



EDITOR'S NOTE

Our esteemed readers, greetings from team Rafiki!

As hinted earlier on in a number of updates from us, our *Primis* went for their long experiment and we are joyful to share with you some of their experiences in this issue. Having listened to the sharings keenly, what stood out in all is the virtue of self-giving and the spirit of *magis*. The letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) summarises it better, 'Although they were free in regard to all, they made themselves slaves to all so as to win over as many as possible.' To the children they became like children, to the students, the sick, and the adults, they became like them so as to win them over. They became all things to all, to save at least some for Christ. They did all these for the greater glory of God.

Okoth Evans Okoth

FORMATOR'S DESK

Though broken, with immensity we experience the love of God which invites us to reciprocate to others. St. Paul tells us that "God loves a cheerful giver" (2Cor 9:7); those who give without counting the cost nor expecting rewards. Oftentimes people think of giving in terms of materiality; however, what God desires is self-giving for the sake of others "I desire mercy but sacrifice" (Hos 6:6). Our *primi* brothers had experienced God's love during their Spiritual Exercises; thus, the Experiment was the best moment for them to realize, live and reciprocate the merciful love of God to the sick, vulnerable, suffering and the dying. We are grateful to God for he had granted them the grace of humility and the spirit of service to those in need. Today they are sharing with us their deep personal encounter with God among the sick, vulnerable, suffering and the dying.

Fr. Mapunda



Issue 01, March 2019

St. Gonzaga Gonzaga Jesuit Novitiate, Arusha—Tanzania.



Primi at their commissioning mass before the long experiment

My Experience of the two months Experiment



One of my desires after the 30 days of the Spiritual Exercises was to see the suffering Christ in the patients and in the people suffering because of different circumstances.

Thanks to God, I received a mission to Bugando Medical Centre for two months. In my experiences at the hospital, I encountered the suffering Christ. Caring for patients exposed me to the suffering Christ who is very present in the helpless patients. This experiment was a great opportunity for me to carry the cross of pain with Jesus. When I was doing my apostolate in the hospital I could realize how God's love and mercy heals patients

through the hands of doctors, nurses and the helping staff who work tirelessly to ensure the sick are healed (**SpEx 236, God is laboring in us through all creatures.**). The ailing exhibited hope that God would heal them.

Participating in humble tasks in the hospital fostered my growth in charity and humility. Talking and listening to my suffering brothers and sisters, counseling and praying for them, taught me to always share my suffering with the suffering Christ. I was able to understand that, even in this too much pain and suffering, Christ does not abandon us because he is always merciful and loving.

Shayo Beatus nSJ



Whom Shall I Send?

In early January, without any prior expectation, I realized that I would be missioned to Radio Kwizera, Ngara, for my first experiment. I had never been there, and so I thought that, besides the primary objective of the experiment, I was being given an opportunity to further explore Tanzania. Together with my companion Nicodemus Mutunga, I embarked on the journey to Ngara via Mwanza. The community in Ngara welcomed us warmly. We felt at home from day one. We spent two months there, and I am personally grateful for the experience, which will ever remain with me wherever I go.

Our mission was to work at Radio Kwizera. I participated in a program called MSETO. The program is both informative and entertaining, striking a balance between the analysis of 'stories' from reporters and some entertaining 'inserts'—all interspersed with creative 'jingos'. MSETO is normally aired during what is normally referred to as 'Prime Time'. As such, as a 'learner', I was behoved to showcase a well-calibrated engagement,

studying not only what I say or how I say it, but also how what is said coheres (both in timing and context) with the rhythm of the 'program flow'. After the two months, I realize that I have somewhat beefed up my public speaking skills, thanks to the experience.

Apart from presenting, we had opportunities to go out on 'field trips'. Out of these trips we were able to learn the real lives of the people who consider Radio Kwizera a saviour. For them Radio Kwizera is a tool that amplifies the voice of the voiceless. Likewise, it is through Radio Kwizera that these people have been informed of different matters that affect their lives. I witnessed several 'kudos' from numerous common *wananchi*. These *wananchi* were not shy to attribute the implementation/success of certain projects to Radio Kwizera. I left Ngara impressed with the bond that has been created between the Radio and the community in the Lake zone, and I am optimistic that the Radio will be instrumental in shaping up an informed society.

Lastly, my sincere appreciation goes to the entire team at Radio Kwizera. This includes the Jesuit community around and the collaborators. I sensed from most of them a spirit of responsibility and dedication, despite several constraints. They are a professional community trying to achieve a certain definitive goal. They aren't only concerned with achieving reputable journalistic standards that would appeal to 'external observers and analysts'. They are rather striving to move ahead without forgetting their situational demands and realities. They know that true progress should be inclusive—be people-centred—and responsive to one's situational dynamics. This is what constitutes the true Ignatian way of proceeding. The dedication and vision of my Jesuit brothers at Radio Kwizera was a testimony to the fact that Communications is not a separate apostolate among many, but an integral ingredient to all other apostolic activities. I pray that the Lord bless the Jesuits at Radio Kwizera, the collaborators, the beloved listeners and everyone whose contribution is instrumental to buoying up the Radio. Many thanks.

Chrisantus Nobert, nSJ

The Beauty of God

"Contento senior contento"- "I am happy lord, I'm happy..." summarizes my sentiments about the long experiment in the various communities and places of apostolates, where we, the Primis, stayed and worked. That God labored in us through the various experiments was much evident and present in the sharing of each and all of us. Words are unable to fully capture the experiences that each of us underwent and completely bring the message to the homes of each of our expectant recipients. I feel that the fruits of the experiment can better be expressed through our lives in the novitiate.

Jesus who in a special way had prepared us and sent us through the master of novices deemed it fit to send Gerard and I to Dodoma to labour with him in our respective places of apostolates. St. Ignatius primary school, Cheshire children's home and the center for orphaned children in Tumaini were our places of apostolate for

the two months we spent in Dodoma. Everything we did brought joy and happiness not only to us but also to those to whom we ministered to. Every step we took was always and ever geared towards giving greater glory to God.

The experiment exposed me to different experiences, both in school and in the parish. The Society of Jesus, through its enriching and formative apostolates exposed me to various groups of people, cultures, perceptions, beliefs, abilities, social status and many other things. I had no choice but bend myself to learn, to give, to offer and to receive. Life was two sided. At times it was in its highest peak or at its lowest point, and at other times at the beginning or at the end. I met people who suffered pain, loss, fear, poverty, and still others peaceless and aimless, and others happy and far more advanced in life. In the face of all this, I understood the meaning of diversity,

not as a mere difference but as the beauty of God under the tower of heaven that is the earth. They gave me the picture of a God always at work laboring for us all. The message presented to me was that each case was unique, needing a unique approach to solve the problems and having its own successes.

These experiences made life very interesting and far from boring and monotonous. Both the high and low moments pushed us forward in our service of God and others. Challenges made us to better our service of God and neighbor. Problems hardened us for mission. Success and achievements even escalated our desire for magis. I did more to benefit the other and the OTHER. I learned the beauty of every moment that God gave me to serve as formative and life-giving. I learned to appreciate life as it is with all its aspects, its realities and surprises. Indeed I came to terms with reality!

Vincent Oluoch Otieno, nSJ

A God of Love and Service

In the Gospel of Luke, 19:4-5, St. Luke says, “so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus come down quickly for today I must stay at your house’, and he came down quickly and received Him with joy.” I tried looking for God who would come down, talk to me, console me, and drive away temptations and fears. It’s true, but when I became a Jesuit novice being formed to become a religious, the factors that changed my way of looking at God were the Spiritual Exercises and the second long experiment at St. Peter Claver High school where I learned another way of looking at God. We manifest our love for God by desiring with a strong determination to please him in everything, in striving as much as possible, not to offend him but to ask him for me to honor of Christ and the Church. Zacchaeus looked at the sycamore tree. It was a good thing to look at my Lord, spend hours in prayer and be with him. Developing this strong determination to please him in everything, and to strive as much as possible, not to offend him. But Christ told Zacchaeus, “come down, I must stay in your house.” Here Christ teaches that we can stay and look at him, but we also have to serve him. When I went to St. Peter Claver High school, I

encountered Christ in serving in the little way possible and in being with his children. I came back ready to listen to his voice when he calls me for a mission, I am ready, whether in the dark or in light. I am capable of love. Loving Christ and neighbor is itself a service. The force of love drives me each day to love more, even if there is no return. I do not wish anything, I do not wish comfort, dignity, joy or being a hero. My comfort, dignity, joy and heroism is loving Christ, dedicating my life for love, a love that comes from the heart of Christ and inflame my heart.

In the Gospel of Matthew, 22:37-38, Christ our Lord Himself says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment.” This remind me that loving God is the submission of my whole self to him. Serving God is not enough, but what is a must is loving him, longing to be immersed in the flame of his love, longing to be pierced through in my heart for the love of him who loves me so much to the extent of sacrificing His only begotten Son.

Going back to the Gospel of Matthew, 22:39-40, I hear Jesus who continues to tell us, “the second commandment is like: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law

and Prophets depends on these two commandments.”

We cannot know whether or not we love God, even if there are some indications that show that we love him, but we can know whether we love our neighbor. It is this much love you have for a neighbor which measure the love you have for God. So love of a neighbor when it’s perfectly practiced, though it’s hard, we will have done everything. As the roots of a beautiful tree are in the earth, we cannot attain the perfect love of a neighbor unless it is rooted in the love of God. I am so moved by this love of God that, if I stay in the enclosure, dedicating my life to prayer, there would still be the need for me to reach out to the neighbor and share this love.

AMDG

Valentino Okwero, nSJ.



CELEBRATING THE CULMINATION OF OUR APOSTOLATE AT ILBORU

History presents companions who took part in the Spiritual formation of the Ilboru students. The Novitiate community has faithfully journeyed with the spiritual apostolate at the school. In spite of the changes in personnel, excellence has been treasured still. We thank God for his providence.

On March 23rd, 2019 Ilboru Secondary school congratulated ceremoniously their Form Six students for their commitment in the TYCS movement for the two years 2017-19. This event was brilliantly organized, actively participated in and socially extended. The function started with the Holy Eucharistic celebration presided by the local parish priest. The liturgy was solemn, well participated in and animated by a sound-trained choir.

After the celebration of Mass, the event

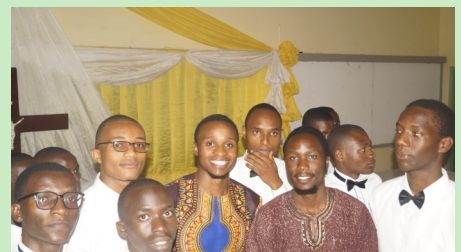
was followed by a reception. There were enough representatives (students) from Ilboru and neighboring schools. Along with the invited guests, family members and teachers, the students themselves jam-packed the hall. Then the feast went through and the joy was shared to the late hours of noon.

On the twilight of the same day, the memories of the good tidings shared in Ilboru carried me away. Indeed, with God’s providence we have been able to accomplish various tasks which involved the students. Having realized this, they were so grateful to the Novitiate community and the Formation team for its mission there. They extended their gratitude to Scholastic Victor Mureithi who received and journeyed with them for one year, Msaki for the two years and

similarly, to Deogratius and Kway who have been with them this last semester.

We pray for them during this time of intense preparation for their National Exams starting on May 2nd. Though many are interested to join us, we embolden them and we keep on journeying with them to discover their vocation and, undoubtedly, we may have some for the coming years.

Msaki Rovelt J. nSJ



One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village,
The child of a peasant woman.
He grew up in still another village,
Where he worked in a carpentry shop
until he was thirty.
Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book.
He never had an office.
He never had a family or owned a house.
He didn't go to college.
He never visited a big city.
He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where he was born.
He did none of the things one usually associates with greatness.
He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him.
His own people reject[ed] him.
His friends ran away.
He was turned over to his enemies and went through a mockery of a trial.
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.
While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing,
The only property he had on earth.
When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave,
Through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone,
And today he is the central figure of the human race,
And the leader of humankind's progress.
All the armies that ever marched,

All the navies that ever sailed,
All the parliaments that ever sat,
All the kings that ever reigned, put together...
Have not affected the life of people on this earth as much as that...
One solitary Life.

This Lenten season and throughout all seasons of our lives, let us fast with him, pray with him, and walk with him ever more closely in our hearts Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

-Adapted from an Anonymous author



Mbogoh Njue, nSJ

Sharing the fruits of formation

While recuperating at Loyola, Ignatius, upon reading the lives of Saints, the Spirit moves him to make a firm resolve of following Christ. This tenacity moves him further to ask himself the triple questions: what have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ? These questions put him on the road as a pilgrim of Christ and later he becomes a labourer for the salvation of souls.

His journey from Loyola to Rome is characterised by a number of life changing experiences which every Jesuit at one point ought to go through in the entire formation process. They come in the name of experiments in different stages of our formation. In the novitiate context therefore, they are times for probation meant to test and bring out our true self; verify the existence of the call of the Lord and assess our capacity to assimilate the spiritual traits of our vocation (see CN 46).

The purity of one's intentions before God is one of the Ignatian traits and thus it is

fitting that a novice's intentions and motivations to live a religious life should be purified and made clear for him and the Society. This, I feel, is in line with the confirmation of/probing the Election made during the long retreat. It puts us in a better position to weigh how faithful we are with regard to our relationship with God in relation to our Elections (see Examen [67]).

After the long retreat, the novices to some extent understand what it takes to follow Christ in service. One's resolve to serve Christ under the Standard of the Cross connotes: working against one's sensitivities, against one's carnal and worldly love; bearing all injuries and affronts, and any form of poverty (see Spiritual Exercises nos. 97 and 98). In other words, the call here is a radical re-orientation of the whole person. A novice leaves the novitiate confinements and goes back to the busy world to test to what extent his thinking, feeling, and valuing of the world has changed as a result of a decision to follow Christ (see GC 34 D.26 No. 539).

The God of a Jesuit, as seen in the Contemplation to attain divine love, Spiritual Exercises no 235, is a God who dwells in all things and is found in all circumstances. The saying goes that gold is tested in fire and, thus, the experiments place us in different humble conditions to awaken our awareness of God's presence therein. The grace of humility obtained herein as a result of acknowledging God's presence in the sick, the rich, the poor, and the students... makes us more available to the Creator and Lord whom we have elected to follow.

Looking around, I see the quest for more is unquenchable, the desire to give oneself for Christ is very real here and I am tempted to use this, plus what my companions shared about their experiences, to be indicators that this long experiment bore more spiritual fruits and their knowledge about the Society, self and God improved significantly.

Okoth Evans Okoth