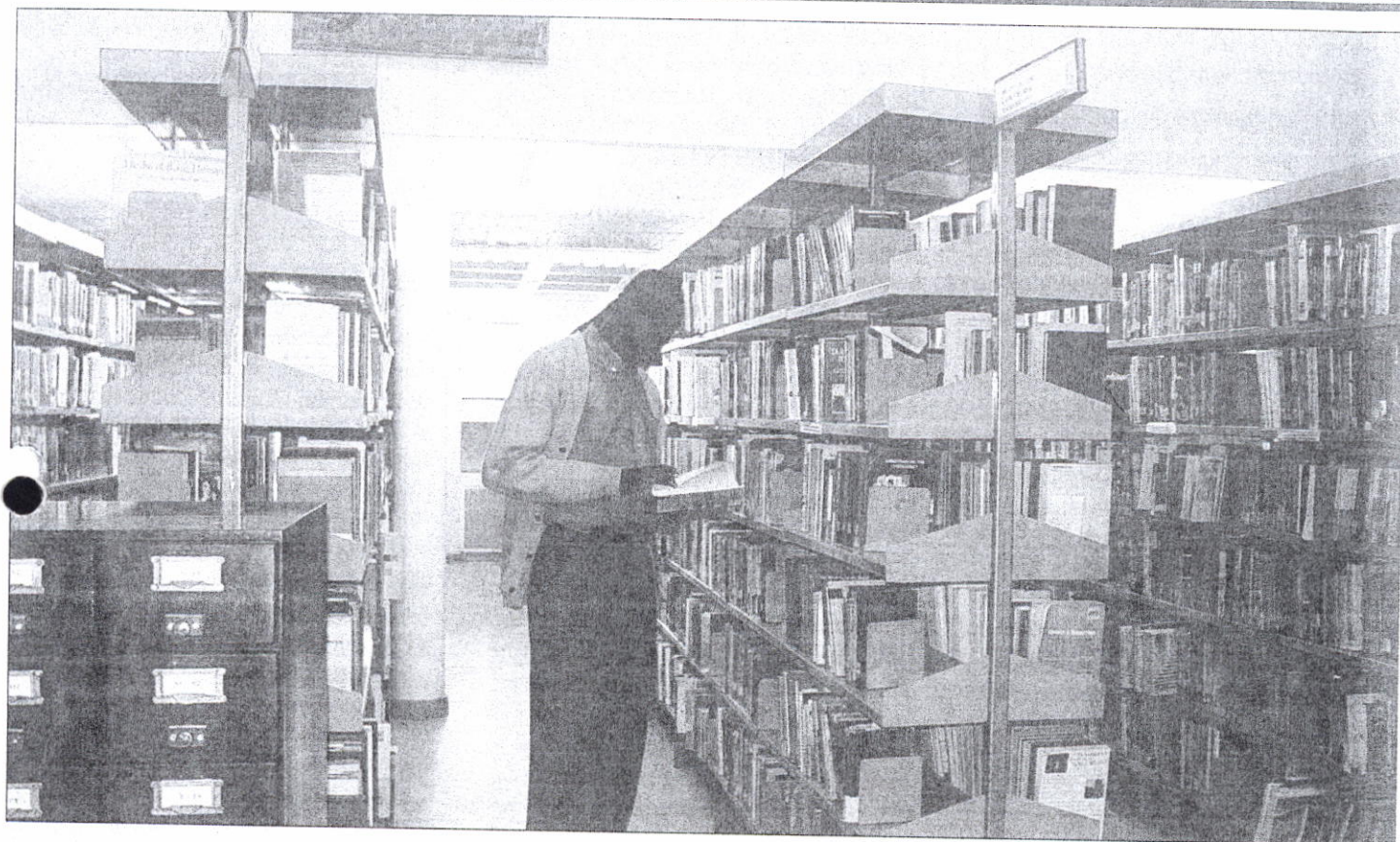




# Tangaza College

INAUGURAL ADDRESS 2004



*This year Tangaza College received from the Vincentians a very precious treasure - a very well kept library comprising of about 65,000 volumes. I am told that with that gift our Library is now one of the best for theological studies in Africa. The new Library would give us the essential sources for scientific research, especially at this stage of developing the Masters Programmes. This generous donation to the African Church, first of all makes me feel very grateful. At the same time it makes me take up with you a reflection on the importance and challenges of intellectual preparation and scientific research in the life of the Church and the challenges that we face here at Tangaza.*

## *For You I Study*

### *The Importance and Challenges of Intellectual Formation for Ministry*

#### OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND OUR HOPES

The Library will make more tangible and visible – of course to those who are willing to read – the Catholic Church's intellectual tradition, a tradition that predates and outshines much of the impoverished state of learning (=learning not for wisdom but for getting a paper qualification which will assure getting a good job) and of passing ideologies (of secularism, of rationalism and other "isms") that today stifle true growth in freedom and the development of the society. We, as future ministers of the Church in Africa, are challenged to discover the wealth of knowledge and wisdom of our human as well as Christian tradition, instead of shying away in our laziness and pragmatism. The sacrifices made by those gone before us and our benefactors in founding and sustaining this College are to help us to grow towards a mature Christianity, a Christianity that would be able to stand up to the challenges of contemporary societies, and assist each one of us to respond to our baptismal call to holiness and the demands of evangelization today.

As we study we carry within us great hopes. The Religious in formation, those preparing for priesthood and laity, hope to be transformed and better prepared for the ministry that they will be called to do; the lay students will be hoping to find the right person to marry and found a family with, and to find work that is satisfying as well as rewarding. And all of us hope that our life in this world will, in some way, even in a small way, bring about positive changes in society, in building a civilization of love and leading people to the author of life, God Himself.

*Principal's Inaugural Address 2004*

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We will then be busy teaching and forming young minds, taking care of the sick, uplifting the poor, and engaged in handing on faith to future generations.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* addressed to all religious called for renewed and loving commitment to the intellectual life as an integral part of the experience of life in the Spirit and the condition for apostolic efficacy. The following text has been frequently quoted, but it will do no harm to hear it again: "In addition to the service of others, within the consecrated life itself there is need for a *renewed and loving commitment to the intellectual life*, for dedication to study as a means of integral formation and as a path of asceticism which is extraordinarily timely, in the face of present-day cultural diversity. A lessened commitment to study can have grave consequences for the apostolate, by giving rise to a sense of marginalization and inferiority, or encouraging superficiality and rash initiatives" (VC 98).

#### "FOR YOU I STUDY"

Saint John Bosco, the founder of the Salesians (please allow me to quote him) had a beautiful phrase to tell his young people: "For you I study". He was fully right. Our studies are not only for my

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personal growth and success, but also "for you", that is, for a life of commitment on behalf of the other. Our study is to help us to be effective ministers (servants) to the other. Indeed, poor ministerial preparation represents a special danger in our society where education in other areas is fast advancing, and the society is interacting with so many external sources challenging it with new thoughts and ways of life. Here in Kenya, we are confronted by the phenomena of globalization, fast changes in our traditional societies, bombardment of information through new technologies of communication, the menace of HIV/AIDS, broken families and related challenges. We read about, and at times even live with violence, crime, injustice, oppression and exploitation of the weak, abortions, sexual immorality, child abuse, racism, the breakdown of marriage, alcoholism and drug abuse, irreligion, abuse of environment – the list could be continued. That is where our people are and where the Church's mission is. Every time *we consider ourselves with respect to our mission*, we are reaffirmed in our conviction that Church's mission is very much impossible today without adequate intellectual preparation; the pressures, demands and expectations of ministry make it quite clear that we must make ourselves more competent to fulfil this complex mission in all its possibilities.

There is no doubt that today, **to be pastors and ministers require greater competence in specific matters**, acquired to a sufficient degree and then followed up by updating and deepening, and a more professional performance of ministerial tasks. Formation of consciences, the Christian animation of communities, the presentation of the Word of God in its true meaning and application to current human situations, the shedding of light on ethical questions, presentation of the Gospel, formation to prayer and celebration, and orientation to the experience of God – all these are things which require heart, fervour and true wisdom acquired through reflection and study.

Acquisition of knowledge and wisdom is necessary in the **new dimensions of pastoral work and ministerial service** which have become practically universal today: ecumenism, dialogue with people of other religions and with non-

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believers, the use of social communication which becomes a pulpit at everyone's disposal, presenting the Catholic doctrinal and moral teachings in the face of at times concerted opposition to them, and participation in public discussions on contemporary questions.

Pastoral and ministerial work is more than organization and immediate action; it includes also the options to be made as a Christian community and the directions to be suggested to individuals in the complex situations of life, and hence an **ability for discernment, enlightenment and clarification**. Besides, the living witness of Christian life - the ability to live consciously the Christian faith, to bear witness to it with joy, and also to speak up in the modern *areopagi* and proclaim Jesus Christ in all his richness - is hard to come by without a serious intellectual formation consisting of study, research and reflection.

What is true of the pastoral sector is also true for the **work of new evangelisation** of the mission-sending communities and in communities actively involved in **inculturating their religious charism**. In the new contexts of Africa in which we are becoming inserted with our missionary spirit and charism, there is an urgently felt need to overcome the simple transposition of contents and methods designed for other areas, and work towards a true inculturation and quality. Both inculturation and quality, call for dedication to study by centres of study and reflection such as Tangaza. Tangaza would remain barren, if its students do not commit to such a persuasion. Here the ancient and great Christian schools of Antioch and Alexandria and their attempts of inculturating and planting Christian faith can be very much inspirational to those who study their very successful experiments

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### STUDY OF THEOLOGY

Majority of you dear students are students of theology. A good number of students are preparing themselves to be spiritual guides and formators. The rest too have many courses with a theological bias. All of us will be engaged in living and handing on the faith. These facts urge me to make a few observations on the study of theology.

First of all let me state that study of theology is very different from the study of other sciences. Theological study is *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding). It presupposes that both the students (and professors) have an **active living faith**, and understand very well that theological study is not an end in itself but is **at the service of faith/Gospel/mission/salvation**. Theology shouldn't be reduced to religious sociology, or a social science where either **the faith or ecclesial character of theology** is ignored or neglected.

This means that the study of theology presupposes in the student a necessary conditioning of a spiritual and existential context characterised by the theological virtues. If one has no religious experience, if a person is not living a life of virtue founded on faith, hope and charity, then he/she cannot "engage in theology" in the proper sense. Major problems arise in theological schools such as ours when some of the students who are doing theology are there "to satisfy a condition to be ordained" or when some of the teachers have not understood and taken in the faith and ecclesial dimensions of theology. The greatest theological minds, right from the beginning of the Church, spoke

of the bond between the three laws that should govern Christian life, *lex orandi*, *lex credendi* and *lex vivendi*, and Christian theology. Theological studies should be in a symphony of all the three: of prayer, faith and life. Good theologians are people of deep prayer, and persons committed to a virtuous life in the society they live.

The importance and quality of intellectual formation for ordained ministry was well-stressed by *Pastores dabo vobis*: "If we expect every Christian – the Synod Fathers write – to be prepared to make a defence of the faith and to account for the hope that is in us (cf. 1 Pet 3,15), then all the more should candidates for the priesthood and priests have diligent care of the quality of their intellectual formation in their educational and pastoral activity. For the salvation of their brothers and sisters they should seek an ever deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries'... [The present situation] strongly demands a high level of intellectual formation, such as will enable priests to proclaim, in a context like this, the changeless Gospel of Christ and to make it credible to the legitimate demands of human reason" (PDV 51, which takes up *Propositio* 26 of the Synodal Fathers).

The responsibility of a serious intellectual commitment is not only of the students but of the teachers as well. "It is necessary", declares the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, "to oppose firmly the tendency to play down the seriousness of studies and the commitment to them. This tendency is showing itself in certain spheres of the Church, also as a consequence of the insufficient and defective basic education of students beginning the philosophical and theological curriculum. The very situation of the Church today demands increasingly that teachers be truly able to face the complexity of the times and that they be in a position to face competently, with clarity and deep reasoning, the questions about meaning which are put by the people of today, questions which can only receive full and definitive reply in the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (PDV 56). It is our hope that teachers at Tangaza College continue to be attentive readers of the "signs of the times" and the "hopes and anxieties" of the people of Kenya and Africa; that they will initiate the students

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to a life of theological and ministerial engagement; besides, through their research and witness of life they be people responding to the challenges of our students.

What is true of the formation of ordained ministers is also, to some extent, true for all the other students. We are all preparing for ministry, and Christian ministry entails an ongoing theological reflection and discernment. Indeed, the programmes offered by Tangaza complement each other, and the theological content is important for each them. Theology needs spirituality and other specialisations since without them theology is just another ideology. Spirituality needs theology since without it spirituality will turn to be spiritism or subjectivism. Social Ministry and Youth Ministry without theological content is mere philanthropy. Education, Social Communication and African Studies without a ministerial dimension is preparing one for a career only. Hence, due weight to the theological courses and the capacity to make constant reference to Jesus Christ and his message is a must for every one. I know most of the Directors of the Institutes insist upon this with their staff and students, even when the nature of the programme is not strictly theological. Today I would like to encourage them in that. Tangaza College is not a nondenominational or secular college. It is a College

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## Tangaza College...

... welcomes all first years students, new faculty members and other staff and wishes them a very happy and fruitful experience.

... thanks the Vincentians for the gift of their Mary Immaculate Library.

... welcomes Br. Alberto Parise, mcccj as a director of the Institute of Social Ministry.

... introduces Mr. Norman D'Souza as the Deputy Principal Finance

... wishes speedy recovery to Fr. Francesco Pierli, mcccj and hopes that he will be able to return to Tangaza soon.

... announces the construction of the student hostel for women in the near future.

... supports fully Fr. Agostino Bertolotti, mcccj and the library staff in their setting up of the Mary Immaculate Library.

... looks forward to the beginning of the Masters Programme in Theology under the able leadership of Fr. Fernando Domingues, mcccj.

... celebrates with *Amani* Counselling Centre twenty five years of dedicated services in Kenya.

... hopes and prays that the Sharing Days for Administrators and Directors (28- 29 August) be a time of evaluation and planning.

... awaits the CUEA Graduation on the first of October 2004.

... eagerly awaits Inter-Institutes symposium 2004 (29 - 30 October from 2.00 pm).

... wishes everyone a very fruitful academic year 2004 - 2005.

<http://www.tangaza.org>

We pray to the Virgin Mother of Jesus to make this College, an instrument of sapiential and scientific learning capable of founding and consolidating the whole edifice of the academic and pastoral formation of future presbyters and ministers.



life of total commitment and consecration to God. That nature and identity should not be sacrificed for any reason whatsoever. Here it won't be out of place or context to quote a section from the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990) where the Holy Father outlines the essential characteristics of being "Catholic". Catholic Colleges are characterised by:

1. A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;
4. An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life"(n. 13).

Dear students, lecturers, administrative and supportive staff, as I welcome you to Tangaza College at the beginning of this academic year, we commit ourselves to that essential mission of the College that constitutes its inspiration and profound *raison d'être*. We continue to pray to the Virgin Mother of Jesus to make this College, an instrument of sapiential and scientific learning capable of founding and consolidating the whole edifice of the academic and pastoral formation of future presbyters and ministers.

**FR. GEORGE KOCHOLICKAL, SDB**  
Principal, Tangaza College  
(August 16, 2004)