



# Habari Za Hekima

|| A Newsletter of Hekima University College Jesuit Community

December 2022



## Theology of Design?

- Vincent Sylvester Wada, SJ

When I got my mission to study theology, I shared the good news with my companions in Carroll Street, New York City. Bill Cain and the other companions would often tease me that I was going to do theology of design. Being a graduate student of Communications Design at the time, the companions helped me to wonder what it might be like to approach theology from a design perspective. My design thesis, titled *"Cognition as a Creative Tool"*, attempted to demonstrate that every human being is a designer. In it, I was expressing my belief that every human being has the creative power of God within him/her. Having completed my first semester of theology at Hekima, I have realized, more than I had presumed, that God is a designer and that nature is a piece of design and a product of God's creativity.

For my weekly apostolic engagement, I work with the JCAM Communications Office. There, I have the privilege of working with some of our lay mission partners. My goal was to use my design and communications skills to support the work of the office. For my first project, I met with Fr. Stephen Buckland, SJ, who was on sabbatical at Africama House. Fr. Stephen is a birdwatcher who had the joy of observing the many birds that grace the beautiful Africama scenery. He wanted to make a simple pamphlet design that lists the Africama birds with their corresponding pictures. However, after several weeks of sketching and designing, we came up with a 168 pages book that gave details about the birds and reflected on the beauty of our common home.

For seven weeks, I researched and looked at numerous pictures of the 76 birds. Simultaneously, I was battling with the creation stories in the book of Genesis in the classroom and wondering how God created these birds. How did the birds evolve? Why do we have this variety? As I was designing the book, I was also wondering how my work would foster the care of our environment. Embarking on this project helped me make sense of the creation story and how design can help me articulate the beauty that resides in nature and remind us of how beautiful our environment would be if only we cared for her. I have realized that theology with a design mindset is not about solving problems or proffering solutions. Rather, it is about attempting to express God, who is found everywhere and in everything, including the birds.

So, is this a theology of design? Not quite! Perhaps it is about using design to help humanity to become more aware of God's presence. Design gives me more ways to talk about God. It gives me more mediums to express God's creative powers. It also allows me the space to participate in God's creativity. Thus, composition and layout become theological terms for me. A grid system becomes a theological framework for me. Keyframes for me become the unending rhythm of God in our lives. Like philosophy, maybe design is also the servant of theology. Who knows, maybe design can help to solve some theological problems. The point is to use what we do, who we are, to become more conscious of God and be cocreators with him; to be a part of the design process and appreciate His love for us which is expressed everywhere around us. Perhaps design can help me to find God. Until then, I shall continue to use color, shapes, and space to do theology.



## Christmas Triduum

- Balthazar Ntenge, SJ

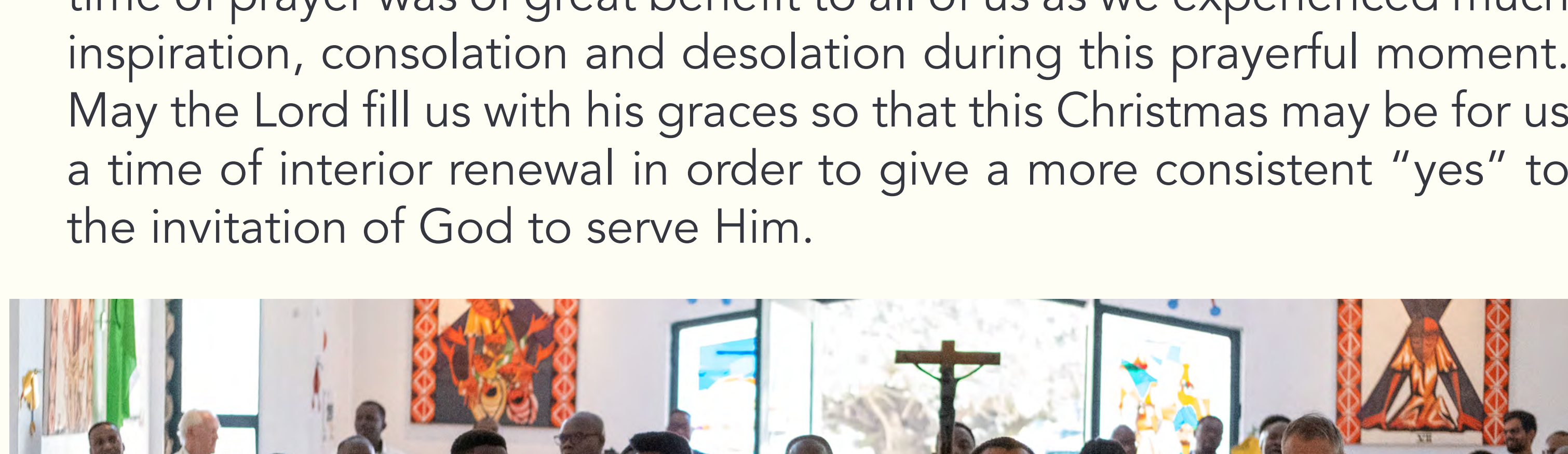
Over the course of three days, from Monday evening, December 19, to Thursday evening, December 22, the Jesuit community of Hekima University College experienced a time of spiritual retreat to better prepare for the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord. This Christmas triduum was guided by Fr. George Macharia, SJ, a lecturer here at Hekima and the Assistant Parish Priest at St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Kangemi. The triduum focused on the theme "From Distraction to Centering".

Monday evening was devoted to instructions on the interior dispositions required of each of us during the retreat, following the mode of St. Ignatius. Thus, Fr. Macharia invited us to silence, solitude, generosity and magnanimity using various texts including: Annotation 20 of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the poor widow's generosity in Luke 21:1-4 and Jesus' moments of prayer in Mark 1:35, amongst others. On Tuesday, he introduced us to the mystery of the incarnation. He began by inviting us to a meditation on the malice of sin, in order to center ourselves and discover or rediscover in ourselves both the core graces we have received from God and the core sinfulness that separates us from God. This self-awareness enables us to seek and find the roots of the evil within ourselves in order to entrust ourselves to God and to seek God's help.

Wednesday involved a meditation on Inner Healing in which we were called to experience God's Merciful, Forgiving and Healing Love during our moments of prayer. Thursday was mainly centered around the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*. The experience of the indwelling presence of God in ourselves and in creation as well as the blessings with which each of us has been endowed by God are sufficient reasons for our total surrender to God. Hence, he summed it up with an invitation for us to seek and find God in all things (*Constitutions 288*). The triduum was concluded with a Mass presided by the Rector, Fr. Deogratias Rwezaura, SJ and concelebrated by Fr. Macharia. During the Mass, the scholastics devotedly renewed their vows.

It should be noted that all along this retreat, each meditation or contemplation was complemented with a prayerful reflection on the text of the late Father General Adolfo Nicolàs, which was entitled "From Distraction to Dedication: An Invitation to the Center". In this document, Fr. Nicolas warns every Jesuit about a variety of distractions which mark religious life in our postmodern world. He describes the ego as the number one distraction while other distractions include distractions during prayer due to distractions in life, perfectionism, distractions of the media and of the market (electronic gadgets, internet, etc.) and distractions from superficiality in the religious realm.

At the end of a busy semester marked by serious academic work, this time of prayer was of great benefit to all of us as we experienced much inspiration, consolation and desolation during this prayerful moment. May the Lord fill us with his graces so that this Christmas may be for us a time of interior renewal in order to give a more consistent "yes" to the invitation of God to serve Him.



## The Feast of Love and Hope: Christmas

- Jaison Joseph, SJ

Although the advent of 2022 was eventful, with the reading week and first semester examinations, the triduum which was facilitated by Fr. George Macharia, SJ helped the community to be centred, to be aware of distractions and to meditate on the meaning of Christmas for each of us. Thus, the community approached Christmas spiritually and mentally prepared.

On the 24th of December, the community and a few guests gathered in the Chapel by 8.00 pm for the Vigil Mass of Christmas. Fr. George Macharia SJ was the presider at the Mass. During the homily, he explained how the incarnation of Jesus is the fulfilment of the promises and prophecies of salvation history. He went on to say that the celebration of Christmas has a triadic dimension as a feast of love, a feast of the Salvation History of Humankind and a feast of Hope. Even though Christmas is an occasion for joy, we find a cross in the crib. This cross follows Jesus throughout his life till Calvary. The process of the redemption of the human race is started at the crib in Bethlehem. Therefore, the celebrations of Christmas and Easter are intrinsically related. He summed up his homily by stating that we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey drawn by the humility of God, who became man to encounter every man and woman so that we in turn may become one in God. After the Eucharist, everyone joined for socials in the refectory and the carols rendered by the choir added joy to this event.

The Christmas Day Eucharist at 11.00 am was presided by the President of JCAM, Fr. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, SJ. He began the homily by asking an intriguing question: "What does Christmas mean to you?" He narrated how the meaning of Christmas has evolved and unfolded in his life and explained that the story of Christmas is about who God is for us. Although there is a personal quality to this story, it precedes and transcends us. God comes to us in flesh at Christmas to bring us

light, love and life. He concluded the homily by praying that we might not miss the core of the Christmas story. The Eucharist was also the avenue for gratefully appreciating and bidding farewell to Fr. John-Okoria Ibhakewanlan, SJ, Fr. Joachim Zoundi, SJ and Fr. Ferenc Patsch, SJ. Both Frs. John-Okoria and Zoundi have served the community and the college admirably in various capacities while Fr. Ferenc had spent some weeks with us on Sabbatical. We pray for them and for their future assignments. After the send-forth, the community members who have their birthdays in December were celebrated and Fr. Bator blessed the departing fathers and the birthday celebrants. The Eucharist was followed by a sumptuous Christmas lunch in the refectory.



## Magis Calls for More Awareness of the Presence of Jesus in One Another

- Salamanraj Masilamani, SJ

On December 31, 2022, I attended the traditional annual Holy Eucharist at the Bagamoyo Holy Ghost Church in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with some members of the MAGIS group. The church is located beside a beautiful Indian Ocean coastline. Besides the MAGIS members, there were also other faithful who joined us for the Eucharistic celebration. After the celebration, the MAGIS members gathered under the mango trees to discuss the events of the day. As some of the younger ones tried to pluck mangoes from the trees, they unknowingly disturbed the bees. The bees began to attack all the people who were there, so everyone scattered. I immediately got into the bus with some of my companions and we started laughing at the people's movement, only to notice a young lady who fell down and was screaming right in front of our bus. She had lost hope of saving herself from the attacking bees and couldn't bear the pain of their attack. She just rolled on the ground in an attempt to get rid of the bees, but the bees were all over her.

My conscience began to disturb me, leading me to ask myself: Why was I laughing? What was I doing? Wasn't I seeing a suffering person right in front of me? I felt pity for her. I started asking myself what could happen if I tried to rescue her from the bees. That inner strength made me witness the presence of Jesus within me and within the suffering lady. Immediately, the inner voice led me to make an effort to rescue the lady despite the concerns of others. For some, it was a bad decision, but for me, I knew that I was following what my conscience intended me to do right at that moment: rescue the suffering lady. I believed that the inner strength was given to me by Jesus. Therefore, I didn't think twice to help her because I was well aware of the situation. Hence, I opened the bus door and went to take her into the bus. I took her by the hand and brought her inside the bus. Surprisingly, while bringing her inside the bus, no bee attacked me and this led me to wonder why the many bees did not harm me.

This experience taught me a lesson. MAGIS calls for greater awareness of the presence of Jesus in our lives, and in one another and listening to His voice so that we can act accordingly without any hesitation. I began to realize that my unworthiness did not prevent me from listening to the voice of Jesus within me, which called me to rescue suffering humanity, represented in the image of the suffering lady.



## MAGIS Eastern Africa Formation Programme in Dar es Salaam

- Randika Fernando, SJ

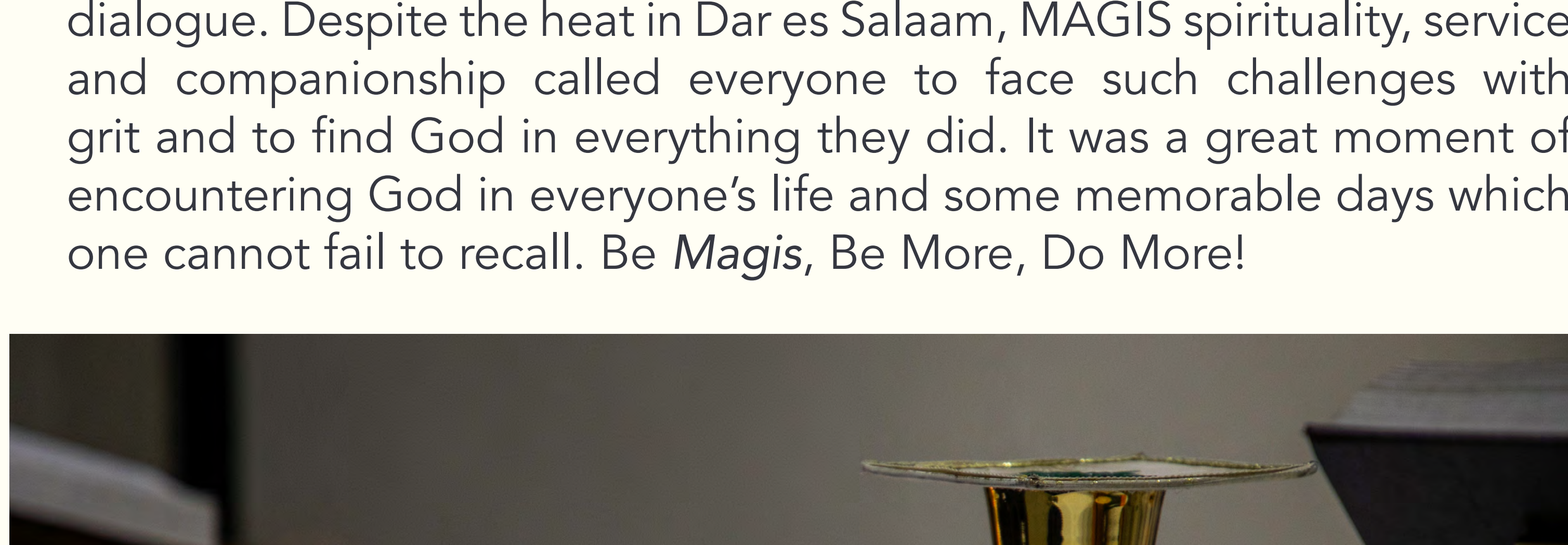
MAGIS is one of the elements of Ignatian/Jesuit Spirituality that calls us to do and aim for more in our quest for the greater glory of God (AMDG). The recent MAGIS Eastern Africa Formation Programme was held in Loyola High School, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania from December 29, 2022 to January 1, 2023. There were over 60 MAGIS members from Eastern Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) for the formation programme 2022/23. Scholastics. Michael Sitati, Salamanraj Masilamani and Randika Fernando from Hekima University College were part of the programme assisting Scholastic Michael Owuor SJ, who is the coordinator of MAGIS in the Eastern Africa Province. As a formation programme intended for young adults aged 18-30, it had 3 Pillars: Spirituality, Service and Companionship.

During the formation programme, the members were able to achieve the five aims of MAGIS through various experiments. These aims are: 1) To embark on a personal spiritual journey that deepens personal relation with God. 2) To venture out of familiar surroundings to be challenged by something new and to discover the truth and beauty in it. 3) To play an active part in the planning and realization of the programme and the whole life of the group. 4) To find safe spaces to share their lives and to experience friendship and community. 5) To live in an international group of young Christians following and rooted in Ignatian spirituality and to experience their unique membership in the universal Church.

On the first day, with an initial orientation, the MAGIS members were prepared for their first experiment which was to visit the sick in different places around Dar es Salaam. The entire group was divided into three. One of the groups visited the Cancer Centre for kids and spent time with them. Another group visited the Nursing Home of infants and elders run by the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Theresa) Sisters. The third group visited a sick family with dry rations and reliefs and spent time with them. The members of each group were able to accompany the sick and elderly through play and fun activities. The groups were inspired by the strength and hopeful nature demonstrated by the caregivers and the children, and they shared their heart-touching moments with all the members of the group at the end of the day.

On the second day, the group went for a pilgrimage from Pugu to Kisarawe. It was a spiritual moment for the group and each one was relieved at the end of the pilgrimage. It was a nice pilgrimage journey and a wonderful spiritual experience. On the third day, the MAGIS members joined other young people across Tanzania for a special Youth Mass at Bagamoyo Beach parish to express gratitude for the year 2022. It became an unforgettable experience for the members of the group who had a fun time together on the beach (except for the bee attack) with games in the sea. On the final day, after the New Year Mass at the parish, there was a session on Mental Health and Self-Awareness followed by concluding remarks on the experiences of MAGIS and the aftermath in study/work and other daily encounters.

The Dar es Salaam MAGIS formation programme offered the participants an opportunity to share a unique experience at three distinct levels: individual growth, relationships with God and others, and intercultural dialogue. Despite the heat in Dar es Salaam, MAGIS spirituality, service and companionship called everyone to face such challenges with grit and to find God in everything they did. It was a great moment of encountering God in everyone's life and some memorable days which one cannot fail to recall. Be *Magis*, Be More, Do More!



## The Eucharist!

- Luis Matope, SJ

What earth had never seen,  
The heavens for a moment,  
Are in shock,  
Archangels, angels, all stand in awe.

The Mystery, none can comprehend,  
The daring Unknowable.

Not just the body and blood,  
Eyes of faith,  
A heart of understanding  
And a willing soul, go beyond.

For many longed not just to see or  
hear,  
But to behold and be.

Not just the body and blood,  
But the Love,  
Shared wholeheartedly in freedom,  
The reconciliation,  
Extended wholeheartedly in humility.

The Eucharist,  
Not just the body and blood,  
But the prayer

*That they may be one  
As You Father are in me  
And I am also in You,  
That they may be one in us...*

The Eucharist,  
Not just the body and blood.

Oh, Jesus Himself,  
Oh, the Godself,  
Oh, the Godself,  
Desiring and daring to be one,  
With the created,  
the fallen and the redeemed.

The hosts of heaven,  
Behold Him face to face,  
And daily proclaim  
Holy, Holy, Holy to Him.

The Eucharist,  
Not just the body and blood,  
But God becoming the only Life  
In Christ we live by.

May Christ be forever,  
Adored and glorified  
In the Holy Eucharist,

Amen!

**Hekima University College (HUC)**

Joseph Kangethe Road,  
Postal Address: 21215

Postal Code: 00505  
Plot No: 209/10170

Nairobi, Kenya.

**Kindly stay in touch**

Instagram: @Hekimahuc

YouTube: @Hekima University College

Twitter: @HUChekima

Website: www.hekima.ac.ke

Email: habari@hekima.ac.ke