

Malezi Kenya

NEWSLETTER OF ORIENTATION YEAR STUDENTS: REDEMPTORIST VOL. 1 ISSUE:1 MARCH 2013

From the Director's Desk



Dear confreres and friends, Greetings and love from Kenya. We are indeed very happy to communicate with you through this news letter. It is a simple effort to involve us to be part of the global Alphonsian family. May the spirit of Alphonsus continue to untie us in our call and mission.

The ability to use the Freedom, to make good Choices with Responsibility is what we aim in human formation. If this basic foundation is not laid then any amount of scholastic formation may not do any good in our Religious formation. As a young formator I understand integration of Freedom and Responsibility is not an easy task because integration demands discipline, commitment, and good will. Experience shows that it is not easy for a young student in formation to integrate without much discipline, commitment and good will.

In this process of integration one may unfold many conflicts within oneself, as one comes to face the real self. In this journey of unfolding one grows to be a better person. It's a time when

one breaks the cocoon to realize ones own beauty.

In the process of integration one person alone can never bring a whole lot of varieties into the lives of many. But surely it is possible to add more tastes and colours to the lives of many, when many hands come together for this purpose. I am grateful for the many hands that have helped me to bring variety to our orientation year programme.

We decided to call this news letter "Malezi Kenya". "Malezi Kenya" literally means upbringing in Kenya. "Malezi Kenya" is a humble beginning for the orientation year students in Kenya to unfold the beauty that lies within.

Christ the Master who perfectly integrated His own personality remains victorious today. He is risen from the dead and has broken the cocoon of human limitations. Let us rejoice that the Lord is Risen! May the peace and joy of the Risen Lord fill your hearts and minds forever and ever.

Fr. Christopher CSsR
(Orientation Year Director).



**THE LORD IS
RISEN
ALLELUIA!**



“Hit by a shock”

In this year of “Faith”, the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI was a faith-shaking event. Before Jesus Christ Ascended into heaven He entrusted authority over the Church to Peter (the Rock), who thus became the First Pope of the Catholic Church. Ever since, this custodian of the Catholic Church was in charge of the faithful until his death.

As a simple student of orientation year I was hit by a snag on 11th February 2013. This experience can not be erased from my life. That day I was bubbling with questions and restlessness in my heart and mind, I could not follow the timetable and go for garden work. I was very much interested to hear more about the resignation of the Pope. It was through the windows of our priests’ common room that I happened to hear about our dear Pope Benedict XVI’s decision to renounce his Ministry as Bishop of Rome as well as the Custodian of the Catholic Church. I remained numb for a while and many questions came to my mind.

But! Why? Is it not a mistake? Is it not disheartening to the entire Catholic Church? He is the one who announced this year as the “year of Faith” for the entire pilgrim Church. Now it appears he lacks faith in God who anointed him for the job.

These and other questions made my mind restless. my soul was consoled by one of our priests. He told me that what pope did was a wise act since his health was not favouring him for his Petrine ministry.

My tiny mind could not understand the reason behind all these. My reason could not go far beyond. At that time nothing came to my mind except the call of Mary our Mother, and the Call of Peter the Rock. Both of them had been chosen by God the Father in order to reveal His love for us. And both of them had great faith in God.

I have a great hope for the entire church. It is in our human weaknesses God’s face is seen clearly. God manifests himself in human frailty just like in the life of Mary and Peter. Perhaps this is a time of God’s Grace. To experience it, let us keep believing.

Bro. Cyprian.



But! Why? Is it not a Mistake? Is it not disheartening the entire Catholic Church ?



A Journey within Myself in Formation



What should I know in Formation? I think the critical question is answered by the beautiful saying of the great philosopher Socrates "Man Know Thy Self". Yes I should know my own self in order to be formed. In this process of knowing my own self, I came across many challenges. I would like to tell you a few important challenges that I faced in my initial stage of formation.

**"In every heart there is a thirst to be a favorite...
A thirst for Recognition..
A thirst for acceptance ..."**

At First, the community that I am in consists of several personalities with various backgrounds. They are from Kenya, from abroad and some are even from my own tribe. I could see in me and in others a thirst for favours... a thirst for acceptance... a thirst for recognition... from our own minded people or priests or even from the formator. And it is very natural for a young formee to feel or seek for them. Indeed most of the time favouritism disappointed me to a larger extent, because I was not favoured. Thus it brought me to an insight. Does my worth disappear because I am not accepted? Instead of getting into my own cocoon it allowed me to grow to a great extent in my vocation.

Secondly, as I walk on a free day down the street, there are so

many girls who want to talk to me. A seminarian does not need to use the best words to impress a girl; on the contrary the girls try to impress him. Some of us are looking for attention yet we don't get it. Some don't need it, yet it is on their way. It is the irony of life. Is not that going against the current that makes life active? But more than that this journey within me in the formation tells me, God is madly in love with me and this makes me to move. Our God never remained on the ground for long instead He walked towards fulfilling the will of the Father. So I am ready to walk in the path of God in Religious life.

Thirdly, I do not have a better moral behavior than what the society that I come from has. But how come! The moment I entered into religious life as an aspirant I am highly expected to have very good moral behaviour. Are they not a challenge for a person of my age to cultivate and shape them? Indeed they are! I am on my way...!

Fourthly, Can you imagine of somebody's experience, who has gone through an international university? Perhaps that person could have come across many kinds of people with different levels of abilities, and with various degrees of motivations. I think it is the same for me in the seminary. It consists of people from different parts of the country. And all these seminarians have been





“ I Don’t have a better moral behavior than what the society that I come from has.”

brought up from different cultural backgrounds. Each one tries to show his culture as the best in this primitive stage of formation. Sure enough we lack co-operation in fulfilling our responsibilities and our commitments, which may demoralize community life. Therefore de-programming of mind is very essential in order to be formed. I think this is a great challenge the formation faces as it follows the footsteps of Christ.

How many hours do you think you need to pray? In introduction to philosophy, we are taught that God is not bound by time, he has no boundary.

But in spirituality we are taught to pray at various times. Imagine how hard it is to come out of your warm blanket in the morning and pray.

It is very tempting not to come out of our comfort zones. What moves me to go forward with all these challenges is nothing but prayer. Prayer is the key to everything. All these may not reflect a profound enlightenment in my life yet they are a sure step for me to be enlightened with the love of God. Let the Risen Lord’s Peace and Joy fill the hearts of his faithful.

Bro. Collins.



A Quick Flash Back: Orientation Year House in Kenya.

Our pioneers in Kenya have found a place in the pages of the history of our Congregation. A history which is written should never go unnoticed. Therefore I would like to flash the light on the history of our Kenya mission for a while.

It was in the year 1987 Late Fr. A. J. Francis visited Kenya for some apostolic work. During this time he met Cardinal Otunga of Nairobi (Now honored as the savant of God) and Bishop Njiru of Meru diocese. As a result the Cardinal and the Bishop of Meru wrote to then provincial Fr. Peter de Sousa (Bangalore province) requesting to start a foundation of our congregation in their respective dioceses. (A Report on Kenya compiled by: Frs. Peter de Sousa and Antonio Rodrigues, India: 1989).



Our Mother House at Iruma



*** The Holy Redeemer Parish was established at Iruma on 26th April 1991.**

*** The First Canonical House was erected at Iruma on 5th May 1992.**

Starting a mission in Kenya got more attraction and preference in the second session of the Chapter in 1988 than starting it in South Korea, which was proposed by Fr. General. It was in accordance with the suggestion of Fr. General, Fr. Peter de Sousa and Fr. Antonio Rodrigues took the responsibility of collecting the data about mission in Kenya. In their visit to Kenya in August 1989, they visited several parishes and institutions and collected enough and more information regarding the life style of people in Kenya. It is fitting to make a note of one of their impressions, which they wrote in their report, "There is a real hunger for the word of God and for the Sacraments which the people feel deprived off." I do agree fully with this even now

On 14th Oct 1990 the first three Indian Redemptorists Namely, Fr. Patrick D' Souza, Fr. Albertus Toppo CSsR and Fr. Gnanam CSsR arrived in the Diocese of Meru in Kenya by-passing Nairobi, the capital city. It was a proud moment for the Bangalore province as well as for the entire congregation. Meru is one the four oldest dioceses of Kenya. It is situated in the highlands about three hours by car from the capital city. It comes under the eastern province of Kenya.

The hard work of the three pioneers in this mission within seven months gave birth to the

parish called "The Holy Redeemer Parish" at Iruma. It was separated from the mother parish at Igoji in the Diocese of Meru on 26th April 1991. Late Fr. Patrick D' Souza CSsR. was appointed the first parish priest, and Fr. Joseph Gnanam CSsR, and Albertus Toppo CSsR, assistants. In fact it was a decisive moment in the history of Kenya mission. The first canonical House was erected on 5th May 1992 at Iruma which could be the second significant event in the history of Kenya mission. Since then this is our mother house in Kenya.

For the next five years the fathers were fully occupied preaching the word of God for various groups of people throughout the country, to satisfy the hunger of the people for the word of God.

The year 1997 was yet another blessing for the mission in Kenya because the fathers had started the formation programme for the future sons of St. Alphonsus in the form of Orientation year at Iruma. The community at Iruma had appointed Fr. David Raju as the Director of Orientation year until the provincial visitation took place. (Community meeting 27/05/1997).



When Fr. Mervin took charge of the orientation year in 1998 there were four young men in the formation.

The first batch of students went to Harare, Zimbabwe for a year of catechetical programme in the year 1999. The First batch of Kenyan orientation year students began their philosophical studies at Harare in Zimbabwe in the year 2000. They were accompanied by Fr. David R.

The structures for the Formation programme for orientation year was entrusted to Fr. Mervin Victor who brought with him his experience of a Formator in India.

African culture was taken into consideration in this stage of formation. It may not have been easy for Fr. Mervin to do this as he was new to Africa. All Formators need to keep this in mind that Formation from the very beginning has a dimension of inculturation. (Report of the provincial Canonical Visitation of Iruma, Meru, Kenya from 10th to 12th October 1998.)

Since then 10 groups of Orientation year students have passed through this mother house at Iruma. There were years when this mother house suffered without having a formee. We have the 11th batch of students this year. So far we have six Kenyan Priests in this

Mission.

The purpose of the Orientation Year is Four- Fold:

1) To give the candidate an initial training and a foretaste of vowed life and the Redemptorist Mission. (Const. 84, 85, G. St. 057).

2) To create an awareness in the candidates of the presence of the economically poor and socially Oppressed and instill a desire for solidarity with them with a view to bringing the Good News to them.

3) To lead the Candidates to an Experiential understanding of our religion and deepening of faith through Catechesis as spelt out by the Synod (1995) on Africa.

4) To offer the Candidates an adequate knowledge of the English language so that they will be able to freely communicate in it and be able to do further ecclesiastical and secular studies through the medium of English. (Report of the provincial Canonical Visitation of Iruma, Meru, Kenya from 10th to 12th October 1998)

It is important to recognize that a key issue for our future in Africa is integration of formation. It is clear to us that we are faced with different cultures, different models of church, and very diverse social pressures.



WATER PROJECT

To give the candidate an initial training and a foretaste of vowed life and the Redemptorist Mission.



Let us follow the foot prints of our pioneers both in the mission as well as in the formation with grateful hearts, to create yet another history for the future generations.



Fr. Christopher CSsR.
(Orientation year Director)



“Tough Time Never Lasts But Tough People Do!”



For a believer the manifestation of God can be experienced in ordinary things that are happening around himself/herself. For a non believer it would be difficult to realize the presence even if a mighty manifestation occur. The picnic that we had on 10th September, 2012 was really a manifestation of God for me. The destination of our picnic was Mt. Kenya base.

We hit the road early in the morning. The journey itself was adventurous and full of excitements. In fact for all of us this was the first time in our life that we got so close to Mt. Kenya, inspite of being born in Kenya. On

our way, looking at the systematic arrangements of the forest, I could hear my brothers recalling geographical lessons which pointed out that Mt. Kenya is covered with forest region, bamboo region and grass land region and Mt. Kenya base. Oh! What a beautiful order in the creation of God. The nature of the forest was captivating. The fresh air that we lack in our cities was available here free of cost. Different

sounds of birds within the forest made me even to forget myself for a while. It was an overwhelming experience.

Was it only an overwhelming experience? No! It was a risky, heart breaking experience too. The way to Mt. Kenya base did not have a proper road at all. Every time we had seen the road ahead our formator trembled inside the car. Several times we fell into pits and we had to push and pull the car out of them. Yet none of us wanted to discontinue our adventurous trip. “At last we made it!” Shouted one of our brothers! I could see the relief on all faces. It was an experience of joy and peace and a manifestation of God’s presence.

As we were returning home our vehicle overturned. I was confused and shocked. My brothers caught my hand and pulled me out of the car. I appreciate them and the value of community life. Together, we pulled and pushed the vehicle to its normal position. Everybody was happy with this success. Our joy was cut short when the vehicle refused to start. We were overcome with fear and confusion not knowing what to do. We were in the middle of a forest, our formator tried to ring up to forest officials for assistance but the call would not go through as there were no signals. It was a tragic time for us.

In the middle of a forest our formator tried to ring up to forest officials for assistance but the call would not go through as there were no signals.

But our faith was strong and relying on God's providence, we started to pray and the vehicle started. Joy returned to the faces of my fellow brothers and my formator. As we started to move we saw three mighty elephants on the way. Oh God thank you for protecting us that day.

Tough time never lasts but tough people do!

Bro. Boni.



Breaking the Political Deadlock of Kenya



Hordes of foreign correspondents flocked to Kenya, with a question in mind, Will it happen again? This was a question which haunted the whole world regarding Kenya. It happened because of 2007/2008 post election violence. The violence killed more than 1500 people. More over two suspects of post election violence who were taken to International Criminal Court were also standing for election for the two top most posts.

A foreigner wondered whether Kenyans were on holidays when the election results were about to be released. If so how long Kenya came to a standstill and all business remained closed. Not even the president could predict what would happen next.

It made me to think about the 2007/2008 post election violence. People killed their own neighbours with whom they had shared meals together. Priests and religious were slaughtered.

Churches were burnt down, many lost their own properties, and thousands were displaced. Billions of shillings worth properties were destroyed, and it resulted in recession. All these happened because the leaders were not ready to accept the outcome of the election.

Will it happen again? Will my right to vote end up in taking away my right to life? Will Kenyans slaughter each other again? Are we going back to the same old situation of buying our death with our votes? These questions came to the minds of Kenyans, like waves, again and again.

As the declaration of the result was delayed people started to pray, "God I want only peace nothing else". Many including priests and religious entered into fasting and praying. Every second of delay of the declaration of the result increased the heart beats of the citizens. The result is out but the tension is not over. Kindly continue to keep us in your prayers.

Bro. Jeromia

Will it happen again? Will my right to vote end up in taking away my right to life?



FEAST DAY

"TALENTS SHOW"



SPIRITUAL DAY



PICNIC AT THE RIVER BANK



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WATER GAME



SPIRITUAL DAY WITH FHIM



FAMILY DAY AT IRUMA



WITH FR. JACEK



DANCE PRACTICE



CHAMPIONS OF THE YEAR





AWARD WINNING MOMENTS



FORMEES DAY! WITH DIFFERENT CONGREGATIONS IN MERU.



Malezi Kenya: March 2013



**2012-2013 ORIENTATION
YEAR STUDENTS**



**2011-2012 ORIENTAITON
YEAR STUDENTS**



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