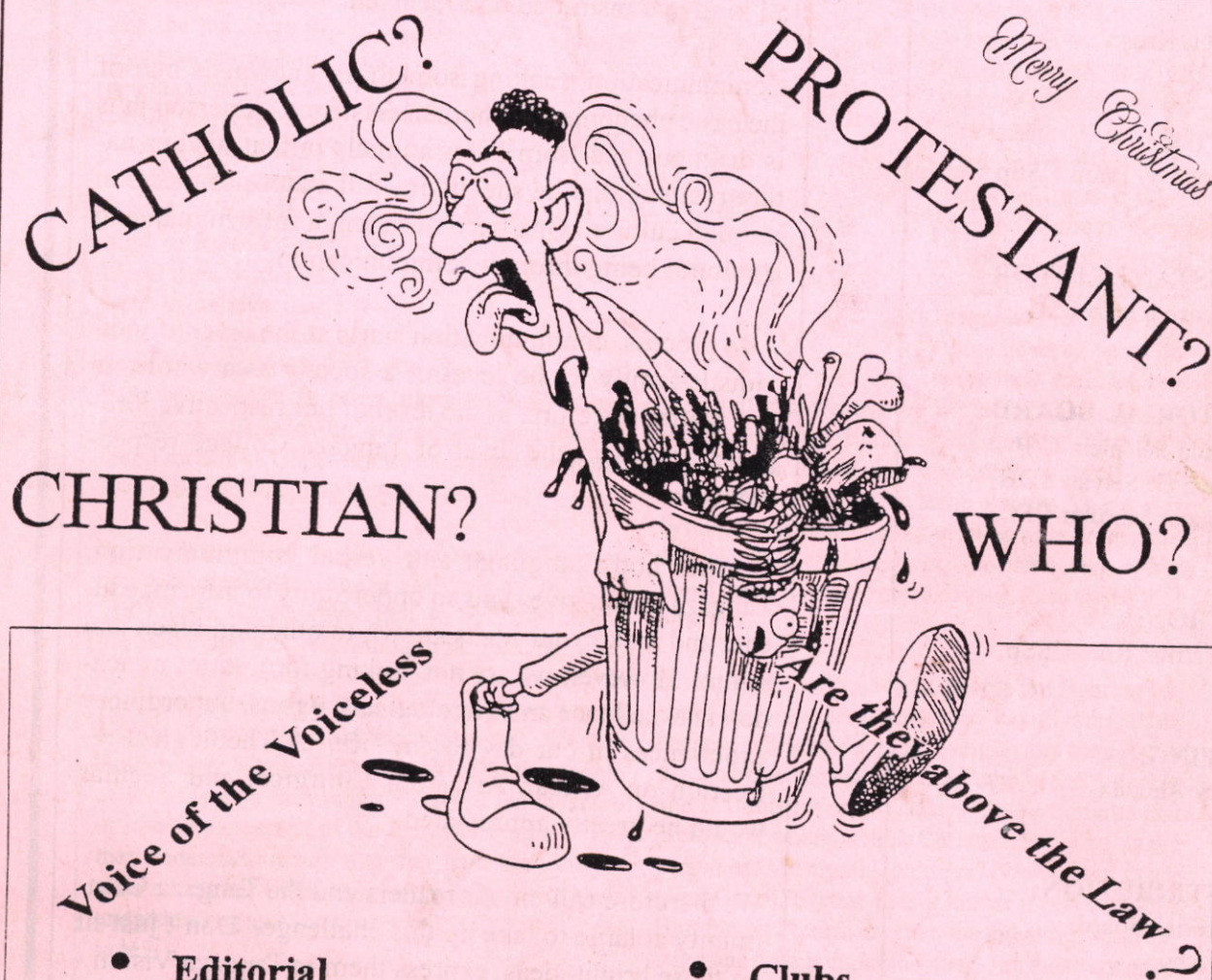


# TANGAZA VISION

DECEMBER 1994



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**High Time to Africanise your Vows, Young African Religious**



## TANGAZA VISION

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**EDITOR :**

Msilanga V. Babu CSSp

**ASSISTANT EDITOR :**

Alphonse Kizito FSC

**EDITORIAL BOARD:**

Masana Selemela C.P  
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**PATRON:**

Fr. Patrick Roe, CSSp

**TYPING:**

Mary Agunda

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Editorial Board,  
Dorothy.

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## EDITORIAL

### The Need to Communicate.

In his message for world communications Day in 1992, the pope cited communications media as the admission ticket of every person to the market - place where thoughts are given public utterance, pieces of ideas are exchanged, news is passed around and information of all kind is transmitted and received.

Communication, making something known, is one of the basic phenomena of human existence. A person thus is distinguished from other animals in that his/her nature requires that he/she attains full stature as a person through culture. One becomes then, a fully human and a cultural being through communication.

As a process, communication starts at the level of individuals/family to the level of a society as a whole; in this matter therefore, at the level of our respective Religious houses to the level of Tangaza College respectively.

Besides body language and verbal communication, Tangaza vision gives you an opportunity to inform, educate and make your ideas known to others in black and white. However, we are not looking for treatises of academic excellence and Theological Jargons, but ordinary experiences in our day to day life. A Theological reflection on African Art, both Liturgical and Secular would be greatly appreciated.

We therefore call on our readers and the Tangaza Community at large to take up this challenge. Don't just sit on those bright ideas, express them in Tangaza Vision - your magazine. Do not reserve your comments on something or keep silent when you ought not to, for you might be the victim of your silence! If at all we want to have a common possession of Truth, let us communicate for almost always, truth is found in communication.

Remember, you will never be a writer without writing. So, start writing now and help Tangaza Vision grow.



## CATHOLIC? PROTESTANT? PERSON OF GOD? CHRISTIAN? WHO?

Much has been said about Rwanda. Human beings have been condemned for being so cruel to each other. Who could believe that such a thing like the massacre of Rwanda could happen in our day? Who could believe that people could have killed each other so much? Whenever I think of Rwanda, my blood runs wild. It's hard to believe that what happened was done by people who have been taught so often about loving God and neighbour. This loving of God and neighbour is taken further by Christ when he says that we should love others as much as he has loved us.

So much has been taught about man and woman being created in the image and likeness of God? What more, Christ prayed that we be one as he and the Father are one. According to St. Paul, there are no Jews and Gentiles, Christ has made us one. In this case even colour does not matter, we are all one in Christ. But what has happened? What is happening? What might happen? Did the people of Rwanda ever hear and understand the message of love, the message of the Holy Scriptures? Will they understand it now that they have seen the results of hatred? Will they become better in their understanding and knowledge of the Christian message?

The majority of the people in Rwanda are Catholics, but how deep is their Christianity? Its important to learn that one has to work much on his/her Christianity in order to become a better Catholic or protestant. Being only a Catholic or protestant without roots in Christianity, one might attend the Sunday Service/mass because its an obligation without getting anything that was read from the Christian



... save us from this mess!

book. One might greet the priest/pastor after mass/service to show that he/she was in but how present was he/she?

Rwanda is not the first evidence of hatred among people. It is just but one of the many and the latest. We had the first and second world wars and many other cases of hatred. South Africa is another good example. It took the people there more than three hundred years before they realized that

the God who created the Whites is the same God who created the Blacks and coloured. Yet, there were white, black and coloured Catholics, who could not even sit in the same church. There were White, Black and "Coloured" who were protestants and yet they could not use the same road. Was their Bible at that time different from what they now have?

In many parts of the world, people are fighting because of religious differences. Families breaking because of the same thing. Neighbours cannot talk to each other because one is a Catholic and the other one is a Muslim or protestant. To the Catholic and protestant, where is their Christianity? Who is the person of God among the three? We all pray to the same God. So what does it matter if one worships Him facing Mecca, another one kneeling while another one does it under the tree? Are these not good chances for us to learn from each other, a chance to appreciate what the others have?

If it was not for religious differences, places like Sudan, Bosnia, Yugoslavia and many others could be much better than what we know of them now. This brings about the question How deep in our relationship with the supreme Being? How much has He penetrated into our beings? Who is fight-



### *Special Contribution*

ing for God among these?

A very good case to consider is Ireland. Catholics fighting with Protestants. What are they fighting for? If some are defending Catholicism and others are defending Protestantism, who is defending Christianity? Who is Christian between the two? Where is the message of the God who loves all and is in all? Do they have the message of Christ in their hearts? They know better.

Coming back home, where are we? Catholics? Protestants? People of God? Christians with the message deeply rooted in us? We might be good Catholics, following all the rules and regulations laid down by the Church and our religious Congregations. Yet we might at times pass by a sick or needy person on the road just not to be late for Mass/Service. During Mass we hear the reading from Matthew whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers, that you do unto me. How does it sound?

A few months ago, there were tribal clashes in the Rift Valley. We gave our suggestions, ideas, opinions and judgements on what was going on but, did all these reflect our Christianity? to be very honest with ourselves could we say that we looked at things in a very Christian way? If we were given the chance and means to defend these poor people (clash victims) what could we have done? If we knew the troublemakers and were given the means and authority to do what we wanted with them what could we have done? Now that things don't seem to be so bad, its possible to say that I could have acted like a Christian. At that time, when things were "very bad" I felt that if given the chance and the means I could have crushed the troublemakers and torn them into pieces, maybe I could have done exactly that. Then, where could my Christianity be if that happened? Maybe there were other millions of people who felt like me. If given the chance could they not have made Kenya worse than Rwanda? Where was their faith? With so many tribes and nationalities in Africa, is it possible to say that what I feel and think of others outside my tribe and nationality is pure

Christian? "Leave them, the Kenyans, Ugandans, Tanzanians, or even Americans, Asians, Europeans etc., they are like that. Is she/he a Kikuyu, Kamba, Luo, Maasai etc. I am not surprised, they are like that". We say often. It might have started like this in Rwanda and slowly the valley of hatred widened. Are we who say, those are Kikuyus, Luos, Kambas, etc not Christians? Is it Christian to group people in categories because one made a mistake? Are we aware of the gap that we are creating? Every time the people / person of "that" tribe or nationality makes a mistake, the gap of hatred is widened.

There has been so many cases of child-rape, if given the chance to act what could we do with such men and women. Good Catholics? yes. Good Protestants? Yes. Has Christianity started to flow in us like our own blood such that we can look at things and reason out things from a Christian point of view. Do I have the courage to point a finger at the people of Rwanda and say that I could never and will never do what they did? If you can, blessed are you.

The tragedy of Rwanda leaves us with the assignment to find out who we are. Catholics, Protestants, people of God, or if Catholics and protestants whether our Catholicism or protestantism has its root in Christianity. Who are we?

Sr. Jane F. Wanjiru L.S.S.J.

*What a challenge!*

*Dear reader, there you are, take your position.  
Who are you?*

*Editor*



## VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

The September 1994 International Conference on population and Development Organized by the United Nations which took place in Cairo attracted

many people's attention. The conference aimed mainly at curbing the world's population growth and to stimulate economic development worldwide. However, abortion numbered almost the first among the most effective ways proposed to reduce population and improve environment.

Others on the list were family planning through contraceptives and sex education to be more open to the young ones.

Abortion, the deliberate termination of a fetus before reaching viability is a sensitive issue which is rooted in deep moral, Religious and political differences. In our modern world today, abortion takes place in substantial numbers among married and unmarried women, young and old alike and women with or without children from all socio-economic levels. The motive behind this whole affair is prevention of birth by terminating defenseless and voiceless life of a fetus: a tiny human being!

At first, abortion was regarded as an illegal act but of late some parts in the world have legalized it. A close study of the affair shows that "Britain and USA Supreme Court did legalize abortion in the years 1967 and 1973" respectively. The legalization of abortion has brought two opposing sides.

One group (pro-life) holds firmly to their argument that abortion is killing the innocent, defenseless, and voiceless fetus. Another group (pro-choice)

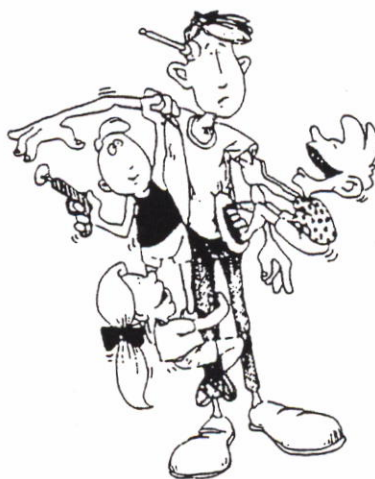
supports the act in that a woman has the right over her own body and hence, unwanted pregnancy can always be terminated.

But, is there any life in unwanted pregnancy? Is this unborn being growing within the mother a human life? When does life begin?

In his book "Aborted Women", Reardon puts it

rights that "human life begins at conception with the fertilization of an ovum by the sperm... embryonic life is human from the first moment of its existence."

Reading carefully between the lines of the Gospel of St. Luke we see specifically that Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. What grew in her womb from conception was not a blob of protoplasm but the person of the God-Man Jesus. Also, carefully taught is that the infant John the Baptist 'leapt' in the womb of Elizabeth. Talking to some pregnant women, they assured me that at times, babies do 'kick' in the womb so clear a sign that they are alive and active. They are created in the image of God, why then terminate the life? Who will hear the cry of these voiceless children of God? Why should one be participating in distorting the image of God on earth? Such purposeful termination of any pregnancy contains the moral malice of the violation of man's most fundamental human



*Children are a God given gift.*



## Special Contribution

### Right - the Right to Life.

Unless the life of the mother is threatened "... innocent human life in whatever condition it is found, it is to be secure from the very first moment of its existence from any direct and deliberate attack. This is a fundamental right of the human person life in the womb remains and hence as valid for the still hidden life within the womb of the mother as for the life of the already born and developing outside of her" (Pope Paul VI)

All in all, abortion is not a "safe and easy" practice as its defenders imply. Due to some hidden motives, especially need to make quick money, women seeking abortion are rarely given the full truth in the local abortion clinics, more so, on the negative effects of the exercise. The "abortion industry" is busy urging women to exercise their right to choose without ensuring them of their right to know. Are some women not manipulated anyway? If at all a woman has the right over her own body, had she Also the right over the body of the unborn baby? Whose right prevails over the other anyway?

Babu Msilanga CSSp

## THE ROLE OF YOUNG RELIGIOUS IN THE PROMOTION OF JUSTICE

### The Question:

It seems that the promotion of justice is not a task that fits with the charisma of Religious:

- It is rather the task of the official representatives of the Church, the Bishops and the Parish Priests. Also it is something connected with politics which is the proper arena of the lay people according to Evangelii Nuntiandi (No 70). Religious people are to remain open to all, therefore they have to be politically neutral.

- The promotion of social justice is rather a secular task, something good and necessary but that is not so linked to our charisma as Religious who are supposed to be concerned more with spiritual things. Have not Religious chosen "the best part" like Mary? (Cf. Luke 10:42).

- As Religious we must be witnesses to the kingdom of God. This eschatological and prophetic witness reminds all that we are not from this world and that we do not have here on earth a permanent dwelling. Therefore our witness must be focused in the values of the Kingdom of heaven more than on earthly realities.

- We Religious have always taken care of the poor in our traditional institutions: Hospitals, Dispensaries, Schools, etc. We have not enough personnel to start this new apostolate of promotion

of justice.

- Many Religious who commit themselves too much to social justice have problems with their superiors, become very critical of their Congregations and tend to abandon prayer and even to abandon their own vocation. All this shows that this apostolate is not so appropriate to Religious.

But on the other hand, the concern for justice is one of the main characteristics of the Church after the Second Vatican Council. Already in 1967 Pope Paul VI started the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace and ever since the concern for justice has permeated all the pastoral concerns of the local Churches. Are we Religious to stay behind the signs of the times in the Church? Our situation in most African countries is a situation of widespread injustice: corruption, political oppression, violation of human rights, social and economic discrimination, etc. What kind of witness to the Kingdom of God can we Religious bear in such circumstances without being committed to the promotion of Justice? It seems clear that almsgiving and material relief to the crowds of the poor is not the real solution to the challenge of poverty.

Our task now is not so much to see whether Religious Women and Men must be committed to the promotion of justice but rather to examine the theological reason why they must com-



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mit themselves (First Step) and the way they must do it (Second Step).

### **First Step: Why Religious must be involved in the promotion of Justice and Peace**

The first theological reason is that Christian Faith is essentially linked to Justice through the link of Love. Faith, Justice and Love are not to be understood as separate and unconnected virtues but as the core of Christian vocation. Paul puts it very clearly in a brief formulation: "What matters is faith that makes its power felt through love" (Gal 5:6). As a matter of fact, Faith cannot be understood only as an intellectual consent to a body of doctrine or dogmas. It cannot either be said that faith is just a fiducial attitude of confidence in God expressed in personal prayer. These two aspects, though true, do not exhaust the integrity of faith because without the practical and social aspect, faith is incomplete, as James remind us in his letter: "Faith without deeds is dead" (James 2:26).

Without this practical commitment to social justice, the risk is to become an intellectual Christian who accepts all the dogmas of the Church but a practical atheist who does not care for the injustice done to the living image of God which is the human being.

The second reason is provided by the very nature of our Religious vocation. We are indeed called to be witnesses to the Kingdom of God in a special way in the middle of the Church. But this Kingdom is not to be conceived as just a future reality to come after death. The Kingdom is already present among us, it starts here on earth, it is "close at hand" (Cf. mark 1:15), not just in heaven. This Kingdom is described very well in the preface of the mass of Christ the King as a kingdom of justice and peace and it is not by escaping earthly responsibilities that we become automatically spiritual.

The third reason comes from the vow of evangelical poverty that characterizes all Religious. It is not a vow in favour of material poverty because material poverty in itself is not a value. Material poverty in the Old Testament is seen as a disgrace, as a punishment for our sins, whereas the

blessing of God is expressed in the abundance of material goods. Evangelical poverty is different: it is a free option for the poor, it is what Pope John II calls today "a love of preference for the poor" (Cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, No.42). A vow of poverty is, in a sense, a vow against material poverty and a commitment in favour of those who are poor and oppressed. But poverty is no longer being conceived as just "badchance" or the consequence of "lack of education" or "laziness". Poverty is not a natural disaster, it is a man-made calamity that could be avoided if there were more justice and sense of sharing in the world. In the struggle against poverty, our vow of evangelical poverty leads us to live in solidarity with the poor struggling against any kind of injustice. If "we have the poor always with us" it is precisely because we have injustice always with us. The simplicity of our lifestyle should be a visible sign of our evangelical commitment to the Justice of the Kingdom not just mere economy or privation.

### **Second Step: How should Religious be involved in promoting Justice and Peace**

First of all the Promotion of justice is not to be conceived as an "apostolate" and still less as "a new apostolate". It is true that some Religious must be more directly involved in the area of social justice, but justice is a factor affecting all the areas of evangelization and therefore all the areas of our apostolate. It is like the integrating factor of all our apostolic activities because in all there is always the fundamental dimension of justice.

Secondly, the principle that "Justice begins at Home" (Motto of the Lenten Campaign in Kenya 1992) has to be born in mind. Therefore the formation of Religious has to integrate this dimension, by educating them to Justice and by establishing structures of formation in which justice is present and visible within the Religious Community itself. If Justice does not start within our own Religious Communities and Catholic institutions we will not be credible as Religious. Here the practical issues of justice salaries to our own employees, of justice in our own communitarian structures and relationships are to be considered. To promote Justice outside while ignoring the in-



## Special Contribution

justice inside would be a typical pharisaic attitude condemned several times by Jesus himself.

Finally, there is another guiding principle: Nobody is born educated for Justice. We cannot take for granted that we know enough about the promotion of justice because we are Religious. It happens that some Religious are not aware of the Social Teaching of the Church, of the Pastoral Letters of the Bishops, of the social and economic situation of their own countries. Such documents are not usually considered as spiritual readings to be meditated during an annual retreat or a monthly recollection; we often tend to prefer "nicer" and "more spiritual books" about how to improve the quality of our personal prayer.

This education for Justice is an on-going process entailing the following aspects:

a) **Experiential Awareness:** This means, a personal exposure and direct contact with the situations of injustice and the persons who are victims of them. Information through TV, Radio and Newspapers is necessary but it is not enough. Nothing can replace first hand experience and personal contact. Here, periods of "insertion" are necessary even if they appear to be not so much productive for the victims. The purpose is, like Moses, to leave the palace of Pharaoh and know the "joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor and afflicted in any way" (Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, Introduction, No.1). It happens sometimes that we Religious, especially during the time of formation, live in "our own world" and are isolated from the daily life of the majority of people. What is the level and the quality of this experiential awareness provided to young Religious during their formation? Cannot a personal contact with the victims of injustice motivate a Religious student towards a serious academic and scientific formation in order to promote Justice in a relevant way?

b) **Analysis of Social Situations:** Insertion and apostolic action without corresponding reflection are not very helpful in the process of an ongoing formation for Justice. Emotional and superficial reactions against injustice need deeper

analysis of the root causes of the problems. If such an analysis is mission, our temptation will be to deal more with the consequences rather than with the causes of injustice. This analysis is to be performed with the help of human sciences so that the theological reflection may be rooted in real life. It is here that sociology, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, and other human sciences have a positive contribution in the integral formation of the young Religious as a promoter of Justice in society. But this analysis is not just a technical and social analysis. It is a theological reflection in the light of Christian faith, in the light of the Word of God, the Tradition and the teaching of the Church, the local Church included. Hence the need for a theological formation not only of those Religious who are destined to become priests but of all men and women that want to be committed as Religious in the mission of the Church to which the promotion of Justice is essentially linked.

c) **The need for Maturity:** Maturity, both psychological and spiritual is always required for any good achievement in Religious Life but in a special way in the realm of the promotion of justice. The reason is that the situations of injustice may affect us to such a point that our reaction may be beyond our control. While human feelings are necessary and fundamentally good, they are not the last criteria in order to react in face of situations of injustice. Violent reaction may be explicable but they are never justifiable for a Christian, let alone for a Religious. A proper balance and integration of prayer and apostolate, action and contemplation, creativity and obedience, courage and patience, prophetic denunciation and silence is very much required in those who commit themselves to the cause of justice. If some Religious committed to social justice tend to abandon prayer and enter into conflict with their superiors this is due not to the issue of justice itself but to their lack of maturity.

### Conclusion:

What we have said is valid for all Religious, women and men, without any consideration of age. But in the historical process of Religious Congregations being more and more committed to the promotion of justice, the young Religious in



## Special Contribution

Africa play a very special role.

Many young African Religious belong to International Congregations in which non-African members are still the majority or have still the responsibility of formation and decision-making in matters of apostolic commitments. While foreigners have their specific contribution in the process of promotion of justice, it is undeniable that they have cultural and political limitations that their African Brothers and Sisters may not have. In the dynamism of the inculturation of Religious Life in an African context, young Religious have a heavy responsibility. The promotion of justice needs also to be inculturated so as to be achieved in the Afri-

can way. For those Religious Congregations that are entirely African, the challenge is fundamentally the same because they may be tempted just to copy the Religious lifestyle imported by other Congregations. It is not enough to have been born African but to continue being an African in full contact and solidarity with the African people. In matters of lifestyle young African Religious have to avoid the danger of becoming what president Mobutu of Zaire called once "the French of Africa or the Belgians of Africa".

Rodrigo Jejia, S.J. - Hekima College

## ARE THEY ABOVE THE LAW?

by Alphonse Kizito Odock, FSC

You are driving peacefully along the highway until, like a monster, there appears an Isuzu NKR 33.3 Litre Direct Injection. You won't wait long. It comes either from the left or the right and before you have seen it, you will hear it because a certain Nigerian by the name of Ras Kimono will be screaming at the top of his voice that he is UNDER PRESSURE! So - you turn off your already drowned news bulletin and are forced to listen to Ras Kimono's problem of being UNDER PRESSURE until the Isuzu NKR 33.3 finds another loophole in the traffic jam and disappears as mysteriously as it appeared.

Matatus are the most notorious, brazen, ill-mannered, noisy and therefore most evident moving objects on our roads today. Not so long ago, matatus were mainly comprised of "jalopies" which were few, illegal, and very scared of the police. Now they belong to a fully fledged industry employing thousands of touts, drivers and other connected people. They are bigger, faster, more comfortable and very legal.

For art lovers there is a new aspect in the name of mobile art galleries: Matatus are now the most colourful objects in our society. They are adorned with various mixtures of decoration, landscapes, beaches, wildlife and people. Some have even adopted the logos and top NBA teams such as the

CHICAGO BULLS, ORLANDO MAGIC etc. A great many are crazy mixture of clashing colours and patterns that are unpleasant and may psychologically affect some people.

As if the loud music was not enough, the touts are excellent address systems - more so since they have to call on passengers above the existing mixture of noises... "Karen! Karen! naba twedy- four bebwa! Karen! bomas, Seminari-kwa watu wa kanisa bebwa!"

Some other groups of Matatus are fitted with long protruding aerials that may look like TV. mobile units. Some have tinted window. This new type of Matatu has not escaped the eye of the "Utumishi kwa Wote". Sometime back, a local daily reported the impounding of siren, color" tinted windows and noisy matatus. A Senior Traffic Officer at the Nairobi Area Police Headquarters had told reporters that the Police were uncertain whether the colour of some Matatus matched their log-books. He also said that it was illegal to fit matatus with tinted windows and loud music apparatus, nor is it right to fit them with sirens since that is reserved for the Police, Ambulance, and Fire Engines.

Most of us have in one way or another got used to the noise and colours of Matatus. But should we get used to their terrible driving manners? It is



### Special Contribution

when you are waiting patiently and obediently in the long sailing line that the "monster" wakes you up to fill alertness by overtaking you on the "clean side" of the road. If there is an oncoming vehicle, they will drive until they are nearly up to it and then make a sudden turn left and push their way into a small gap already formed, because you have already been forced to brake hard to avoid crashing into its left side. Then they will be in the line in form of you with their noise. But not for too long! They will quickly find a way to shoot ahead in any direction, even making an illegal "U" turn at times. Whichever side they use they cause traffic jams and death risks to pedestrians. They feel they have the right to stop anywhere; at corners, on hills etc.

You'd be better off avoiding some parts of town because they are a matatu maze. Vehicles facing all directions. A case in point is at Mfangano Street. Here you will be avoiding both endless lines of vehicles and humanity. Maybe the strange names and phrases, especially those on the backs of matatus serve to keep you busy, amused or angered when they have edged their way between you and the car in front. For example "Cherio", "For your eyes only" "Music Factory" "simply" "I'll be back."

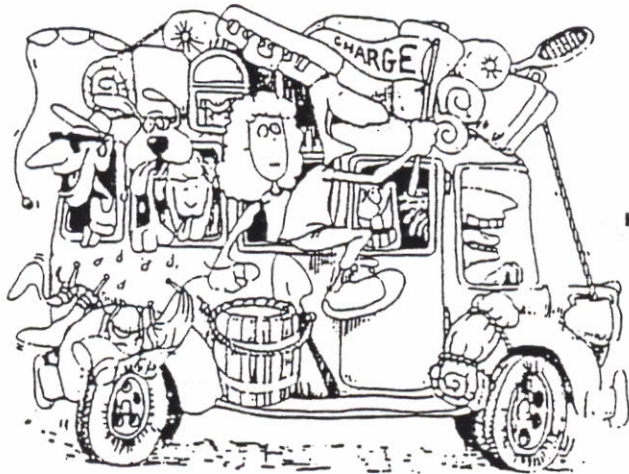
The audacity of the Matatus committing traffic crimes seems to imply that they are above the law. They don't seem like they are going to lead exemplary "motoring lives". Should the rest of us just be content with cursing only? Most 'Nairobians' seem to be comfortable

and accept the menace. It is rare to find a Nairobiian who is "normal". A "normal" Nairobiian should be added in the list of endangered species. But because of our helplessness, we have adopted humour as a penance and stick it at the back of our vehicles: "Danger, ex-matatu driver", a trust testimony that if you can't beat them, join them saying.

Fortunately (or unfortunately) Matatus are a force to reckon with: we don't change them, they change us. We all look stupid waiting obediently like school pupils at the end of a long line of vehicles while a Matatu cruises past to skip the line by a Kilometre or so at different spots. Patience is running out and soon all of us will turn our cars into little Matatus; climbing onto pavements, hooting carelessly and flashing powerful lights at high speed. A few have started doing that (seen some?). But don't be tempted unless you are "ex-matatu driver." You might not maneuver like they do and can only get into serious trouble if you are lost or stuck.

All said, matatus remain a very integral part of our ailing transport system. You only need to remember sometime back when they went on strike to

show their importance and why we cannot do without them. I think it will be "throwing the baby out with the bath water" to say all Matatus are bad. Surprisingly, there are Matatus which are not noisy, stop at lights, treat passenger gently and are obedient to traffic rules. But for those Matatus that are blind to traffic regulations, are they above the law?



*Space for one more?*



## HIGH TIME TO AFRICANIZE YOUR VOWS, YOUNG AFRICAN RELIGIOUS!

Plenty of talk we have had about Africanization of religious life, but who does something about it. Here at Tangaza we had students' workshops with this topic in preparation for the African Synod. Popes have for long encouraged it, the Synod heard palavers on it (one bishop candidly confessed in the Synod Hall to the merriment of all: "We Africans take delight in talking"), the just ended Synod on Consecrated life had more excellent speeches about the urgent need for it (see its instrumentum laboris: have you read it?).

What are we any longer waiting for? Who has to give more authoritative orders until we move? Is it a cultural bias to wait for orders from above until at last some initiative is taken? The

orders are given - see above! Overcome your cultural inertia, one of the plagues of this Continent - it is out of date in modern Africa! So let us take action now, not tomorrow!

Let us start with semantics and definitions. For instance a reformulation of the vows in the African context. Permit a non-religious, one who has never in his life taken any vow but tries to keep them, permit this concerned Mzungu to make some daring suggestions to stimulate thought and discussion, and - hopefully - action! Sometimes even an outsider has something worthwhile to contribute. Present your Superiors in the twenty communities at Tangaza some of those results, and pressurize them into action!

1)

### THE VOW OF CHASTITY

Wrong word! Long outdated, also in the formerly Christian West! By definition each and every follower of the celibate Jesus is bound to be chaste, whether not yet married, or married, or single. This is not even a so-called "evangelical counsel", but goes with Christian faith and baptismal self-obligation and marriage: marital chastity, for instance.



*.....overcome your cultural inertia, one of the plagues of this continent - it is out of date in modern Africa!*

So the only correct term would be Vow of Virginity/Celibacy, lived with the grace of God in lifelong fidelity to His charisma. The unmarried, single Christian (their number is growing today also in Africa!) who has never taken any vow, is bound to the very same

sexual self-discipline, if he/she wants to be faithful to his/her Christian vocation, which includes the sixth and ninth commandments. Also in this capital matter there are no first-and second-class Christians!

2)

### THE VOW OF POVERTY

Such a vow adds to the hypocrisy and credibility gap with which religious life is observed by critical outsiders: Religious, especially in materially generally poor Africa, undoubtedly display collective wealth. They are seen to be wealthy, sometimes even scandalously so, side by side with the truly grinding misery of the countless destitute, also in Nairobi where they live mostly in the posh suburbs. Let us at least throw this offensive word away: in Africa no religious belongs to the



## Special Contribution

maskini! A vow of "Umaskini", have you heard a more grotesque lie?

"Maskini" is in all African vernaculars I know of an abject and negative term, whereas in Christian tradition, also under Franciscan impact, it has become a noble term implying simple, frugal, selfless, undemanding lifestyle even with voluntary deprivations, having always 'too many material goods, continuously to be gotten rid of'. "Who has two shirts, give one to the one with none!" I know that also African religious practice such individual selflessness, but collectively they display an atrociously different image!

The proper term in African speech would be something like "Solidarity with the have-nots, with the "watu wadogo-wadogo" who are treated as dirt by the powerful and wealthy. Religious are by profession to take the part of the underdogs, exploited, oppressed and marginalized in society. Do they in Africa? "Option for the miserably poor" was the rallying signal of the Vatican II spirit. Read Bellagamba's desperate lamentation about the non-existing echo of this conciliar Cry among the bourgeois Nairobi religious!

### 3) THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

I have again to laugh when I look at the gentle new greed of the generally dialogical and considerate religious Superiors who earnestly try to practice "I have come not to be served, but to serve", not like those "Gentiles who like to lord it over"! But how many laity, having never taken this vow, practice it daily, crunching under despotic and dictatorial bosses at their places of work, condemned to lifelong slavery at the risk of loosing their precious jobs? And how many wives have to suffer in Christian patience unbearably autocratic husbands day and night? I know of almost no religious who has to put up, for a short term of office, with a similar Superior: we are a privileged caste, no doubt! many laity with be far ahead of us in the heavenly places!

Furthermore, such "religious obedience" is usually

conceived in long outdated individualistic terms. It presupposes a Superior telling an inferior (is not this the corresponding term?) "Go, and he/she goes". "Come!, and he/she comes", "Do this! and he/she does it": truly military styles. But such times are hopefully gone for good in religious life. It is not in Vatican II style. Or are young African Superiors as autocratic as a past generation of whites?

So the proper wording today would be something like "a Vow of lifelong loyalty or fidelity to one's Institute under its legitimate leadership". And such authority would hopefully be excised in a dialogical manner, trying to find in communitarian consultation and discernment the will of God most beneficial to the community as well as to each of its members, all brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

4) May this cheeky Mzungu finally dare not formulate a fourth Vow, specific and counter-cultural to Africa? I would propose a Vow of taking responsible initiative. Here if anywhere much more courageous decisions for pastoral innovation, creative imagination, no longer "waiting for orders from above", seem to me to be urgently needed. We will only have a less conformist laity and less complacent religious (Bishop Ndingi was complaining: "Why do our seminaries produce such conformist seminarians?"), if initiative action "below", by each individual, is encouraged and honoured. Risk-taking unafraid of censure and failure, and all active virtues, need strong cultivation and education if we are to have that more mature Christian life in the local churches, of which there was so much talk at the African Synod...

Brothers, thanks for your patient hearing granted to this frank and impatient Mzungu who is in love with Africans, whether Christian or non-Christian.

Luigi Clerici  
(member of a Society of Apostolic Life, without vows)





## EVANGELIZATION

Commitment to Evangelization calls for a genuine belief to God's unconditional love in our lives. This is pivotal to our spiritual growth. What we call Catholic Evangelization as that wholeness in bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ in every human strata, human situation. The essence of evangelization is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ, and the response on our part, we who hear it.

We are a Pilgrim People called to become evangelizers. We need to be people of joy, enthusiasm, optimism, challenge, etc. As evangelizing people, we face challenges of the day and society. As we face the challenges of life, we need not to cry, but rather rejoice in the Lord and in the Good News. Reverence of the Lord Jesus in our hearts gives hope courage, and strength to carry on. The remedy of fear is hope: So we should refuse to give in, in despair. Our challenge is to respond in awareness and perfection about God's love. Our task today as evangelizers it to catch the generous spirit and enthusiasms Jesus had about bringing the message and reality of God's love to the whole world.

Each one of us has a story of faith to tell. If we do tell them, we will transform dreams into realities, by the power of the Most High. Conversion is a change in our lives which comes about by the power of the Holy Spirit and our cooperation with Him. People experience conversion in many different ways. Some experience it through renewal programs, marriage encounter, scripture studies, spiritual groups, etc. It is important on our part that we be converted first and be continually so, if we are to be genuine Catholic evangelizes. With confidence in God's Mercy, Love and healing forgive-

ness of the past, we must constantly examine how today, we can more effectively and more genuinely bring the Good News of Salvation into our lives, families, and in all areas of our human living. Be concerned, reach out, and do not let your career goal fall on your way. Evangelizing is in fact a street and vocation proper to the journey of faith. Proclaim Christ by living examples, witnessing to our Catholic lives with honest, truthfulness, faithfulness, love etc. Generate excitement and enthusiasms filled with joy and hope, as vehicles of evangelization.

We need to have new approaches to changing circumstances and life situations as we read the signs of the times. It is important to be very much aware of the obstacles, difficulties, and challenges involved in evangelization, especially in the areas of the dignity of family, collaborative ministries, decline in and of sacred life, value systems, etc. Evangelization must be the essence of our lives, for we are called to share Christ Jesus with all those we live with and meet in life. In order to be involved, in order to be effective Evangelizes, education and spiritual formation are necessary. We must make it our point that Catholic literacy in understanding our faith is necessary. It is of equal importance that an evangelizer has to have the qualities of humanity, hope, faith, love and endurance.

by: Rev. Kitira, CSSp,  
2015 Louisiana Ave,  
New Orleans, LA 70115-5294  
U.S.A.





## NATURE AND GRACE - AN UNDERSTANDING

The question of the nature and the mission of the Church is for me, a person who confesses Jesus Christ as Saviour of utmost importance. To ask, "what is my understanding of the nature and mission of the Church" is as basic as a person's understanding of his/her self, the nature and the origin of the person's family, his/her cultural background and the individual's national distinctiveness. I see this question therefore as dealing with the problem of identity. This question remains imperative since my own vocation and being are inseparably linked to the church's nature and mission. My understanding of the nature of the church is more in line with the tradition of the church and reflections from Scriptures in the following five aspects.

A) *The church as a people of God:* We are called to witness to God's coming and Christianize the present in the light of the future. (1 Pt. 2:9-10)

B) *The church as the body of Christ:* An invitation to reflect the Spiritual functional and the reality of the church.

C) *The church as the temple of the Holy Spirit:* For Paul, what makes the Church the Temple of the Holy Spirit is the fact that Spirit indwells there. (1 Cor.6:1-7)

D) *The Institutional nature of the Church:* The Church has specific activities, rites, roles and goals which gives her persistence and stability and which therefore distinguishes her from other social structures.

E) *The church as a building:* In which the faithful gather to worship God.

The above understanding of the church now sets a basis to begin a reflection on

what the CHURCH is all about and its mission. Reference to mission in this reflection implies a task and responsibility of every Christian and not just a few people in ecclesiastical circles. With our model of the Church being Christ himself, the mission of the Church must follow Christ's missionary strategy; He became flesh, dwelt among the human race and met people at the time of their greatest need. For the Church this should be a challenge to let the Gospel take roots in the life history and culture of those whom we have been called to evangelize. This has both to do with meeting the reality of a world fed up with foreignness, imperialism, and colonialism and is searching for life in terms of her own historical realities, and a God who meets his people in his son Jesus Christ as he makes Himself present through His Spirit in their own struggles, aspirations, failure and achievements. As God's instrument, the Church has been entrusted with an all-comprehensive mandate. She has been sent to witness to her "miraculous" origin. To "disciple" the nations of the earth by teaching them to observe whatever Christ commanded. As bodies that constitute the Church, we have been called to share with men and women personally and collectively the Good News per excellence!

This is for us a struggle for life and fulfillment that will promote a holistic vision of God's mission to the world.



*God is so good that He has not only given me a body,  
the Church, but also nature and grace*

God is so good that He has not only given me a body, the Church, but also nature and grace. While grace adds nothing to my existence, it raises me to a higher and unmerited level, a level where I attain the fullness of my being. But, how do I start



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moving towards the point of unity with God? This is where the church comes in. As natural as I am, I always seek some natural, tangible means to communicate with God. The church therefore has been inspired to use means that facilitate this communication by the use of sacraments as the efficacious instruments of grace. The instant I, as a Christian animated by faith allow the desire to receive a sacrament to well up within me, I put myself under the influence of the grace proper to that sacrament. In this light, all grace is sacramental because all grace implies to some extent the visibility of the Church. In the sacraments, the fruits of redemption are applied to me, I am granted grace within the sphere of the Church and its mission. This line of thought is reflected in Peter Fransen's book; '**Divine grace and man**'..... God's dwelling made to bear fruits in us in a visible experiential manner. At the same time it gathers us all into one people of God, both visible and invisible, the body of Christ, the Church...." By this action the Father prolongs the

work of redemption in Christ and in the power of the Spirit. And so the church has a purpose, a mission to reach all the ends of the world, to touch the hearts of men and women alike, to transform lives and gather all the peoples to God. I see this truth as a mirror or a call to holiness which sometimes entails self examination. I am aware that I have a potential for grace. That I am among those called to make this holy nation, the Kingdom of God. As I become more and more conscious of that, I realize too that I have been invited to proclaim, teach and witness to, without reduction or apology, the Kingdom to the whole of the human race. To strive for the integral growth of the Church, that all may experience God's salvation in Jesus Christ in their struggle for life everlasting, reconciliation, solidarity, Justice and dignity so that meaning can be given to the mission and nature of the Church - Amen! Alleluia!

by Alphonse Kizito

## SOCIAL MINISTRY IN MISSION

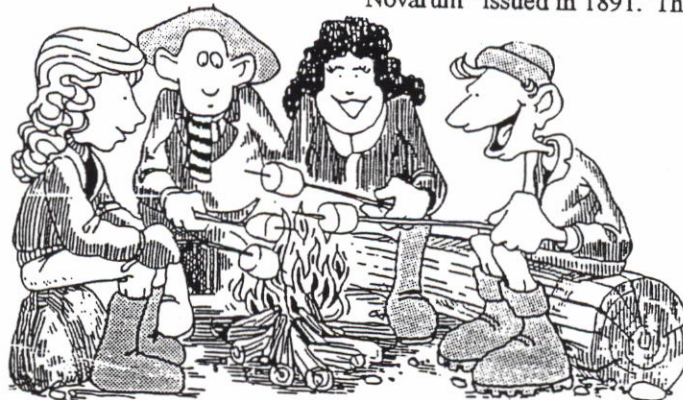
### A Tangaza programme for Brothers, Sisters and Lay Missionaries

#### 1. Emergence of Social Ministry

Bonhoeffer once wrote that Christian life nowadays cannot but have the following connotations: prayer and action for human beings based on justice; whatever is going to be staged in the Christian world should out-flow from prayer and commitment to justice. This conviction of the great Christian martyr of the Nazist regime,

executed on Hitler's order on April the 9th, 1945, could be summarize as profound transformation in the conscience of the Church over the last century.

Three years ago we celebrated the centenary of the first Encyclical letter on social problems: "Rerum Novarum" issued in 1891. This century is marked



.... *The aim of the course is to offer social, biblical, anthropological and theological foundations for the social ministry of brothers, sisters and lay-missionaries who work in missionary situations in Africa.....*

by tremendous acceleration on the deepening of the social awareness of the Christian communities. Not to mention other popes, the incumbent pope has already written three Encyclicals on the social problems of our times. For sure a great



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part of the credibility of the Church in the modern world depends on its relevance to the tremendous socio-cultural-economic challenges of our time.

In the pastoral constitution, "Gaudium et Spes", we find the ecclesiological foundation of social ministry, since it delineates a clear link between social ministry and the nature and mission of the Church. As Hehir says: "The view of the Council was that the specific mission of the Church is religious in its nature and purpose, yet that in pursuing this religious objective, the Church contributes to three socio-political objectives: \* protecting the dignity of the person; \* fostering the dignity of the human family; \* informing human activity with deeper meaning and purpose" (in New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol 17, 317).

The Synod of Bishops of 1971 explained in clear-cut language the relationship between the evangelizing task of the Church and its involvement in the pursuit of justice and peace. It did it in two articles of the document on "Justice and peace in the World". They read: "listening to the cry of those who suffer violence and are oppressed by unjust systems and structures, and hearing the appeal of the World that by its perversity contradicts the plan of its creator, we have shared our awareness of the Church's vocation to be present in the heart of the world by proclaiming the good news to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted. The hopes and forces which are moving the world in its very foundations are not foreign to the dynamism of the gospel, which through the power of the Holy Spirit frees men from personal sin and from its consequences in social life."

"The uncertainties of history and the painful convergence in the ascending path of the human community directs us to the sacred history; there God has revealed himself to us, and makes known to us, as it is brought progressively to realization, his plan of liberation and salvation which is once and for all fulfilled in the paschal mystery of Christ. Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."

### 2. Formation for social ministry

In this context, we can easily understand why what today is called social ministry should be considered an integral part of the pastoral action of the Church and even more so of its missionary service. Paul VI, mirroring the vision of the bishops of the fourth synod on "Evangelization in the modern world", wrote: "Between evangelization and human advancement - development and liberation - there are in fact profound links. These include **links of an anthropological order**, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but subject to social and economic questions. They also include **links in the theological order**, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man?" (EN 31).

Brooding over these thoughts, several Congregations present in Tangaza, felt that the time was ripe for the launching of a programme of formation for social ministry. Tangaza is a "Theological College of Religious", since many religious are involved in social ministry, such as brothers and sisters, besides a good number of lay-missionaries, a programme of this kind would have been very appropriate to the institution. CTC (Christ the Teacher Course), launched by the La Salle Brothers, highly appreciated and attended by many congregations and laity, prepares for teaching ministry. It cannot cater for other types of social ministries.

The decision was taken on the 12th of May 1994; the programme would start in August at the beginning of the scholastic year 1994-95. In spite of several difficulties the course is on and attended by 11 students, 10 brothers of four congregations (Comboni, Divine Word Missionaries, Marianists, Camillians and one sister (Incarnate Word Sisters).

The aim of the course is to offer social, biblical,



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anthropological and theological foundations for the social ministry of brothers, sisters and lay-missionaries who work in missionary situations in Africa within the context of the social activity of the Church in general and of local Christian communities (such as parishes, small Christian communities, hospital, agricultural projects, Maendeleo ya Wanawake...) in particular. The programme of the course aims at an adequate formation for such a task, keeping into account what the candidates should have already acquired through the previous years of formation, first and foremost a profession.

The course lasts two years; besides the theoretical formation at Tangaza, are also foreseen spells of experimentation in the field during long holiday and in the second year. We are trying to collect information on projects worth visiting, run both by the Church and also by NGO.

### 3. Requirements for admission:

- a: completed secondary education or equivalent;
- b: completed an adequate period of religious formation and professional training;
- c: recommended by appropriate religious superior or organization;
- d: passed entrance examination of English as required at Tangaza;

### 4. School programme:

The subjects were chosen taking into account two objectives: to further the personal formation of the candidates and to achieve a valid preparation for social ministry.

#### a) Completion of personal formation

- \* General psychology
- \* introduction to philosophical thinking
- \* Biblical and liturgical spirituality
- \* How to read the OT
- \* How to read the NT
- \* Christology: the person of Jesus.
- \* History of the charism of religious life, with special attention to the role of brothers and sisters in the field of development.

#### b) Formation for social ministry in Africa

- \* Essential Elements of missiological Anthro-

pology: the basic tools to grasp the meanings and symbols of cultures; to understand the issue of inculturation... which is essential also for development and liberation...cross-cultural communication.

\* Sociology: General sociology, to understand the society around us and to read the phenomena with critical eyes; sociology of development.

\* Theology of Creation: It is essential for a sound vision of development, liberation...ecology and mission; it will include also the theological value of human work and the role of man and woman in creation.

\* Ecclesiology: ministries in the Church: laity, religious (male and female) priests, ... and their complementarily in mission activity; organization of social work within the context of a parish, small Christian communities...

\* History of the Church in Africa: the evangelization of the Continent; the contribution given by the Church in the field of human promotion.

\* Christian Social Ethics: with emphasis on the social doctrine of the Church about Third World problems.

\* Theology of Mission: particular attention will be given to the phenomenology of the first proclamation of the word to non-Christians, and to cooperation with other religions in the field of human promotion.

\* History of development in Africa since independence, with focus on the causes of successes and failures.

\* Experimentation in the field..

### 5. Appeal of the bishops

Experimentation will help us improve the content and the method. Suggestions will be highly appreciated. To conclude with I would like to quote few lines from the message of the Amecea-Imbisa bishops in Rome for the "African Synod": "If at certain moments of history the Church appeared linked to unjust and oppressive regimes and may not always have spoken out against unjust situations where it should have or given the necessary guidance, the times have changed and we are convinced that we cannot just pass by today's injustices in silence. The Church will commit the sin of omission if it does not denounce the violation of human rights. The promotion of justice and peace is the basis for evangelization".

Fr. Francesco Pierli MCCJ



### "WE ARE BECAUSE THE CHURCH IS"

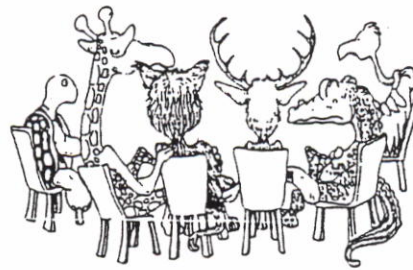
In a conversation with young people a question about the Church was raised and the following questions became a problem for them to answer, what is the Church? what is our relationship with the Church? Can the Church exist without me? and can I exist as a Christian without the Church? Well, this is a theological and ecclesial issue. I too believe that there are many people in our society who seem to understand the Church and Christian existence as two distinct things. It is therefore for us to ask ourselves and help others to ask themselves this questions "who are we as Christians and where do we belong?, who am I as a Christian and where do I belong:- a reflection for a wandering soul in search for its identity.

In an attempt to answer the above questions many people have tried to apply catechetical and dogmatic ideas which were presented

to them during catechuminate. I think that it is vital to understand that we cannot answer this question unless we understand the meaning and demands of Christian existence and vice versa. At the same time, we cannot understand Christian existence unless we understand the nature and the mission of the church itself, which cannot be understood also unless one understands the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, whose body the Church is. It is therefore evident that the question of the Church is our question as Christians.

If the question of the Church then is our question what is the Church? First of all the Church is not a thing (it), but a "she". She is a body of Christ, a community of Christian and a temple of the Holy Spirit - because she is the dwelling place for God. We are the Church because we make the community of Christians, and if we are the Church therefore, we are dwelling places for God in Spirit.

The Church as a body of Christ is a sacrament of Christ in a visible sense. Previously I mentioned the Church being a "she" because in a special way the Church is portrayed as a mother. Why a mother? Because she is a model educator, educating her children through her visibility in the Society. This mother who has been facing the current crisis is a suffering servant and a pilgrim, gradually progressing and growing towards a goal despite the persecutions and misinterpretations.



*We are the Church because  
we make the community of  
Christians .....*

The mission of our mother Church like the Mission of Christ is centred on the Kingdom of God, to proclaim the word, to educate her offsprings and to reach out to those who are left out. As a model educator she currently has a challenging mission and many areas to educate especially, reaching out to the frustrated single mothers, frustrated fatherless children and several orphans in our society. Many

people are in a state of dilemma, several parents are not ready to take the responsibility over their children. Children of the present century are wise and sensitive even when they are three years old. They attempt to confront people in the society with question which humiliate them, they put forth comments which the society cannot stomach: but they have the right to fight for their rights.

Cases of family life and irresponsible parenthood have become debatable issues on the streets, in bars, in the Church and everywhere in our society. Many children have gathered the courage to ask their mothers "mum, where is my dad?" Sometimes they have no courage to tell who the father is, and this affects them emotionally, psychologically and socially.

Recently during my apostolic experience of a standard five pupil. I was touched by the experience of one girl in the class who had problems in paying



'activity fee' balance. Almost 65% of the students in my class have a different idea of the concept "father". Asking her about her parents, she just talked of her mother who leaves home very early in the morning for "Kibarua". She seemed to know nothing of the existence of her "father" it is fine for people of good will to try and help in educating such people the importance of "responsible parenthood":

This is a real and a painful experience and I think it is a challenge for us members of Christian family to educate single mothers who are in desperate situations, to help the children and try to be mothers and fathers of those who feel exiled in their own communities. These are the demands of christian existence.

Sr. Lucia Mutuku CFCJ

## LISTEN TO THE POOR VOICES

Dear friends of Tangaza, It is with great pleasure that I have accepted the challenge posed to us by Fr. Clerici in one of our course, to write and share my or our positive pastoral experiences lived during the past long holidays and to invite others to live the same experience.

Baba! Baba! Baba!.... This is this the word pronounced by the people which re-sound to my ears when I re-think to my tough but beautiful months I lived in Korogocho. Fr. Alex likes to call this place and people "the underground of the history". And it is true! I hope, at least, that most of us had a chance to visit and see a slum here in Nairobi. You could truly realize that many a people living in awful conditions may be forgotten by almost everybody. Only the politicians "Sometimes remember them..."

Nairobi has almost 100 slums and out of 2:25 millions of inhabitants, 55% live in 5% of the land-slums!!! These slums are concentrated "other world".

Korogocho is a part of Kasarani division, in the Eastern sector of Nairobi and part of Kariobangi which corresponds with one of the six main slum areas of Nairobi. It is divided into different villages each of which grew independently at different times as a result of a policy

of demolition of slums and resettlement of squatters pursued by Nairobi City Council during the years 70s and 80s and recently as a result of urbanisation. According to the Census done in 1992 there is a population of almost 100.000 inhabitants.

People there live in densely packed mud-walled houses. There are very few open spaces or community facilities. However, the people regard it as their "home" despite the very poor living conditions. Only a minority have a regular income from wage employment. Incredible fantasy and creativity is the usual way of survival in Korogocho. For a great number of people life is exactly A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL.... Small scale activities, primarily hawking, petty commodity trading, artisans (jua kali) and small service, immoral activities such as prostitution, stealing and distilling of chang'aa.



The result is a life of precariousness, tensions and sufferings with an incredible exploitation. This analysis is more or less the same in other slums especially in Kibera where I have done my apostolate with a youth group during the weekends in the previous 2 years. The two have taught me their daily struggle in this human journey which is full of



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inhuman environment.

My desire and aspiration was "to live, understand and perceive" better the problems of this people not only from the sociological point of view but also from the human and spiritual sides. As Jesus and the Gospel may be True Broken Bread to feed the hunger of these people of God.

It is with these feeling that I asked to my superior to be allowed to live for 2 months in Korogocho with my friends and conferees. Our presence there was to share the life of the people and trying to make the church present as a sign of hope and solidarity. The main purpose is that today the priority for urban mission is a physical presence reaching out and sharing in the life of the people. They are convinced that the pastoral care from outside is no longer enough to understand the true reality; much less to make relevant contribution to the building of the church.

The pastoral motivation is the preaching of the Good News to the poor. Ales affirms this when he says that "if mission means announcing Jesus' Good News of Salvation to the poor, and the poorest of the poor are today living in the slums of the great cities especially in the poor countries, then the disciples of Jesus should be there.....". There community are truly open, called to minister to one another answering the needs of their 23 communities. Evangelization there is at both, the "Jumuia" and village levels covering all spheres of life.

They have Integral development in finding a simple methodology to help themselves: For instance, they have nursery and informal schools, feeding programme, adult education, batiks, baskets, necklaces, crosses and recycling garbage projects.

In these two months I tried to work with the Kindugu, (a new small christian community.) They are drunkards and once thieves who are trying to change their life by working hard. They work in small project carving wooden crosses during the week. They share Bible, and other activities at the end of the week. To me this was a challenge which I accepted with joy and I decided to continue with this apostolate every Saturday and Sunday. In many cases when we are sharing the Bible the people have a great power of listening to the word of God attentively and share it positively while applying it to their previous lives in an extraordinary way.

My experience is going on and I assure you that it is challenging and demanding but also full of joys, hopes, richness, trying to share what I am with these brother and sisters convinced that God has never forgotten them and continues to love them. I invite all of you to come, to see and stay even for your pastoral experience during your holidays. It is a place where you will find a deep humanity, struggle for a better life and many teaching for our Christian and religious life.

KARIBUNI!!!

Daniele Moschetti MCCJ.

## BUILDING AN ECUMENICAL ATTITUDE (An experience in Ethiopia)

When one hears the word "ecumenism", many thoughts - if any at all - may come to one's mind: experts in colorful cassocks meeting at some historical place; theologians publishing documents (hardly referred to afterwards!); baddies (the others!) who err, and goodies (ones's church!) who pilgrim...

These examples are partial. As a matter of fact, ecumenism is not so much the concern and the job of some elite within a given Christian denomination. It involve every baptized, trained or not, lay or cleric. Ecumenism is above all an attitude of liv-

ing one's Christian faith.

Ecumenism does not deal with feeling nice towards each other. It deals with facts: we, Christians, are divided! Look at the newspapers announcing the Sunday Services: how many denominations are listed under "Christian"!

Of course, one may be born a happy Catholic and die a happy Catholic without bothering much about the other Christian traditions. And that's fine with me!



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But it is not being Catholic according to the full sense of the word (Check in your Greek dictionary!) How can one limit the working of the Holy Spirit to he's tradition which is all together bounded by history and culture? Does one fence in God's action into one jurisdiction, say the Roman or the Anglican communion?

For once, some texts of the Magisterium are enlightening on that matter: "Concern for resorting unity pertains to the whole church faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone according to the potential of each ..." (Unitatis Redintegratio, n.5; 21 November 1964).

And again, some thirty years later, "those who are baptized in the name of Christ are, by that very fact, called to commit themselves to the search for unity (...) to live our Baptism is to be caught up in Christ's mission of making all things one" (Directory for the application of the Principles and Norms of Ecumenism, chap.I,n.22;25 March 1993).

But I believe that for one to enter into this vital movement of racing out to other Christian Churches, one needs to prepare oneself accordingly: the urgency of the matter does not allow messing around or de l'a peu pr'es!

My experience in the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia has helped me build this attitude of sincere openness. I would like to share with you.

For two years I lived in Ethiopia's northeast province called Tigray, bordering with Eritrea. Tigray is the historical cradle of modern day Ethiopia. The famous Axum kingdom was flourishing on its high mountains; one of the oldest African Christian Churches was founded there through the conversation of one of his kings. Since then, the Church has grown a genuine Christian tradition totally Ethiopian and fully apostolic: she has her own theology, spirituality, canons, liturgy, moral writings, hagiography, organization, etc.

When I arrived into Tigray, I met a Christian community very much alive, proud of her past and sure of her present-day stand. But history has made lasting scars and as a Catholic missionary, I was a member of the Catholic eparchy (diocese) of Addigrat of the Ethiopia rite.

The presence of the catholic church in the midst of the Orthodox Church appears as a non-sense. I was wondering why there should be two communities of Christians living together and bounded by the same rite, culture and history, but whose denomination is parting them into two churches? But I cannot remake history, and the fact is that now Ethiopian Catholics are born from two or three generations of Catholics.

But I made it clear to my confreres that I was going to study the Ethiopian Christian tradition from its Orthodox sources and not as the Catholic Church has adopted it.

This remark may sound flippant from my part! The point is that in Ethiopia today, within the Catholic Church, there are two rites, the Latin and the Ethiopian rite, side by side and dangerously slowing down the rapprochement with the Orthodox Church.

In other words, a missionary who comes to Ethiopia must ask himself/herself: have I come to expand the Roman Catholic Church through conversion to the Roman Catholic rite regardless of the local culture and history, or have I come to learn from the already existing tradition of the Church so as to immerse myself into it and become an agent of promoting, and if need be, assisting it?

The hard thing about getting into grip with it is that one has to learn languages, the local spoken language, tigrygna, an offspring of the second, liturgical language called geez. Similar to learning at Latin and Italian at the same time!

But then, as I took part to the Sunday mass, I could understand better the depth of Ethiopian theological thinking and appreciate it more and more. By participating in it, I grew in my love for it. And little by little, I experienced acceptance from the Orthodox local community, from the priests and the laity alike.

One old lady was telling me that now she knew that we were one in faith because I had bowed eight hundred sixty times or so on Holy Friday - (that was the reality)

This knowledge opened the way towards befriending the Christians themselves. Another phase of learning started for me: listening to the elder (and married!) priests telling me something about of the Gospel, of Jesus, of Mary...; listening to the young man proudly showing up his neck-cross and starting off on "these sects coming to disturb us"; listening to the housewife who offers me a



## Peoples at Tangaza

piece of bread after blessing it with the words of ancient geez prayers...

A new perspective of Christian living has opened up for me as I grew in my knowledge of Ethiopian Christianity.

Listening and learning, not only cultural facts or items, but a whole new and authentic way of being a Christian enriches for one's openness. It helps me not to fall asleep into my own tradition; it provides me with a wider and therefore more critical, approach to what Christianity means. It enlarges my mentality which naturally tends towards ecclesiastical complacency, self-centeredness and phariseism; it helps me to see God as always bigger than my own understanding.

It prompts me to search for the essentials in my Christian faith, and perhaps invite me to question my own tradition, too.

As far as the African Christian Church is concerned, there is a call for new models, new structures, new liturgies.

Of the many interventions made at the Synod for Africa, I would like to quote one of them made by Cardinal Achillea Silvestrini, in charge of the Oriental Churches Dicastery in Rome. He said: "they (the Ethiopian and Egyptian Churches) are significant models of the incarnation of the Church in the local culture. The Alexandrine tradition, in its spreading to Ethiopia, took on its own features, ever more deeply African. For this reason one must look back at this liturgical and disciplinary tradition which more naturally can even today those people who in neighboring areas choose to embrace the Christian faith.(...) Ecumenical dialogue (...) in the area must be reinforced (...)" (Osservatore Romano, n.18, 4 May 1994,p.6)

Ad meditandum....

By Thierry Shelling. M A.

## MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLE WITH AIDS

Medical methods have proved futile to deal with people with AIDS. But that doesn't mean that there is no other alternative to help people who are facing the problem of grief, guilt, fear and anxiety, pain and suffering, loss of meaning and purpose of life. This is an issue where a minister is supposed to integrate his theology and psychology to approach the problems in a wholistic manner. But to be able to express empathy and communicate well with client, it is prerequisite that a minister must have knowledge of self, so that he/she may be in a position to help others. Not only that, as a minister one needs know the feeling of the AIDS sufferers towards self - are they feeling guilt, or do they believe that they have been punished unjustly? Knowing that, one will be in a good position of knowing what to do in the particular situation and be able to use theological tools to heal rather than to wound.

It is essential to use expressions that do not stigmatize or blame people. Sometimes the poor approach has lead to many ministers being condemned as responsible for alienating AIDS sufferers by pointing a moral finger at them. Judge not (Mt. 7:1-3). Even worse, some church leaders have caused HIV positive people to loose their faith. I recall some words of one infected person who told me that he never

goes to church nor prays since he was declared a sinner in public by a priest when he went to address a meeting of youth in a certain church. As a public figure a minister needs to be very careful, otherwise, instead of bringing people together he may scatter them.

As a community of believers we are supposed to help the family unit accept these people. By this they will be able to help persons with AIDS accept themselves. People with AIDS are very sensitive about any suggestion about that they are to blame for their illness because many patients already carry a burden of guilt because of the feeling that they acquired the disease through promiscuous behaviour. This make them sensitive to blame, and they can bee deeply hurt by preachers who lay emphasis on sin and punishment.

Ministers are supposed to be selective on the language they use when dealing with these clients who need physical, emotional and spiritual care. I recall once doing my pastoral in Kenyatta Hospital in Nairobi. I went to visit my clients whom I knew were suffering from AIDS. Inside the ward I found a certain preacher speaking of the fruit of sin, and talking about AIDS in the manner which showed a



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complete lack of concern for the people with AIDS in the community she was addressing. Careless preachers have made many believers look at AIDS as punishment for sin, and they continue to spread these ideas, so people became afraid to come near AIDS sufferers forgetting that these people are sick, physically, spiritually and psychologically. They need help.

Not only that, some people even refuse to shake their hands with AIDS victims. In fact that simple act of not even greeting someone or pulling back your hand kills their spirit completely. To some people it seems very difficult to deal with these clients. I think it's more all less like dealing with or helping with cancer or patients who are in despair.

Such is the situation and we can still do something for them. Encourage them and let them know they have much to live for their life is still valuable. Let them experience from us that we love them and we really care for their life and do not condemn them as sinners. Encourage them to continue living and take part in daily activities as much as they can, in so far as it does not ruin their health, e.g. participating in social gatherings, sports and even some simple work. Remember that social alienation leads to deep depression and so we must be aware that these people are as much in need of social contact and support as anyone else. They need time and help to overcome feelings of fear, anxiety and anger. The

great achievement can be reached if we also pay attention to the relatives of the sick person who needs moral support as well, because the sickness affects all the people in the community. We can only truly be neighbours with AIDS people by proving our faith in action in our daily life. (Lk. 10:29-37. Jas. 2: 8:14-18).

AIDS seems to be the 'leprosy' of the contemporary world. Today for sure if Jesus came in our society he would do the same as in his own time - he reached out his hand and touched him (Mt. 8:1-3). What the gospel is trying to show to us is that Jesus' mercy is not limited to those who are sick physically but also offered to those who are emotionally troubled or who carry a burden of guilt. He is often around seeking all those who have been rejected by the community or those who are cast aside for moral stigmas, the tax collectors, the prostitutes and all who have gone against God's will. He said, "It is not the healthy who needs the doctor, but the sick" (Mt. 9:10-13).

These words of Jesus are full of implications for the whole church and his disciples in every part of the world, because AIDS victims are often regarded as untouchables. One patient told me that when he told his friends that he was HIV positive his friends avoided even shaking hands with him. Jesus put a challenge to the church of our time to be real neighbours for them, respect them, love and help them. Jesus is calling each of us today to respond to his mission - "Love of neighbours".

Ambrose Uhuru Chuwa. IC  
(Volunteer Counselor in Kenya Red Cross Community Care Centre)

## THE NEW CATECHISM

By affirming her confidence of being able to speak about God to all men, the Church defends her dialogue with other religions, and also with Philosophy and even with Unbelievers and Atheists. Our knowledge of God is limited and so our language about him must be



*Creature have truth, goodness and beauty*

equally so.

We have to take creatures as our starting point, when it comes to naming God, but more especially does man, who was created in the image and



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likeness of God. Creatures have truth, goodness and beauty. So they all reflect the infinite perfection of God. That is why we take creatures' perfection as our starting point, when it comes to naming God. Yet, God transcends all creatures. So, purifying our language of everything that is limited, is a continual process if we are to have a clear image of God.

Although he is the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable, our language

is using human modes of expression, but it does attain to God himself, while it is unable to express him in his infinite simplicity.

Between Creator and creature, assimilitude implies a greater dissimilitude. We cannot grasp what God is, but only what HE is not. Yet man is by nature and vocation a religious being.

By. David I. Ehimanre, SJ

## A MATATU THEOLOGY

Matatu No. 24 drove off the bus station.

My friend and I were pushed into the middle of that "manyanga." Compelled by our religious discipline "to be in time." We thought we would rather be crushed among the crowd than to wait in the queue. The matatu which can hardly carry 45 people now seemed to be carrying 70 to 75 people. I can hardly put both my feet down. I can hardly keep my head up too. I am a bit too tall for that "mathree".

I wonder, how some of my friends taller than me manage to travel by these matatus.

Amidst the heat of the human bodies around me, the smell of the sweat and the pain of the pressure my mind can still reflect ... (Infact the easiest way to escape form the agonizing reality is to think of something better.)

I observe the different people in the matatu, each in his/her own world.

The driver; He seems complacent, quite unaware of what it means to be in the crowd. (He reminds me of some of our Bishops).

He knows where he is going, where people want to go. But the situation of the common-folk matters very little to him. He is somehow responsible for the situation, however, he himself unaffected by the situation. He even seems to have a good time, he's smoking away.

The touts: the rough and tough guys, pushing people in, ordering, commanding ....

But they too are not among the rest of the crowd. They are near the door and having a lot of fun, they laugh on, and enjoy their job. (They are like some of our priests),

who command, order and preach to the people to do things. They themselves never know what it means to be in others' shoes.

And then those seated: The "Saved Christians". Complacent and satisfied, looking scornfully at the standees! They consider themselves the chosen few. And some of them mercilessly getting annoyed at those falling on them, as the vehicle swings left to right and back.

And finally the **Common Folk**:

(I am proud to be one of them, at least at this moment) helpless, silent, struggling, trying to survive. When will all this crowd get out, I wonder.

Nyayo Stadium, the touts continue adding. He adds, two or more victims to the over-flowing vehicle.

Wilson Airport, no one alights.

Barracks, no one moves.

Bomas of Kenya, 2 or 3 step down.

"Kuwinda!", the tout shouts aloud. A lot of them alight. There is some breathing space inside now.

And the matatu passes near Tangaza College, my *alma mater*.

But I shamefully wonder, in this "imported building", am I not doing an "imported theology"?

Every day in Tangaza how comfortable with my books, little aware of those people of Kuwinda in the neighborhood, much like the driver in the matatu. How am I going to be of use tomorrow when I stand at the pulpit and preach to my fellow travelers in this matatu.

Would my beautiful language make any sense?

This guy, my neighbour in the matatu, when he comes to the church on a Sunday after a week of struggle, mated-travelling being only



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the least (while for me this journey has been only an adventure, for him it is part of his *weltanschauung*) I speak of "love of neighbour", "grace of God", and all those jargons that Tangaza has poured in me. Will it make any sense to him?

While he has to constantly compete with his neighbour for survival - for a job, for a place in the matatu, at the numerous queues - when the other is a threat to his existence, should he love his neighbour? When he works so hard to get so little, While others who don't work live in comfort, (shamefully, I belong to the latter group) His sick wife on the one hand and his school-going children on the other....



*My friend and I were pushed into the middle of the "manyanga"*

Can he understand the love of God?  
OR what would he understand about salvation. I am sure there would be no hell in the after-life for that guy. For he has a lot of it already in this life.

My reflections became a prayer.  
Lord, what sin

did he commit to be struggling out there?

And what did I merit to be sitting here so comfortable? Help me to be a little kind to him at least when he steps on my foot in the matatu.

Help me, when I am engrossed with my theology books. Not to forget my fellow travellers in the matatu. And lord, forgive my indifference and complacency.

By Sahaya G. Selvam SDB

## "Do Teachers and Students really know where their horses are going?"

There was a time when god sent angels from heaven with an urgent message for man. He still does. A few months ago, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk came to Holland and one day walked into the house where I lived..... while he looked straight into my eyes he said: "there was a man on a horse galloping swiftly along the road. An old farmer standing in the fields, seeing him pass by called out, 'Hey Rider, Where are you going?' The rider turned around and shouted back, 'Don't ask me, just ask my horse!' (Creative Ministry, Doubleday & company, New York, 1978, p.3)

For many centuries, teaching has been the most universal and appreciated role both in our cultural and religious Ministries. But when we realize that today, teaching has become a highly complex process that prepares man for an even more complex society we might become receptive to the words of the Buddhist Monk. Education is not meaningful because of what is taught, but because of the nature of educational process itself. Perhaps we have paid too much attention to the content of teaching without realizing that the teaching relationship is the most important factor. In this context, teaching

can either be a violent or a redemptive process depending on how we do it.

Contrary to forming man's intellect and transmitting values, teaching can be the most vulnerable activity which by its nature is competitive, unilateral and alienating. You only need to walk during the last week of the semester on a college campus to pick up the mysterious A-B-C-D- and -F language that seems to be on everyone's lips. The worst part of it is to see a student celebrating over his or her fellow who has got a lower grade.

Underneath many methods of teaching is still the prevailing supposition that someone knows everything and that someone else is 'tabula rasa' and the whole game is to try to make one just or nearly as competent as the other. The aim of teaching is not to make photocopies: this is the work of the photocopying machine. The aim of teaching, I believe, is to evoke a meaning into one's life. It is to initiate insight and understanding through sharing of experiences and learning from one other. Perhaps no teacher can be a true teacher unless he is also a friend. In other words, when Christ said to



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his disciples: "I shall not call you servants anymore, but friends" (Jn.15:14), he became in truth their real teacher because all fear was overcome and real learning could begin.

Finally, if learning is in some way to be a preparation for the future, it should be one of actualizing rather than alienating. It should be expressed in our daily life. And

the teacher in trying to realize this, will discover that learning itself is a way of life that goes far beyond the classroom, that it creates new relationships that do not finish when students leave, that it is a process that asks for continuation and not limited by grades and degrees, and that it is a challenge to an ongoing renewal of one's formation and style of life.

By Aluvale, MCCJ

### Thieves : Pray For Them - Otunga

"Do not get angry for thieves, pray that they get converted and become good persons". His Eminence, Cardinal Michael Otunga, the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi, said this on Sunday 16th October 1994, at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church - Ruiru, where he confirmed about 45 adult Christians, and opened a newly built magnificent Parish Hall in a colourful eucharistic celebration.

In his half an hour sermon, carrying the theme, "Created in God's Image", His Eminence stressed

of money and wealth. The devil is moving around. Of course we need food, clothing plus other basic things for life but we need to realise the time wisdom and supremacy of God, the Creator." Otunga said.

The parish was also celebrating 800 years of their patron Saint St. Francis of Assisi, who is too the patron of Ecology. He lived in Italy in the 13th century. Cardinal Otunga praised the Maltese missionaries; the priests, sisters and brothers, who built and yet are working in Ruiru Parish.



*His Eminence  
Maurice Otunga*

much on family formation. He said, "no child ever believes that his or her mother/father can give poison to him or her. The child trusts the parents, and believes whatever they give is good". Pride, lies come from the devil, the enemy of Faith and Goodness. The devil deceives people with worldly wisdom and knowledge which empowers idol worship

"It is horrifying when living and working in such a parish yet thieves come to attack the priests, sisters, and brothers," Cardinal said. Referring to the past incidents of theft, Otunga said, thieves had attacked the priest in-charge of Ruiru Parish, the sisters convent and of late they attacked the brothers, took off with them the vehicle which is not yet recovered. Other similar incidents have happened in various places here in Kenya. "We are humans. We get angry. I get angry. Even the Pope gets angry. We want to act otherwise but we are Christians. Let us pray for these people (Thieves) to be touched by God's Spirit and change for better persons, in God's own image and goodness. Let us be united firmly, ready to do good". His Eminence emphasized.

"Is it possible to become saints?" The prelate asked the Christians fully parked in the Church. "Yes!, it is. We have already St. Francis, who was a human like us, others saints, martyrs, virgins and pastors, after a millennium of Christian Evangelization." "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect, but it is hard. It is only by God's grace that we are able". The Cardinal said.

By P.T. Kamau  
P.O. Box 24882  
NAIROBI



## MAKE GOOD USE OF YOUR LIBRARY

Some time ago a certain Kenyan told me that there was something called "a bad culture of reading" spreading fast like a bush fire across this continent. At the time I didn't really understand what she was talking about. Recently however, it dawned on me that there was some substance to what she was talking about. It is said that a good number of Africans and especially Kenyans (unless you prove me wrong) stop engaging in stimulative-intellectual reading after they graduate from college or university. They

literary throw their books under their beds because now they know it all! This is the reason for statements like, "Wow! thank God I finally got my degree no more books in my life again! "All the knowledge acquired in College begins to "decay" or turns into some sort of "relic" because it is not used or challenged by new concepts!

The reason why we have libraries I believe is so that those who search for wisdom will continue to do so even long after college years. That those who search for wisdom will continue to keep their minds stimulated by new ideas in the richness of libraries such as the one Tangaza is privileged to have. Recently, Tangaza Vision went on a fact finding mission in Tangaza Library. Mr. Gabriel Maina the head librarian availed some very important facts.

Currently, the library has about 24,000 volumes of books, 10,000 of which the college has acquired through donations. This is a pretty good acquisition compared to 55,000 volumes in Hekima Library. Thanks to our donors! He noted that the Library has a capacity of about 60,000 volumes. By the end of the year Tangaza Library could be having close to 25,000 volumes of books. As was seen, the library is up for expansion to create more readership.

In the survey carried out by Tangaza Vision it was ob-

vious that the library has a vast and varied collection of books on Theology. A question was raised concerning developing the non-theological section. Mr. Gabriel noted gladly that this was a section that was now growing slowly but steadily, with new acquisitions in fiction, literature, education and social studies.

He was very pleased however, that over the years the African section has grown to a notable size. For those interested in African studies here is a place for resource materials and other such interesting publications.



*Bad culture of reading!*



Why doesn't the Tangaza Library keep the daily newspapers? Over the years it has been argued that this was not necessary since different communities buy their own newspapers. The nature of Tangaza College is now showing that not everybody belongs to a religious community. Mr. Gabriel was quick to respond by saying that the matter would be further looked into in collaboration with the persons concerned to create a policy. Other than the provision of information, If well kept, newspapers could act as good reference materials.

While the library is growing as far as books are concerned, the space is becoming smaller and smaller. With the increasing number of students it was clear that the reading space will continue to be limited. Has the administration foreseen this problem?

In general, Tangaza Vision would like to commend the library staff for their exceptional work especially in assisting new students get acquainted with the library. Special thanks to the Library Staff for the difficult job of cataloguing, circulating books and re-shelving them. You take part in the development of Tangaza brains, keep it up! The facilities are here, the books are here. Let no one be converted to the "bad culture of reading." **Tipped Tip:** Our Library will be going High-Tech. Some hope to computerize the library - good news isn't it?

By Alphonse Kizito, FSC.



## Laughter

A Christian wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained thus; I have gone to Church for 30 years now, he wrote, and in that time I have heard something like 3 thousand sermons. But I cannot remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time, and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons anyway. This letter started a real fight in the "Letters to the editor" column. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this reply to it; "I've been married for 30 years now. In that time, my wife has cooked 32 thousand meals for me. But for my entire life, I cannot recall the menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals, I would be dead today".

by Joe Triphon C.S.Sp

A travelling preacher in a strange town asked a newspaper vendor the way to the post-office. The boy showed him the route and the preacher thanked him adding: "You seem to be a bright and courteous young man. How would you like to listen to my sermon this evening so that I may show you the way to heaven? "You are going to show me the way to heaven?" Said the boy, "While you do not know the way too the post-office."

by Joe Triphon C.S.Sp

During a court proceeding, the judge became so angry with a convict who had appeared in the court many times. Judge: "You should be ashamed of yourself. This is my sixth time to see you in this court." Convict: "You should be ashamed too! All this time I have always met you in this very court."

## What a Misfortune!

A man and his wife were not in good terms. They could only communicate through writing on pieces of paper. One day, the man was to chair an official meeting at 08.00 a.m. Before he went to bed the previous night, he wrote to his wife "Wake me up at 7.00a.m. tomorrow."

On the following day, the wife woke up at 6.00a.m. When it reached at 7.00 a.m., she wrote a note, "It is 7.00 a.m. Wake up!". She placed the note on the table beside the man's bed. The man slept until 9.00 a.m. and of course, he was late for the meeting. What a misfortune.

by Vincent Mang'ong'o MCCJ

## DEATH

*Why death?*

*So cruel it is taking both young and old  
The beloved and the despised  
Does not choose nationality or colour  
Neither can one run away from it*

*Death a mystery we must all face  
Go up the hills or deep in the valley. It will follow there  
I'll be smiling with you today  
Tomorrow I will be gone. Gone never to return  
My body will be as cold as steel. No more smiles  
Death will have taken that best of me  
But why death?*

*It takes all  
The popular and the unknown  
Kings and their subjects too  
Many of the friends and relatives that we knew  
Never to see them again on the surface of the earth  
It gives no signal or time  
It comes like a thief in the night  
Why death?*

*Sure enough  
It is the way to the new world  
But why death?  
Is there no other way?  
It's not like going abroad, where even after parting for a time we  
can still meet again on earth.  
Death takes never to bring back to the earth.  
Why death?*

*Yes, we have hope  
One day we shall meet  
But still we will be able to tell that, that one is Jane?  
How shall we know who is who?  
Shall we be able to recognize our dear ones?  
Why death?*

*Others lead and we follow  
No stories are brought back about where they go  
No book to read.  
Yet we have to fallow  
We have to reach there.  
Each day brings us closer to the grave  
Each minute reduces the minutes of our lives  
Who knows my day?  
Can't he tell me?  
My bag has to remain packed ready to go.  
Woe to me that death might come when I  
have just unpacked the bag  
why death?*

*Death. Death.  
Death you have no mercy  
You can wipe a family in one day  
You take a baby that has just been born  
You have taken the young who are strong and lively  
You take the middle-aged who have so  
much to attend to  
You take the old who want to sit back*



## Poets Corner

and review their lives  
Death, when shall you be satisfied?  
And why you death.

by Sr. Jane Frances Wanjiru L.S.S.J.

### ONLY A MOMENT

when a stone is thrown into a river it creates waves  
after a brief spell calmness returns  
Like a spark that shines its glow only for a moment  
Only moment a minute passes  
In the dead silence of the night the slums moans and groans  
with sounds of empty stomachs  
So is the piercing cry of a woman in labour another child  
is born  
Oh! heavens help the child there is a bad world out there.  
What will become of this child only slum boy  
A thief or gentleman oh! what a fate  
For he stands condemned by life  
But only a moment which outlives life pain and frustrations.

The child innocent laughter breaks the misery of this crazy  
world  
Oh! heavens help the girls that walk the street at night  
The boys that carries the gun at night  
A man who spends his money on alcohol  
For only a moment is the peace of mind in all life's frustration  
So is the oasis in the desert it is only for a moment

by Velaphi Mazibuko C.P.

### A SCREAMING BISHOP

I had a vision  
It was an apocalypse  
I was praying in the church  
As I was reciting the anticipation I heard a voice a voice  
coming from behind me which said and  
commanded me,  
"Look at the bishop's cathedra"  
My God I nearly sank into my shoes!  
Yes it was a terrible experience  
There sat a bishop  
the bishop I had known for years now  
was screaming. A screaming bishop  
But his screams couldn't be heard by the congregation praying  
there.

Again another voice in front of me asked whether I knew that I  
answered "how could I while it was a new experience to me?"  
"Yes" it said "days are coming when you will be seeing terrible  
things"  
But I was assured of a promising future I endured  
Again it added "the bishop screams as he sees a vision"

So he had a vision! What kind of a vision  
Yes a vision on different things happening to the church I  
asked "what are those things"  
The voice said, "He had seen a cross on which having a  
skeleton there are people who do things to destroy it  
One is holding a sword to cut the skeleton down

Yet the other is having an axe in his hand trying to cut down  
the cross  
Others mocking it  
Others taking no notice of it but they had to guard it anyway!

Worse still others are holding bribing torches in their hands  
trying to burn it down  
Again there are pieces of flesh and clothes scattered all over  
the place  
the flesh supposedly to be used to fill in the skeleton and cover  
it with the clothes  
Others had taken the robe and torn it distributed among  
themselves  
Yet again there is a woman and a man standing  
Standing under the cross trying to do something  
the man trying to avert the disasters  
the woman weeping bitterly"  
then the voice behind me said  
those are things that disturbed the bishop"

Then I asked "what do thy mean?"  
it answered  
"The skeletal crucifix shows Christianity without culture so it  
needs a culture  
Yes inculturation.  
It is to be inculturated in order to meet the people's expecta-  
tions  
The one with a sword represents Islamic assault on Christian-  
ity  
A man with an axe trying to cut it down represents secularism  
those making are those interested partners in Ecumenism

Taking no notice group represents the forgotten responsibili-  
ties on social justice and Evangelical mandate holding  
firewood on their hands are at least  
Yes atheists with their propaganda  
Pieces of flesh and clothes represent the elements of African  
Traditional Religions elements which will fit well to reshape  
Christianity with culture that is refilling the skeletal crucifix  
Those who had distributed the robe among themselves  
represent the  
African independent churches  
They had taken some elements of Christianity and gone their  
way with them.  
A man and a woman represent the Church  
then the voices said simultaneously to me  
"You are to do something"  
But I asked "who are you?"  
The voice in front of me said "I am what it is"  
and the one behind me said "I am what it should be"  
As I couldn't do anything I remained gazing at him  
until when the services ended  
I left the place disturbed as I understood that the African  
church was in agony  
YES THE AFRICAN CHURCH IS IN AGONY.

by Masui L.  
Ratco  
Box 321  
Tabora  
Tanzania



## Poets Corner

### CITY DWELLERS

by John K. Muthengi CP

My dear son  
Take for yourself this thin porridge  
And forget the horrible stench  
of urine and shit  
round our shanty paper house  
For your mother is a curse of life .....  
Dear son, just forget this smell  
And wash your feet from whatever you stepped on  
Son, lack of hope is death  
have some hope  
To see you through in life.

And this sukuma wiki, dear son  
Take  
Drink a mug of water  
You'll forget the sweet smell of food  
by the New Stanley Hotel  
which you smell s you loitered by the hotel  
Hoping that a kind person might sense  
the hunger in your stomach  
And know when you lastly saw a decent meal.

What?  
Please son, don't ask for meat  
Meat is too expensive.

Son, the way you looked at those people  
walking happily along Government Road  
Dressed in expensive clothes  
Their women wearing golden necklaces...  
Son the way you looked at those people  
That look drove me mad!  
What ran through your mind?  
What are you growing up to become?  
You know how much I'm chained here  
Tied against the metallic posts of eternal suffering  
down here in Mathare Valley  
This valley which God forgot  
Our only home on earth.

Take, dear son,  
This small sweet potato  
which I collected around Wakulima Market  
on my way back from my begging missions.  
As you eat it, dear son,  
Imagine eating many eggs; real fried for you  
Imagine, son, for real eggs are not meant for you.  
Take  
Sukuma wiki and half rotten potatoes  
And imagine they are Molo Lamb chops  
Accept and be content  
with what we get, dear son.

Remember, dear son,  
that real food and meals are not for us  
They belong to the people who won the earth  
We are squatters, son.

On this floor, which too belongs to the landlord,  
Sleep  
Upon this torn sack  
The cartons and the rags will give you comfort  
Son, when you fall asleep you'll forget  
The warm blankets and mattresses  
we saw in the shops of the Indians  
along Government Road.  
Sorry son, those things don't belong to us  
They are for the people who won the earth

We are squatters.

Don't listen please  
To that strange sound I make  
urinating in this basin  
I fear stepping out of this room  
It is too dark outside and it is raining  
And you know there are those who hunt us too  
It is dark  
and matches are too expensive  
Besides, what use are they in a dark rainy night?

Tomorrow son, you'll be free again  
TO wander the streets of this city  
Fighting for your survival  
Scavenging for your life in the dustbin  
Thank God for the garbage heaps  
We can't bellyacher.  
What you'll get edible from the bins  
Eat  
For tomorrow is a very bad day for us  
and you must save your life.  
In the evening God will drive you home  
As he would  
a lost cow into the kraal of its owner  
There'll still be this floor for us to sleep on  
This paper house here in Mathare Valley...  
It is the bedspread of our earthly life.

Don't bruise my heart son  
Don't pester me for good things  
Those belong to those who won the earth  
We are squatters.

Sleep well son.

dear God, our God  
Take my hands  
comfort my son as he grows up in this valley  
Hear my faint cry  
from my weary and sorrowful heart  
let me sing for you oh my God  
to the utmost of my voice  
Some day. One nice day...  
As for now I'm hungry and tired  
weary and worn out  
alone and single parent  
A woman in a the middle of a dark night  
I say God  
Sometimes the pain of living here  
Stings more than the pain of death.

A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO  
THERE WAS NEWS ON THE LOCAL DAILIES  
THE SHANTIES WERE DESTROYED  
THE TITLE ON ONE DAILY WAS  
"CLEANING UP CITY"  
Hee the prophecies of old are fulfill  
"the poor will always be with you..."  
or worse still  
"Those who don't have  
even the little they have  
will be taken away from them."  
You shake your head in disagreement  
This is gross exaggeration; you think  
for this is never on the news  
It is no news at all  
It is a way of life  
Accepted and supported by our society  
Does that sound like you and I?  
You wonder  
No wonder!



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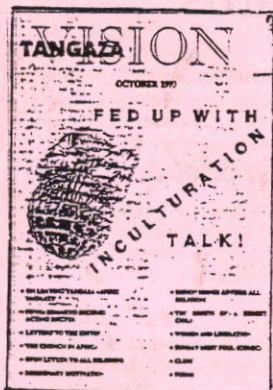
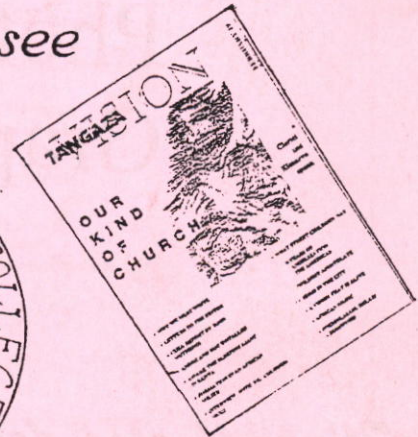
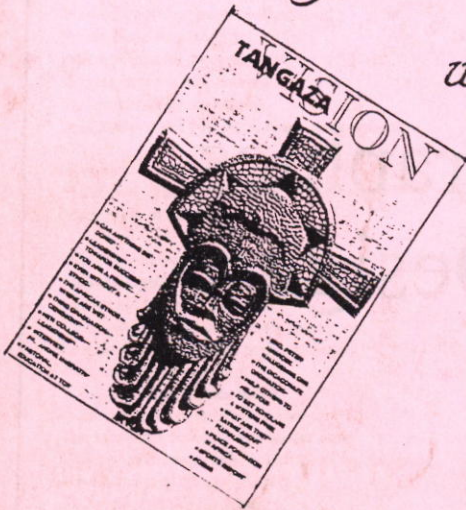
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