

"So When Will We Become a University?"



Dear members of the Tangaza Family, Lately I am asked several times per week, even several times per day: "When is Tangaza actually going to become a university?" In fact I am pleased by the question, because it shows a growing awareness of the transition, and eagerness for it. But my answer is probably disappointing, because it is not very specific. I'm often inclined to respond in the words of the hymn – "soon and very soon" – or even in the words of Jesus: "Stay awake, because you know not the day nor the hour"! The reality is that we seem to be very close, but we cannot predict precisely when it will happen. Tangaza has already submitted its application and fee to the Commission for University Education (CUE), but we are still putting the final touches on other documents that CUE requires, such as the proposed university charter, proposed statutes, and strategic plan. Those should be going to the Commission by the end of September or early October, if there are no further delays. Then we wait for the Commission to get back to us. They will almost certainly have points they want to negotiate or adjust in the documents. They

also need to come to Tangaza for on-site inspections. That will probably take a few months at least. Finally, once they approve and send the application on to the Cabinet Secretary, then we must get onto President Uhuru Kenyatta's calendar, since he is the one who comes and formally grants the charter making us a university. We are doing what we can to make sure he knows about us and our aspirations, but we can't predict the priorities of State House. Thus, if all goes well, we are anticipating that the charter will be granted during this academic year, probably sometime in the second semester. That would please me very much, because I would dearly love to see it happen before I sing my "Nunc Dimittis" and hand over the reins as I step down at the end of next June. We opened our doors in August 1986, and there would be a beautiful symmetry if we could begin the new academic year in August 2016 as "Tangaza University", on our 30th birthday. So we ask your continued prayers that the process goes well.

Steven Payne, OCD



The Church has changed much in the past decades. The Ecumenical Council celebrated in the Vatican in the early 1960s has been a turning point. The Church rediscovered the importance of the local community, the role of the laity, and the need for more collegiality. It is in this spirit that the Synod of Bishops was inaugurated. This is an important tool to make the voice of local Churches heard. In time, the Synod has been opened to experts and observers who were not Bishops. The latest novelty was introduced by Pope Francis who called a Synod on the Family and foresaw the celebration of this important meeting in two separate sessions. The first session gathered in Rome in October 2014 and discussed various issues regarding the family. That meeting of the Synod did not reach any conclusion but sent its final documentation back to local Churches throughout the world, asking each diocese to offer its input.

The second phase of the Synod is to take place in Rome in just a few weeks. The observations, reflections, proposals coming from the base will have great

import on the discussion of the Bishops. The voice of the laity, by far the greatest majority of the Body of Christ, will have a chance to reverberate in the Synod hall.

It is in this spirit of reflection and participation that Tangaza University College has organized a Conference on the Family in May 2015. The proceedings of that conference are now available in a book recently published thanks to the efforts of Dr Churu, our Deputy Principal, Fr Joseph of ISMM, and Mr. Jeketule Soko of the Research Department. All the material has also been sent to the steering committee preparing the Synod in Rome as one of the contributions of the Kenyan Church.

The book reports the words spoken at the conference. It was impossible to publish the participation and atmosphere of that meeting. All those who attended can be considered contributors. In fact, during the three-day conference we saw great



From the top clockwise: Fr. Orobator, the participants, the Marriage Encounter team with Mr. Jeketule, Fr Selvam and Mrs Nzangi.



Family Today

participation in engaging the presenters, deep sharing in group works, and clear commitment to family life. If one aspect did stand out, this is certainly the participation of the laity. The men and women of today are aware of the tremendous difficulties family life is facing. At the same time, there is also the awareness that it is all in our hands, and that it is possible to reach out and help those who seem to have lost their bearing in leading their families.

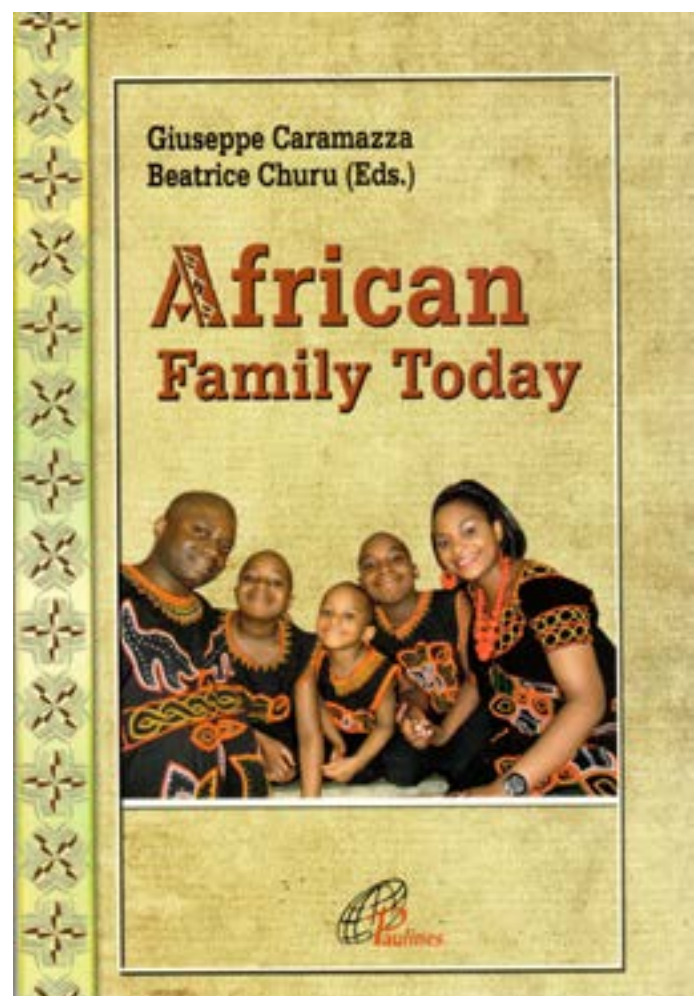
The Synod representatives will work and produce a document. Yet, the real work in favour of the family will take place here, on the ground. The family is continuously in peril. A growing secular culture, the wrong media messages, the volatile commitment



of people towards marriage these and other difficulties are there. However, in every period of history the family faced difficulties. It is part of the mission of the Church to support the family. It is part of our vocation as ministers, family members, parts of local Churches to work for the good of the family.

A positive aspect of the Conference held at Tangaza is the drive and commitment showed by participants. The family might be suffering, yet there is in the Church - and in parts of society - the will to create the right environment for people to build up good, nurturing families.

We are certain that the material published in this book will help a deeper reflection on the family. Pastoral agents and the laity alike will find here topics



that can be used in preparing workshops, round tables or catechetical meetings. As participants in the conference pointed out, there is much more to be included: from the question of formation of children to the inclusion of people with disabilities, from the role of Church's leaders to the preparation for marriage. Yet, a conference cannot possibly cover all aspects of family life. This realization will, we hope, translate into a renewed effort to continue the work the Synod has started and a continuous attention to the family, the building block of our society and of our faith community.

Different, therefore unequal!



Getting around is something many of us may take for granted. Stairs, sidewalk gratings, narrow passages, are barriers we walk over, around, or through many times a day. However, to those of us who have physical disabilities, stairs can be large barriers. In other words, physical features that people without physical disabilities take for granted can present serious problems for people with different abilities, simply because their needs have not been considered in designing those features.

Tangaza's quest to become a fully-fledged university has given motivation to the growing need to make this a universally accessible institution. This means an all-inclusive environment for all people including Persons

With Disabilities (PWD). This reality dawned on Tangaza's management when the Institute of Social Ministry planned for a conference on Persons with Disabilities to take place there.

On September 26, 2014, TUC got the opportunity to host a large group of PWDs. The one day conference brought together various Non-Governmental Organization's concerned with issues of disability under the theme "Persons with disabilities, a special gift to humanity". Over 500 persons, with a myriad of disabilities, attended the conference. This was a challenge to the facilities and environment afforded by TUC.

Motivated by this wakeup call, as well as the need to have a more inclusive environ-



The author on the main ramp to Imani house and with a student from the Institute of Social Communication near the elevator.

ment, TUC had to act. Immediately the college started planning and working to become an all-inclusive place. Extra ramps were built. The college canteen became accessible by those using wheelchair and crutches. Imani house building entrances were improved. It is now possible for physically challenged persons to move around in the compound and access most of the places. But a lot more need to be done.

It is important for us all to remember that an inclusive environment does not just mean accessible buildings, facilities, transport and other tangibles. Inclusion includes our attitude and behaviour. Tanzania benefits when we have a more inviting and accessible environment, and when we are more attentive to the needs of all.

Brenda Betty Kiema
(MA student, ISMM)

