* Ordinary Season yet it's extraordinary
- \* Wade in the water
- \* Africa and the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Restoration of the Jesuits
- \* Discovery of Conscience
- \* A marginal thinker

## THE EDITORIAL TEAM

### Advisor:

FR. BERNARD MALLIA, SJ.

### Editor, Design and Publication:

NOEL TUMAINI, nSJ

### Photography, Correspondence:

AYELE SHALAMO, nSJ

## FORMER RAFIKI MEMBERS



*Tobias Dindi and Kiprono Ng'etich*



Kindly share with us your thoughts, opinion,  
and correspondence. Contact us through;

The Editor,  
Rafiki Magazine  
Gonzaga Gonza Jesuit Novitiate  
P.O. BOX 1726  
ARUSHA , TANZANIA  
Tel. +255736500511  
E-mail.  
[gonzafiki@gmail.com](mailto:gonzafiki@gmail.com)

## THE RAFIKI TEAM



From left: Ayele Shalamo, Fr. Bernard Mallia and Noel Tumaini .

*Picture: James Lele*





Noel Tumaini, nSJ

Editor

"...you are confusing me!". When the cooks prepare 'matoke' as a meal one of the common food in the land of Mutesa II, sometimes it happens we have bananas as fruits on the same meal. This did not please one of ours from Buganda Kingdom, thus he remarked like this and so it became a joke of the year.

Dear readers, our issue this season will be focusing on the experiences of young Jesuits in the novitiate for the past two years together with very diverse, deep and inspiring experiences of their young who remain behind still to accumulate enough wisdom ready for the journey.

It is interesting to recall my experience with a man from the '*Land of Presta John*', people who used the myth of a Christian King defending the Christianity against Muslim Jihadists in Africa in order to get help from Western Christian Monarchies. This man could use the same technic like his forefathers by coining people with titles just to achieve their support and passive resistance in any debatable issue. Mashallaah! It was a deep experience, the unity in diversity that helped us to build a more peaceful community.

In this regard I welcome you to enjoy this product of young Jesuits in the novitiate and possibly understand them, help them and encourage them as they journey with Christ. This cultivates among others, the companionship in mind and spirit.

We congratulate the thirteen companions for their first profession of vows in the Society of Jesus, offering themselves fully to God like the first apostles. They vowed Poverty, Chastity and Obedience to God and to the Superiors of the Society of Jesus to accomplish the mission of Christ in the world. I use this opportunity to thank them for their generosity, their life and I encourage them to abide in Christ always. We promise them our prayers as a Novitiate community. God bless them!

I also use this opportunity to be grateful to the Rafiki Team members; Ayele Shalamo, nSJ and Bernard Mallia, SJ without forgetting Kiprono Nge'tich, SJ (former editor), and Tobias Dindi, SJ (former correspondent and a designer) for their great and generous contribution to the Rafiki Department. I also thank those who were generous to share their life experiences with us in writing. I am motivated to encourage more contributions from both inside and outside the novitiate walls. Abide in Christ!

Your Companion in Christ,

Noel Tumaini, nSJ.



## FIRST MISSIONING

It is the beginning of a mission life. It is Jesus who first calls us both to be with him and to be sent by him as his witnesses, sharing in his mission. The formation in the novitiate is the beginning of listening to the call to be with him, to come to know him and share his life and vision. It is then that we are launched on our first mission, to go out and to start on his work. We are sent out but this also means that while being sent at the same time we remain with him. This is being contemplative in action. This is what we shall be doing the rest of our life whatever mission we are sent on at any particular time. In our first mission, as on all subsequent mission, we continue to grow in the knowledge and vision of Jesus as his mission unfolds.

We are sent with his power and authority and we are to rely not on ourselves or on the means available to help us carry out the mission but on him who sends us, for whatever the mission it is always his. A Jesuit is always in a state of formation until we all grow into full maturity in Christ. With the first missioning we continue to build on the sure foundation received in the novitiate.

It is like the seed that is sowed in the ground and grows into a full plant and gives the fruit always drawing strength from the place where it is rooted. The first missioning is already the growth of the plant starting giving fruit while it continues to grow and push its roots deeper and stronger in the knowledge and vision of Jesus. It is a taste of what we shall be doing the rest of our life, however varied it will be. From the first missioning we learn how to go on being missioned in service and in love whatever we do.

As we are launched on our first mission we may feel both grateful and assured. We are grateful for all that has gone into our formation in the novitiate that has prepared us so well to embrace wholeheartedly the mission we are sent on and at the same time we may feel assured that we can look into the future with confidence for the Lord will continue to provide us with all we need to fulfill the mission on which we are sent. We are on this mission together and we feel that this spirit of solidarity among us will help us in the mutual support we give to each other as companions on mission. May the good Lord bless each and all the new missionaries as they start their life-long missionary journey!

Faternally,

Bernard Mallia, S.J.

## Formators' Desk



Bernard Mallia, S.J.



## IT WAS A HOME OF LEARNING

By Eddie Onyango

I cannot imagine that it has been two years and we are on our way out. Our predecessors used to tell us; “If we do not go then you do not become *secundis*.” Which made a lot of sense because just like them who were finishing the novitiate, I was also looking forward to the same.

It is hard if not impossible to capture the two years of the novitiate experience in one article. I reflected on what to write and attempted to summarize my experience into one theme: I think that for me, to a big extent, the novitiate was a great learning experience/opportunity.

To begin with a few examples of what I learnt right from the beginning was how to do the hour and the breviary which was successful thanks to my angel Jary. This was completely new for me. I was a little anxious about it as well at the beginning but it eventually turned out to be fine with time.

This I would also tie to tips on cleaning and maintenance of our block by my number two angel Kangs. My first block was Mandela which also housed my angel who also happened to be the block master. I have to credit him with leading by example. My first Saturday cleaning was in collaboration with him. My, my, the job was spectacular; from the windows to the floor, to the tiles et cetera. Talk about the lawn in front of the block, really green and I have to add comfortably, with zero tolerance for weeds. Block members could voluntarily *magis* there every after games as we tell stories. Unfortunately we kept the story telling bit which could at times go past 6 pm (silence time) which was a source of several *briefs* from Manresa through the coordinator. All in all, I was impressed by the sense of being thorough which I tried to pick up.

Well, another learning point for me was the long retreat experience. I had heard so much about the Spiritual Exercises, even up to the time for embarking for it to the extent that I think my perception, I have to admit that to some degree, was ill-informed. I had my own experience as Eddie which forever I will be grateful to God for. I also acknowledge that it has been a struggle implementing the few ideas I picked up but with His grace and help, I will keep trying to the best of my ability.

We also had one long experiment which was great as well for me. I was posted to Mwanza; residing at the Francis Xavier Jesuit community, in charge of Nyakahoja Parish while I did my apostolate at Bugando Hospital. This, definitely, was a also a totally new experience for me. In the end, it was one of my key experiences. The two months, mostly at Bugando, taught me to be grateful and be careful on the many things we take for granted; well, sometimes I still forget this. The experiment had its own ups and downs but in the end, it was generally a great experience.

I would also like to mention two other experiences which I think were key as well. This was my Friday apostolate which was at Ilboru High School. The students challenged me to do more in order to have meaning sessions with them. I learnt a lot in the process, enjoyed my time and sharing with them and I will surely miss them, especially the current group.

The other is the week long seminars. As one of our former formators used to say; ‘my goodness’, I met so many novices, shared jokes, friendships, et cetera, which was new and exciting. Most of the facilitators were not only experienced but lively and even at times extremely hilarious. This *fo sua* was a great initiative which augmented very well our classes with the local SJ formators who were in themselves great.

Community life has been another point of learning for me. Here, certainly, I had a mixed bag of potatoes. There were many high moments and low ones as well. To a big extent I would say the curve was normal. I believe there is a lot I have learnt from this community, there are things I am still learning and many more that I am yet to learn and this of course is with the help of God.

I think it may not be possible to capture all I have picked-up in the novitiate which includes as well some few cooking tips from Mathenge and Mama Nancy, volleyball from Kyalo, basketball from Macharia (former minister), encounters and discussions with the many Jesuits, name it.....

In conclusion, for all who have participated in shaping me to be who I am now; directly or indirectly, thanks and abundant blessings. I know that until death, I will continue to be formed hopefully to what God wants me to be and for this I continue to ask for His grace to allow myself to be formed with His help and those of those around me.



*Secundi Novices with Cyrus Mwangi, SJ, 2014*



## DISCOVERY of CONSCIENCE

Francis Arinaitwe, nSJ

Which is better? Self-satisfaction (satisfaction of one group of persons) or satisfaction for all (that all enjoy true justice)? Look at what Jesus is always looking for in human beings: forgiveness which brings a U-turn in any human being. Look at how Jesus brings about justice to the three parties i.e. the adulterous woman, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, and himself.

“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman who had been caught committing adultery, and they made her stand before them all. They said to Jesus, ‘this woman has been caught in the very act of committing adultery. In our law Moses commanded that such a woman must be stoned to death. Now what do you say?’ They said this to trap Jesus, so that they could accuse him. But he bent over and wrote on the ground with his finger. As they stood there asking him questions, he straightened up and said to them, “whichever one of you has committed no sin may be the first one to throw a stone at her”. Then he bent over again writing on the ground. When they heard this, they all left, one by one, the elder ones first. Jesus was left alone, with the woman still standing there. He straightened up and said to her, “Where are they? Is there no one left to condemn you?” “No one, sir” she answered. “Well, then,” Jesus said, “I do not condemn you either. Go, but do not sin again.”

The woman went home happy, the teachers of the law went away contented and Jesus as well because he accomplished his mission of bringing the lost to the love of God. Remember she was caught in the very act. Was she in the very act alone or the man ran away? Or could he have been within the crowd that wanted to stone her? I want to leave alone the topic of the man and concentrate on what is given me in the story. The woman went away happy because she was forgiven her sin by Jesus and saved from being stoned to death by the teachers of the law. The teachers of the law were made to understand that the law is nothing when it comes to true justice (justice of God). They were helped to visit their conscience and they discovered that they had been sinning often. When it came to Jesus, he judged which one was the greater for her i.e. death or life. This is now an open debate; think about it.



*“...from today you will be called Leomparer II, I have zero apology for this succession of power. Take this incognito as a sign of power which will give you all necessary faculties to function as a King for rest of your time in the novitiate”*  
Gabriel Obonyo, SJ,

*Leomparer I*



*Sch. Mark Constantine, SJ a local tourist in our of nice places in Kili-manjaro. ‘La vie est bien’*



*Our neighbors, ‘you men, abide in Christ’*



## SEARCHING FOR MEANING?



*Eddie Onyango, sj*

One of the greatest challenges today is 'existential vacuum', meaninglessness of life, lack of awareness of what to live for, inner emptiness. Now it is important to realize that the meaning of life differs from man to man, from day to day and from hour to hour. What matters therefore is the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment with a possibility of positive extrapolation.

The essence of human life lies in the sense of irresponsibility; living as if you were living already for the second time and as if you had acted the first time wrongly as you are about to act now.

The true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche; that is, **self-transcendence**. This implies that being human always points at and is directed to something or someone other than oneself. The more one forgets himself (by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love) the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself. This is called **self-actualization**; which if in itself is pursued, is not obtainable but is achieved only as a side effect of self-transcendence.

It is also said that at times we discover meaning in life primarily by creating a work or doing at deed, by experiencing something or encountering someone or by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering.

Interesting enough, man has the unique potential to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph. When we no longer are able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. Remember, man is always ready to suffer on condition that his suffering has meaning especially where suffering is unavoidable but in no way is suffering necessary to find meaning.

Now, optimism especially amidst tribulations is at its best when it allows for turning the challenges/tribulations into a human achievement and accomplishment, deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better deriving from life's transitoriness (death) an incentive to take responsible action

Once an individual's search for meaning is successful, it not only renders him happy but also gives him the capability to cope with suffering. However, if it is in vain, it could also lead to a fatal condition (meaninglessness)

Beloved, have a meaningful life.

*Adapted from: Man's search for meaning by Victor Frankl.*

## *A marginal thinker*

Noel Tumaini, nSJ

Dear readers! The more arguments you win, the less friends you will have. Give it a benefit of doubt. To a marginal thinker, in any additional unit of anything he consumes, does it meet his expectations? He reasons this in the light of an additional unit he consumes whether it takes him where he would like to be or not. He understands nobody consumes just for its own sake. The additional satisfaction he obtains from the additional unit consumed, is it what he desired? Or is it just a matter of doing '*magis*'? Let us think that, whatever we consume it is all that total and thus the additional unit is just an abstract. But the trouble is, what is 'that all'? In 'that all', when you consume the first unit of it, an additional pleasure fetched by one more unit as you proceed, then, can we use it to measure our satisfaction? This is what he refers to as marginal satisfaction. A marginal thinker agrees with this methodology contrary to the idea of computing total satisfaction which might not be very realistic.

Dear readers, Sir Robert Baden-Powell said, 'there is no teaching to compare with example'. Take an example of a bottle of coke sold at \$ 2 in 2009 and had been increasing in price to cope with the economic cycle yearly. When you want to drink coke, the more bottles you add the less additional satisfaction you are likely to enjoy. The willingness to pay slows down too. If price increases without adjusting your earnings then your demand and desires will be suffocated by less units affordable by the same stationary earning. The welfare should be taken care-off constantly overtime to cope up with a dynamic economic disequilibrium. This is the way of a marginal thinker who vowed to think at the margin.

If our marginal thinker believes in God, what do you expect him to do? Assume everything remains constant. Does he have room to apply his marginal thinking? Yes, of course! God says in the scriptures, '...go and multiply and fill the world'. For a marginal thinker it may mean '*go and think at the margin*' – here, I don't mean doing the '*magis*' per se. Therefore, when we add one more of what is given to us, then God is satisfied more and hence measures our progress with '*that one more*'. Then, the marginal thinker looks at '*God who wants us to multiply*' what he has provided for our sustainability, but he also sees how knowledgeable we are when he brings-in new things. Should we reject them or take them for granted? No! For a marginal thinker, our work is to multiply and make the whole world a better place for a multiplying humanity in love and not to compromise by constraining ourselves. This can help us to examine our practices being spiritual, managerial and so forth in a very critical way than the tendency of backward mentality. Christ taught us by the example of multiplying the loaves and not trying to squeeze with the little. 'Go and do likewise' - this is our call.





## THE GLORY OF GOD RESIDES IN A MAN WHO IS FULLY ALIVE.

Wafula Emmanuel, nSJ

My high school teacher once told us that a “wise man is he who enjoys life on earth and enjoys life in heaven, while a foolish man is he who suffers on earth to enjoy life in heaven or enjoys life on earth and loses his life in heaven”! How true this statement is resides in your definition of life. For a Christian, life is the most important gift, the best gift that God has bestowed on man, whether one is conscious of it or not. But the life that we have here on earth is temporal due to our imperfect nature. There is a greater life than this one, Eternal life.

In John 3:16, our life both here and in heaven resides in God's love for us. It is in this great love of God manifest in his Son Jesus that we have eternal life. How wonderful should this knowledge be for every Christian? This is what keeps us Christians going. When Jesus resides in us, then we are truly alive. In the Gospel of John 6:32, Jesus not only corrects the notion the crowds have about Manna in the desert during Moses' time, but assures them of the true bread (Manna) from heaven, given by the Father, the bread that gives life. Astonished; they said to him in John 6:34, “Sir, give us this bread always”, and Jesus gives the perfect response, “I am the bread of life...” (John 6:35). This bread of life is not only of this temporal life, but of the eternal one. He assures them that anybody who believes in him will never hunger or thirst. Hunger and thirst both of body and soul, for me, seem to be the biggest factors that can naturally deprive one of life. Why then should we not eat this bread and have life? Indeed life in full.

Sometimes I ask myself these questions; why did Jesus think of the last supper? Why did he refer to the bread and wine as his body and blood? Why did he exclude anyone else from this important meal except for the chosen few? I may or may never come to understand fully this paschal mystery but it is one mystery that I place all my faith in not only because it's the mystery of my salvation but because I tend to think that Jesus wanted to find the

best means for his glory to remain with us. Of course I stand to be corrected; Jesus had made a promise to remain with his disciples until the end of time. Again after his resurrection, many would only recognize him after the breaking of bread. The Eucharist therefore is the most special means: Jesus has lowered himself to us to allow us to have life and the role of the spirit is to reveal his presence in his absence.

In the Principle and Foundation of Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, our main reason for being is to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, that through doing this, we save our souls. How is this possible? Our praises help us by disposing ourselves to the glory of God which makes us

alive. In one of the common prefaces, we read that our praises,

reverence and service to God add nothing to His greatness but they profit us for our salvation. Yet another one says God delights in such small tokens as the world can offer. The implication here is that God allows us to share in his glory not because we merit it but because it gives us life.

Jesus emphasizes that he is the vine and that we are the branches (John 15:1-8). It is a fact that a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine. Of this, he says, “remain in me as I remain in you.” It's not even possible to imagine a branch without a stem. This would mean that the branch is firewood. Jesus is the Glory of God who resides in us and encourages us to remain in him if we are to truly be alive. The above title is therefore inverted. It should read “for a man to be fully alive, the glory of God must reside in him”.



## Ordinary Season yet it's extraordinary

Kimario Mark, nSJ

It was the beginning of the ordinary season, Monday following the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. After the morning prayers and the personal hour of prayer, we joined together as a community for the Eucharistic celebration. The celebrant invited us in this ordinary season of year A by some very striking reflection.

It's the ordinary season but we are being told to expect extraordinary things also. Why approaching the ordinary season with such kind of an attitude? He didn't refrain from telling us that for us as Christians, this is a period where life seems to be normal but with a lot of experiences which shape our lives. After all it covers a great period of our church circle. That's the reason why some of the great feasts of the church are also found within the ordinary season. We are not supposed to close our eyes for the extraordinary encounters during this period.

In this year, the Mother Church started the season by offering to us the Gospel of Mk1:14-22. From this Gospel passage we see Jesus starting to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. God has come to dwell among us in order to save the whole humanity from its sinful state. This is the God who is compassionate, loving and merciful. Jesus is fulfilling his mission statement as presented in Luke 4:18-19. He went ahead by starting calling his first disciples which is also an invitation for all of us to follow him and imitate his way of life. Is this invitation just in the beginning (the first day) of the ordinary time not an extraordinary experience? Every day during the Eucharistic celebration the homilist never fails to point out clearly the values of the Gospel which are extraordinary compared to the worldly values.

In my view point, *"if we are able to see God in everything, then everything turns out to be extraordinary"*. This is an experience which I get from the various activities and engagements in the novitiate from the chapel, classroom, sports' field up to the manual work. A simple example is like while the business in the ranch is still going on: our engineers who are philosophers, psychologists, teachers, journalists and economists among others, are demonstrating their talents in the construction field with a great sense of commitment and professionalism that someone might feel they are civil engineers.

This attitude of considering what we see in our daily life as extraordinary experiences may take root among us if we learn to be grateful to God for what life offers to us and appreciating every experience whether it brings joy or sorrow, as the Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons offer to us more than just ordinary experiences. The Examen can offer to us the solution towards this by helping us to see the footsteps of God in our daily life during this ordinary season. As long as we can see God laboring in us and having a genuine encounter with him during this time, is that not an extraordinary experience?

When we see the bright morning star shining on us and lighting our way and even its setting in the evening, when we reflect on the gift of life and good health, when we appreciate our companions around us, the beauty of nature, our work of building the kingdom of God and many other things through the eyes of faith we will be able to see them as extraordinary experiences of God's presence in our life. This will be an inspiration for us to continue to spread the kingdom of God by being the witnesses of his word which gives life.



Above: Scholastic Amboni, SJ with 'Secundi in transition'





When

They were.....

nsj

Michael Kyallo, nsj-1994.

When we speak of respect for life, we are speaking of respect for all human life; for helpless, unborn infants, people who are disabled or elderly, the victims of crime, abuse, poverty and war; yes there should be respect for human life, with a lot of emphasis I find that the first right of a human person is the right to life hence it must be protected over and above all.

Whatever is opposed to life itself such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion should be focused on with lots of attention and if possible laid off. These things poison the human society but do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury, moreover they are a supreme dishonor to God the creator and free giver of life. Our attitude therefore must be one of total reference for life.

We will only be able to do this by manifesting through our own example the respect for the human life. As religious people more so Catholics we should show our respect for life by speaking against abortion, lynching of suspects, Euthanasia, Infanticide etc.

Another way will be through how we listen to others, how we deal with conflicts, how we treat people who are different from ourselves, how we show love to those close to us, how we treat our own elderly relatives and neighbors and lastly, how we pray and trust in God.

Actually a loving attitude comes from God, who created all of us in his own image regardless of any imperfections, so when we see Christ in everyone loving becomes easier. Imagine that, a little smile, a kind word, an effort to listen

and understand are strong signs of loving attitude.

God really, is a God, a loving God who cares and provides for what He has created. Each of what He has created has a purpose for He communicated to us through children, the elderly the poor, the disabled, even through the imprisoned and the dying.

As Mother Teresa of Calcutta puts it; "it is not how much we give but how much love we put in the giving", therefore as Christians we should be ready always to follow the footsteps of the merciful Christ who was loving, healing hence giving full meaning to life and should not be hesitant to defend life. From the moment of its conception, life must be guarded with greatest care.

Furthermore no one is permitted to ask for this act of killing either for himself or herself for another person entrusted to his or her care, nor can he or she consent to it either explicitly or implicitly.

Therefore taking of human life is not only a violation of divine law but an offence against the dignity of human person, a crime against life and an attack on humanity.

## Welcome Brothers !

Yesterday 24th May was a memorable day to the community. We received nine guests who soon will be called novi. We are grateful to the Lord for these men and we hope that He who called them will guide and protect them as they try to discover His will in their lives. The names are;

Andrea Paul Alberto

Lalisa Asafa Runde

Mebratu Elias Lubamo

Nahum Osman

Oduor Gabriel Paul

Onyango Bernard

Sajilo Julius

Tadele Wolde Baramo

Turyakira John

# Finding God At St. Joseph's Children Home

John Siyumbu, nSJ

In the just ended month of March 2014, I had the experience of volunteering at St. Joseph's Children's Centre. This is a home and day care for abandoned kids within Arusha. Beginning March 3rd, my companions and I spent most of our weekdays in the home. St. Joseph's is a growing Centre. It comprises modest closely arranged buildings. There are hostels for boys and girls, a dining-cum-social hall, a residential staff house, a class building with three classes – bird class (baby class), elephant class (nursery) and giraffe class (class one). What follows is my impression of this experiment insofar as it is constitutive of my probation and formation in a Jesuit novitiate.

A warm welcome at 8.40am on a cold Monday March 3<sup>rd</sup>, from our host, Sr. Mnate, marked the beginning of our assignment. A short orientation of the classes served to help me understand my workplace. Being in a school setting felt comfortable. Very much so. It emerged that my companions and I would volunteer as co-teachers in class one. This not only seemed daunting but, by that fact, most exciting and welcome. I saw, before me, an opportunity to practice simplicity. In this part of the assignment I felt tested and probed.

Over the years, I have come to learn that the simplest explanation is the best. If I

would simplify and distill the content in the curricula so that the learners would understand then that would not only be efficacious, but most gratifying indeed; then I would be like Benedict XVI – a great, top-of-the-range theologian who taught Catechism to children. A nagging setback was the realization that: I would be doing this without a grasp of the Tanzanian primary school curriculum; I was ill-equipped in terms of teaching aids and the planning that is required to teach at such delicate learning levels. These doubts brought to mind what Fr. Jim Noonan, a good and kindly priest, once told me regarding such apprehensions. I wrote this down in my notebook that morning at St. Joseph's: God will always correct the mistakes that others make in your life.

Just like I was going to make mistakes while teaching these children, I had confidence in my God that he would correct those mistakes, for his greater glory. Preliminary business on the first day involved the following: sharing out subjects under the guidance of the class teacher; Elizabeth Godfrey, and knowing the pupils. In class one, I met Deborah Stephano, Peter Christian, Hilda Innocent, Isaac Honest, Christian Living, Moses Zawadi and Edward Zawadi. It was in the faces of these children

where I searched for Christ. I was to provide religious instruction and teach the following curriculum-based subjects:

science, vocational skills and information and communication technology. Easy now there, nothing as grand as it might seem. It's not like we were learning C++ or something as exciting as hacking the Russian KGB.

My days began in accord with the Novitiate program: Lauds at 6.00am followed by Mass and a quick breakfast afterwards. I biked from the novitiate in the company of my companions arriving at St. Joseph's circa 8.20am. Classes at St. Joseph's began at 8.00am. That meant I was always late. The school day ended at 3.20pm. There were two 40-minute breaks: a morning break from 10.20am to 11.00am and a lunch break from 1.20pm to 2.00pm. I had my meals in the company of the learners and other members of staff. I had at least one class everyday lasting an hour and a half. Fridays were set aside for continuous assessment tests and games. Very enjoyable days they were, especially the games part. My Tuesdays were the most occupied with three classes; spanning the periods from 11.00am to 3.20pm. If not actually teaching, I was one of the co-teachers, assisting the main teacher in managing the class, checking assignments and explaining concepts to individual pupils. This way, I was always on call at all times.

..Con. Page 17





*..here, our brother is in the dress typically worn by the early Jesuits in their mission. Today they may not be too common to Jesuits but they remain the heritage of our history of the Society of Jesus. Jesuits adapt to the dress of time, culture and place in the catholic world.*

**Below:** from left; Lubega, Kyalo and Mark.



## HERI NAWATAKIA

Na Francis Kyalo, SJ (Safari)

Nikitanabahi, siku ayami 'mepita,  
Nami kwa fasihi, nagusia yal'opita,  
Nikiwasabahi, kwa heshima nawaita,  
Nd'o mpate wahi, wote tuwe sadakta,  
Kusikia tusikie, tusije f'ata hadithi.

Arusha nilifika, elfu mbili kumi na mbili,  
Mji un'osifika, kwa vijimambo mbalimbali,  
Njiro nilipofika, kajionea ama kweli,  
Hakika kikumbuka, mapokezi nalikubali,  
Ndipo kwa tabasamu, safari 'kang'oananga.

Kuaswa na kuasana, wa busara uafiki,  
Upunguza kuzozana, nakukuza itifiki,  
Mazuri kupongezana, kupunguza zetu dhiki,  
Waja wanapobishana, si vyema hili tucheki,  
Yote haya kajifunza, kwa hi' nyumba ya malezi.

Kongole ninazituma, ziwafikie walezi,  
Kiongozwa na Shirima, mengi kweli memaizi,  
Kwa kazi wamejituma, shupavu waelekezi,  
Kwao siye tumechuma, mema kwa ino miezi,  
Ya heri tutaonana, siku al'opanga Mola.

Mbili myaka 'mekatika, siamini 'naposema,  
Ila mengi 'metendeka, kwa mizani s'ezi pima,  
Hili moja tatamka, il'onigusa mapema,  
Mazoezi yasifika, ya kiroho yas'okoma,  
Mengine tutayasema, siku al'opanga Mola.

Al'opanga Maulana, naona yamewadia,  
Ni siku ya kuagana, ambayo 'metufikia,  
Kwa yale tul'otend'ana, mawi nayakuchukia,  
Samahani kuombana, iwe yetu nadharia,  
Ya heri imewadia, kwa heri tunaagana.

Kaditama nikitua, wenzangu nawakumbuka,  
Pamoja tumeshakua, hakika 'meadibika,  
'Shauri ulomurua, tena wa kuaminika,  
Ml'onipa 'mechukua, aushini tatumika,  
Ahsanteni nashukuru, kwa heri tutaonana.

# What language does God speak?

Patrick Oyet, nsj

Once upon a time there was a man call Okello who lived in Kitgum District of Northern Uganda. In sixth grade he studied the Christian religion. At his baptism he chose the name Emmanuel, which means “God is with us”

After finishing his high school, Emmanuel read magazines and books about God. He believed that God was truly present among us, but he wanted to know what language God speaks. Emmanuel posed his special question to different church leaders in his village. The old catechist answered, “I think God speaks Latin”

The chairperson of the parish council guessed, God speaks our local language Acholi.

But the searching youth Emmanuel had doubts. “When I get the right answer”, he said to himself, “I will know immediately and feel great joy”. So the young African set off on the journey.

In the neighbouring parish he asked again: what language does God speak? One Christian suggested langi, another local language.

Again Emmanuel doubts. He began to travel across the whole of Uganda, visiting small towns and city. In one place the Christians were certain that God speaks Ateso. People in Western Uganda, Said God speak their local language. While residents in the central said God speaks Luganda. Emmanuel was not satisfied with these answers. Remembering the African saying that, “travelling is learning”. He journeyed outside Uganda.

The Kenyan said Kikuyu and Luo. People of Tanzania said “God speaks Swahili” in West Africa he got different replies: Lingala in DRC, Hausa and Ibo in Nigeria and Arabic in Morocco.

He decided to travel the whole world if necessary. Passing through Europe, he was told that God speaks French, or German, or Italian. The Christians of North America said English, while South America said it was Spanish or Portuguese. The young Ugandan knew in his heart that these answers were inadequate. Determined to find the real truth, he went to China, where the local people insisted that God speaks Mandarin or Cantonese. Emmanuel was tired from his long travels, but he resolutely pushed on. In India he was told that God speaks Hindi. He reached Israel late in December. The inhabitants said, “Surely God speaks Hebrew”.

Exhausted by his long travels and the unsatisfactory answers, Emmanuel entered Bethlehem. The local hotels were filled. He looked everywhere for a place to stay. Nothing was available. Finally, in the early morning hours, he comes to a cave where cows and sheep were sheltered. He was surprised to see a young woman with her new born baby.

This young mother said to the travelling youth, “Welcome, Emmanuel you are very welcome. “Astonished to hear his name, the young African listened in awe as the woman called Mary continued speaking to him. “For a very long time you have traveled around the world to find out what language God speaks, your long journey is over. God speaks the language of love. God loved the world that he gave his only son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Overjoyed to hear these words of Mary, the young Ugandan suddenly understood God’s language of love for all people, for all races, for all nations. Emmanuel exclaimed, “Truly, today God is with us”

## *My novitiate experience*

Arinaitwe Francis, SJ

Now I agree with the singer who sang that one step at a time. When I had just reached in the novitiate one leg was in, the other leg was still in Uganda. Time was not going, one month was like a year. Someone advised me that whenever a person reaches in a new organization which is well established one needs to give it at least five years and if things don’t work out then one needs to go away. She also emphasized that a rolling stone gathers no moss. My novitiate experience is both long and short. In the beginning I was not settled, I was comparing my life in Kampala with life in the novitiate. This made my life in the novitiate at first, a bit hard. As Socrates put it; wonder is the beginning of wisdom, my life in the novitiate has been a life of wonder. What helped me was that I took life positively and so, my experiences in the novitiate became very educative in my life. I came to love the novitiate life. Slowly by slowly I started feeling at home.

One thing which helped me to settle was listening attentively and taking what I hear very seriously. I listened like a little child listening to its parents and I relaxed my mind and continued with the idea of one step at a time. I came to love the novitiate programs. I very much fell in love with silence and the one hour of prayer in the morning before Mass. I used to make private novenas through the Holy Spirit and my favorite saints during the hour of prayer in the morning before Mass. When I got used with the novitiate, time started flying. I treasured some ideas which I felt were very crucial in my life that is, respect for each other and I hated fear like the way I hate doing bad to a brother. I challenged where necessary but with prudence having on my mind the one notion that the love of Christ must shine among all the novitiate family. I tried to define what it means to be a family and to be a true brother. I treasured polite talking and correcting mistakes with a brotherly concern, and so, harmony flowed in the novitiate like honey. Polite talking helped us to understand each other. We came to respect differences among ourselves, mostly in personality.

Definitely we had strong men behind us who always challenged us in living as brothers in the novitiate. One of them once told us in a gathering; “the Novitiate/the Society is not a place of mass production.” He went ahead to explain this phrase that they are the differences in personality and way of doing things which make the Society very desirable. Whenever he opened his mouth to speak, he only spoke wisdom and he often challenged all of us. We capitalized on his statements and respected the novitiate program. His statements became very popular and loved because in our group we had comedians, story tellers, noise makers, outgoes, musicians, introverts, extraverts etc. God created everything and pronounced them good and so we capitalize on respect for each other and love. The novitiate became a place to trim cultural setting prejudices because we become true brothers in one culture i.e. the Society of Jesus.





## Wade in the water

Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, SJ

*Provincial of AOR .*

*Wade in the water, wade in the water, children. God's gonna trouble the water. ....(sings).*

I witnessed a special and beautiful event recently. It was on the lake Babogaya in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia. I saw four ducklings, four baby ducks, take to the water for the very first time. The four ducklings were led to the edge of the lake by their mama duck in front and papa duck behind. Mama duck went in to the lake first and... then the baby ducks stopped. I imagined that the baby ducks had never seen a lake and did not know what a lake was. I imagine a tiny, fragile and vulnerable one-day old duckling on the edge of a vast and expansive crater lake! But here they were on a lovely sun-bathed morning, fresh from their shells, innocently standing on the edge of a wide and deep lake, being urged by their parents to take a plunge. You could almost see the fear, doubt, anxiety, hesitation....It didn't last too long, though. One by one, they did; each baby duck waded in to the water and Papa Duck followed. They didn't need any lesson on how to swim; they just followed Papa Duck and Mama and I could tell the baby ducks were happy and fulfilled, and they felt at home in the water.

The experience on Lake Babogaya reminds me of what we are doing here today. For the first time, like those baby ducks, these brothers and companions are taking to religious life in a very public and formal way. Think of it this way: for two years they have lived in incubation, sheltered and protected, taught and schooled on the meaning of religious life in the warm, friendly and cozy environment of the novitiate. Now they are hatched, and they stand at the edge of religious life. Like the baby ducks on Lake Babogaya, some if not all have had moments of doubt, fear, anxiety and hesitation. Perhaps these feelings and emotions still linger, even today. Yet each one stands before us in this chapel-before God, the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother, and all the angels and saints-ready to wade in to the water of religious life. And we are urging them on with songs and prayers, worship and celebration. It is a special and sublime moment; it is a new beginning inspired by God's grace. Wade in the water....(sings).

Going back to Lake Babogaya. As soon as the four baby ducks waded in to water, something terrifying happened. Suddenly, some big, brown birds appeared in the sky swirling around and flying low, each trying to swoop down and snatch a baby duck. But they could not. Mama Duck and Papa Duck let out loud and menacing squawks; they quacked and flapped their wings to ward off the danger and scare the hawks away. Thankfully, the baby ducks survived the danger and continued to float safely in the water. For the entire time that they waded in the water, they close to their mama and papa ducks. As I watched them, each day in the water, the baby ducks never left the side of their mama and papa ducks.

Again, as I reflect on the experience of the baby ducks, I see something similar happening in our lives as women men to be Disciples of Christ. Particularly for our thirteen brothers and companions, as they leave the safe, comfortable and sheltered life of novitiate, they begin life and mission as religious in a public and formal way. The doubts may return, and no doubt, there will be obstacles, tempta-



tions and difficulties along the way. They won't always have a Mama Duck or a Papa Duck to fend off the danger. But in today's gospel Jesus gives us a simple formula: "Abide in me." Stay close to me and will be safe. Stay close to me and your lives will bear fruits. Abide in me and you will live authentic lives of chastity with integrity, poverty with simplicity and obedience with generosity. "... apart from me you can do nothing"; "Unless you abide me the waters of life as religious and as lay women and men: Abide in Christ!

I have not said a word about the vows-what they mean and why they are important. You have spent the last two years learning about the vows and living the vows. God willing you will spend the rest of lives doing it. But, how? How will you fulfilled and faithful lives, with integrity, simplicity, and generosity? This is what Jesus gives us in the gospel: Abide in Christ; never stray from the side of Christ in prayer, in community, in studies, in mission.

A vow is a promise that we make to God to do something better and possible. And remember, what you do is important. But a vow is also a promise to us by God. More important is what God will do: today God is also promising to abide with you. Stay close to God and abide in God.

LUBEGA ALOYSIOUS, SJ



I was in the midst of my work when I received a call from Fr. Jim Gillon SJ my vocation director, that I had been accepted by the Society of Jesus to join the Novitiate. I was exhilarated at these glad tidings, knowing that my long wait had finally come to an end. But at the same time, I felt a certain kind of uncertainty

at the road I was choosing to take. After the choice was made, I reduced my belongings to a twenty-kilogram backpack and bade farewell to those who matter. I later joined fourteen other companions with whom we arrived at the Novitiate in the sweltering afternoon of May 26, 2012.

My first days in Gonzaga Gonza were spent trying to settle into a new routine; from a more fluid and personal timetable of my pre-novitiate life to a more structured and communal timetable of the Novitiate. Many of my former freedoms were to be curtailed by the book I came to know as the Blue Book, which I found lying strategically on my table in Kostka 13. I missed among many other things my family, job, friends, mobile phone, soap operas and the Premier League. It is interesting to note how the Novitiate has weaned me off many of these things. Gradually I adjusted to the system, thanks to the then Secundi, who made me feel at home in many ways. After making a number of mistakes (some more grave than others) and learning from them, I advanced in the wisdom of the Novitiate and its way of proceeding up to this day.

Among the things I looked forward to, were the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola. You can blame my anxiety on the repetitive reading of William O'Malley's *The Fifth Week* during my candidacy. My eagerness to do them was heightened by some elder companions who described them in terms of visions of rupture, fire and brimstone. Although I felt daunted by the silence of thirty days, I entered them with much openness to the Spirit, and did them for all I am worth. Ever since the beginning of the *fifth* week, my experience of the Exercises is a challenge I try to live daily, especially in my prayer and community life.

My long experiment in Dodoma gave me an invaluable experience which will always be with me. I not only worked for the needy but also met new people and learnt some Swahili. I was touched by the generosity with which the Parish community hosted us and the zeal with which they run the apostolates there. The Novitiate is a house of prayer, done communally and personally. At the center of this, is the Eucharist with which we are nourished daily. I highly treasure the personal hour since it is done in private, and it tests my fidelity

to spiritual duties when left on my own.

However, Novitiate life in all its goodness is not paradise. Just like any rose, it has its prickles. My first struggle has been with myself and my weaknesses. It seems that every time I want to do what is good, it is the bad that I do instead. When I probe my inner depths, I realize that the fires of the love of God and the love of the world are burning side by side. Outside of me, community life also comes with its own challenges; accepting an order of things which are not determined by me, the headaches of communal discernment, tolerating and being tolerated among others. Sometimes, one cannot fail to detect some undercurrents of cynicism and bitterness towards oneself or others. However, I am not turning back because of these challenges. I agree with Shakespeare when he says that Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds. If it pleases our Lord that I serve him, I trust that he will give me the necessary graces and strength to overcome many obstacles.

There are many things to remember about Gonzaga Gonza. In La Storta, we united our hearts, minds and voices to the praise of God and if our Lord was pleased with it, some dozed off in ecstasy. In Agape, we feasted and fasted together, and regaled each other with a lot of jokes, facts and fiction. In the fields, we ploughed the fields and scattered together and discussed a lot of theology. At the pitch, we celebrated our victories and mourned our losses. At Manresa, we queued for Spiritual direction, permissions and personalia. In the classes, we learnt about our Institute, struggled with English pronunciations and French fluency. In the library, we explored the wisdom of our world and satisfied our curiosity. In Arrupe, we watched news and movies, played games and held meetings in which we lost hours and kept minutes. There are also many other places which cannot be included here because of space.

Indeed, I would have loved to stay longer but another mission awaits me. In a few weeks' time, I know that the acronym "SJ" will be accompanying my name. This is something I do not deserve because it associates me with many excellent Jesuits, both dead and living. It comes with a lot of expectations from Jesuits and non-Jesuits alike. On these, you can add the exhortations of St Ignatius; to love poverty like a mother, to imitate the chastity of angels and to excel everybody in obedience. From the look of things, this will be an uphill task, but I count on the grace of God and your prayers that I may be able to live up to it. As for you Gonzaga Gonza, I look upon you with much gratitude. If I ever forget you, may my other hand be forgotten as well.



# Africa and the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Restoration of the Jesuits



Festo Mkenda, SJ

Initial response to the invitation to commemorate the bicentenary of the restoration of the Jesuits was fairly slow in Africa and Madagascar. There was a general feeling that the suppression of the Society and its subsequent restoration had little impact on the continent. The feeling was based on a certain inability to see the global picture, a state that was compounded by historical ignorance. This, however, did not last long, for Jesuits are not known for wallowing in ignorance for longer than can be excused.

One only needed time to re-read the letters of Fr Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., on the commemoration for one to appreciate the larger picture. Three letters from the General served to build up the momentum for this monumental celebration, pointing more specifically to the lessons Jesuits can draw from the historical events of suppression and restoration as well as to their spiritual relevance for our life and mission today.

On November 15, 2011, which marked the bicentenary of the death of St. Joseph Pignatelli, Fr. Nicolás wrote to all Jesuits, drawing their attention to someone who loved the Society so profoundly that he continued to labour for while it was under suppression, rather like Mary Magdalene going to anoint the Lord while he rested in peace. St. Pignatelli, said Fr. Nicolás, "preserved unbroken his love for the Society and for the Church." In that letter, the General anticipated the year 2014, inviting the Society "to study and know more fully the historical period of the suppression and restoration" and "to take advantage of such a commemoration as an opportunity for the Society's spiritual renewal for greater and better service to the Church, with renewed vigour and zeal." His was an invitation that extended to all Jesuit

provinces or individuals without exception.

As if to ensure the momentum would not be lost, on January 1, 2012, the General wrote again, this time urging Major Superiors to prepare for and facilitate activities related to the bicentenary. "Each important date on the calendar is an opportunity for reflection and learning," said he in the letter that viewed the bicentennial celebration as an occasion to "enter more deeply into the continuing renewal of the Society that takes place in each generation." Outlining a number of topics that could be explored historically, the General reminded the Major Superiors that "prayerful reflection based on the historical knowledge...can enable us to learn from the lights and shadows of our past so that we might see more clearly and embrace more generously what the Lord calls us to do in our own times."

The culmination of this build-up of momentum arrived with the General's letter to the whole Society, written on November 14, 2013, on the theme of the commemoration itself. By this letter, the General invited "every Jesuit, all our collaborators, every community, apostolic work, Region and Province of the Society to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Restoration of the Society in 2014 with humble and sincere gratitude to the Lord, with the desire to learn from our history, and as an occasion for spiritual and apostolic renewal." In this invitation, two things stand out once more: that not a single Jesuit is exempted from this celebrations, and that it is more of a spiritual exercise informed by history than a mental gymnastics aimed at self-glorification.

To keep Jesuits focused, Fr Nicolás proposed five salient themes for reflection. It is interesting that the first was *creative fidelity*, which for many brings back to mind Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach's elaborate treatment of the same in his address to Provincials gathered in Loyola, on September 22, 2000. "We must be more radical," said Fr Kolvenbach whose word remains relevant today, "as much in returning faithfully to our origins as in attending to the challenges of the present moment, and to what all that demands of us in terms of living out, here and now, the experience of our founder Ignatius." To those of us in Africa, nothing could be more appropriate as a first topic for reflection: our ancestors in the Society, including St Pignatelli, kept the suppressed Society alive amid the most discouraging conditions; how can we make the very same Society vibrant on our continent in the most challenging circumstances that are so obviously marked by the proverbial unholy trinity—ignorance, poverty, and disease? St. Pignatelli may be an Italian who lived two centuries ago, but his lesson to the Society in Africa today is a solemn one.

.....Cont.

.....cont.

One may ask why St. Pignatelli—and, indeed, all the people the General called “‘bridges’ between the Old and the Restored Society”—laboured so ardently for a suppressed Society. The answer would seem to lie in the next two themes proposed by the General: *love for our institute* and *fraternal companionship*. There is no doubt that, even when others had ceased to think so, the “bridges” remained convinced that the Society was willed by God for a specific service in the church, and that theirs was a singular vocation to make that happen. They loved *the Institute* and equally loved those called into it, not as passengers in a train going the same direction but each with his or her own destination in mind, but as companions with one common mission, whose fraternal bond is made stronger by the joys and, especially, the pains of remaining faithful to that same mission.

The General’s fourth theme, which is on the *universal mission* of the Society, invites Jesuits to be global, to think big. What could possibly be the limits of the Jesuit mission and of the companionship that serves it? For those of us in Africa, this question challenges us doubly. Clearly, the valid need to inculturate and to build the Society locally carries with it the danger of blurring the missionary spirit that, as the General suggests, marked the restored Society. The current Society in Africa owes its existence to that restored zeal for the missions. This is the same zeal that was so visible among the first companions and so central to the very foundation of the Society. Obviously, the Society of Jesus in Africa would not be Jesuit at all if it lost the broad missionary vision that transcends physical and social boundaries. It is, in fact, the social boundaries that constitute the second aspect of the double challenge to Jesuits in Africa. In an effort to embrace the broader mission of the Society and bear witness to the diversity that Paul VI called “the richness and beauty of evangelization” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* [1975], no. 66), can African Jesuits stand above misconstrued national, ethnic and clan identities that too often pit their communities against each other with horrendous consequences?

As it should be clear, the four themes outlined above pose a challenge in the present with a view to serving the future better. One could even be excused for saying that only fools dared to confront so indomitable a challenge. Fr Nicolás’ last theme of *faith in providence* reminds us that the Jesuit mission is something with a divine origin; it is something of God, to be accomplished only with God’s gracious assistance. Our efforts to be creative in a faithful way, to understand the Society better in order to embrace it affectionately and love those called into it, and to avail ourselves totally to its universal mission would certainly founder if they were purely a secular practice in muscle-flexing. We are but mere instruments in the divine hands, and we are better advised to beseech the God who deigned to use the suppressed Society to achieve so great a good as the restoration we are commemorating to find some use for us in the mission he has entrusted to the Church today, especially that which is sprouting from the African soil.

## From page II

The humble activities required of me at St. Joseph’s called to mind the unfathomable providence of God. Looking back through my life to the people involved in my early years wasn’t an infrequent occurrence. I came to appreciate the work of God in my teachers, parents, friends and many persons I could recall. God was there, in front of me, in the children even though I was not studying philosophy or enjoying the comforts of a familiar environment. Many a time I would ask myself the reason for engaging in this experiment. Especially when I got back at the Novitiate every evening. I never came up with a conclusive answer. I don’t have one yet. The taxing task of biking was, on the one hand a means of exercise and on the other a form of mortification. All through I kept asking God for the grace of patience. Each week, in its modest ways, presented an opportunity to practice patience, temperance, courage, justice and prudence.

In the course of this experiment, my companions and I became a fixture on the road to St. Joseph’s. As passers-by, we were referred to by some children by the road as ‘*watu wa baiskeli*’ – the cyclists. In this I felt in solidarity with my fellow Christians who leave their homes every morning to their workplaces. Even though I was biking, I empathized with those who walk miles from home to their workplace. My companions and I frequently met such a Christian who would walk miles to work close to our Novitiate. This part of the experiment served to provide a link to the existing reality of those I would like to work amongst as a servant and fellow Christian. AMDG





**Gonzaga Gonza Jesuit Novitiate, Eastern Africa Province, P.O.BOX 1726, Arusha—Tanzania**