



Issue 11, Nov 2017



S T . G o n z a g a G o n z a J e s u i t N o v i t i a t e , A r u s h a — T a n z a n i a .

EDITOR'S NOTE

Spiritual progress is gradual and dependent on many factors. Active prayer is indispensable in this journey. Both the *Secundi* and the *Primi* have had enriching experiences that have offered them a platform to strengthen their faith in Christ and confirm their call of being companions of Jesus.

The month of September was of significance to the *Primi* as it saw them participate in the basic exercise of beginning the journey of becoming Jesuits; the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. This exercise helps in the removal of disordered attachments and hence disposes the soul to unite itself deeply with its Creator. Having been united with the Creator, one realizes his/her purpose of being created and the ultimate end.

It was an exhilarating encounter as all of them narrated. It was the moment of recollection that drew them to a deeper friendship with Christ. What was unfit in them was scrapped by the unfathomable divine mercy. From the treasury of inexhaustible goodness, graces poured forth and new virtues were assimilated. The *Primi* relate how invaluable each day was for them, always being concluded by a Mass and adoration, the height of prayer. Many, if not all, applaud the importance of exhibiting generosity in their lives crowned with sincere love.

The *Secundi* also have their story to voice. The two months of experiment were certainly a way of putting into practice their call to be missionaries.

It is incredible how they received these apostolates with

fervor. One can only marvel at their enthusiasm and indefatigable exertions to make Jesus known wherever they were working. Some of them share their experience in this newsletter.

The reunion of the *Primi* and the *Secundi* was a joyous moment. Individual sharing marked the climax of this reunification, some of which has been captured in this edition. The Socius (Fr. Charles) exhorted all to be open for them to know how God speaks to us mainly through our brothers and our daily experiences. He emphasized the need to watch out so that the old self may not reappear. In addition, he encouraged all to keep striving forward.

"A generous reception of the Holy Spirit leads to generosity," noted the novice master (Fr. Simon) at the conclusion of the sharing. He observed that lack of commitment makes prayer tedious. As expected of any religious, he pressed the need to live under the standard of Christ and he praised the highest level of humility that we ought to embrace.

Espousing optimism and supporting one another is of immense importance. May we continue to live outstanding lives earnest of the call that we have received.

DAVID MATHENGE, nSJ

FORMATOR'S DESK



There is time for everything, says *Qoheleth*! In the context of the novitiate, both *primi* and *secundi* had time to depart and time to return, time to experience and time to share their experiences with other members of the community. It is through such moments of encounter and sharing we see, feel and appreciate the magnificence of community life—when we

gather to listen to each other's tales of their personal encounter with God and share the mutual friendship in Christ who is our deal models. This reminds us that community is not simply for mission but it is a mission in itself as it is stipulated in the triptych—identity, community and mission—of the GC 35.

With generosity and magnanimity, the *primi* and *secundi* shared their experiences of the 30 days retreat and experiments respectively. Such experiences remind us of our call as Jesuits: serving Christ under the banner of the cross.

Fr. Christopher M, SJ

"The Lord does not delay his promise... he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."
(2 Peter 3:9)

DIVERSITY IN PERSONALITIES MAKES COMMUNITY LIFE FASCINATING



With whom would you prefer to be mis-sioned? I must confess that this is the most difficult question that I have so far come across in the novitiate. It is not because my hierarchical list would favour suspicion of attachment, but because this attachment limits my growth.

The theorists of interpersonal attraction cite factors such as similarity, reciprocity, equity, proximity and familiarity as

the major basis of formation of human relationships. I recall asking some of my former students what qualities they desired in potential suitors; unsurprisingly, the above factors emerged favourite. People are very intentional in their perception of relationships. They want to be with those who share their interests, feelings, abilities and/or gifts. But then, what happens when one has no choice about whom to live with in a community? Does the difference in traits, that make us unique, make community life chaotic and distasteful? In the business sphere, some Human Resource Executives have advised that in fact, the worst kind of group for an organization that wants to be innovative and creative is one in which everyone is alike and gets along too well. I cannot gainsay that.

The diversity in personality makes us embrace extensional perceptions of relationships. In our interactions we come to appreciate the value and hence unity in diver-

sity. There is complementarity of needs since the other people will always offer what I do not have. I also get a chance to explore, actualise and showcase my potentialities. Each member of the community yearns to be with any other member. This absolutely widens the road to perfect maturity.

In a macro-environment of this kind, there is proper scaffolding. It permits character formation in order to achieve competent conscience - the willingness to, for instance, listen to and heed each other because by doing so we are listening to and heeding God who made these people, and to whomever this uniqueness is pleasing.

It, thus, can be said that with little or without differences, our knowing, deciding, acting and growing would be paper thin.

ABEL OGONAH nSJ

SEEKING AND FINDING GOD'S WILL IN THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES



Praise be to the divine majesty for His blessings. He led me through the most significant experience in my life time, the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. He gave me a willing spirit,

a sincere heart, devotion and the general silence of mind and calmness of body as I began to dispose myself in such and wonderful prayer period.

Prior the Spiritual Exercises novitiate life was good. Since the daily activities, from spiritual matters to social matters, with the companions and the community in general laid a good foundation and created a conducive environment for my peaceful disposition in the Spiritual Exercises. My genuine appreciation to the novitiate community.

Before the Spiritual Exercises I had anticipated to immerse myself in prayer, converse with God and stay in his presence silently listening to him. It was a time to deepen my faith and hope in divine providence as I journey with Christ to imitate him perfectly. I was able to recollect and talk to myself, reconcile with God for my downfalls, and to start a Christ-centered life.

I treasured every week as I encountered God in extraordinary experiences, with God that I ever had. My eyes were widely opened to the inner self, recollecting and making humble amendments. The heart was wide open to God's love and creation. It showed me my purpose of being and how to go about the Salvation of my soul and others. A seal was imprinted in my heart, thus helping me to remain focused on praising, revering and serving God.

The second week was long and demanding on my side, since I had a new view and a better understanding of God, life and creation. I had to dedicate myself with devotion in all my

prayer sessions to share Christ's ministry fully in order to attain the most perfect spiritual poverty which I find is very essential to sustain my daily living. The contemplation on Christ, bread of life, and on his burial became powerful and unforgettable moments in my life. With great love the Lord gave me His holy body to make me always grow near him.

I really felt being transformed, strengthened in faith and many other virtues were being acquired such as, good self-knowledge, discernment, indifference and appreciation to God's love and creation. Through God's providence, personal efforts, the community members and spiritual direction may the good Lord allow all the virtues to be deeply rooted in me. It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ. To God be the glory.

ROVELT MSAKI nSJ.

LOVE DOESN'T ASK WHY - BY NIYITEGEKA DON REMY nSJ



The mention of apostolate in the Society of Jesus fills one with much anticipation. It is natural to eagerly look forward for a new apostolate. For us novices, it is a time to go to the peripheries of the Society's mission. It is an opportunity for a novice to learn from the older companions the nature of apostolic life which awaits him. It is a time to test the waters and see if one can swim across this ocean of vocation in the Society of Jesus which we have fallen in love with and freely joined. In addition,

it is also a great opportunity for the Society to probe and confirm our call.

I was sent to Gulu for my second experiment. Although it came as a surprise, I received the mission with great love and joy. Happiness filled me as I thought of working with the people who are recovering from the traumatic experiences of war. It was a beautiful occasion to be among these people without doing much but being present and feeling with them. As we were missioned, I prayed for strength and courage to do my best in the apostolate.

The experiment at Ocer Companion Jesuits College confirmed my heart's desire of serving God in creation through small things. I realised that our vocation is a journey of

love and no matter what you do, as long as you love it, it will give you satisfaction. As I travelled from the Novitiate to Gulu, I remembered the first missionaries, such as Francis Xavier; that gave me courage and energy, though I did not know the place. I had never been to that part of Uganda, but I had heard a lot from there. The companions we found there took care of us and we felt at home.

Apart from the community and the school, my companion and I worked at St. Jude Children's Home (SJCH) where we experienced the life of orphans, what it takes to find and reunite a child with his family. We worked with the youths who were also orphans at SOS Children's Village (SOS Youth Centre) where we were in contact with youths affected by

the war in Northern Uganda. In these two places I learned that nothing is greater than having a family and growing up in a peaceful environment.

One special thing I realised when I helped in simple duties at the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu (Rosa Mystica, the home of elderly Sisters) is that falling in love with our vocation is at the heart of a successful mission. Most of these Sisters have over sixty years in religious life but the fire is still burning in their hearts. I believe that the lessons I learned from my companions and the place of apostolate will take me for the rest of my life. The experiments made me conclude that love doesn't ask why but it pushes us to do more for the greater of God no matter the circumstances.

GOD'S LOVE



Your love for me Lord no one can separate,
Even if the devil tries to penetrate,
A shield for me you will create,
Never from you to disintegrate.

Since the day of my appearance,
In my mother's womb nameless,
You named me for your service,
To preach to people your forgiveness.

Though I have sinned against you,
Blessings are all I'm receiving from you,
Though I have disobeyed you,
Mercy is all that descends from you.

In the day of my disappearance,
Forgive me for my disobedience,
When people's cry will be limitless,
In heaven give me a place.

Now all my trust is in God,
Oh Most Blessed Trinity,
Place me together in your unity,
Always to do what is good,
For me to have life's eternity.

JOHN MARO, nSJ

MY SECOND EXPERIMENT: BACK TO SCHOOL



It is in various apostolates that a Jesuit encounters the suffering Christ. This was clearly evident during my first experiment at Bugando Hospital in Mwanza.

My second experiment was at Saint Peter Claver High School (SPCHS) in Dodoma. It is here that I became more aware of the greater scope of suffering. Someone may look okay on the outside, but they could be suffering on the inside. Indeed, I encountered the suffering Christ at SPCHS. I learnt that in one way or another, every human being

experiences some form of suffering and struggle.

I remember during one of my first days there, when I was supervising evening prep, I met a student who was studying from outside the classroom. He was sitting on the stairs. I asked him why he was studying from outside. He replied, "Is it such a big deal?" Where I come from, it is an abomination to speak to an elder like that. I could feel my heart rate increasing, as I got worked up. I decided to walk away momentarily, as I pondered on those 'piercing' words.

Then I remembered something I had read about Pedro Arrupe. When asked how he managed to blend so well with the youths, he replied that he does not listen to what they *say*, but tries to understand what they *mean*. I then walked up to the student and said,

"Did you ask whether it is a big deal?" The student gave a sufficient clarification. He never meant to be rude. He meant to tell me that the students were allowed *some* freedom during prep, to choose where to study from. It was then that I discovered that young people struggle in communicating effectively with elders.

Working in a high school was a challenging yet wonderful experience. I went to SPCHS thinking that I would be the one teaching the students a thing or two. I ended up becoming the student, and they the teachers. I hope to continue reflecting upon what I was taught and apply it in my life.

JOSEPH NJOROGE, nSJ

THE CALL TO SERVICE

I thank God for He offered me the chance to work at the Missionaries of Charity Children's home in Dar-Es-Saalam during my second Long Experiment. It is a diverse community comprising of babies and children, the handicapped, the old, the mentally retarded, the blind, the sick especially those living with terminal diseases, mainly HIV and AIDS, and other illnesses such as Elephantiasis to mention but a few.

Initially, in spite of receiving the mission with joy, I was a little bit worried about how I will serve the suffering Christ through such people. But through prayers, God assured me that his favour would rest on me throughout the experiment. He showered me with all the graces I needed in order to be in touch with the suffering Christ. This gave me the zeal to do His will with love and to trust Him who works through our Superiors.

Together with my companion Mark a. k. a. Francis Xavier, we strived to satiate the thirsting Christ through services like teaching prayers, cooking, feeding, entertaining the babies, children, adults and elders, guiding the



blind to specific places such as the toilets, the church and the dining room; such were the hum-

bling tasks which needed a lot of creativity and discernment.

I am grateful to God for the successful

mission in Dar. It was an enriching experience. I have known God more after encountering him in the suffering. Additionally, I have grown in knowledge of myself, the Church and the Society of Jesus. I thank the formation team for granting me the chance to do my experiment in Dar.

Let's keep praying for one another and live in a manner that is worthy of our call which we have received, with humility and patience, bearing with one another through love, always striving to preserve the spirit of union of heart and mind, embracing fraternal correction, being faithful to our charism and our way of proceeding for the greater glory of the divine majesty.

REGAN SANGA, nSJ