



Habari Za Hekima

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Collaborators in Mission

- Mario Chingole, SJ

“Collaboration is not easy”. This was one of the remarkable statements by Fr. Allan Ggita, SJ, during the Ignatian week on the Topic *“Collaborators in Mission”*. Fr. Allan brought to mind one of the elements that the Society of Jesus has been insisting on for many years, especially from the General Congregation 35, which is collaborating with lay people and other congregations in our mission. This element is taken from Christ. Right from the beginning of his mission here on earth, Christ wanted collaborators. He collaborated with people of different tribes, places, and professions.

He did not select his collaborators because of their backgrounds but because of their abilities. A clear example is his apostles, disciples, and people who agreed to align with his mission. Those collaborating accepted to learn and to be molded by his ways of doing things. But it was not that simple. Some resisted being molded and left, and others brought their ideologies with them and never fit in the mission of Christ. These are challenges that Christ encountered in his mission and that will not be absent in the mission of the Society of Jesus.

This is because we are dealing with people with different purposes in life, like some apostles, like the two sons of Zebedee (Mark 10:35-45). They thought that collaborating in the mission of Christ was about comfort and fame. Can you imagine how disappointed Jesus was after hearing those words?

Nevertheless, the Society of Jesus was founded by Christ himself. It follows the examples of Christ and the apostles in collaborating with the lay people and other congregations to advance the mission of Christ on earth, and the collaborators in the mission are indispensable because they complement the Jesuits in what is lacking, especially some skills that may be lacking in Jesuits.

Collaboration in mission is a gift that comes from Christ. This is a gift because the Society of Jesus helps its members to imitate Christ and grow in every kind of virtue to be able to work with people who do not align much with the mission of Christ. A Jesuit might be put in a place where he finds the sons of Zebedee. The Jesuit has to understand and teach the people to align their desires with the desires of the Society of Jesus, which is looking to accomplish the mission of Christ. This does not mean that everyone a Jesuit might encounter will resist aligning his desires with the desires of the Society of Jesus. There are still good collaborators, and they accept to be molded.

In an apostolate, the Society of Jesus is not looking for perfect collaborators because perfect people already know the will of God, and they are even hard to find. The Society is looking for people who can align their desires with the desires of the Society of Jesus and do things differently from other institutions and organizations. Collaborators should remember that working with the Society of Jesus is not about profit but about making a difference in this broken world. A world that cries for people who can do things wholeheartedly and not expect a reward for an action they take. For this to happen, the Society of Jesus has to be able to teach its ways of processing to the collaborator, and most of the time, the first teaching should be that Christ is the center of everything we do.



Freedom of a Jesuit

- Gautier Yameogo, SJ

The Ignatian Week in Karen took place from Monday, July 10, to Friday, July 14, 2023, at the Little Sisters of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus in Mazzanti House, where we have been enriched with theological insights and reflections on our relationship with others. Under the guidance of Fr. Deshi Ramadhani, SJ, our facilitator, the first day’s topic was “Freedom of a Jesuit,” where Father William O’Neil, SJ, expertly explored it.

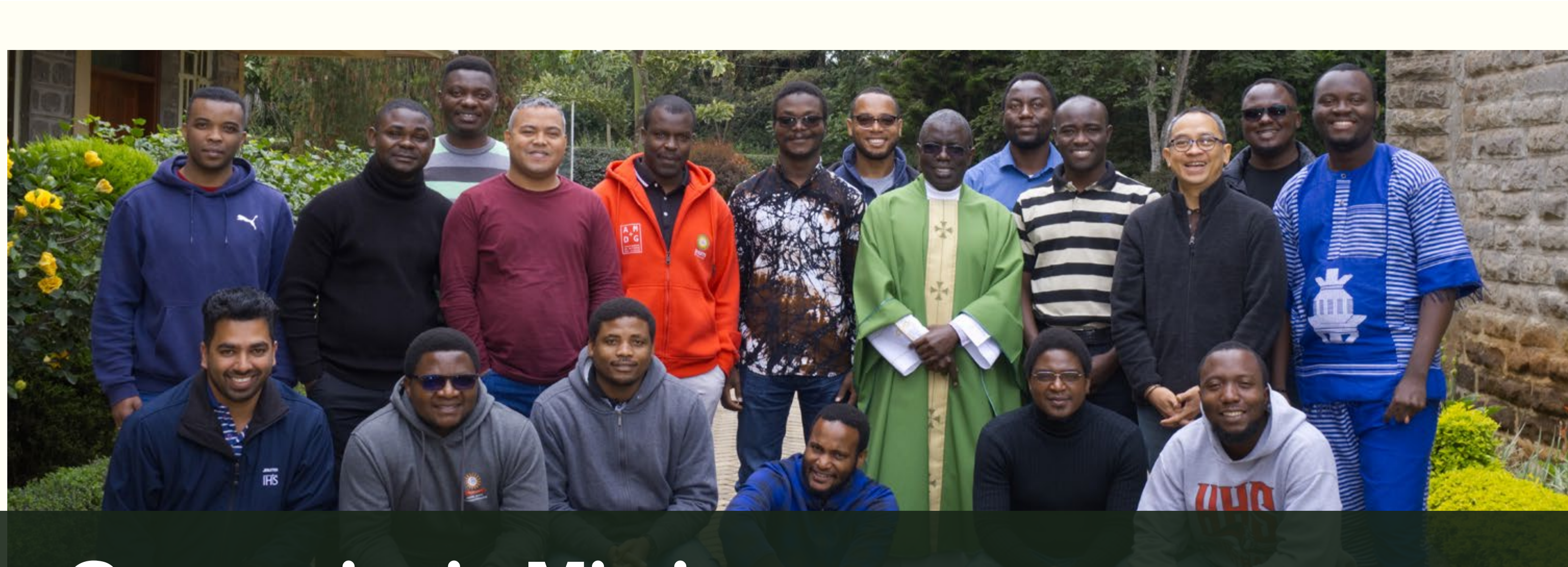
Through this day’s reflections, I have gained a deeper understanding of the significance of freedom in the context of obedience and self-acceptance. It has become clear that true freedom lies in choosing life over death, a concept reminiscent of Deuteronomy 30:19.

We entered freely into the Society of Jesus, responding to God’s call. Our response reflects our decision to embrace a path where our lives become gifts for others. So, inner freedom pushes us to choose to be religious, and through *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Principle and Foundation* give a better understanding and strengthen our freedom. *The Principle and Foundation* is the capacity to go away from every kind of whimsy. In that manner, we can see and find God in everything. That comes with the indifference that might guide us in the way of the *Magis*. And throughout the concept of indifference, we are more disposed to live our obedience.

I am always elated and marveled at the contemplation of the Incarnation. This is an unrivaled action. It represents freedom, demonstrating how we can transform and renew ourselves and humanity. The Holy Trinity, observing the world, chooses to act benevolently and decides to share again with all humanity their goodness. So, people can remember that they are creatures of the Creator, the image of God. This act of remembering our true image as creatures of the Creator invites us to transcend our comfort zones and become people for others. As the way of the Incarnation, we are invited to see our inner world, the world as a whole, and choose to do good. To act as God acts every day, some kind of Incarnation to save us from every evil and every misconduct. Our freedom must be like a compelling movement that leads us irresistibly to do good.

In essence, freedom is synonymous with love. And this love puts us in action to share what we experienced with others. “To walk, moved by the freedom of the Children of God that makes us available to be sent anywhere, encountering a suffering humanity, following the dynamic of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, relieving the suffering of so many brothers and sisters, placed, like Him, on the cross.” (CG 36, Complementary documentation)

Let us pray for the grace to be eager to do good, utilizing our capacity for freedom. Through this, we can exude the love of Jesus Christ; that love can flow through us, impacting the lives of others as He did through His own life.



Generosity in Mission

- Balthazar Ntenge, SJ

In Ignatian spirituality, one of the attitudes often required at the beginning of an Ignatian retreat is generosity, which is annotation n°5. It says: "It will be profitable for the one who is to go through the Exercises to enter upon them with magnanimity and generosity towards his Creator and Lord, and to offer Him his entire will and liberty, that His Divine Majesty may dispose of him and all he possesses according to His most Holy will."

Generosity in mission was the theme Father Binamungu Mukasa, SJ, developed on the third day of our Ignatian week. It was articulated around three main points, namely the challenges of a mission, the positive aspects of a mission, and the things to do and those to avoid. This presentation was essentially a sharing of personal experience.

If it is true that the generosity required during the retreat extends to the mission of a Jesuit, it is not always easy to have this internal disposition in missions. In some circumstances, certain factors can hinder this virtue. Nonetheless, it is precisely here that a Jesuit, following the call of the Eternal King, should prove even more generous: "And if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well" (Matthew 5:40). In fact, it often happens that in his mission, a Jesuit encounters challenging moments: improvisation of missions, abrupt interruption of missions because of others, change of future perspectives, etc. Despite all this and for the greater good of those we are sent to, a Jesuit should be quick to go on a mission under any circumstances.

By being generous, a Jesuit who carries out his mission finds great consolation and great spiritual and human benefits: words of thanks and acts of gratitude for many people we serve during our different ministries and graces received by many of them.

Nevertheless, in his outpouring of generosity, a Jesuit should be wise: he should constantly be aware of the fact that he is a minister of the word and of reconciliation and will act accordingly; he will try to stand firm even in challenging moments; he had better not be available to go on missions when he knows he will not be effective; he should pay attention to legacy syndrome (accomplishing his mission in such a way as to make himself known as if his predecessors had done nothing); instead he will work to the best of his ability, leaving marks in all simplicity; he will also take heed to the abuse of power.

All in all, generosity, while being an important virtue in accomplishing our mission, can sometimes be a double-edged sword both for the superior who missions and those missioned. The former runs the risk of taking for granted the generosity of those with inner freedom, and the latter can easily fall into the abovementioned traps. Hence the need for rigorous discernment.



Life is a series of beginnings

- Christian Kombe, SJ

As Jean d'Ormesson once stated, "Life is a series of beginnings." This truth resonates profoundly within the Jesuit way of life, mirroring the spiritual journey and the life of Saint Ignatius himself. This journey resembles a profound pilgrimage, culminating in the encounter with God – the very principle and foundation of our existence. Along this captivating pilgrimage, the gradual integration into the apostolic body of the Society of Jesus unfolds through several stages. Now, at the threshold of theology, a pivotal phase for Jesuit scholastics aspiring to serve under the banner of Christ as ordained ministers in the Church, the words of Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach's document on formation echo: "Theology enables the scholastic to penetrate deeper into God's plan of salvation in Christ, within which is located the mission of the Society at the service of the Church; he is thus readied to be a minister of the word and of reconciliation."

The Hekima Theologate community orchestrates an orientation week for its new members to immerse the new students profoundly within this spiritual and ecclesiastical journey. Far from a mere routine exercise, this endeavor allows the newcomers to fully inhabit the Hekima community – their home and the beautiful setting where they will engage intensely with sacred studies over the next three years. This week is also their introduction to Nairobi – a sprawling mission field where they will learn to become shepherds with the "scent of the sheep," as expressed by Pope Francis.

The orientation week unfolded from Monday, July 24, to Friday, July 28. Guided by second-year students, the 18 new theology students embarked on a journey of acquaintance, each sharing their vocational journey with the others. Subsequently, they were introduced to various facets of life at Hekima, essential insights about their host country, Kenya, apostolic activities, spiritual life, and many other aspects that will shape their next three years. Visiting different communities and works within the Eastern Africa Province (AOR) in Nairobi and the Africama house of the JCAM and exploring Nairobi's vibrant metropolis constituted significant moments during this enriching, intense, and fruitful week.

As these pages are penned, almost all the scholastics are in retreat, a pivotal time for deep introspection and life review, and setting their course for the upcoming academic year, commencing on Monday, the 21st of August 2023. As echoed in the scholastics' vow formula, may the Lord, who has inspired the desire to offer ourselves as sacrifices, bestow upon us all the necessary graces to fulfill it. In the words of Saint Ignatius, "Go forth and set the world on fire," the 18 new students, after an immersive week of orientation, stand ready to heed this call. As they step into the corridors of theology, they carry not only their academic aspirations but also the profound mission of serving God and humanity, following the path Ignatius laid down and illuminated by Father Kolvenbach's teachings. The Hekima Theologate's orientation week has provided these aspiring scholars with a glimpse and a compass as they venture into the sacred territory of theological studies, armed with knowledge, faith, and a spirit ever eager to embrace the world's challenges with the wisdom of the Divine.



My Journey at Hekima, in a nutshell

- Luis Matope, SJ

A joke goes around for my class of 2023 that we came as a Covid class, and we go as a *Maandamano* class. The three years in Kenya, and particularly at Hekima, have been years of graces and blessings in which, as I look back, I have been graced to grow up as an individual and a Christian. The learning environment of the classes, the community and social environment of both Hekima Jesuit Community and School, and the community of Kenya, have been of immense help to my growth.

One of my joys of doing theology has been the aspect of doing theology on my knees. Indeed, theology called me to humble myself and accept learning. Moreover, it helped me to open the horizons of not only understanding but feeling and being part of the challenges, struggles, pains, hopes, and joys of the community of Africa and humanity at large. The pains, of course, included the reality of the sad story of how, especially in this part of the world, religion is sometimes used to deprive people of the *Imago Dei* and their dignity.

My joys as a newly ordained deacon include being prepared and ready to participate in the mission of Christ our Lord as a humble servant. Through the many apostolates and the academic studies here at Hekima, I feel that Hekima has played her part in preparing me for the ordained ministry. As I grow every day in the same ministry, hopefully, I will be able to be a good human being for others and myself as Hekima prepared me.

As such, my hope and dreams in relation to my theology studies are that, first, to be able to grow up as a human being. In the same line, I want to be of service to God and the rest of my sisters and brothers, as I will be sent to minister to them by the Lord Himself. I also hope to grow deeper in prayer, discernment, accompaniment, and reflection in my personal life and the ministry.

My hopes and dreams for Hekima are that more and more, there may be contextual theology with diverse cultures and that African theology can more and more be visible and take up root. Indeed, more can be done. As one of the crises we have in Africa is good shepherds, another of my dreams and hopes for Hekima is that she may expand more and more and continue to train women and men for others who are good shepherds of the people of God.

Hekima is a special place that I shall always cherish!

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