

**To be a Family of Missionary Discipleship**





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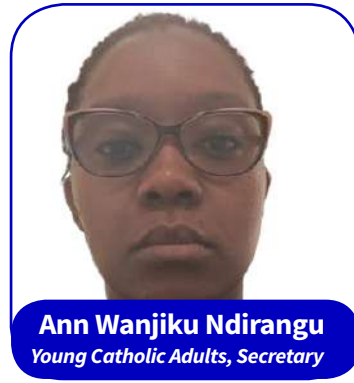
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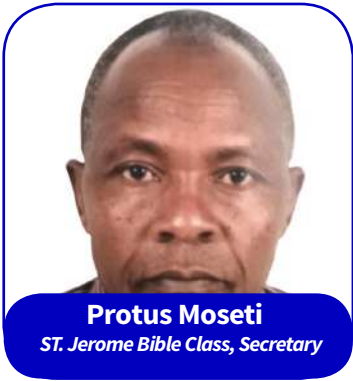
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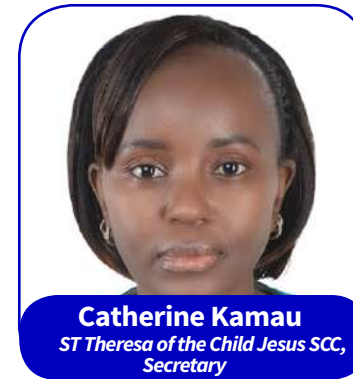
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# Editorial Message for the 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of The Basilican

**D**ear Readers, It is with great joy and gratitude that I welcome you to the 12th edition of The Basilican! This issue stands as a testament to our vibrant parish community and our shared vision to be a Family of Missionary Discipleship. Together, we continue to reflect on our faith journey and draw inspiration from the examples of those who have dedicated their lives to living and spreading the Gospel.

This edition is a rich tapestry of stories, reflections, and milestones. From Pope Francis' proclamation of the Jubilee Year 2025, rooted in the hope that "does not disappoint," to our local celebrations, we are reminded of the universal call to deepen our faith and actively participate in the mission of the Church. This edition also highlights the impactful efforts of the Holy Family Minor Basilica in promoting active participation in liturgy, engaging in community outreach, and fostering unity across generations.

Particularly inspiring are the testimonies of faith and resilience shared within. Stories of personal challenges, such as battling illness or embracing the call to priesthood, demonstrate the power of faith, community, and the unyielding grace of God. They encourage us to trust in His plans and draw strength from our parish family.

As we embark on this new season, we are called to renew our commitment to living as missionary disciples. Let us carry forward the hope and unity that define our parish, reaching out to those in need and being active witnesses of Christ's love.

I invite you to dive into this edition and discover the many ways our parish is growing in faith, hope, and love. May it inspire you to deepen your own connection with God and the mission entrusted to us all. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported us by sharing their stories. We encourage others to come forward and contribute to the magazine, helping us continue to grow and share our journey together!

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed Advent and a joyful Christmas.

In Christ,

**Judith Gondi, Parish Pastoral Council Secretary**

**For Editorial Team, The Basilican**



## Pope Proclaims Jubilee: ‘May hope fill our days!’

**A**t a ceremony in St. Peter’s Basilica on Ascension day, May 9, 2024, Pope Francis solemnly proclaimed the upcoming Jubilee Year 2025, consigning the Bull of Indiction – “Spes non confundit. Hope does not disappoint” – to the Archpriests of the Papal Basilicas and representatives of the worlds bishops.

“Hope” is the overarching theme of the upcoming Ordinary Jubilee of 2025, a theme reflected in the opening words of the Bull of Indiction, entitled “Spes non confundit. Hope does not disappoint.”

Long passages of the Bull were read out ahead of Vespers on Ascension Thursday, during a ceremony in which the document was solemnly consigned to the Archpriests of the four Papal Basilicas, the Pro-Prefects of the Dicastery for Evangelization, and

representatives of the world’s Bishops.

In spes non confundit, Pope Francis announces that the Jubilee Year will begin with the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica on Christmas Eve, 2024.

Later, on 29 December, the Pope will open the Holy Door of the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, the Cathedral of Rome. On the same day, every Cathedral and co-Cathedral throughout the world will have Mass celebrated

***“Hope” is the overarching theme of the upcoming Ordinary Jubilee of 2025, a theme reflected in the opening words of the Bull of Indiction, entitled “Spes non confundit. Hope does not disappoint.”***

by the local Bishop to mark the opening of the Jubilee.

On the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, 1 January 2025, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door for the Basilica of St. Mary Major, with the Holy Door for the Basilica of St Paul’s Outside the Walls being opened on Sunday, 5 January, the Vigil of Epiphany.

“In the course of the year,” Pope Francis writes, “every effort should be made to enable the People of God to participate fully in its proclamation of hope in God’s grace and in the signs that attest to their efficacy.” The Jubilee will end in the particular Churches throughout the world on 28 December 2025, with the Holy Doors of St John Lateran, St. Mary Major, and St Paul’s Outside the Walls being closed on that same date.

And finally, the Jubilee Year will draw to a close in Rome on the Solemnity of Epiphany, 6 January 2026.

## An Opportunity to Be Renewed in Hope

“Everyone knows what it is to hope,” the Pope wrote in the introduction to the Bull. “In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring.”

Expressing his desire that the Jubilee might be “an opportunity for us to be renewed in hope, Pope Francis recalled that pilgrimage is “a fundamental event of every Jubilee event,” traditionally associated with the human quest for the meaning of life. The artistic masterpieces and the beauty of creation we see on our journey inspire us to praise and thank God for His wondrous works.

In particular, he invited all the particular churches throughout the world to prepare priests and the faithful for Sacramental Confession, which should be readily available throughout the year.

In a special way, Pope Francis invited the the faithful of the Eastern Churches, especially those already in union with the Successor of Peter, to take part in the Jubilee, and to feel welcome in the city of Rome, noting how many are already “enduring their own way of the Cross,” forced to leave their lands by violence and instability.

that “the Church might bear faithful witness to this message in every part of the world.”

### The Light of Christian Hope

The Holy Father prayed, too, that during the Holy Year, “the light of Christian hope might illumine every man and woman, as a message of God’s love addressed to all,” and Reading the “signs of



the times,” Pope Francis noted the desire for peace in a world increasingly

marked by violence and conflict, and the loss of a desire to have children, with many countries facing a “demographic winter.” He called for a social covenant to support and foster hope.

The Pope appealed especially for prisoners, recalling the tradition of offering amnesty or pardons during Jubilees, and said he hopes to personally open a Holy Door in a prison, “as a sign inviting prisoners to look to the future with hope and a renewed sense of confidence.” And he called for prisoners to be treated in accord with their rights and dignity, while once again pleading for the abolition of the death penalty.

The Bull continues with Pope Francis urging that hope be offered to the sick, to the young and to the elderly – especially grandparents, to migrants and to the poor.

The Holy Father recalled that the fruits of the earth are intended for all, and encouraged everyone to come to the assistance of the poor. In particular, he called on richer nations to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them.

Recalling that 2025 is the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council, Pope Francis urged expressions of synodality, and renewed efforts to further Christian unity. He appealed especially for progress to be made toward a common celebration of Easter, noting that in 2025, providentially, all

Christians will celebrate the Paschal mystery on the same date.

### A Holy Year Marked by Hope

Pope Francis insisted that Christian hope, rooted in Christ’s death and resurrection for each human person, points to our final destiny, eternal happiness with God in heaven. We are saved by God’s mercy, seen especially in the gift of indulgences: While Confession washes away our sins, indulgences – including the Jubilee

Indulgence – remove the effects of sins forgiven in the Sacrament. In the Bull of Indiction, the Pope notes that the specific conditions for receiving the indulgence will be published soon.

The Holy Father concludes the Bull with a final note of hope, praying that “the coming Jubilee will be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God”; and that it might help us recover “the confident trust we require in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God’s gift of creation.”

“Let us even now be drawn to this hope!” *Spes non confundit* ends with Pope Francis exclaiming, “Let us even now be drawn to this hope!” He calls on Christians to live a life in keeping with their faith, as a witness and an invitation to all to “hope in the Lord.”

“May the power of hope fill our days,” the Pope says, “as we await with confidence the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory, now and forever.”

### Vatican News

*To be a Family Of Missionary Discipleship*



## Message From Most Rev. Philip Anyolo, Metropolitan Archbishop Of Nairobi

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

**A**s we gather once more to celebrate our Annual Family Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to each one of you. This occasion is not only a time of joy and fellowship but also an opportunity for us to reflect on our identity and mission as members of the Holy Family Minor Basilica. Today, I wish to encourage you in your journey of faith and remind you of the great responsibility we all share as a parish community.

The Holy Family Minor Basilica stands as a Sanctuary of Catholic worship in Kenya, a sacred space where countless souls have

encountered the living God. This Minor Basilica, dedicated to the Holy Family of Nazareth, is a spiritual home where we gather to offer praise, seek guidance, and find solace in the presence of our Lord. It is a sanctuary that has been entrusted to us, not merely as a physical building but as a living community of believers.

As members of this parish, you are called to be stewards of this Sanctuary. Your active participation in the life of the parish is essential in ensuring that the basilica remains a vibrant centre of worship and evangelisation. Through your

prayers, contributions, and involvement in various ministries, you sustain the spiritual vitality of our community. I urge you to continue supporting your parish with the same zeal and dedication that has characterised your efforts thus far.

In a special way, the Holy Family Minor Basilica is not just a parish; it is a family. We are bound together by our faith in Christ and our commitment to live out that faith in our daily lives. As a family of missionary disciples, we are called to inspire and influence the people of God, leading them to a deeper communion with

Christ and participation in the mission of the Church.

As a family of missionary disciples, we are called to inspire

Your role as missionary disciples is not a passive one. It requires active engagement in the life of the parish, whether through participation in liturgical services,

As members of the Holy Family Minor Basilica, you are called to live out this mandate in your daily lives, in your families, workplaces, and communities.

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and influence the people of God, leading them to a deeper communion with Christ and participation in the mission of the Church.

Pope Francis often speaks of the Church as a “field hospital” where the wounded come to find healing. Our basilica is such a place—a refuge for the weary, a source of strength for the weak, and a light for those who walk in darkness. But it is not enough to remain within the walls of this sacred place; we must go out and bring the love of Christ to others. Our mission is to reach out to the poor, the marginalised, and those who have yet to encounter the love of God.

involvement in charitable activities, or sharing your faith with others. Each one of you has a unique gift to offer, and when we come together as a community, these gifts are multiplied for the glory of God.

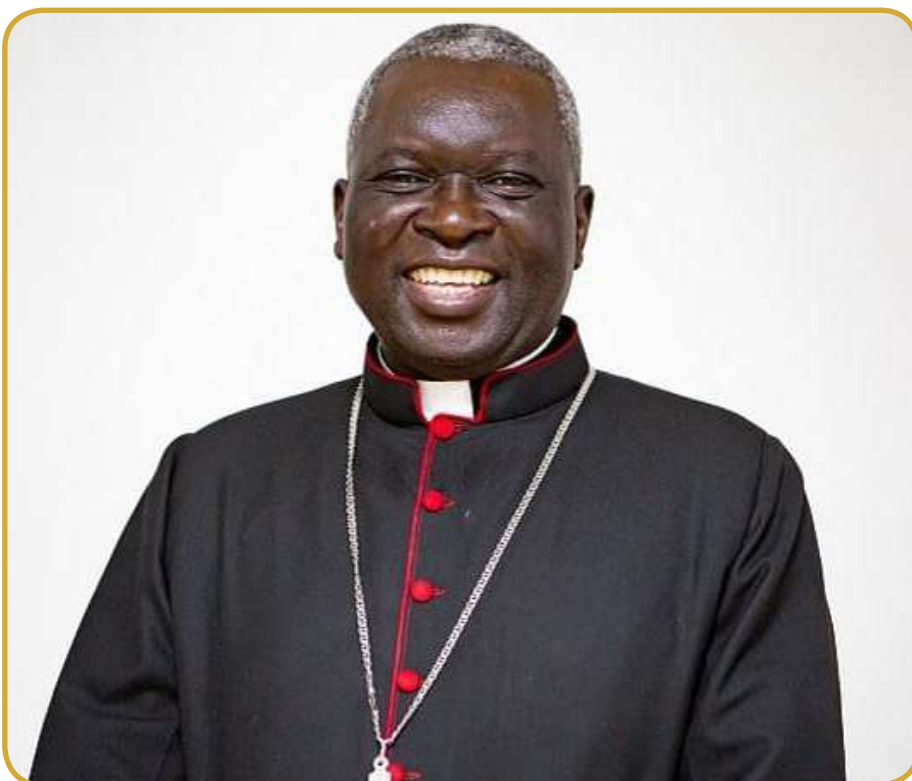
Through your baptism, you have received a divine mandate to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20). This great commission is not limited to a select few; it is the mission of every Christian.

May each one of you become a worthy instrument of God’s love to the entire world. Let your words and actions reflect the love of Christ, drawing others to Him. In a world often characterised by division and strife, may you be ambassadors of peace and unity, bearing witness to the transformative power of the Gospel.

As we come to the end of this year, it is an opportune time to reflect on our journey as a parish family. We have faced challenges, but we have also experienced countless blessings. Let us give thanks to God for His faithfulness and seek His guidance as we move forward into a new year.

I wish each one of you a joyful and blessed Christmas. May the birth of our Saviour fill your hearts with hope and peace. As we celebrate this sacred season, let us remember that the Holy Family of Nazareth—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—serves as a model for our own families. Through their intercession, may your families be kept safe and united in love.

As we look forward to the coming year, let us renew our commitment to our parish and to the mission entrusted to us by Christ. May the Holy Family Minor Basilica continue to be a sanctuary of worship and a source of inspiration for all who enter its doors. May we, as a parish family, grow in faith, hope, and love, always striving to live out our calling as missionary disciples.



# Embracing Our Mission as Disciples of Christ

By Rev Fr. Dr. Michael Ndichu

In recent years, the term “missionary discipleship” has become central to the Church’s mission, so much so that it now guides the mission statement of our Cathedral Parish. This concept calls all of us to follow Jesus’s example, as shown in the Gospels, and embrace His path of self-denial, daily commitment, and faithfulness to God.

## The Heart of Discipleship

At its core, being a disciple means learning from a master—taking in their teachings, emulating their actions, and allowing their example to shape one’s life. Jesus’ first disciples learned from Him directly, walking with Him and embodying His words. Today, we continue this journey through Scripture, Church teachings, and the sacraments, deepening our relationship with Christ and living out His message in our daily lives. This journey, however, does not end with personal growth; it compels us to share the Gospel with others. Jesus’ command to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Mt 28:19-20) reminds us that discipleship is both an inner transformation and an outward mission.

## Every Baptized Christian: A Missionary Disciple

Through baptism, each of us becomes a missionary disciple

(cf. Mt 28:19). This calling is not just for clergy or those trained in theology; every baptized Christian is entrusted with the mission to spread the Gospel. Pope Francis emphasizes that those who have encountered God’s love are moved to share it naturally. He calls on us to “be permanently in a state of mission,” embodying the role of “missionary disciples” who actively bear witness to the faith (Evangelii Gaudium, 120).

## Embracing the Mission

Missionary discipleship means shifting from mere maintenance of the faith to a vibrant, active mission. We are called to foster

**“To live as missionary disciples, we are called to walk closely with Jesus daily, experiencing His love and spreading His message through prayer, service, formation, and witness.”**

encounters with Christ that open hearts to conversion, continually nourished through the sacraments. Pope Francis encourages a shift in focus from administration to outreach, urging parishes to become communities that joyfully engage the world with the love of Christ. The journey of evangelization requires dedication, collaboration, and the support of the entire Church. Together, we can effectively lead others to discipleship, centered on the love we have experienced through Jesus.

## The Universal Call to Evangelize

Evangelization is not limited to reaching non-believers but also includes reawakening the faith in those who may have drifted. This is a continual renewal in faith, nurtured by the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance, which equip us to embody and share the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Pope Francis affirms that the New Evangelization is a call to every believer to share the joy of Christ with others through a simple, informed, and joyful witness.

## Characteristics of a Missionary Disciple

*A missionary disciple is recognized by several key traits:*

- 1) Worship: Attending Mass and engaging with the sacraments as an expression of faith.
- 2) Prayer: Developing a regular, personal prayer life that sustains their relationship with God.
- 3) Service: Looking for ways to support the parish and serve the broader community, especially those in need.
- 4) Generosity: Giving back to God as an act of worship, offering the “first fruits” with gratitude.
- 5) Learning: Seeking to grow in understanding of Scripture and Church teachings.



6) Discernment: Following God’s direction and purpose for their lives.

7) Fellowship: Engaging with other believers in a spirit of community and encouragement.

8) Fruitfulness: Reflecting the virtues of love, peace, and kindness, as described in Galatians 5:22–23, through a life filled with the Holy Spirit.

To live as missionary disciples, we are called to walk closely with Jesus daily, experiencing His love and spreading His message through prayer, service, formation, and witness. Each encounter with Jesus deepens our relationship with Him, compelling us to share His love

joyfully and reach out to those in need.

#### Looking Forward

As Christians at Holy Family Minor Basilica, we are called to engage in evangelization actively. We can look to the example of the first disciples, who, upon encountering Jesus, immediately went forth with joy to proclaim, “We have found the Messiah!” (John 1:41). Likewise, the Samaritan woman, after speaking with Jesus, led many to believe in Him “because of the woman’s testimony” (John 4:39). Saint Paul, too, after encountering Christ, “immediately proclaimed Jesus” (Acts 9:20). Anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not require lengthy preparation to share it.

As the year comes to a close, I extend my heartfelt wishes for a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with God’s blessings. The coming year will be a Jubilee—a time of grace and renewal. Let us be pilgrims of hope, bearing Christ’s light amid the challenges of our world, from the pandemic to economic hardships. May Jesus, Mary, and Joseph bless and protect our families, filling our homes with peace, joy, and justice, just as Christ brought these gifts to the world at His birth.

***Fr. Ndichu is the Executive Administrative Secretary of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, Father-In-Charge, and the Administrator of the Holy Family Minor Basilica.***



# Promoting Active Participation in Liturgy

By Naomi Ndirangu

When discussing active participation in the liturgy, a few key questions arise: What exactly is liturgy? How does the laity contribute to it, and how do they benefit from it? This article addresses these questions and highlights ways the Holy Family Minor Basilica promotes active involvement in the liturgy.

The term “liturgy” originates from the Greek word *Leitourgia*, meaning “public work” or “work done on behalf of the people.” In Christian tradition, it refers to customary public worship practices—a series of rituals, prayers, and ceremonies integral to religious services. Unlike private devotions, the liturgy includes public elements like the

Eucharist, scriptural readings, hymns, prayers, and sermons. It’s a community celebration in which the faithful, as the body of Christ, connect with God through prayer and sacred rites, making it far more than a passive observance.

## **The Role and Importance of Active Participation by the Laity**

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) emphasized through *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that liturgy is not solely for the clergy but invites the faithful into full, conscious, and active participation. This active participation transcends physical presence, calling for mental and spiritual engagement in prayers, responses, and rituals. Such participation allows congregants

to fully experience the mystery of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, fostering a communal worship of God. The laity, therefore, aren’t just spectators but co-offerers with Christ, where prayers and hymns become a way to deepen their spiritual journey, enhance understanding of the scriptures and sacraments, and affirm their baptismal calling.

Active participation also creates a profound experience of the Paschal Mystery, transforming believers with God’s grace and empowering them for mission and evangelization. Roles like lector, Eucharistic minister, usher, choir member, and altar server each contribute to the richness of the celebration. Such roles and responsibilities help lay participants appreciate their role

in the church's life, strengthening their connection to both the community and God.

The lay faithful may also actively participate by engaging fully in prayers, responding to dialogues during mass, singing during liturgy, making appropriate gestures and postures at mass and in receiving the Sacraments. These promote a sense of shared responsibility in mass.

### **How the Basilica Encourages Active Participation**

The Holy Family Minor Basilica has emphasized various activities to fulfil its mission of building a vibrant and engaged community by promoting active participation in Liturgy as part of its Strategic Plan towards "inspiring and influencing the people of God through active participation and communion for the mission of God". These activities include:

#### **Music and Singing**

Following Vatican II's Musicam Sacram, the Basilica promotes singing as an essential part of the liturgy. Music, selected carefully by choirs, unifies the faithful, encourages their vocal participation, and lifts their hearts, enhancing the liturgy's spiritual depth. Liturgical music animates the congregation and enriches the worship experience. The Basilica encourages choirs to select familiar, theologically sound, and musically appealing songs that align with the liturgical theme, season, and mystery being celebrated.

#### **Choir**

The choir leads the congregation in song, ensuring that everyone can engage vocally. A well-prepared choir enhances the celebration, setting the tone for liturgical celebrations through the hymns sung, which invite the

faithful to follow along and fully participate.

#### **Mass Animation**

Liturgical animation involves organizing and guiding various aspects of liturgy, ensuring the congregation understands and actively engages with the rites. Animators lead pre-Mass rehearsals, preparing attendees to immerse themselves in the sacred acts.

#### **Liturgical Education**

Liturgical education equips the laity to take on roles like lector, usher, choir member, and Eucharistic minister. The Basilica holds frequent educational sessions, covering continuous adult formation classes that deepen understanding and reverence for the various roles, which in turn enhance active participation.

#### **Communication**

Through announcements, the parish magazine, website, and social media, the Basilica keeps the faithful informed of upcoming liturgical events and celebrations, fostering a sense of belonging and participation.

#### **Seminars and Workshops**

The Basilica regularly hosts seminars and workshops focused on liturgy, catechesis, and contemporary issues relevant to spiritual growth, such as family life and mental wellness. These sessions are designed to inform, inspire, and prepare the faithful for active service.

#### **Outreach and Community Involvement**

Outreach and social ministries extend the spirit of liturgy

into the broader community, embodying the Church's mission beyond its walls. By connecting the liturgy to the church's social mission, especially among marginalized populations, a spirit of community and shared purpose emerges.

#### **Conclusion**

Through these initiatives, the

**“The lay faithful may also actively participate by engaging fully in prayers, responding to dialogues during mass, singing during liturgy, making appropriate gestures and postures at mass and in receiving the Sacraments. These promote a sense of shared responsibility in Mass.”**

Holy Family Minor Basilica fulfills its mission of "inspiring and influencing the people of God through active participation and communion for the mission of God". This approach helps parishioners feel more engaged and connected in their worship, drawing them deeper into the mystery of faith and strengthening their bonds within the body of Christ. When we embrace the opportunity for active participation in the liturgy, we not only enrich our own spiritual lives but we are also fortified in the life and mission of the Church as a whole.

***Naomi is the Parish Pastoral Council Vice Moderator, Moderator of Lector Society & Liturgy Group.***

# Drama in The Liturgy

By Rev Fr. Mugane Josef



Liturgy has been at the centre of all the celebrations of the Church. However, as Sacrosanctum Concilium affirms “the sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the church” (SC, 9). It nonetheless plays a vital role in worship. In actual fact, Catholicism proper is all about Liturgy. The Vatican II Ecumenical Council indeed observed that Liturgy is “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed [...] the font from which all her power flows” (SC, 10). In other words, Liturgy perpetuates faith though spiritual life is not solely restricted to liturgical participation (cf. SC, 10-13).

In this regard, there are liturgical acts that ought to accompany its practice. As such there are proper acts that should be performed during the Liturgical celebration of the Holy Mass. At the mention of “proper”, the implication always is that there are “improper” actions and/or gestures. One may decide to call it drama. Elsewhere, it is called “liturgical abuse”. There is a lot of drama during liturgical functions, some are critical ones that we witness almost every other day. The issue is usually how to address such abuses.

To cite some common drama: It is often you hear proclaimers of the Word duplicating Alleluia

that has already been sung by the choir or vice versa. Raising or extending open hands, a gesture reserved for the Priest celebrant. There are quite a few who cause distraction by kneeling when it is not required by any liturgical rite. Some observers call these gestures a loose form of fanaticism. Eucharistic ministers also share queer experiences. When the minister shows and says to the recipient saying “The Body of Christ”, the correct response is Amen. As simple as that sounds, it is not devoid of drama and a lot of it for that matter. Some ministers report hearing strange responses like, “Yes! Ndio! That’s right! Exactly!” and so on.

While we must admit that there is a lot of drama during Liturgical functions, usually experienced through gestures, responses and movements (henceforth abbreviated as GRM), in virtually every part of the Liturgy there is the expected or required GRM.

To sugar coat these abuses, there are those who refer to them as adaptations. While Vatican II council gives room for adaptations, at times referred to as a form of inculturation, it also cautions against such adaptations (SC, 37-40). Here, in our respective jurisdiction (Kenya) a thorough reference should be made to The Pastoral Guidelines on the Celebration of Liturgy in the Dioceses of Kenya.

Almost always those who take note of the mistake(s) are left helpless since they have no “diplomatic or prudent” way of making the correction(s). It is left for the courageous to correct the abuses. It is a fact that, it is not

easy to correct a mistake that has for long been widely held as the norm. The one who takes the initiative, to correct, is almost always seen as a conservative. Notably, “the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence” (SC, 30).

Interestingly, this is how improper GRMs develop and with time they are adopted as the “norm”.

We often hear some people admit that “nothing can be done... it is impossible to go telling everyone... let them be if it is helping them practice/live their faith better” and so on. Yet there are innumerable fora through which these improper dispositions can be addressed. Perhaps this article is one such forum and might partly help meet the intended objective(s) since it is not possible to exhaust everything. Properly defined, liturgical abuse is an addition, a removal or a change in a liturgical celebration and none is supported by any authority.

Vat. II in deed anticipated such a scenario when it affirmed that no person, “even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority” (SC, 23, 3). These abuses are often seen as ways of “improvising the liturgy” or even innovated liturgical manifestations. Essentially, abuses arise when the rubrics are relaxed, neglected or altogether ignored. Any “innovations”

is seen as a way of satisfying the people in a given liturgical function, sometimes it is the celebrant(s) and at other times the laity.

It is imperative to acknowledge the fact that Liturgy itself flows freely and no innovations or improvisations are required whatsoever. In deed by itself, Liturgy is quite rich. At some point, some people may be heard commenting “what a beautiful Liturgy!” These, apparently,

## “Properly defined, liturgical abuse is an addition, a removal or a change in a liturgical celebration and none is supported by any authority.”

often arise when everything is well planned and executed while remaining faithful to the rubrics.

The manner of celebration is already contained and adapted to fit various occasions and needs. If everyone knows the occasion or the need beforehand, it becomes easy to celebrate the proscribed rites with due reverence. In other words, a given Liturgical celebration fits right into the manner of its observance. Any attempt to twist anything to fit an individual’s interests creates drama, and worse, it is abuse in the proper sense of the word.

On another level, many people get disturbed when there is no movement or sound within the Liturgy. They think, wrongly though, that the people must be kept busy either through singing or talking at any time, actually all the time. In fact, some congregants are seen beckoning the Choir (Director) to “do something”. In another

instance, when there are low tone “consultations” on one issue or other, someone is often heard saying “Choir!” There must be a song, or the commentator must keep the ears/eyes of the congregants busy. That should never be the case. As observed previously, silence too has a place in our Liturgy (SC, 30). Indeed, on two instances, it is boldly prescribed – after the homily and reception of holy communion! Elsewhere, it may be recommended.

Since the Liturgy flows smoothly by itself, it follows then that once it is properly celebrated,

it should take us “there” and not us taking it “there”. The latter case is what we are highlighting here as ritual “manipulation”.

It is no wonder that the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) understands Liturgy as an act of public worship where the Christian faithful participate in the work of God. It is through the Liturgy that Christ continues his work of redemption (see CCC, 1069). We get uplifted when we faithfully and reverently celebrate and participate in the Liturgy. This being the case, why should we opt for a role reversal? It is not us “lifting” the Liturgy, rather it is the other way round.

Things have been simplified for us to participate with the reverence that is due, that is, proper worship, yet it is always a puzzle when people attempt to complicate what has been simplified for them. For instance, in the Roman Missal, Lectionary and Sacramentary, the books that are frequently used, the rule

is very simple: “say the black and do the red!”. Drama arises when we want to compose “instant rubrics” or when someone suddenly chooses to become the rubrics themselves.

One author contends that “surprises” within mass emerged after Vatican II council; before then, it was something unheard of (read *The Ten Most Common Liturgical Abuses*, Johnson, Kevin Orlin). Many Catholics actually acknowledge and appreciate how their parents and grandparents participated in the Holy Mass. For instance, before the introduction of local languages in the celebration of mass, people knew the prayers and responses during mass in Latin. A language alien to them. Yet, they faithfully knew what to respond to, when and how without reference to any text and the corresponding gestures.

Post Vatican II era has seen a lot of “creativities” which even Liturgical norms themselves do not give provisions for. In his address to 1998 ad limina address, St. John Paul II (Pope), observed the genesis of the problem.

That, while there are genuine changes within the Liturgy, not all “have always and everywhere been accompanied by the necessary explanation and catechesis; as a result, in some cases there has been a misunderstanding of the very nature of the liturgy, leading to abuses, polarization, and sometimes even grave scandal.”

There is a general rule, often seen as a natural determinant to actions, usually in “religious circles” that says that “in case of doubt, do not act”. Should the same be said concerning liturgical norms? Perhaps not.

The reason is that, there are sufficient documents and texts that aim at bringing “order into disorder” within the various Liturgical celebrations.

**Such support materials that can aid in proper liturgical practice include:**

- The General Instruction of the Roman Missal: proper acronym is GIRM
- The Code of Canon Law: whose acronym is CIC, rendered as such by its Latin title *Codex Iuris Canonici*
- The Ceremonial of Bishops
- Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite
- The Documents on the Liturgy or The Liturgy Documents: usually these come in a single volume that give the many kinds of liturgical regulations.
- Directives from Popes and Vatican Congregations, in particular, The Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship (CSDW).
- Episcopal Conferences of different jurisdictions have publications that are adapted to celebration of liturgies within such jurisdictions. Here in Kenya, the KCCB General Secretariat published the “Pastoral Guidelines on the Celebration of Liturgy in the Dioceses of Kenya”.

It is worth noting that this list is not exhaustive. Some or many of these documents are published online. To be on the “safe side” always check on the relevant and authoritative Catholic sites like: the Catholic Exchange, National Catholic Register, Catholic Herald, Catholic News Service, The Vatican, Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN),

Aleteia, The Catholic Weekly, Catholic Online, Episcopal Conference websites and many parishes have online pages. Evidently, no one is deficient of information. As the Scripture affirms, people reject knowledge and gaining information, and that is how they perish (cf. Hos 4:6).

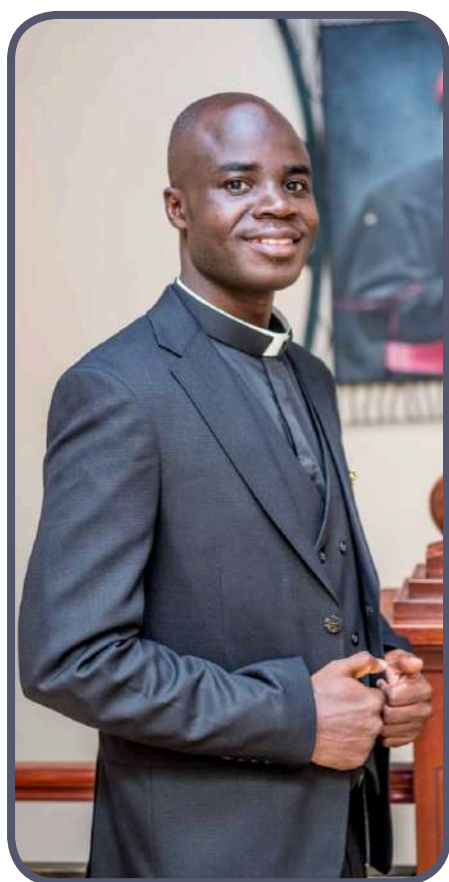
Any well intended Catholic Christian who feels there is a violation in a given liturgical practice ought to take action. The process can be rigorous since many people shy away or fear to raise the issues especially if it is from the clergy. However, as one author observes “as frustrating as the process might get, never lose your sense of charity. If your complaint comes to a successful conclusion, do not crow about it; you have not won anything. The law has been fulfilled. The Blessed Sacrament has won” (Johnson, Kevin Orlin).

To bring this matter to a close, “whatever the case, liturgical abuse hurts the entire congregation, and the whole Body of Christ, by reducing the solemn occasion of the mass into a ‘show’ [...] designed to please the fancy of those in attendance” (see *Liturgical Abuse*, available at WordPress.com). In a nutshell, the Liturgy is rich, it flows, and it is adapted to the various occasions and needs. In this regard, any drama is an abuse and very much unnecessary. As one Liturgist observed, “if it would have been inappropriate at the Last Supper or at Calvary, it is inappropriate at Mass.”

**Fr. Mugane is an assistant parish priest at Holy Family Githunguri & formerly an assistant parish priest at Holy Family Minor Basilica.**

# My Priesthood Journey

By Deacon Kevin Okeyo



I am the only child of the late Mama Rukia Anyango who passed on in the year 1996. As fate would have it, I have other brothers and sisters from different mothers. Our dad would then transition to the other world in the year 2002. This death changed the trajectory of all of us the family members.

After the death of my mother, I recall stumbling upon a birthday card that my mother sent me dated 21st December and since I didn't have my birth details; I presumed the date to be my birthday which I have adopted since.

In my foundation years, I attended St. Columbian's primary school in Turbo as well as Shibale Primary School in Mumias and after successfully completing my primary education I proceeded to

St. Mary's High School Kibabii in Bungoma.

It was during my High School days that the seed of priesthood was sowed in me. While at St. Mary's High School Kibabii I actively participated in the Young Catholic Students (YCS) movement under the chaplaincy of a diocesan priest who was welcoming, and I keenly observed how much he loved his work and gave his all.

If I recall well, he may have been managing over 150 schools in the diocese but was present in almost all the activities organized by the various schools. Looking at him, I saw a humble man that loved service which drew me to admire the vocation, and I desired to assist him in fulfilling his duties and lightening the workload for him but didn't give much thought to the idea then.

Having been left without parents, I had the privilege of being brought up by several families. The idea of being an only son was constantly put to the surface, and this explains why it was a struggle to float this weird idea of becoming a priest to the relatives. Good to mention that my maternal relatives were, and some are still Muslims. The desire superseded other factors and in the year 2016, I joined St. Mary's Molo to start my formation journey.

After High School, I didn't bother much with the vocation idea and was just waiting to join a higher institution of learning. This would come to pass in the year 2011 when I joined the University of Nairobi (UON) to pursue Bachelor of Arts (Swahili/Psychology). Since it's said that when an opportunity presents itself you should grab it,

I did exactly that with Heritage Insurance Company where I worked as an underwriter in the year 2015- 2016.

From my university days, St. Paul's Chapel and chaplaincy that serves the University of Nairobi has played a big role in growing the vocation desire. Thanks to the wonderful priests that minister there.

In the beginning of 2016, I decided to pursue my vocation to priesthood and expressed my desire to the then Parish Priest Fr. Stephen Mbugua who recommended me to the vocation director. In August 2016, I formally began my priesthood journey when I was invited to join St. Mary's Molo Seminary where I did my propaedeutic studies and would transition to St. Augustine Senior Seminary Mabanga for my Philosophicum until the year 2020.

From September 2021 to May 2024, I studied at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (C.U.E.A) for a Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology. I was ordained as a Deacon on 12th July 2024 and posted at the Holy Family Minor Basilica where I serve to date. As a seminarian I served in the following parishes: Ruku, Umoja, Gathanga and Limuru.

Priestly vocation requires a happy person, that I have learnt, it needs obedience, that makes things easy. The support has always been amazing and for sure one never lacks. It is my prayer to always serve with zeal. I shall serve to the end.

**Deacon Kevin currently serves at Holy Family Minor Basilica.**

# Parenting in Faith: Guiding Children on the Path to Fulfillment and Responsibility

By Dr. Annemary Nkirote



**W**ho is a parent? A parent (Isaiah 3:4 and 12) in the biblical sense is somebody who leads their child in the way God wants them to be led.

A parent who lets their child do whatever they want, and oppress them, is not doing their job of being a parent, and in God's eyes, they are barely a parent at all. In Eph 4:13 & Psalm 127:3-5, we find that the fundamental goal for Christian parents should be

to guide their children to a saving faith in Christ and to set them on a path to maturity, bringing them to the full measure of his glory. Parenting is one of God's most important callings. Children are a gift and blessing from God.

## **Key Components of Parental Responsibility**

(The Micklin Law Group LLC-(MLG) & The Bible) Providing for basic needs: This includes

ensuring the child has adequate food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, and education. It also involves meeting emotional and developmental needs through love, nurturing, and positive guidance (MLG).

"In everything set them an example by doing what is good" Titus 2:7. It's taking care of your children's needs. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the

faith and is worse than an unbeliever” 1 Timothy 5:8.

Making important decisions: Parents are responsible for crucial choices like the child’s education, religious upbringing, medical treatment, and extracurricular activities. These decisions require careful consideration of the child’s best interests and age-appropriateness (MLG).

“BELIEVE—Trust that God wants you to make the right choices just as much as you do. His Holy Spirit will guide you”. (Romans 8:28)Disciplining and setting boundaries: Establishing age-appropriate rules and consequences helps children learn self-control, responsibility, and respect for others. Discipline should be balanced with positive reinforcement and open communication (MLG).

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4) Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them “(Proverbs 13:24, NIV)

Protecting and safeguarding the child: Parents have a duty to protect their children from harm, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. This also involves teaching children safety skills and being aware of potential dangers (MLG). Mark 10:13-16, we see Jesus valuing children. He defends them and shows them his favour. Jesus underlines this in his words in

Matthew 18:5. Jesus puts himself on the same level as the child saying “whoever receives a child in my name, receives me”. Promoting well-being and development: Proverbs 22:6 is telling parents that if you train a child in his sinful way, then when he is old he will not depart from those sinful habits.“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” (Proverbs 1:8)

Legal Aspects and Enforcement Parental responsibility carries legal weight, and neglecting obligations can have consequences. Child protection services may intervene if a child’s needs are not met or there is evidence of abuse or neglect. Courts can also make decisions regarding custody, access, and parental responsibility in cases of separation or conflict. (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010; The Children’s Act, No. 29 of 2022; The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989).

#### **The Best Interest of the Child**

**“While the journey may be demanding, the rewards of raising responsible, compassionate individuals who contribute positively to the world make it worthwhile.”**

#### **Principle**

The best interest of the child principle is a fundamental principle and a crucial framework enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and widely adopted in various national and international laws and policies concerning children. It essentially means that all actions and decisions affecting a child must prioritize their well-being and development above all other considerations. In Kenya, the principle is entrenched in the Constitution, 2010, and the Children’s Act, No. 29 of 2022.

#### **HFMB and Parenting**

A key aspect of the catholic faith in the wellbeing of a child and spiritual formation is institutionalized through, Baptism, Catechism, church groups (PMC, MYM, Youth Serving Christ & Young Adults), Catholic sponsored Education institutions and various church programs for parents of PMC & Youth and It also forms part of the teachings for the CWA & CMA on Parenting (HFMB Manuals for PMC, Youth, CWA & CMA).

#### **Conclusion**

Given the above, understanding the multifaceted nature of parental responsibility, individuals can strive to create nurturing and supportive environments for children to thrive and reach their full potential. In essence, parental responsibility is a lifelong commitment that goes beyond providing basic needs. It’s about nurturing young minds

and hearts, fostering personal growth, and equipping them with the tools to navigate life’s challenges. Ultimately, fostering a child’s well-being is a

shared responsibility not just for parents, but also for communities, institutions, and society as a whole.

By working together, we can create an environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive. “Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven...” Matthew 19:13-14

***Dr. Annemary is the Secretary for St. Phillip Neri SCC.***



## HFMB Celebrates the Elderly: Embracing Pope Francis' Vision of "The Elderly as the Firm Foundation of the Future"

By Florence Wambua

**O**n Sunday, July 28, 2024, Holy Family Minor Basilica (HFMB) joyfully celebrated the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. This special event aligned with Pope Francis' message, "The elderly are the firm foundation of the future," and was inspired by

Psalm 71:9: "Do not cast me off in my old age." The day highlighted the invaluable contributions of the elderly in shaping our future and brought the parish together in gratitude and reverence.

### Organizing the Event

Under the guidance of Parish Administrator Rev. Fr.

Michael Ndichu and the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), the celebration was thoughtfully organized to honor the elderly and grandparents of HFMB. Parishioners, including a large number of elderly members, gathered to participate in the Masses led by Rev. Fr. George, whose uplifting homilies

conveyed Pope Francis' message of cherishing the elderly. His words of encouragement contributed to a joyful atmosphere and were warmly received by all present.

### **Mass and Gift-Giving Ceremonies**

The homilies of the day emphasized the importance of valuing the elderly and their role in the parish and beyond. Following Mass, a gift-giving ceremony expressed the community's tangible appreciation for the wisdom and faith of their elderly members. This symbolic gesture underscored the parish's commitment to honoring the contributions of its elder generation.

### **CWA Luncheon & Celebrations**

The Catholic Women's Association (CWA) continued the celebration with a luncheon, which featured a cake-cutting ceremony, poems, and musical performances led by mothers. Through these heartfelt activities, they celebrated the elder generation's irreplaceable role in nurturing family values and faith. These gestures aligned with Pope Francis' vision of strengthening intergenerational bonds and building a cohesive, faith-filled community.

### **Caring for the Elderly and Sick**

In a show of support, CWA members extended their care to elderly and ailing parish members. This outreach was deeply appreciated, reflecting HFMB's enduring spirit of compassion and unity. The support provided to those unable to attend was a testament to the CWA's dedication to the parish family.



### **Messages from Parish Leaders**

The event was enriched by messages from CWA Chaplain Fr. Michael Ndichu, Fr. Joseph Mugane, and PPC Moderator Bernard Owuor. Their words emphasized the significance of respecting and caring for the elderly, reinforcing a collective sense of unity and love within the parish.

### **Honoring July-Born Members and Future Generations**

Special blessings were bestowed on parishioners born in July, a gesture that celebrated parish family ties and encouraged intergenerational support. A particularly touching moment was the blessing of young parishioner Yona Aristidi, who is preparing to enter priesthood formation. This recognition served as a hopeful symbol for HFMB, highlighting the Church's continuity and the bright future of its mission.

### **Service to the Sick**

The Lectors group visited sick members of the parish, further demonstrating HFMB's commitment to caring for every member of the community. This

act of service was a testament to the strong support network within HFMB, especially for those unable to join in the main celebrations.

### **Looking Ahead**

As HFMB prepares for Harvest Sunday, there is renewed optimism and a deepened sense of community unity. The collaborative efforts of parish leaders and the focus on family and faith demonstrated during this celebration have laid a solid foundation for future events, reaffirming the parish's commitment to nurturing and honoring its elderly members.

### **Conclusion**

May God continue to bless HFMB, guiding it as it builds on the firm foundation established by its elder members, with a future that remains rooted in faith, love, and community.

***Florence is the moderator for the Catholic Women Association of the Holy Family Minor Basilica and Central Deanery of the Archdiocese of Nairobi.***

# A Journey of Hope and Healing: My Battle with Cancer

By Jane Maureen Mwaura



**M**y name is Jane Maureen Mwaura. I am married, a mother of four, and a proud grandmother. My journey may not be unique; if you belong to the “cancer club,” you may have encountered similar emotions and struggles. To all cancer victims and survivors who choose to remain silent, I hope this article encourages you to share your stories. Together, let our narratives illuminate the path for others facing the battle against cancer, shining brightly like stars in the night sky.

## ***This is my personal story...***

On June 2, 2023, I discovered a small lump in the upper part of my breast. Concerned, I visited a doctor after three days, who promptly referred me for a bilateral breast mammogram. To my shock, the results were highly suspicious for my right breast (BIRADS V). Following this, I underwent an ultrasound and a core biopsy for further evaluation. Two weeks later, I received the devastating diagnosis of invasive ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), estrogen receptor positive stage 1A.

This moment plunged my family and me into darkness. Further tests, including C.T. scans of my chest, abdomen, and pelvis, were necessary to confirm that the disease hadn't spread. Thankfully, on June 30, 2023, at K.U. Referral Hospital, I learned that the cancer had not spread to any organs. My family and I sought opinions at various hospitals, including M.P. Shah, K.U. Referral Hospital, and Aga Khan, to find the best treatment path. After careful consideration, we chose Aga Khan Hospital and Dr. Marek, whose expertise and guidance I cannot recommend highly enough.

Together with my family and the doctor's team, we convened to discuss the treatment approach. Given the size of the tumor, the decision was made to start with surgery to remove it, followed

by chemotherapy and then radiotherapy. After a successful lumpectomy, my pathology results were encouraging. My doctor declared me cancer-free, but I was advised to undergo eight sessions of chemotherapy and 20 sessions of radiotherapy for extra precaution.

On September 6, 2023, I had my first chemotherapy session under Dr. Amina Kidee. Nervous about the tough journey ahead, I prayed, “If this is for your glory, may your will be done. Lord, you have healed me before, and I believe you will do so again.” During this period, I frequently visited Resurrection Gardens with two spiritual friends to pray and find peace at the Cardinal Otunga Mausoleum. I also participated in 1 o’clock masses at Holy Family Minor Basilica, requesting special intentions, and brought flowers to our Blessed Mother Mary at the grotto. Whenever I felt strong enough, I engaged in charitable work, reaching out to those I met during my hospital visits to offer encouragement, even when I was too weak to leave my bed.

To ease the treatment process, Dr. Marek recommended inserting a chemo port, which would allow nurses to access my veins more easily. This minor surgery was a relief, but chemotherapy proved to be a harrowing ordeal—complex, frightening, and unpredictable. I often questioned whether I would survive. The sessions occurred every three weeks, and I experienced severe side effects after each treatment, including nausea, loss of appetite, fatigue, weakness, diarrhea, dehydration, and more.

By the second session, my hair began to fall out, prompting me to visit a barber and shave it all

off to avoid the trauma of losing it slowly.

**Here’s how I managed those side effects:**

1. Pain Relief: I took Panadol for pain.
2. Nausea: I relied on anti-nausea tablets from my doctor and ginger tea, which worked wonders.
3. Hydration: I aimed for 2 to 3 liters of water daily.
4. Constipation: I took prescribed medications right from the start.
5. Heartburn Relief: I used antacids to reduce acidity and heartburn.
6. Breathing Exercises: I practiced regularly to help alleviate chest and lung compression.
7. Small Meals: I ate what I felt like, but in smaller portions.
8. Light Exercise: Walking around the compound helped combat fatigue and joint pain.
9. Oral Care: I brushed my teeth multiple times a day and used mouthwash to combat the persistent bad taste.
10. Watermelon Blends: Blended watermelon helped me stay hydrated and added variety to my water intake.

**To anyone facing chemotherapy, here’s my advice:**

1. Understand the dos and don’ts from your medical team to prepare for each side effect.
2. Maintain a positive mindset and focus on your blessings.
3. Boost your immunity after each session with A.B.C juice

(apple, beetroot, and carrot) to help with blood levels.

4. Engage in enjoyable activities to keep your mind occupied during treatment and combat “chemo brain.”
5. Rest at home during the first week after treatment, and get out during the following weeks to stave off depression.
6. Prioritize healthy, iron-rich foods to prevent anemia.
7. Listen to your body—rest when you need to.
8. If overwhelmed, talk to a counselor, friend, or family member; sharing burdens can lighten your load.
9. Consult a physiotherapist for appropriate exercises during treatment.
10. Meet with a nutritionist to learn about beneficial foods during and after treatment.
11. Consume plenty of fruits to boost immunity and flush out toxins.
12. Drink lots of water—2 to 3 liters daily—to support kidney health and eliminate treatment-related toxins.
13. Take care of your vital organs to avoid damage during treatment.
14. Don’t worry about hair loss; it will grow back post-treatment.
15. Encourage those around you to have regular checkups.

I also discovered an NGO next to M.P. Shah Hospital called Faraja, which offers valuable services to cancer patients free of charge, including physiotherapy, nutrition advice, massages, and body fitness. It’s a wonderful place to

connect with fellow warriors and share experiences.

After completing eight chemotherapy sessions, I had a three-week break before beginning radiotherapy. Unlike chemotherapy, radiotherapy was manageable. I underwent 20 sessions, each lasting 20 minutes. During treatment, I recited the Divine Mercy Chaplet, placing my trust in God. I would go for treatment in the morning and then head to work. After the 20 sessions, my skin around the affected breast darkened due to heat, but it returned to normal after a few weeks.

Finally, I returned to my gynecologist, Dr. Amina Kidee, who prescribed a hormonal tablet for daily use over the next five years, alongside regular checkups. During my first follow-up three months later, I received the joyous news that I was cancer-free. This was a testament to God's goodness, prompting my family and me to hold a thanksgiving mass for my healing. Overwhelmed with gratitude, I celebrated with a song, "Nasema Asante," which you can find on my YouTube channel (Maureen Melodies), sung alongside my family. I believe that mass is the highest form of prayer in the Catholic Church. Each Sunday I missed created a yearning for the Eucharist and left me feeling empty. After healing, I wanted to shout my gratitude from the mountaintops, feeling an immense debt of thanks to God. I made an effort to give generously during home mass, but I still feel indebted to Him.

My journey with breast cancer was challenging, yet I am grateful for God's grace, my family's unwavering support, and the encouragement of friends and fellow survivors. God promises

not a smooth life but sufficient grace to navigate life's challenges. I have witnessed His faithfulness firsthand, reminding myself that if God allowed this journey, He must have a purpose, and His purpose always prevails for His greater glory.

To those fighting cancer, remember you are not alone. Millions are on a similar journey, united in this collective battle. More importantly, a heavenly host, led by our Creator, is holding your hand every step of the way. This diagnosis taught me the importance of having a reason to remain strong for my family, fueling my determination to fight and stay positive.

Throughout this journey, my family and friends have been my pillars of strength. Realizing I needed a reason outside of myself to fight made a significant difference. I thought of my family and the countless prayers and support I received from loved ones. I wouldn't give up, not when so many believed in me. No one deserves to experience the agony of cancer—not even my worst enemy. The support from my family has been nothing short of overwhelming. My husband, Peter Mwaura, held my hand throughout the journey, providing prayers, encouragement, and financial assistance. He researched solutions for every challenge we faced. During my chemotherapy, my eldest son, Alex, drove me to appointments, managed medications and payments, and kept me company. My firstborn daughter, Maggie, stepped in to run my business and provided spiritual support, calling daily to check on me.

During my radiotherapy, my youngest daughter, Zipporah, accompanied me to the hospital every day. At home, my youngest

son, Timothy, kept me company, praying for me every night. The joy of having my grandchild close by was immeasurable; Ailish always lifted my spirits. Words cannot adequately express my gratitude for each of them.

Special thanks to Mr. Gerald Gakuru who encouraged me to write this article. I will forever be grateful, Most of all to God almighty for healing me.

#### ***Here are my key lessons:***

1. Accept your situation—cancer is not an automatic death sentence.
2. Eat healthy foods as recommended by a nutritionist.
3. Exercise regularly and engage your mind with books, puzzles, or learning a new skill to prevent memory loss (chemo brain).
4. Rest when your body demands it.
5. Join a support group with others undergoing similar treatments.
6. Avoid stress; research shows it can contribute to cancer.
7. Maintain faith and trust in God; He will never leave you.
8. Foster good relationships and surround yourself with people who uplift you.
9. Stay hopeful and focus on the future.

***I urge anyone battling cancer to keep fighting and trust that they are never alone. Thank you for taking the time to read my story. I hope it offers hope to others.***

***Jane is the treasurer of St. Dominic SCC.***

# Understanding Breast Cancer: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Early Detection

By Dr. Amina K. Habib

**B**reast cancer is the most common cancer globally, affecting millions of women every year. It is estimated that 1 in every 8 women will be diagnosed of breast cancer worldwide. Early detection and treatment are crucial to improving survival rates.

## Understanding Breast Cancer

Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast grow uncontrollably, forming a tumor. These cancerous cells can spread to other parts of the body if not detected and treated early. There are different types of breast cancer.

They can be categorized by the type of cell the cancer is arising from, the marker or identifiers it has on its surface, and if the cancer has the potential to spread or it is still in the “pre-invasive” stage.

These different subtypes are determined early in the diagnosis of the disease as they will determine the kind of treatment that an individual will be offered.

## Early Detection and Diagnosis

Early detection of most cancers is crucial for successful treatment. This is particularly important in breast cancer as it is one of the most curable cancers. It has a cure rate of over 95% if detected early.

Regular screening through mammograms, breast self-exams, and clinical breast exams are important for women, especially those over the age of 40 or with a family history of the disease is highly encouraged.

## Risk Factors

Understanding risk factors can help in taking proactive steps for prevention. We put the risk factors in two categories; factors are out of our control, while others can be modified.

### Non-modifiable risk factors include:

- Gender and age: Women, particularly those over 50, are at higher risk.
- Genetics: Mutations in BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes significantly increase the risk.
- Family history: Having close relatives who have had breast cancer can elevate risk.

### Modifiable risk factors include:

- Lifestyle choices: A diet high in processed foods and saturated fats may increase breast cancer risk.
- Alcohol consumption: Excessive drinking is linked to a higher risk.
- Lack of physical activity: Regular exercise helps maintain a healthy weight and lowers the risk of cancer.

## Breast Cancer Symptoms

While early breast cancer may show no symptoms, some key warning signs to watch for include:

- A lump or thickened area in the breast or underarm.
- Changes in breast size, shape, or appearance.
- Nipple discharge, especially if it's bloody.
- Skin changes like dimpling or redness.

Once an individual develops above symptoms, they should present to a health facility that is able to fully investigate the cause of symptoms and offer appropriate recommendations.

Generally, the first step is usually a scan to clearly outline the tumor and determine the stage of the disease. What a stage of cancer says – and in this case breast cancer, is how far the disease has spread.

A biopsy will also be done. This means a small sample of the tumor

is taken, often with a needle. The sample will be analysed under a microscope to confirm that it is indeed cancerous. Further, other tests are also done on the same sample to determine the type of breast cancer.

This information eventually will guide what treatment the patient is a candidate for.

## Treatment Options

The type and stage of breast cancer determine treatment options. Common treatments include:

- Surgery: Lumpectomy (removal of the tumor) or mastectomy (removal of the entire breast).
- Radiation therapy: High-energy rays are used to destroy cancer cells.
- Chemotherapy: Powerful drugs that target and kill rapidly growing cancer cells.
- Hormone therapy: Used for cancers that are sensitive to hormones, helping to block or lower estrogen levels.
- Targeted therapy: Drugs that target specific genes or proteins that are involved in cancer growth.

All the above treatment modalities as well as the expertise are available in Kenya.

## Conclusion

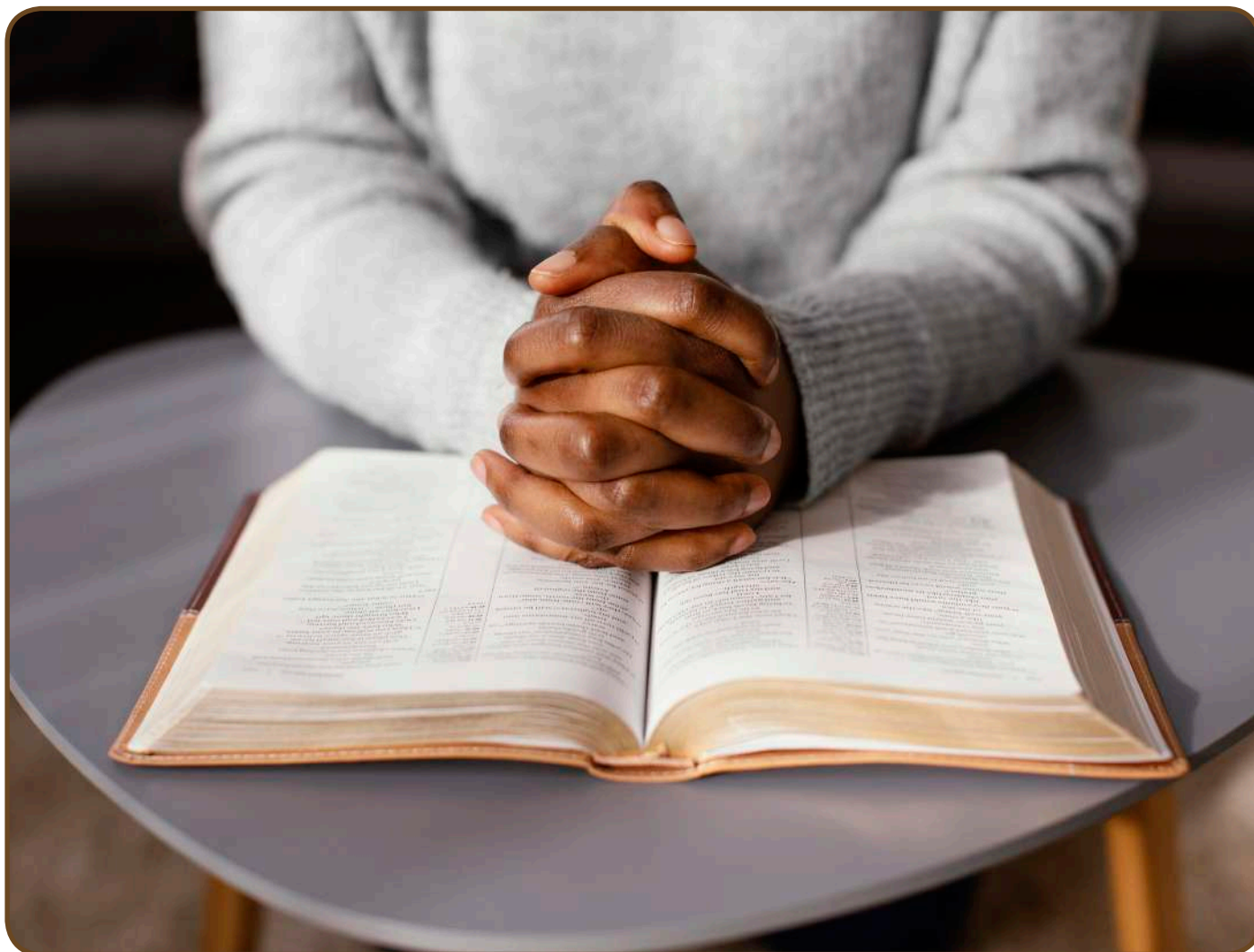
Raising awareness about breast cancer saves lives. Through education, early detection, and support for ongoing research, we can reduce the impact of this disease. It's essential for individuals to be proactive about their health and for communities to come together in the fight against breast cancer.

**Dr. Habib is a Consultant Medical Oncologist based at Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi (AKUH,N).**

# The Indispensable Importance of Holy Family Minor Basilica's Spiritual and Religious support during and after COVID-19

By Rev Fr. Wilson Kamau

*The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe (Prov 18:10)*



**T**he reality of COVID-19 Pandemic was a trigger for extensive use of mass media by the church.

Online live-streaming of the Holy Mass during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic became a spiritual space for reaching out to the roots of the Church. Certainly, it showed a truly deeply religious face of the Catholic society and again it was a facilitation of participation in the online liturgy, a participation

without the necessary focus and involvement in the broadcast.

At time, online live-streamed Mass was not only intended to provide a common prayer mainly for the sick and the elderly, who cannot go to church. Instead, the pandemic created a new requirement to provide broadcast to all the faithful locked indoors. The changes associated with the general lockdown resulted in all celebrations being transferred to the Internet and other media.

## **Closure of Churches**

The closure of churches and the prohibition of the celebration of the sacraments in the presence of a congregation was a new situation for many of us. It was all the more difficult given that during the period of extreme restrictions the number of liturgical participants was limited in spite of the fact that period of the Paschal Triduum and Easter is traditionally associated with crowded churches.

Pope Francis, while emphasizing the value of broadcast during the pandemic as a sign of closeness with the faithful and as a possibility of receiving Christ in spiritual communion, warned against the virtualisation of faith. At the end of the lockdown, he expressed the desire for the faithful to return to normal sacramental life through personal participation in the liturgy.

The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops dispensed Catholics from participating in Sunday Mass granted. This was not necessary for the reality of the pandemic was an objective reason which made it impossible to fulfil the obligation to participate in the Sunday Eucharist. Under these circumstances, the purpose of the dispensations was merely to appease the consciences of the faithful. Nevertheless, the Church authorities realised that mere dispensation was a temporary remedy rather than a permanent solution for the situation.

### **Holy Mass broadcasts by the media**

It is worth noting that in pre-pandemic practice, the Church recommended personal participation in the liturgy. This was caused by fears of the virtualisation of communities and the faithful freeing themselves too easily from personal participation. However, when drastic restrictions caused by the threat to health and life were introduced, a pro-media attitude prevailed.

During COVID-19 pandemic several radio and television stations (including liberal and secular ones, and not only those considered strictly religious or pro-Catholic) changed their schedules to include Sunday Eucharist broadcasts.

From KCCB and ADN the message below was forwarded to many Catholics in Whatsapp,

Facebook and SMS forums about such broadcast:

*'Live transmission of Holy Mass on Palm Sunday*

*The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Nairobi, wishes to inform all the Catholic faithful in Kenya that there will be live transmission of Holy Mass on Palm Sunday, 5th April 2020, by Citizen TV, NTV, K24, KTN and KBC from the Holy Family Minor Basilica starting from 9.00 am. The mass will be presided over by the Chairman of KCCB and Archbishop of Kisumu, Most Rev. Philip Anyolo. Kindly pass this information to all the Christians and invite them to participate in the Holy Mass through the above TV channels.*

*From the General Secretary of KCCB and Pastoral Coordinator of the Archdiocese of Nairobi."*

It was in the spirit of Vatican II Council, the KCCB factored the formative dimension of the use of the modern means of communication in broadcasting Holy Mass. This dimension imposes an obligation on the broadcasters to ensure that the Mass broadcast can serve as a model for the preparation of the liturgy. In doing this, the Conference played its central role under this mandate in appointing competent person to undertake this responsibility.

Accordingly, the Basilica became the suitable model and later with the Capuchin TV when the churches reopened. Notably, there were also grassroots initiatives of parishes to independently broadcast the Mass over the Internet which most of them ceased after the lifting of strict measures. However, the broadcasted Mass from Holy Family Minor Basilica was affordable and accessible to many Christians.

Prolonged restrictions could have been detrimental to the religious

sensitivity of the faithful. Dispensation decrees and encouraging messages from the KCCB which were broadcasted from the Basilica became practical pastoral guides of alleviating the negative effects of this situation, e.g., on a spiritual, emotional, and psychological level.

On the Synod – For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission: One of the thematic nuclei from the ten themes given to be explored, under the theme, "Speaking Out", a question for reflection and exchange is given, "How does the relationship with the media (not only Catholic media) system work?". This is to articulate on how a lived Synodality enlightens us that embracing Catholic Media as part of our Christian life. This is the role that the Minor Basilica played though first as a crisis and continues to play now as a means of evangelization.

From the pandemic period until now the intense live streaming of Mass from the ADN Cathedral Church can be viewed from an apostolic endeavor which looks at the streaming of the Holy Mass and the Church's activities as a testimony to the faith of the community of believers and as an opportunity for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Thanks to the former HFMB Administrator, His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Simon Peter Kamomoe who facilitated the support of both Capuchin TV and KBC TV and who ensured the continuity, even after the pandemic, of live broadcasted Mass not only on Sundays but also on weekdays. Best regards to the current Administrator, Rev. Fr. Dr. Michael Ndichu who succeeds in this endeavor.

***Fr. Wilson is an assistant Priest of Our Lady of the Annunciation Gatitu Parish & served as a deacon at Holy Family Minor Basilica.***

# Choosing a Baptismal Name: A Reflection on Christian and African Traditions

By Msgr. John Lukwata



**T**his article is a short reflection on the Baptismal name in the Rite of Infant Baptism.

It is intended to help parents, godparents, and priests to make an informed choice of the child's name at Baptism.

Children baptized as infants receive a baptismal name which is normally chosen by parents and godparents. Choosing a name for Baptism presents an opportunity to parents/guardians to exercise their freedom. In the current Rite of Infant baptism,

the minister asks for the name the parents have chosen for their child and baptizes the child using that given name. (2nd ed. Rite of Infant Baptism, 2020).

The Code of Canon Law states that parents, sponsors, and parish priests are to take care that a name is not given which is foreign to Christian sentiment. (Canon 855). In The Rite of Infant Baptism, "Infant" means a child at the earliest stage of his/her life. It refers to those who have not yet reached the age of discernment and therefore

cannot profess personal faith. Infants are those below seven years of age. Parents and godparents assume great responsibility in introducing their children to the faith.

Infant Baptism and naming receive justification from biblical and Church traditions. Jesus said: "Let the children come to me and do not prevent them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Mt.19:14).

Baptisms in the early church included entire households of

which children were part. For example, the baptisms that took place at the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:24-48); at the household of Lydia in Acts 16:15 and the entire household of Crispus, the synagogue official in Acts 18:8. In the early Church, children were baptized first before adults, if they could speak for themselves, otherwise, their parents or relatives would speak for them” (Hippolitus, *Apostolic Tradition*, 215,21:16)

### African Naming Traditions

Traditionally, In Africa, names are given by parents, grandparents, or elders. In African cultures, names are part of a deeper significance; that of the identity of the person. African names can be theophoric: these are names that express divine nature or divine attributes (Upendo, Imani, Neema, Bahati, Furaha, Tumaini, Zawadi among others).

There are names connecting the child to the relatives, ancestors, and spirits. Some names serve to keep the memory of the circumstances at birth: For example, there are names given to children depending on whether they were born at night, in the morning, during rains, drought, or earthquake. Location of birth site can be a reason for naming a child. Gender also determines the type of name to be given. There are different names for girls and boys. Names can also be given depending on the child’s physical appearance.

Western missionaries (Italian, French, Dutch, Irish, English, German) proposed names for Baptism from familiar saints in their countries of origin (Patrick, John, Catherine, Luigi, Theresa). Times and tastes do change and parents’ preferences



also change. Some parents are gradually abandoning the traditional Christian names of Saints for their children and they instead opt for trendy names from celebrities and popular personalities in the world of music, entertainment, or sports.

This is increasingly one of the factors informing the choice of the name, judging by the current baptismal registers in several parishes in Kenya. Also, many young parents avoid names of saints that are too common. Furthermore, names are carefully chosen to avoid ethnic profiling or discrimination based on religious affiliation.

### Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)

According to the Kenya Conference of Catholics Bishops,

the names chosen for Baptism should be names of saints (Christian names) and should not be foreign to Christian sentiments (Canon 855; *Pastoral Guidelines*, 2015, p.82) A person can receive an additional saint’s name at Confirmation. (Cf. KCCB, *Pastoral Guidelines*, p.94).

### Lessons from the Bible

The Jewish culture places great emphasis on the naming of all things by God but also entrusting the act of naming to people. God named all that he created (Gen.2:20). Just like in Africa, parents in the Scriptures are the ones who give the name to their children following their birth and are often linked to circumstances surrounding their birth. For example, at the birth of Moses in Ex. 2:10: I drew him from Water.

At the birth of Samuel, Hannah named her son Samuel

(1 Sam 1:20) which means the person over whom the name of God is pronounced. The angel tells Joseph to name the child Jesus in Matthew 1:21. "He will be the one who will save the people from their sins".

The name of John in Luke 1:59: "God has been gracious". At the circumcision of Jesus: "When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Lk.2:21). Changing the name of a person is to give the person a new identity, mission, and responsibility. God changed the name of Abram to Abraham (Gen.17:5), Sarai to Sarah (Gen.17:15), and Jacob to Israel (Gen. 32:29). Neighbours can name a child. Thus we read "... And the neighbour women gave him his name, at the news that a grandson had been born to Naomi. They called him Obed" (Ruth 4:17). Some of the names are associated with the place where the person comes from for instance Mary Magdalene, from the town of Magdala, a site on Lake Tiberias, Mk.16:9; Simon of Cyrene (Mk.15:21).

From the above biblical tradition, Christians freely choose baptismal names. This is a Judeo-Christian tradition. Names like Moses, Sarah, Daniel, David, Esther, Samuel, Ruth, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Peter, Paul, and John are biblical names. Then there are names chosen from men and women saints and martyrs across the centuries: names like Agnes, Lawrence, Francis, Anthony, Dominic, Theresa of Avila, Catherine of

Siena, Charles Lwanga, and others.

### **Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC: nn.2156-2167)**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that God calls each one by name (Is. 42:1; John 10:3). Everyone's name is sacred. The name one receives is a name for eternity. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of dignity of the one who bears it. The baptismal name can be a name of a saint that is of a disciple who lived a life of exemplary fidelity to the Lord, a hero who is a role model of faith and charity. Patron saints provide a model of charity and we are assured of their intercession (CCC.n.2156). A person can be baptized without being given a name of a Saint but it would not be good to deprive the child of a name of a saint. To have a name of a saint as a patron is to gain entrance into the larger family of God (not just biological), to have a role model of faith and charity, and above all to have an intercessor.

### **Practical Recommendations**

Let the parents be free to choose a fitting name for their child and to consult priests and relatives if necessary. It is important for parents to be informed about the life and virtues of the saint they have chosen for their child. A Pastoral Guide to pastoral agents about available Christian names or some index of saints and their patronage is a necessity. Michael Walsh edited a classical volume of Lives of Saints (1987) and it proved to be a very useful source of information. Lives of saints or biographies of saints whether in hard copy or digital versions are

available in Catholic Bookshops and they can be very useful.

Catechesis about the lives of saints can be done in a parish. Once in a while, brief lessons on saints of the week can be done during the Sunday Mass; before the announcements, or before the final blessing. Also during the pre-baptismal instructions, parents and godparents can be informed and advised on the available options of how to choose a name for Baptism of their children.

Encouragement to choose local African saints/Blesseds/martyrs both ancient and new: Monica, Augustine, Kizito, Holy Martyrs of Uganda, Josephine Bakhita, Nyaatha, Clementine Annuarite, and others.

A baptismal name has legal implications too. It is important to ensure that a name is easy to spell and to pronounce so that children do not have to struggle to explain it to others as they grow up. In a booklet entitled "Ten Thousand Baby names", (1985) Bruce Lansky made some useful recommendations: a name that is too unique may be a disservice to the child. Be sure the name is not a burden to the child by being unpronounceable or unspellable. Too many middle names cause problems for children when filling out a form.

### **Conclusion**

Baptismal names have a spirituality. The ultimate purpose of naming is the salvation of the person who bears the name: "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Lk.10:20).

***Msgr. Lukwata is a lecturer at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA).***



## Journey to Sainthood : 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the death of The Servant of God Maurice Cardinal Otunga

By Rev. Prof. Fr. Lawrence M. Njoroge

**T**his year marks the 21st anniversary of the death of Maurice Cardinal Otunga whose cause for Sainthood was petitioned

in Rome by John Cardinal Njue, then Archbishop of Nairobi, in 2009. The following year, the much-loved Cardinal Otunga received the title Servant of God.

Many faithful in Kenya and beyond have continuously been asking: When will this son of the soil be declared Saint? Is it not taking too long?

This question becomes pressing, even urgent, when one considers that illustrious persons who were contemporaneous with Cardinal Otunga and worked closely with him have been canonized. This list includes, Pope John Paul II who became saint in 2011 and Mother Teresa of Kolkata, canonized in 2016.

The making of a Saint in the Catholic Church is a rigorous process governed by the instruction *Sanctorum Mater* or Mother of Saints approved by Pope Benedict the XVI in 2007. This document outlines four stages namely Servant of God, Venerable, Blessed and canonization as Saint.

The first stage mainly consists of information gathered relating to the heroic virtues of the candidate. In order to be declared Venerable, the Servant of God must be voted for unanimously. In order to be beatified as Blessed, a miracle has to be approved. Finally, another miracle needs to be presented and approved by Rome for canonization.

In this rigorous process, one cannot predict when a candidate for sainthood will be promoted from one rank to the next.

John Henry Cardinal Newman died in 1890 and his cause for sainthood began in 1958. He was canonized in 2019 by Pope Francis. While the process of Pope John Paul II took six years, that of Cardinal Newman lasted 60 years.

Nearer home the cause of Sr. Irene Stefani, fondly known as

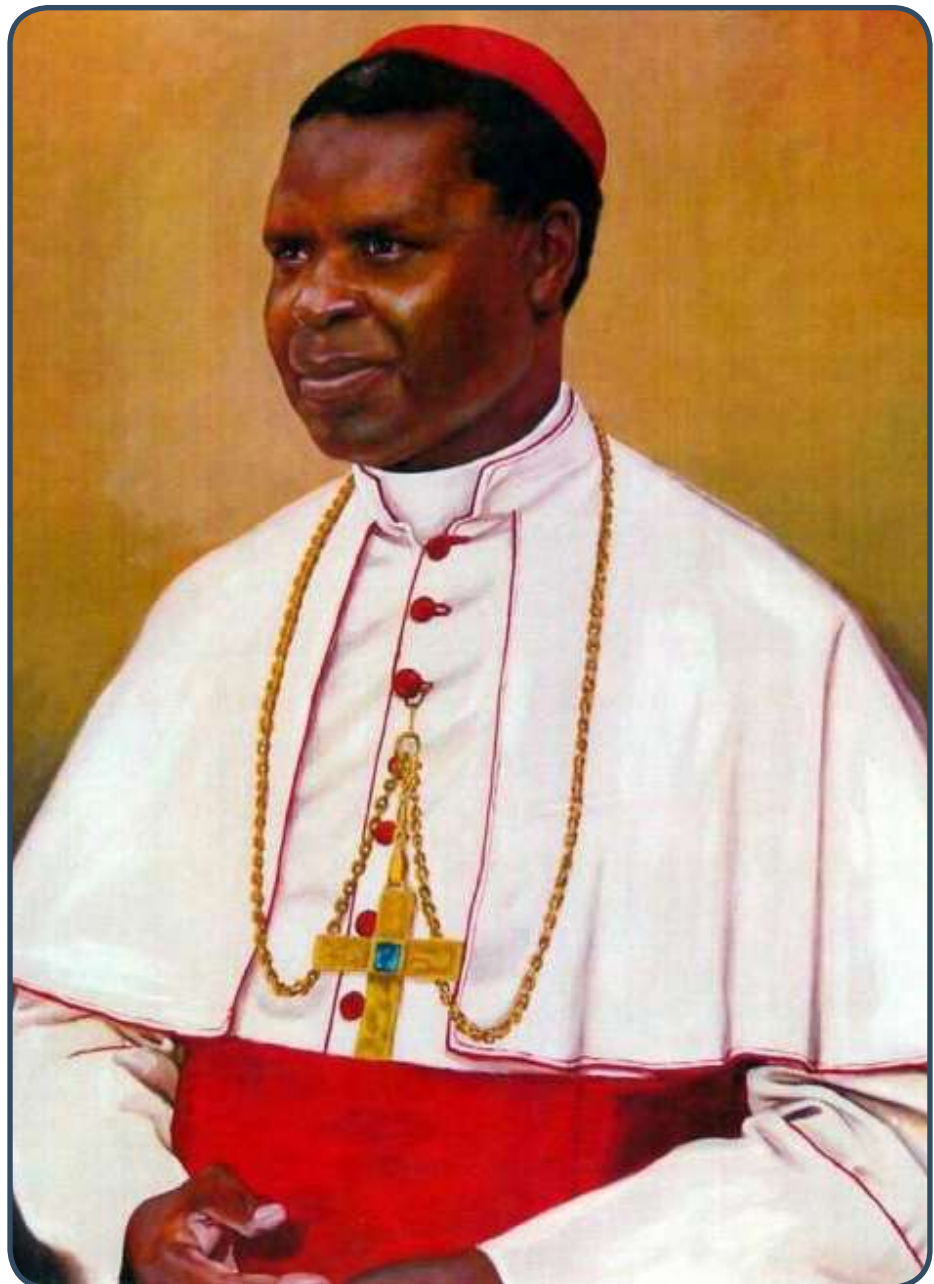
Nyaatha (Mother of Mercy), was opened in 1985 and she was declared Servant of God the same year. She became venerable in 2011 and received the title Blessed four years later. Thus, it took 25 years for Sr. Stefani to transit from Servant of God to Venerable.

Last year, Archbishop Philip Anyolo of Nairobi, Petitioner to Rome for the Beatification and Canonization of Cardinal Otunga, rejuvenated the Central Committee and appointed Fr. Peter Kaigua Ngugi, a Lecturer at the University of Nairobi as chair. Besides helping to fundraise for the process, the other task of the committee is to promote knowledge of the heroic virtues of the Servant of God.

Since appointment, the committee have visited 30 parishes in the Archdiocese of Nairobi and several tertiary institutions including Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA), newly-chartered Tangaza University and Hekima University College.

This committee has drawn plans to visit parishes and learning institutions throughout the country in order to promote knowledge about Cardinal Otunga, especially among the younger generations - Gen Z and Gen Alpha - who did not have the benefit of meeting the beloved Cardinal Otunga.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Anyolo during the Kenya Conference of the Catholic Bishops (KCCB) visit to Holy Father in August 2024 had consultations in Rome with Cardinal Marcello Semeraro President of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, in respect of the case of Cardinal Otunga. KCCB, headed by Archbishop



Maurice Muhatia Makumba, is equally interested in progress of this cause because the Servant of God Maurice Cardinal Otunga was and remains a national icon.

In his address to the congregation, at the Holy Family Basilica on Sunday 1st September 2024, Archbishop Hubertus van Megen, the Nuncio or Ambassador of the Pope in Kenya, urged the faithful to intensify prayer for the cause. Further, he insisted that the presentation and approval of two miracles is required for Cardinal Otunga to be raised to the

ranks of Blessed and finally be pronounced Saint.

Catholics in Kenya and persons of good will are desirous and hopeful that the Servant of God be beatified and named saint. For many, this will be the highest point in the history of the Catholic Church in Kenya because Cardinal Otunga will be the first son of the soil to be canonized.

**(Prof) Fr. Lawrence is the Vice Postulator Cause of Cardinal Otunga & University Chaplain (Catholic) & Professor JKUAT.**

# Integrity for a Just Nation: #Lentencampaign2024 Call

By Kennedy Mutisya

The great British writer, C. S. Lewis, said, “Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.” This great quote greatly resonates with the #LentenCampaign2024 clarion call on ‘Integrity for a Just Nation’ implying the use of our integrity to promote justice in Kenya. Integrity therefore, implies the application of the following perspectives into our daily lives of witnessing to Christ; honesty and truthfulness, transparency, accountability, humility, courage, adherence to moral principles, ethical decision making and commitment to doing what is right.

Integrity holds a special preference in the Catholic Church Doctrine as it is enshrined in the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching on ‘Preferential Option for the Poor’ that calls for addressing injustices of the poor including alleviating their suffering and misery. It goes ahead to entail Social Justice which is an embodiment of fair resource distribution, opportunities and privileges in society.

Therefore, addressing inequalities for the common good. #LentenCampaign 2024 was premised on strong foundations that aim to create awareness and build advocacy on issues across the the five weeks of Lent. The five weeks delve into contemporary issues that are evident in the daily lives of the Kenyan populace.

## **WEEK I: SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE**

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 recognizes that ‘All Sovereign Power Belongs to the People of Kenya’ implying that the people may exercise their sovereign power either directly or indirectly through their elected representative hence this authority of the Government is created and sustained by its people’s consent, through their elected representatives or rather directly. Sovereignty of the people has severely been affected by; Massive corruption, skewed and tribal appointments, state capture of independent institutions, voter bribery and excessive taxation.

### **Social Accountability**

Mechanisms remain the main hope for the citizens of Kenya to engage in holding duty bearers accountable. With devolution celebrating 10 years such mechanisms that exist include; Budget tracking, community score card, public hearings and consultations among others.

## **WEEK II: RIGHT TO CLEAN SAFE AND ADEQUATE WATER**

The right to clean, safe and adequate water is enshrined in the CoK 2010 (article 43). Kenya prides itself of 88 water towers as identified by Kenya Water Towers agency though only 18 are gazetted. All this water towers transform to major water basins. Further, Kenya experiences heavy rains

with most of this water going uncollected for future use.

Approximately 28 Million Kenyans lack access to safe and adequate water. Water scarcity is a common phenomenon in both the city and rural Kenya. The quality and quantity of water has been severely affected by; poor sanitation, water pollution, poor management of water resources, poor farming practices, unplanned urban development, population growth, industrial growth, vandalism of water infrastructure, among others.

## **WEEK III: CHALLENGES OF HIGH COST OF LIVING**

Currently, talking to any Kenyan they won’t fail to mention the high cost of living that is really hitting the country hard.

## **WEEK IV: RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM**

The recent happenings at the famous ‘Shakahola’ acted as a wake up call to the sad reality of extreme religious cult.

## **WEEK V: EMERGING THREATS TO THE FAMILY**

The family is the basic social fabric of society.

# Youth and the Church: Partners in Faith and Purpose

By Vincent Otieno



## The Youth Fulfilling God's Purpose Today

**E**cclesiastes 12:1 (NIV) Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years of approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them." The Bible has told many stories of young people in their youthful age called by God to accomplish tasks. This is a testament that God takes delight in the energy and passion of the youth and above all borrows our resources to accomplish his mission. Like David, Samwel and Jeremiah the youth at the church today have a unique and powerful role in the Lord's Kingdom.

The foundation of our catechism teachings is about knowing, loving and serving God and to be with him in eternity. Our youth are gifted differently and they can harness their talents to serve God and their communities. In their service, young believers are called to set a positive example in every aspect of their lives influencing others through their godly behavior. 1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV) Don't let anyone look down upon you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

Youth involvement in community service is equally crucial. Our communities are in need of leaders that stand in the gap

in times of need and there's no better person to provide leadership in our communities than the youth, for God can use anyone to fulfill his purpose.. We have recently witnessed an inspiring uprising among the youth in our country, who courageously stood up for justice and truth by exercising their constitutional rights and holding our government representatives accountable. This remarkable act of service exemplifies the leadership our communities urgently need from the younger generation. It also provided an opportunity for young people to embody their values and seek justice for our nation, guided by the principles of their faith. While we have learned valuable lessons along the way, celebrating our

successes and acknowledging our shortcomings, Christian youth must embrace the distinctiveness that sets them apart from those who do not follow Christ. As His Grace Anthony Muheria wisely stated, “Do it in a godly manner.”

### **The Church’s Commitment to Youth Empowerment**

The leadership of the Holy Family Minor Basilica began crafting a strategic plan for 2024-2028, recognizing that youth are not only the future of the Church but also a vital part of its present. As such, they have designated youth empowerment as a key pillar of the strategy. Engaging young people in service and leadership within the Church is essential for their spiritual growth and development in faith and the development of the church. In the spirit of the synodal pillar of communion, which emphasizes that no one is left behind, the youth of our parish play a crucial role in advancing the mission of the Lord and in preserving the Holy Family Minor Basilica as a sanctuary of Catholic worship. They possess the unique gifts of age, energy and time, allowing them to inherit and enhance the efforts of previous generations.

The Church must now plan both for today and the future, recognizing the youth as custodians of our current initiatives, which will yield fruits in the years to come. Our efforts through the youth formation classes will actively involve the younger generation and the Church will teach to impart skills, and empower them to carry forward the current initiatives for the benefit of future generations.

As the youth seek intergenerational fairness, and it is the Church’s responsibility



to be a place where they can find this assurance, inheriting the best from those who came before them. As Proverbs 13:22 (NKJV) reminds us, “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children.

### **Parents and Their Sacred Role**

Psalms 127:3 (NIV) reminds us that “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.” Parents hold a precious gift in children, and the journey of parenting is filled with joy and gratitude toward God. It is essential to value and love our children deeply. Like the church, parents bear the sacred responsibility of raising their children in the knowledge and reverence of the Lord. Proverbs 22:6 (NIV) encourages us: “Start off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” This shared responsibility invites parents to collaborate with the church in nurturing generations that are deeply rooted in faith.

Parents have the unique advantage of spending significant time with their children, allowing them to instill the ways of the Lord. This privilege lays the foundation for a life filled with purpose and happiness. A parent’s greatest joy comes from witnessing their children embrace the truth of the Gospel and live in obedience to God’s Word.

### **Conclusion**

Both the church and parents share a sacred duty to illuminate the path for the younger generation entrusted to them by the Lord. Our community thrives when youth are nurtured to love God with all their heart, soul, and strength. In turn, young people are called to honor their parents, following the commandments that promise long life. They must also respect the church as a house of prayer, a place where they can learn Christ’s teachings, worship, and seek wisdom.

***Vincent is the Parish Pastoral Council Organizing secretary and secretary to St. Augustine SCC.***

# Celebrating Bishop Kamomoe's Tenure at Basilica

By Paul Kasimu

Over the past 14 years, Holy Family Minor Basilica Parish witnessed a remarkable transformation under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Dr. Kamomoe, who later became His Lordship Bishop Dr. Simon Peter Kamomoe.

## Spiritual Growth

His journey began with a vision of spiritual renewal. Numerous baptisms were conducted and he officiated 78 marriage ceremonies, emphasizing the sanctity of family life. Ash Wednesday became a grand event, with visiting Bishops and Clergy increasing the number of masses from 4 to 12, drawing Christians from various parishes and denominations.

The Annual Way of the Cross became a 12km pilgrimage through the bustling streets of Nairobi, with youth groups animating the journey and local ordinaries leading the way. The Easter Triduum was enriched with thematic homilies and visiting priests, making it a spiritually uplifting experience.

Under his tenure, Bishop Kamomoe constituted the Youth Board whose primary focus is on the youth, guiding them through spiritual growth, careers, vocations, sports, charity, and sustainable projects like the Youth Shop. Youth mass and the St. Gregory the Great Choir, formed during this period, achieved Diamond Class status.

Establishment of the Parish Council Choir (Basilica Magnificent Choir) which ended up gaining over 50 active members. The Magnificat Choir and Christ Centered Choirs formed the Basilica Choir, which in 3 years successfully participated in the Climak festivals from Bronze Class and now



elevated to Gold Class. Monthly joint choir animations in Basilican uniform became a tradition.

The twinning of HFMB with Our Lady of Fatima in Kiriko parish fostered spiritual mentorship and financial support, leading to the construction of a new parish church and clergy house.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, he ensured that online masses continued for the elderly and sick, maintaining a sense of community. He introduced the celebration of the achievements of Christians, commemorated birthdays, anniversaries, and home masses, and introduced annual family day celebrations. Bible reading sessions, increased confession timings, practical homilies, and active participation in church development projects further strengthened the spiritual fabric of the parish.

### **Growth of Small Christian Communities and Church Groups**

Under Bishop Kamomoe's leadership, Small Christian Communities (SCCs) flourished, growing from 3 to 20. These communities were linked to adult catechesis and baptism and has seen a SCC being formed every year. This period has seen Christians through the SCC participating in pilgrimages, charity, acts of mercy, team building, and retreats.

The total number of church groups reached 39, made up of 6 ecclesial groups, 20 SCCs, 10 solidarity groups, and 3 choirs. 'The over 145 PPC membership drawn from the 39 church groups.' All of which has been empowered to plan and execute their activities independently.

### **Vocations**

Bishop Kamomoe mentored numerous deacons and

seminarians, with two parish youth ultimately becoming priests. As His Excellency, Most Rev. Hubertus van Megen announced his appointment as a Bishop, one of his mentees, Yona Aristidi was preparing to begin his journey to priesthood. He promoted family life and published two insightful books on Christ-centered marriage and the role of mothers-in-law.



### **Social Work**

Recognizing the importance of social support, Bishop Kamomoe established a social office to address the needs of the poor and set up a counseling support office. He initiated charity support for five institutions, maintaining this support for the last five years. They include: Talithakum Hands to Serve Trust; KCCB Endowment Fund; Little Sisters of the Poor; Radio Maria; and Missionaries of the Poor.

### **Development of Infrastructure**

Hi Lordship also spearheaded significant infrastructure developments. A prayer garden themed around the Way of the Cross was created, and the church was refurbished with images of saints. The parish office was relocated, and the Cardinal Otunga Annex was constructed, along with contributions towards the Cardinal Otunga Plaza.

The Adoration Chapel, Marian Grotto, and Crypt were built, and the old priest's house was improved to host the Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Holy Family Minor Basilica Community - Felician Sisters. The Rectory was constructed, and shares in the Archdiocese parking were purchased.

### **Church Projects**

"His Eminence John Cardinal Njue, the Emeritus Archbishop of Nairobi, was instrumental in reclaiming the Catholic Parochial School from the government, which is now known as Holy Family Minor Basilica Catholic Parochial School. Bishop Kamomoe, a constant supporter of the Cardinal, played a crucial role in assisting with the reclamation process. The school, which is accessible to parishioners, has since grown significantly in terms of academic excellence.

Additionally, the Agape Family Bread Bakery project was initiated to generate additional funds for the school, supporting its continued growth and ensuring the provision of quality education."

### **Others**

The parish magazine, The Basilican, was introduced and has been running for 10 years. Financial sustainability was enhanced with security measures, a borehole installation, and a perimeter wall.

As Basilica community, we give thanks to God for the opportunity to experience growth and transformation during this period under the dedicated leadership of Bishop Dr. Simon Peter Kamomoe.

***Paul is the immediate former moderator of the Holy Family Minor Basilica and Central Deanery of the Archdiocese of Nairobi.***

*To be a Family Of Missionary Discipleship*

# Message of Goodwill and best wishes to the Parishioners of Holy Family Minor Basilica from the PPC Moderator

By Bernard Linus Owuor



**D**ear Parishioners, The Mother church encourages the faithful through her teachings to count their many blessings and name them one by one. We are reminded that this is a sure way of finding meaning in our worship and faith as it opens our eyes to see the many great things God is doing in our lives.

As we reflect on the year ending 2024, and look forward to the future, I am filled with gratitude and hope for our parish. This year has been marked by significant milestones and the promise of exciting developments ahead is more than a reality. Key among these include the following:

## Episcopal Ordination

We are blessed to have witnessed the Episcopal ordination of His Lordship Bishop Peter Kamomoe who before this colourful event was our Administrator for a period of 14 years. This sacred event did not only strengthen our faith but also reaffirmed our commitment to serving God and our community with renewed vigour and dedication. It also confirmed God's assurance that He can use anyone and that with Him all things are possible

## Discovery of Our True Identity & Living It

During the year, we were able to clearly identify who we truly are and what God desires for the

Parish. Accordingly, we identified and embraced our Parish as The Sanctuary of Catholic Worship. This identity implies that our devotions, Liturgical Celebrations, actions and initiatives are all anchored in ensuring that Basilica remains a place of spiritual refuge and growth the Catholic way for all who seek it.

We continue to live up to our identity and uphold it in our lives as individuals and as a family of believers

## 2025 - 2030 Strategic Plan

It is normally intimated that a people can only be as good as the strategy they deploy, and how well they implement it. The strategy defines a people's belief

and strategic focus. To align the Parish to this dream, we wish to report that we have laid out a comprehensive strategy for the years 2025 to 2030.

In drafting the plan, we focused our efforts on enriching our faith & liturgical celebrations, promoting active participation and communion together as one family of God for the mission of God. Measures were also put in place to ensure no one is left behind thus deliberate efforts were made to act for the marginalised groups of including the widows, orphans, single parents, persons abled different among others.

Through the Strategic Plan, we aspire to be a family of missionary discipleship where we shall strive to inspire and influence the people of God through active participation and communion, for the mission of God. Looking ahead at the horizon, we believe that this plan designed to guide our parish through the next four years, will lay a foundation for a better Basilica with a focus on the following pillars and enablers:

### **Strategic Pillars**

- Christian Formation-focusing on enriching and growing the Parishioners in faith
- Promoting Active Participation in Liturgy
- Youth Empowerment- to give a more focused approach to matters relating to the youth
- Promotion of Vocations- Grow vocations to priesthood and religious life and marriage
- Mission-empower the parishioners to live their faith to live their faith and for the church to more actively reach out to the people of God through pastoral

work and other Christian virtues including charity.

To accomplish this great plan and realise the expectations under each pillar, more efforts will be put on the following enablers;

### **Strategic Enablers**

- Sustainability and Resource Mobilization
- Parish Administration & Services
- Infrastructure and Maintenance

We are optimistic that these pillars and enablers will help us achieve our goals and ensure that our parish remains a beacon of hope and a source of spiritual nourishment for all. Basilica will truly become a Sanctuary of catholic Worship.

### **Growth in Small Christian Communities and Rebirth of Dormant Ones**

The Parish experienced an exponential growth in both membership and participation in most church programs by the Small Christian Communities. This was particularly important as it ensured compliance with the call for active participation in the Synodal process. During the year, the Parish also formed a new group; St. Peter the Rock as is its tradition under the patronage of St. Peter in honour of Rt. Rev. Bishop Peter Kamomoe the immediate administrator. We gladly welcome them into the Holy Family Minor Basilica fraternity.

Remarkable participation was noted in various activities including in the Annual Subukia National prayer day and the exemplary representation of the Parish by various groups including the Catholic Men Association and Youth Serving Christ (YSC) which emerged the

best in the Archdiocese of Nairobi competition. The Pontifical Missionary Movement also represented the Parish in various activities and performed well.

We commend all the groups for their active participation in various programmes and encourage them to sustain this critical element of both the Strategic Plan and the Synodal Process.

### **Bible Trivia**

St. Jerome holds that Ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ and thus every Christian has a personal duty to enrich his or her faith by reading the scripture as often as is possible. Since it is generally perceived that Catholics do not read the scripture, a maiden Bible Trivia festival was held to promote the culture of reading the scripture and know the Catholic faith in a much deeper way.

The trivia which covered the three letters of St. John and themed Love, targeted the 34 groups of the Parish but registered the participation of 25 entries with St. Perpetua & Felicity emerging the overall best performer. The Liturgy Group were 1st runners up in the event with the Pontifical Missionary Children (PMC) closing the top three best performers.

The Bible Trivia session was a wonderful way of engaging with the scriptures and deepen our understanding of God's word. The session was not only educative but also a source of fellowship and fun. We encourage everyone in the Parish to participate and continue to grow in faith together.

In conclusion, we can say that the Trivia was a faith enriching event which besides the scripture also covered the Know your faith segment and is set to be an annual event going forward.

## **Appointment of Rev. Fr. Michael Ndichu as the New Administrator**

Following the installation and apostolic ordination of Rev. Fr. Simon Peter Kamomoe as the Auxiliary Bishop of Nairobi, Rev. Fr. Dr. Michael Ndichu was appointed as the new Administrator of the Parish. His appointment was welcomed with joy by the Parishioners who saw him as a suitable replacement to the Rt. Rev. Bishop Kamomoe. The success of any voyage is as good as its captain and in Fr. Ndichu, we the faithful of Basilica found in Fr. Ndichu that elusive but dependable captain who we welcome wholeheartedly.

The appointment of Rev. Fr. Dr. Michael Ndichu saw the Parish review and craft a new Strategic Plan and focus on a new beginning; a new strategic direction. We are optimistic that the Parish will experience an even greater and wholistic growth under his stewardship.

## **Refuge for those in Distress**

The Basilica became a safe haven for many citizens of all walks in moments of distress especially during the many protests in the Central Business District that pitted the security apparatus on one side and the citizen/protesters on the other.

The church played a critical role in promoting peace and providing a voice of reason in most of such cases with the parish becoming a medical rescue centre at one point. These activities affirmed the parish position as a true sanctuary of Catholic worship which we look forward to improve and enrich in future.

***Notwithstanding the milestones, the parish equally encountered numerous challenges which included:***

## **Challenges Facing Our Youth**

The youth are the future of our parish, and we recognize the unique challenges they face today. From societal pressures to the quest for identity and purpose in life, our young people need our support more than ever. We are dedicated to addressing these challenges head-on, providing guidance, and creating a nurturing environment where they can thrive.

Like the rest of the country, the church has equally been affected by the challenges affecting the wellbeing of the young people who are an integral part of it.

The frustrations of the youth and their challenges reached the bubble during the approval of the Finance Bill by The National Assembly culminated in a major countrywide protests under the banner Reject the Financial Bill. The protests placed our Parish, Holy Family Minor Basilica, at the centre (as the face of the entire church) with the protesters on one side and the Government on the other.

As a Parish we used this specially opportunity to rethink the role of the youth in the church and used the situation to enrich our Strategic Plan under the Youth Empowerment pillar.

## **Appointment and Commissioning of the new Youth Board**

In view of the myriad challenges affecting the youth in the Parish and the Country at large, there was need to rethink the management of youth affairs and model of their formation. Accordingly, a new Youth Board was formed and commissioned to deal with all matters affecting the PMC and young people as envisaged in the Strategic Plan. We are optimistic that the team

will work tirelessly to mitigate the challenges affecting the young people and bring them back to the church. We therefore congratulate them for accepting to serve the young people in the Parish.

## **Plans for 2025**

As we move towards 2025, we are excited about the implementation of our new Strategic Plan (SP). This plan places our parishioners at the centre of all our activities, ensuring that every initiative we undertake is aligned with your needs and aspirations.

Your involvement and feedback will be crucial as we embark on this journey together. We acknowledge that there can never be success in anything done without the involvement of the stakeholders.

As I conclude, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your unwavering support and dedication.

Together, we can overcome any challenge and build a stronger, more vibrant parish community. I particularly wish to thank all the leaders for their support with a special mention of the PPC Executive and the Parish Development Committee.

On behalf of the PPC Executive and the Administrator, we wish you a merry Christmas full of God's blessings and a fruitful and prosperous new year 2025.

May God bless you all abundantly.

***Bernard is the moderator of the Holy Family Basilica Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), moderator of Central Deanery Pastoral Council (CDPC), and moderator of Basilica Magnificat Choir.***

# AGAPE FAMILY BREAD & YOUTH SHOP

## Agape Family Bread

*Not Just Bread.... It's a Tasty Bread*



- ❖ Rock Bun
- ❖ Cupcakes

- ❖ Coconut Buns

- ❖ Brown Bread

- ❖ Fancy Bread

**A**gape Family Bread Bakery is a project initiated by Holy Family Basilica Parochial School, aimed at generating additional funds to finance various school activities in support of quality education.

The bakery provides a diverse range of products, including Brown Bread, White Bread, Fancy Bread, Coconut Bun, Fancy Buns, Rock Buns, and more, all crafted with family health in mind. Your

purchase of these delicious baked goods directly contributes to supporting the school. Therefore, by choosing Agape Family Bread, you not only enjoy tasty treats but also play a role in enhancing education.

Welcome to Agape!

**Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. - Proverbs 11:25**

## Youth Shop

*For all Sacramentals and Prayer Books*



- ❖ Rosary

- ❖ Crosses

- ❖ Prayer Books

- ❖ Photos

- ❖ Rock Bun

- ❖ Coconut Buns

- ❖ Brown Bread

- ❖ Fancy Bread

- ❖ Cupcakes

**T**he Youth shop is a project initiated by Holy Family Minor Basilica Youth Board, aimed at generating additional funds to finance various youth activities. The shop provides a

diverse range of sacramentals and prayer books. Your purchase of these items directly contributes to supporting the youth activities at HFMB.



# PONTIFICAL MISSIONARY CHILDREN

By Faith Rallyne

It is a movement for children aged between 0-14 years under the patronage of the Roman pontiff. It was founded in 1843 by Bishop Charles De-forbin in France. This was after the tragedy of the baby girls and those with disabilities were killed in China. This movement was established to bring children together to be taught about Christianity and get an education. The motto for PMC is “Children Helping Children”.

The aim is to foster Christian faith and missionary formation of children and to help them take up their responsibilities in the church as missionaries. Their patron Saint is Maria Goretti.

This is a very vibrant ecclesial group at Holy Family Minor Basilica under the Chaplaincy of Fr. Simon Mwangi and Sr. Tecla as the coordinator. The PMC is guided by Christian formation through continuous formation, recollection, and catechism, active participation in the liturgy through mass animation, and liturgical dances and Missions. The PMC have Children’s mass running through the first three Sundays of the month and Mass animation in the main church on the last Sunday of the month.

As part of growth and integration with the ever-evolving society and school system, this year, The PMC Role Models was launched by Archbishop Philip Anyolo. This is a subgroup within the PMC for all the children in Junior Secondary School. They are guided by the PMC motto

“Children Helping Children” under the patronage of the three children of Fatima namely; St. Jacinta, St. Francisco, and Venerable Lucia.

The PMC Role models participate in all PMC activities with a particular focus on deepening their faith through catechesis, seminars, life skill development, team building, and sporting activities. These activities are primarily at the parish level and where feasible the Deanery level.



The writer is the PMC Animator



The voice of the PMC Role Models

They are identified by Christian attributes of love, self-control, respect, responsibility, honesty, prayerfulness, patience, kindness, humility, peace-making, and service to others.

**Faith is one of the PMC Animators.**



Hi! I’m Nathan Maloba, and I’m 12 years old. I want to share what it’s like being a role model for the younger kids in PMC (Pontifical Missionary Childhood).

Being a role model is kind of like being a guide. We help the younger kids, show them the right thing to do when they’re confused and offer support when they need it. Sometimes, we just hang out, share stories, and have fun together because we’ve gone through similar experiences. But even though we’re role models, we’re still PMC kids too. We just have a bit more responsibility.

There are about 15 of us helping out, and we all do different things. Some of us lead in dancing, while others help with the liturgy. We even get to share our experiences and switch roles

to see what everyone is good at. And of course, since we're still kids ourselves, there are always adults around to guide us. We attend formation classes to learn how to be better leaders and grow in our faith.

In PMC, we look up to Saints Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco, the three children visited by Mother Mary. They were good at following God's commandments and prayed the rosary often. We're encouraged to do the same, and after every mass, we're reminded to pray the rosary with our families at home, because "a family that prays together stays together."

But PMC isn't just about prayer; it's also about helping other children. Every Sunday, there's a tin for donations, and the money goes to help poor children who don't have the same opportunities we do. It feels amazing to know that we're helping others while also following God's commandments.

In short, being a role model in PMC is super fun and rewarding. It helps both the younger kids and us grow spiritually and physically. I hope this gives you an idea of why being part of the PMC is one of the best things ever!

**Nathan Maloba is in Grade 6, Hospital Hill Primary School**



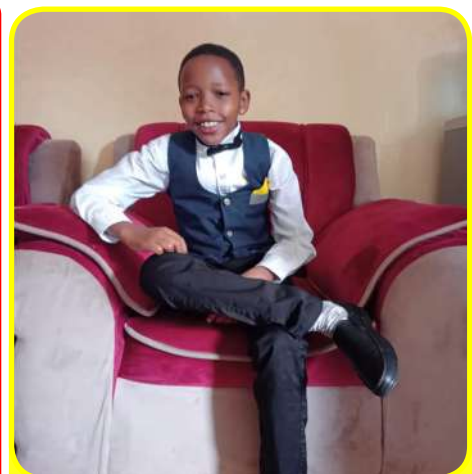
My name is Ruby Bakhita Mukambe. I am 12 years old. I am a member of PMC role model at Holy Family Minor Basilica. A PMC role model is a young person between the age of 11-13. A PMC role model is kind, responsible and is always there when the young children need them. I encourage other Catholic Children to be part of PMC and PMC role models.

**Ruby is in Grade 6 at Kianda School**



My name is Rita Patience Muthoni. I am 12 years old. I am a role model. First of all, I would like to thank the person who introduced "The PMC Role Models". The patron saints for Role models are Jacinta, Lucia, and Francisco. Role model refers to a group of people who are taken as examples to the younger ones. The values of role models are love, respect, self-control, humility, kindness and be peacemakers. A role model should be prayerful and active to the word of God. We learn how to correct young ones and how to help them during difficulties.

**Rita is in Grade 6 at Parklands Primary School**



My name is Valerian Maina, I am 12 years old. On January 26th, we have children who wish to join the Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC) and those who wish to continue with this missionary group. We call this Epiphany Sunday. On this day, the children are requested to have their PMC rosaries and uniforms. These items are blessed during their epiphany mass when they are taking their vows. We invite parents to support us in growing our faith and spreading the gospel. Every child aged 0-14 years are invited to join PMC. After the celebration of this great mass, the children are taken to have fun and will engage in fun activities like swimming, playing ball games, etc. All children are invited to join this missionary group and will be taught moral values. I am a proud member of PMC and I invite everyone in this age group to join us.

**Valerian is in Grade 6 at Kijani Ridge School**



My name is Lorraine Maina. I am 8yrs old. The day of the festival, we met at church and left together in the bus. We sang and ate snacks. It was a short drive to St Francis Xavier, Parklands. We attended mass and after we changed to our uniform. When our time came, we were called on stage to perform the singing game. We did well and it was so fun. We stayed outside as other children performed. After all the children performed, we were called inside for the results. We got number one. We were so excited. We got a certificate. We went back at our church celebrating. We also went to St. Monica Njiru for the next level of the festivals. We attended mass and thereafter performed. It was so fun. Many children had different uniforms. We looked colorful. Tell every child to join PMC because it is fun. God bless our teachers, parents, and the church. Amen.

**Lorraine is in Grade 3 at Catholic Parochial School**



My name is Luigi Gabris Leon. I am 9 years old. A calm day at Resurrection Garden. It is a beautiful place with many paths, leading to the way of the cross. As PMC we visited and prayed from the first station to the 15th station which is the resurrection. At the tomb where Jesus is buried, we saw an angel seated on it. I think this was an angel

sent by God to watch over the body of Christ. The same angel watches over us during sorrowful moments. The stations are well done with beautiful artwork. This helps you understand the prayer of each station. We spent the day in prayer and closed with a High Mass lead by our Chaplain Fr. Simon Mwangi. It was a great experience and I would like to go again. God bless our teachers, Sisters, Parents, and Priests for helping us know more about our faith. Amen.

**Luigi is in Grade 4 at Mount Laverna School.**



**Recollection at Resurrection Garden**



**Music and art Festivals- Deanery and diocese level**



**PMC members actively participating in a liturgical dance**



**PMC Fun Day**



**PMC Fun Day**



PMC Fun Day



PMC Fun Day

We as Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC) animators, love to thank every parent /guardian for trusting us by sending your child/ children to us for both spiritual growth and guidance for

a better tomorrow in our society, church, even in the future leaders of our great country.

Our greatest desire is to see this child/ children grow in the fear of the Lord without denouncing their faith no Matter the future they will choose.

We are always front line to lead them According to the teaching of the church under the umbrella of \*CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN\* in PMC the church recently introduced a new group called PMC role model which is under PMC.

PMC role model are the children who are in junior secondary school and are also known as the mirror to the young children's in. When we say mirror, we mean the little ones will always imitate or follow the good picture the role model will play.

In PMC also the word of God is our light to anything we do or teach. We read from psalms 119:105 "says your word is a lamp to guide me and alight for my path". Let's also from home try to teach our children how to read and put the word of God into practice. Remember always that charity begins at home.

As PMC animators we have introduced a musical class, ( key board, band,musical instruments and many more) not forgetting our able choir which sings every Sunday during our PMC mass at the large hall.

We encourage the parents / guardians to bring their children to PMC for spiritual growth and also to know more about our faith.

Lastly, "my child, don't forget what I teach you. Always remember what I tall you to do. My teaching will will give you a long and prosperous life."(proverbs 3:1,2)

My child, when the Lord corrects you, pay attention and take it as a warning. The Lord corrects those he loves, as parents correct a child if whom they are proud.

(Proverbs 3:11,12)

Thank you

***The writer is a PMC animator.***

## MISSIONARY CHILDREN PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we pray that all children may come to know you and believe in your love for hem. Help us through kind words and good deeds to spread YOUR LOVE to the whole world.

**Amen**

# Missionary Youth Movement (MYM)

By Bernice Grace Njoki



**T**he Missionary Youth Movement (MYM) is a dynamic youth group within the Archdiocese of Nairobi, welcoming teenagers aged 13/14 to 18. MYM honors St. Maria Goretti as the patron saint for girls and St. Kizito for boys, drawing inspiration from their profound devotion and strength. In our parish, MYM members play a significant role at the parish, deanery, and archdiocese levels. With 80 active members, our Basilica MYM group thrives with parish support through the parish MYM chaplain.

## **Basilica MYM Activities**

Since most MYM members attend boarding school, activities primarily occur during school holidays. We follow the Archdiocese Youth Pillars: Faith, Fun, Formation, Family,

and Follow-up. Teens engage in different committees to help plan and mobilize for these activities. Some of our notable MYM activities include:

### **Mass and Liturgy Participation**

#### **Objective: To engage teens actively in the liturgy**

Our teens animate the parish mass as per schedule, taking part in liturgical dance, proclamation, prayers of the faithful, and various roles. They also participate in deanery and Archdiocese liturgies, gathering every April for the Archdiocese MYM Mass at St. Mary's Msongari grounds.

### **Workshops and Counseling**

Objective: To support teens' formation and mental health

Monthly sessions and school holiday workshops focus on holistic development. MYM animators, clergy, and facilitators guide teens, addressing key areas of growth. Through the parish's social welfare office, clergy and mental health experts are available to provide support for their well-being.

### **Teens Camp**

#### **Objective: Social growth and bonding**

The annual camp fosters social connections and personal growth, with activities such as hiking, team-building exercises, swimming, and bonfire sessions. This time allows teens to bond and receive guidance from animators.

## Bible Clubs

Objective: Fostering a space for teens to explore the word of God

Our parish MYM teens form bible clubs, each named after a saint. These groups meet like book clubs, reading and discussing Bible stories. This structure cultivates a habit of reading and sharing, reinforcing faith within a collaborative environment.

## Talent Activities

Objective: Offering a platform for teens to evangelize through talents

MYM teens showcase their talents at events, including the deanery MYM sports, where they participate in races, ball games, and chess. A parish talent show in August attracted enthusiastic participation, while the MYM band performs in various church events, bringing joy and inspiration.

## Other Activities

- i). Charity Work
- ii). Parents' formation and engagement



**Bernice is the MYM Moderator**

## The Story of Our Patron Saint, St. Kizito



St. Kizito, Uganda's youngest Catholic martyr, was born around 1872 in Waluleeta. Cheerful, skilled in sports and music, Kizito's vibrant personality endeared him to his peers. In 1886, he was baptized by Charles Lwanga. When Lwanga warned of a growing threat to Christians, Kizito courageously stayed by his side, prepared to die for his faith. On June 3, 1886, Kizito and his companions were martyred at Namugongo. As the patron saint of MYM boys, St. Kizito teaches resilience and the courage to uphold faith. His life as a young African martyr inspires us to stand firm in our beliefs, even in the face of adversity.

**By Nathan Muchiri, Queen of Apostles Junior Seminary**

## The Story of St. Maria Goretti



St. Maria Goretti was born in Corinaldo, Italy, on October 16, 1890. Losing her father at a young age, Maria took on responsibilities to support her family. Her cheerful piety drew admiration from all. On July 5, 1902, a neighboring farmhand, Alessandro Serenelli, attacked her, intending to force her into sin. Maria resisted fiercely, warning him against this path, and chose martyrdom over sin. She was stabbed multiple times and, on her deathbed, forgave her attacker. Years later, Alessandro's conversion was attributed to Maria's forgiveness.

Declared a saint on June 24, 1950, Maria stands as the patron saint of MYM girls in the Archdiocese of Nairobi, embodying purity, forgiveness, and the courage to defend faith against all odds.

**By Shavonne Mulera Barayia, Mary Leakey Girls' High School**

## St. Kizito's Legacy



Having a young African saint as our patron brings a sense of pride and inspiration to us. St. Kizito's story reminds us that age is not a barrier to standing courageously for what we believe. His unwavering faith is a source of strength for MYM boys across Nairobi.

**By Roy Kamande, Chomo Boys' High School**



# Youth Serving Christ (YSC)

By Dennis Wafula

The year 2024 has been an exciting and fruitful one for the Youth Serving Christ (YSC) of the Holy Family Basilica. Our journey has been filled with spiritual growth, fellowship, and service as we dedicated ourselves to various activities that have strengthened our bond as a community and deepened our faith. As we reflect on the year, several key events stand out, highlighting our commitment to faith, service, and personal growth.

## Transitioning and Fun Day

The year began on a high note with a special event on 7th January 2024, the Transitioning and Fun Day for the PMC, MYM, and YSC. This day marked the start of the year's activities, as new and continuing members were officially transitioned to serve in their respective groups. It was a joyous occasion that not only celebrated our commitment to Christ but also allowed us to bond as a community through fun activities and fellowship.

## Central Deanery Hike

In February 2024, the YSC participated in the Central Deanery Hike at the Aberdares. This outdoor adventure was an opportunity for us to appreciate the beauty of God's creation while building friendships and unity. The hike was physically challenging but spiritually rewarding, as it allowed us to reflect on our relationship with nature and deepen our fellowship.

## Central Deanery Bible Trivia

As part of our mission to grow in scripture knowledge, the YSC groups in Central Deanery also took part in a Bible Trivia challenge held at St. Catherine of Siena Church. This event was both fun and educational, allowing us to test our understanding of the Bible in a friendly competition. The trivia not only fostered teamwork but also strengthened our scriptural knowledge, helping us become better ambassadors of the Word.

## Liturgical Activities and Church Involvement

Throughout the year, the YSC has been actively involved in various liturgical activities within the Basilica. We have animated Mass on several occasions, taking up different roles such as Lectors and church announcements. We have also performed liturgical dances during different church events, adding a vibrant and youthful spirit to the celebrations. Our participation in these activities has helped us grow spiritually and develop a deeper connection with the church community.

## Spiritual Recollection at Resurrection Garden

In June, YSC members gathered at Resurrection Garden in Karen for a day of spiritual recollection. The recollection was led by our Recollection Master, Rev. Fr. Geoffrey Wakanyi, and was a profound experience for all who attended. The day included engaging talks that focused on

spiritual growth, a reflective Way of the Cross and concluded with the celebration of Holy Mass. This event was a key moment for us to retreat from our daily lives, reflect on our spiritual journeys, and strengthen our relationship with God.

### **Yona Aristidi Shayo's Journey to Priesthood**

This year also marked a significant spiritual milestone for one of our own. Yona Aristidi Shayo, a dedicated member of YSC, joined St. Mary's Major Seminary in Molo on August 2, 2024, to begin his spiritual year as he embarks on the journey to become a priest. We hold Yona in our prayers as he pursues this noble calling and remains an inspiration to all of us in his pursuit of serving Christ.

### **Youth Festivals**

Our journey began at the Deanery level, where we joined other Parishes in the Central Deanery to celebrate our faith through music, Bible study, and intellectual challenges. The event held in August 2024 at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, South B, was a vibrant gathering of Young Catholics in YSC eager to share their talents and knowledge of scripture. During this event, the YSC group participated in several categories, including:

**Set Piece Singing** – where we showcased our musical talents by performing a piece 'Hii ni Ekaristi' for the competition.

**Quick Fire Questions** – a fast-paced competition testing our knowledge of Catholic teachings and scripture.

**Bible Trivia** – further challenging our understanding of the Bible and fostering teamwork.

Our hard work and preparation paid off as the Basilica YSC took 1st place overall in the Deanery-level competitions. This victory not only strengthened our bond as a team but also enabled us to proceed to the



Zonal level. Here, we faced more challenging competition but remained steadfast in our mission to represent our Parish and serve Christ through our talents and knowledge. Our commitment continued to shine through, and we successfully earned our spot at the Archdiocese of Nairobi Youth Festival.

On 5th October 2024, the Archdiocese of Nairobi Youth Festival took place at St. Martin De Porres Parish, Karuri, Kiambu Deanery. At the Archdiocesan level, our participation in quick fire, and Bible trivia was once again marked by enthusiasm and determination. Although the competition was fierce, we were proud of our performance and the unity we displayed as a group. More importantly, the experience helped us grow in faith, teamwork, and community engagement.

### **Formation Classes for New and Old Members**

Currently, the YSC group is undergoing formation classes aimed at nurturing both new and old members. These sessions provide an opportunity for personal Spiritual growth, offering guidance on living out our faith in everyday life. The classes focus on understanding the Catholic faith more deeply, fostering leadership skills, and encouraging a stronger commitment to service within

the church. This ongoing formation is crucial in preparing us to take on more responsibilities and serve our parish and community with dedication.

### **Conclusion**

As we approach the end of the year, we reflect on the many blessings we have received and the growth we have experienced as a youth group. The activities we've participated in this year have strengthened our bond, deepened our faith, and allowed us to serve the church and our community in meaningful ways.

We are grateful to our Parish Administrator, Rev. Fr. Michael Ndichu, our chaplain Rev. Fr. Boniface Mburu, parish leaders, mentors, and the church faithful for their support and encouragement throughout the year.

The YSC remains committed to continuing this journey of faith and service, looking forward to more opportunities to grow spiritually and contribute to the life of the church. May God continue to guide and bless the Youth Serving Christ of the Basilica as we strive to live out our faith and inspire others in the journey of Christian discipleship.

***Dennis is the Vice Secretary of Youth Service Christ.***

# Young Catholic Adults (YCA): Through the Eyes of Mother Teresa of Calcutta

By Jocelyne Amkwabwa



**M**atthew 25:40 speaks profoundly on Acts of Service and helping one another in the Society. Service to humanity equals service to God and in many ways, we are called to emulate this as Christians. Learning to serve and giving back to the society not only demonstrates unwavering charity but also an understanding by Christians that it is through giving that we receive and an outstanding Faith in the Supreme who replenishes us when we lack.

During the Lenten Season, the visit to Mother Teresa Children's Home in Huruma was a deeply moving and impactful experience for the Young Catholic Adults from the Holy Family Minor Basilica. Our group's commitment was to visit the poor and show our support. The

endeavour was well planned and organised through our leaders. We made contribution in cash and kind and members were able to volunteer and give amenities including cloths and other supplies earlier informed by the sisters that will go along way in support and contribution.

Filled with the zeal to support, the YCA team was up to the task on the D-Day, purchases timely made and the striking punctuality contributed the days success. Our able leaders organised and booked transport, and the journey began after a word of prayer.

At Mother Teresa, the striking serenity, the cool environment and the cleanliness of the facility formed the outstanding first impression of the sanctity

of their work and attention to details. To everyone of us, we felt serendipity. I think about the lessons, Mother Teresa is an Emblem of Beauty inside and outside and a representation of a heart filled with love for humanity. Her legacy was fresh. The welcome was warm and from the first tour to the last, we learnt the ultimate importance of preservation of life. We first met the children, most of them were invalids. This experience builds our Hope that even in the most desperate situation, life is sacred. Mother Teresa Children's Home has a facility to handle the mentally differently abled. We also met new mothers with there babies, and invalid children and this was so impactful.

After the tour, we grouped our team to perform the different



## YCA CULTURAL WEEK: 14-20TH JULY 2024

The YCA (Young Catholic Adults) Cultural Week kicked off on July 14th, 2024, with the vibrant theme: “Rooted in Culture, Unshakable in Faith.” The events aimed to energize social structures through the powerful lens of Catholic Social Teachings. Throughout the week, YCA members from all deaneries came together on an interactive online platform, sharing, learning, and deepening their faith.

The online sessions centered on learning and exploring Encyclicals and Exhortations. Each deanery was assigned a specific document to study, understand, and present during their designated time. They discussed the document’s relevance to YCA today and outlined an action plan based on their insights. These sessions offered a truly enriching experience, strengthening both knowledge and faith.

Then came the grand finale on Saturday, July 20th—the much-anticipated Cultural Day at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Ruiru Parish! Excitement was through the roof as hundreds of YCA members gathered to showcase their cultures, and the competition was fierce. The day began with a joyful Holy Mass, animated by Rev. Fr. Victor Mbutia, where song, dance, and celebration filled the air.

The Mass provided a moment of reflection on the vital role young people play in our communities and nation, inspiring everyone to use their voices to drive positive change.

The afternoon session featured vibrant cultural activities and engaging presentations. From song presentations to trivia questions, every deanery gave their all to win the top prize. YCA Basilica members were front and center, representing the Central Deanery with pride and

roles assigned to us by the sisters, these including splitting of wood into firewood, the role assigned to the males in our team.

For ladies, we were to assist in cleaning, folding of clothes and we ended up doing two roles, picking of beans and spending time with the new mothers mostly of our age. We had beautiful from self introduction to sharing and this session built our empathy to feel other people’s pain and try resonating with their solutions and to accord every around us indubitable grace. Time was scarce and we ended up with a longing to give more.

In the end, we shared our lunch during a session and conversations that brought meaning and change. The visit to Mother Teresa Children’s Home in Huruma was a deeply moving and impactful experience for the young Catholic adults from the Holy Family Basilica that aligns beautifully with the spirit of compassion and service exemplified by Mother Teresa herself. The reflections on the challenges faced, particularly in interacting with children dealing with mental health issues, show

the depth of care and perseverance the team brought to the visit.

The structured care at the Home, the dedication of the sisters to not only the children but also the surrounding community, is a testament to the power of love and service. It’s clear that the impact of this visit went both ways—the children felt the warmth and joy of companionship, while the YCA team gained invaluable lessons on empathy and service. The act of bringing essential supplies, and our participation in the daily rhythm of the Home, reflects a true commitment to meaningful, tangible support.

The legacy of Mother Teresa, as embodied in the actions of our YCA group, is alive in the work done at Huruma. It’s beautiful to hear how your hearts were filled with inspiration and a renewed commitment to service, following in the footsteps of Christ’s teachings for future posterity and this was indeed an honor to belong to the Young Catholic Adults, Holy Family Basilica,

**#WEARE LEGACYSEEKERS**

**By Jocelyne Amkambawa**



commitment! The energy, camaraderie, and competitive spirit were electric as each deanery cheered their team on.

This unforgettable week marked yet another YCA milestone of unity, evangelization, and service, leaving everyone eagerly awaiting Cultural Week 2025!

**By Stellah Serem**

### **ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI YOUNG CATHOLIC ADULTS (Y.C.A) ANNUAL MASS**

Theme of the year: A vibrant heart, anchored in faith for new evangelization. The annual ADN annual YCA mass was held on the 14th of September 2024 at Queen of Apostles Ruaraka. The event was presided over by His Grace Most Reverend Philip Anyolo, Metropolitan Archbishop of Nairobi. The highlights of the day were the launch of the YCA guidebook and the Kikoi festival at Mji wa Furaha.

The event kicked off at 9.30 am

with arrival and registration of members present, followed by opening prayer and remarks. Then we were officially welcomed by Ruaraka Deanery Moderation.

Without doubt, Jesus revealed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy to mankind to give them a means to combat these evils through prayer.

The holy mass then started at around 10.30am. In his homily, Fr. Victor talked about gratitude despite crosses and difficulties. In his words, "If someone was to be given your life they would be so grateful. Robin Sharma once said, turn your hurt into healing, your wounds into wisdom and your pain to power. The law of hope states that always learn to turn your tears in prayer. Learn to let the will of God be done. Never let the physiological and spiritual weight of our sins weigh us down.

William Kimaya invited Fr. Victor for the launch of the spiritual

book and the new logo. The new spiritual guide book is a tool to help us remember who we are about as YCA. It contains prayers and abridged version of the commissioning right of YCA. We are legacy seekers

The vision of YCA is to be a holistic young catholic adult rooted and transformed by catholic social teaching guided by the gospel values

Our mission is to follow together inspire evangelize and champion the catholic social teachings increasing our knowledge love and faith in God- St. Oscar Romero.

The Kikoi festival was definitely the highlight of the day for the YCA members. It was a session to show unwind a long week and the best way to end a good day. The members got to dance and the hype from MC Gachuhi was what we all needed.

**By Bellah Odhiambo**



# ST. MARY'S SCHOOL NAIROBI

## SCHOOL'S PHILOSOPHY

The school's philosophy is envisaged in the school Motto as found in the School Logo: "Bonitas, Disciplina, Scientia" (Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge). These Latin words appear in gold lettering above the school entrance and beneath the school crest on every blazer. They refer to three inspiring virtues that have created the community spirit of St. Mary's School. They are the ideals by which pupils and students strive to stand for and, whose fruits they seek to produce in their daily lives.

**BONITAS, DISCIPLINA, SCIENTIA.**



## OUR VARIED CURRICULA



**KINDERGARTEN  
(PLAYGROUP, PP1  
& PP2, KG1 & KG2.)**



**CBC  
(GRADE 1- GRADE 6)**



**CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY  
(YEAR 1- YEAR 6)**



**JUNIOR SECONDARY  
(GRADE 7 - GRADE 9)**



**IGCSE  
(YEAR 7 - YEAR 11)**



**INTERNATIONAL  
BACCALAUREATE (IB)  
2 YEARS DIPLOMA  
PROGRAMME**

Scan for Admission



**2025  
ENROLMENT ONGOING**



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# Basilica Catholic Men Association (CMA)- Forging Faith and Fellowship

By Joseph Otinda

**T**he Catholic Men's Association (CMA), a beacon of faith and fellowship for Catholic men, is a vibrant community within the Holy Family Minor Basilica parish. This dynamic group, rooted in the teachings of the Church, is dedicated to fostering spiritual growth, strengthening family bonds, and contributing to the betterment of society.

## A Call to Holiness

As St. Paul exhorts in 1 Corinthians 16:13, "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong." The CMA at Holy Family Minor Basilica embraces this call to vigilance and fortitude, encouraging its members to live exemplary Christian lives. The group's motto, "Good Family, Good Church, Good Society,"

encapsulates its mission to build strong families, strengthen the Church, and positively impact the society.

## A Devoted Community

The CMA is an integral part of the broader Catholic Church, operating at various levels, from the national to the parish. The Basilica CMA chapter is a testament to this interconnectedness, actively



participating in diocesan and national initiatives.

The chapter's activities are diverse and enriching, including:

- Spiritual Formation: Regular retreats and recollections provide opportunities for spiritual renewal and deepening faith.
- Charitable Works: The CMA actively engages in charitable activities, such as visiting the sick and elderly, supporting families in need, and participating in community service projects.
- Social Bonding: Through social gatherings, sports events, and other activities, members foster

strong bonds of friendship and camaraderie.

- Liturgical Engagement: The CMA actively participates in liturgical celebrations, leading prayers, singing in the choir, and animating Mass.

#### **A Year of Grace**

In 2024, the Basilica CMA choir soared to new heights, claiming the prestigious title of best CMA choir in the Archdiocese of Nairobi! This incredible achievement is a testament to the talent, dedication, and hard work of our members. The choir's triumphant performance was a

highlight of the year, bringing joy to the entire parish community.

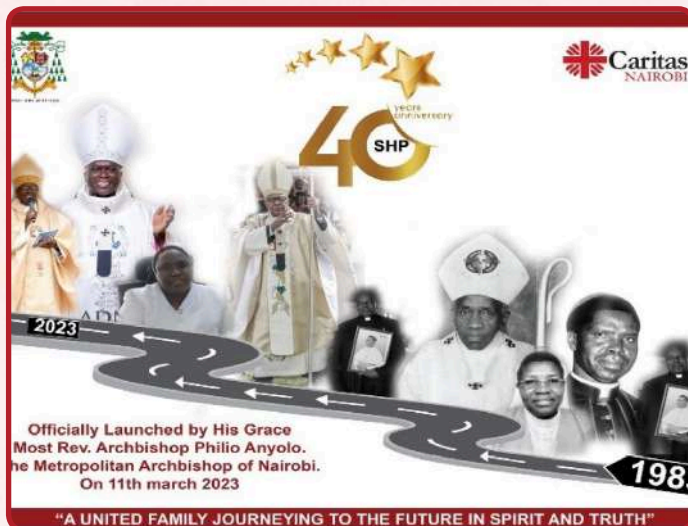
As the CMA continues to grow and thrive, it remains committed to its mission of building a better society, one faithful man at a time. By living out the Gospel message and supporting one another, the members of the Basilica CMA are making a lasting impact on their families, their parish, and their community

***Joseph is the secretary of the Catholic Men Association.***

*Caritas Nairobi is the aid and social development agency mandated by the Archdiocese of Nairobi to coordinate and implement aid and social-economic development programs in Nairobi and Kiambu counties. Caritas Nairobi envisions a society where all live dignified lives. Guided by the Catholic Social Teachings, Caritas Nairobi's vision is ... A Just, Self-Reliant and Value Based Society. Our programs include:*

### **The Socio-Economic Empowerment Program**

The vision of this program is to economically empower communities. Since 1983, envisioned by the Servant of God Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga, the program previously known as the Self-Help Program has been mobilizing people into groups and inculcating in them a savings culture. Members then lend each other after six months of active saving and share the surplus in form of dividends. Through the years the program has grown immensely and in 2015, Caritas Microfinance Bank was founded in order to extend support to small and medium-sized micro-enterprises and low-income households.



### **Food security and livelihoods Program**

Caritas Nairobi over the years has implemented projects to support farmers and also small-scale dairy farmers in Kiambu and Nairobi Counties. In order to continue supporting dairy farmers in 2023 Caritas Nairobi officially launched a milk processing plant, Caritas Dairy, to extend support to smallholder farmers in the dairy value chain. The dairy has a capacity of over 20,000 liters of milk per day. Current and ongoing projects in the program include Smart Hydroponics Farming in Kenya, Right Coffee Project where capacity building and the adoption of new farming technologies are emphasized.



## Gender and Youth Empowerment Program

This program seeks to promote equity and equality for all women and girls, men and boys to achieve holistic and sustainable development and social justice within the Archdiocese of Nairobi. Our approach to women empowerment and gender equality is for both genders to champion the agenda- men taking the lead in supporting the processes while at the same time outlining the roles of men and women. Current projects under the program are the Social Development Program (SDP), the Beacon Boys Program (BBP), Youth Program, and Promotion of Micro-finance Program (PROMIC).



## Relief and Charitable Centers

The Catholic Church has long been at the forefront of efforts to protect and support vulnerable children. Our mission aligns closely with the Kenyan government's agenda, particularly in advancing child care reforms and providing alternative family care. We stand in solidarity with the government in its efforts to create a framework where every child has access to a safe, nurturing environment.

Caritas Nairobi runs institutions like Rescue Dada Centre-Kamulu, Kwetu Home of Peace-Kamulu, Boys Town-Ruai, and Joy Village-Nazareth where we continue to provide comprehensive care, addressing not only the immediate needs of vulnerable children but also their long-term reintegration into society. The Church recognizes that children represent the future of Kenya, and our moral and social responsibility is to ensure that no child is left behind.



**To partner with Caritas Nairobi, contact us through:**

**Office Line: +254 (0)723 168764**

**Email Address: [director@caritasnairobi.org](mailto:director@caritasnairobi.org) or [caritas@caritasnairobi.org](mailto:caritas@caritasnairobi.org)**

# The Journey of Basilica Magnificat Choir (BMC)

By Colette Namalwa

Once upon a time, in the vibrant heart of Nairobi, a new musical chapter began at Holy Family Minor Basilica. During a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) meeting, the need to expand the choir arose. Given the structure of the Basilica, a large choir was essential to create impactful liturgical singing.

But the question remained: how to recruit new voices? It was then that Rev. Fr. Simon Peter Kamomoe, now Bishop, proposed that the PPC members themselves take on the challenge and become members of a new choir. His idea was simple but transformative: both outgoing and incoming parish leaders would unite to form this new ensemble.

With his deep devotion to Mary, Bishop Kamomoe officially founded the Basilica Magnificat Choir (BMC) in 2018, naming it after Mary's song from the Gospel of Luke (1:46-55). In the beginning, there were

challenges. Many members had little choir experience and doubted their vocal abilities. To guide the transition, Bishop Kamomoe enlisted the expertise of Mr. Nick, a dedicated music director. Balancing full-time jobs, members struggled to find time for rehearsals, leading Mr. Nick to introduce Personal Online Rehearsals (OPR). Through OPR, members recorded themselves and submitted their recordings for review, while the full choir gathered for harmonization on Saturdays.

On Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019, BMC was officially commissioned as a choir of the Holy Family Minor Basilica by His Eminence John Cardinal Emeritus Njue.

This memorable Mass marked the beginning of a journey that would see BMC blossom, evolving into one of the Basilica's three main choirs with a remarkable choral repertoire and standard.

## The Pillars of BMC's Success

From its inception, BMC has

flourished thanks to three essential elements:

1. Mass: The central purpose of the choir's work, where they lead the congregation in sung liturgy.
2. Physical Interactive Rehearsals (PIR): Held on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings before Mass, these sessions are crucial for preparing and building cohesion within the group.
3. Personal Online Rehearsals (OPR): These sessions have become a cornerstone of individual development, elevating the choir's overall performance.

## A Family United

The members of BMC form a close-knit family, supporting one another through illness and unexpected hardships. While rehearsals are rigorous, they also provide time to catch up, bond, and strengthen friendships.

## Aesthetic and Liturgical Excellence

BMC believes in the power of beauty in both sound and appearance. Recognizing that a choir that sings well and presents itself attractively uplifts the congregation, BMC coordinates its attire with the liturgical colors of the Church, enhancing the reverence and aesthetic appeal of the Mass.

Through commitment, creativity, and a strong sense of community, the Basilica Magnificat Choir has grown into a beacon of musical and spiritual excellence at Holy Family Minor Basilica. Today, BMC stands proudly at five years, continuing to inspire and elevate all who hear their harmonious voices.

**Colette is the Secretary to the Basilica Magnificat Choir.**



# St. Gregory The Great Choir



## History and Evolution:

The St. Gregory the Great Choir, originally known as the Youth Choir is under the leadership of the youth board and Bishop Simon Peter Kamomoe.

It was commissioned in 2018 at the Holy Family Minor Basilica. Since its inception, the Choir has grown significantly, now comprising around 85 Choristers. In a shift from previous practices, the Choir eliminated age restrictions, welcoming parishioners of all ages to join.

## Role in the Parish and Events:

The Choir is a vital part of the parish life, rotationally singing at the 8.00am, 9.30 and 11.30 Masses. Beyond regular Sunday services, the Choir also participates in other liturgical events, including weddings, baptisms, requiem masses, and birthday celebrations for Choir members.

Notably, in 2019, the Choir represented the parish at the ordination of their former acting Chaplain, Fr. Francis

Katuta, in Zambia, followed by a Thanksgiving Mass at Holy Family Minor Basilica.

The Choir's main mission is to lead congregational worship by singing with excellence, ensuring that every Mass is filled with lively, beautiful music, all in accordance with liturgical guidelines.

## Practice Schedule:

- **Thursday: 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm**
- **Saturday: 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm**
- **Sunday: 2 hrs before the mass.**

## Affiliation with CLIMAK:

St. Gregory the Great Choir has been a proud member of the Catholic Liturgical Music Association of Kenya (CLIMAK) since 2017.

CLIMAK organizes various events such as music festivals, St. Cecilia Day celebrations, and National Prayer Day, in which member Choirs participate.

Since joining CLIMAK, St. Gregory the Great Choir has consistently

excelled, qualifying for the National CLIMAK Music Festivals every year.

## Concerts and Recordings:

In addition to their participation in Mass and CLIMAK events, the Choir occasionally organizes music concerts to showcase their musical progress and evangelization, a recent one which was held on 22nd September 2024. These concerts highlights both their vocal performances and the talents of the choristers in playing various instruments and above all building Choristers' bond.

The Choir also produced their first album, Vol. 1: 'Roho Za Waumini' (Souls of the Faithful), released while the group was still known as the Holy Family Minor Basilica Youth Choir.

Every year, the Choir records Christmas chorales, which have been broadcasted on Capuchin TV and KBC during Christmas Eve.

***St. Gregory the great, pray for us.***

# The Christ Centered Basilica Choir

By George Wachira



It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High

The Christ Centered Basilica Choir, considered the “Senior” Basilica Choir was formed in the year 2014 by Rev. Fr Simon Peter Kamomoe ( as he then was). Jesus Christ had to be at the Center of choir singing at our parish and the main focus of the choir had to be tailor made to achieve this objective.

The Christ Centered Basilica Choir is the linchpin upon which the transitioning of the youth choir into St Gregory the Great Basilica Choir as well as the formation of the Basilica Magnificat was pegged upon.

Membership of the Christ Centered Basilica Choir is as diverse as it is rich, covering a large demography. Our Oldest member ( Winnie Makokha) is

88 years young and has sung at the Holy family Basilica parish for the last 54 years while our youngest is a 14 year old “ Genz” who is an accomplished, pianist and instrumentalist and is currently pursuing his high school education at the Queen of apostles minor seminary.

The warm and camaraderie relationships between the members makes Christ Centered Basilica Choir a “home away from home”

This then translates to focused, vibrant and all inclusive animation during the sung liturgy at our Masses. Our competent trainers, visionary executive, accomplished instrumentalist and talented choristers ensures that the sung liturgy by the Christ Centered Basilica Choir is both edifying and vibrant.

As The Christ Centered Basilica Choir celebrates our 10 year

anniversary, we Thank Our Almighty Father for thus far He Has sustained us. We extend our gratitude to the clergy, the parishioners and our members for their cooperation and support. We encourage our parishioners to join the Christ Centered Basilica Choir as we continue in our evangelization ministry by way of Service to God and service to the people by way of praise and worship through choir singing.

(Acts 2:46). Thus St Augustine says rightly, ‘Singing is for one who loves’ (PL 38:1472). There is also the ancient proverb: ‘One who sings well prays twice.’

So Brethren ( Psalms 100:4) let us enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courtyards with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

**George is the secretary to the Christ Centered Basilica Choir.**

# St. Matthias Small Christian Community

By Nathan Ngumi



**S**t. Matthias Small Christian Community (SCC) at Holy Family Minor Basilica Parish was founded on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2014. It began with catechumens who entered the Church during the Easter Vigil the night before.

An early and influential guide to the group was Fr. Matthias Wambua, then a deacon, who taught several catechism lessons to the class during 2013-2014. Inspired by his teachings, the group chose St. Matthias, the apostle who replaced Judas, as their patron. Over time, members of St. Matthias SCC have shared a journey of spiritual growth and close social bonds, forming a deep sense of family among each other.

The group started with over seventy members, though some later moved from Nairobi or shifted parishes. Today, the group has settled at about twenty-five active members. Along the way, marriages have been celebrated, and children have joined the community, pointing to a promising future.

The group meets monthly, gathering every third Sunday for prayer, Bible study, and discussions on parish matters. Four times a year, St. Matthias animates Sunday Mass, their distinct uniforms making them easily recognizable. Following guidelines set by the Parish Pastoral Council, the group annually engages in three key

activities: a recollection or retreat, charity work, and teambuilding.

For their charity work, St. Matthias adopted Talitha Kum Children's Home in Nyahururu, Laikipia County. Run by the Religious Sisters of St. Martin de Porres, the home provides care to orphans and children with HIV/AIDS from infancy to age eighteen. Each year, St. Matthias members visit the home to support the sisters and connect with the children.

Bishop Simon Peter Kamomoe, who served as Parish Administrator for fifteen years, was the group's patron from its inception until April of this year. He was consecrated Bishop in



February 2024 after being appointed by Pope Francis, and his encouragement greatly enriched the group's spiritual growth. Currently, Fr. Simon Mwangi, an assistant priest at the parish, serves as St. Matthias' patron.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, from 2020 to 2022, the group faced significant challenges as churches closed and movement restrictions limited physical gatherings.

During this time, St. Matthias maintained online engagements,

eagerly resuming in-person fellowships in 2022, grateful for God's protection and guidance.

In 2024, St. Matthias SCC proudly celebrated its tenth anniversary. Looking to the future, the group has set ambitious goals, including pilgrimages to the shrines of the Ugandan Martyrs in Namugongo and Our Lady of Kibeho in Kigali, Rwanda.

Currently led by Moderator Anne Obonyo, St. Matthias SCC warmly welcomes new members who seek to grow in the Catholic faith, hope, and charity.

For the journey so far, all praise and glory belong to the Lord. Truly, He is our Ebenezer. St. Matthias SCC, visit our parish office on 1st Floor at Cardinal Otunga Annex Monday to Friday, between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.

***Nathan is the CJPD Representative of St. Mathias SCC and immediate past Organizing Secretary for the Parish Pastoral Council.***

# St. Joseph Small Christian Community: A Journey of Faith and Fellowship Community

By Cynthia Mmboga



**A**t the heart of Holy Family Minor Basilica Catholic Parish lies a close-knit Small Christian Community (SCC) named St. Joseph. St. Joseph SCC brings together 31 dedicated members.

Our journey began modestly in 2011, and now, thirteen years later, we look forward to continued growth and blessings. Our life together is deeply Christian at its core, focused on living out the baptismal vows nearly all of us made in 2011 when we were welcomed into the Church here at the Basilica.

We meet every third Sunday of the month at 9:30 a.m., usually at the church or sometimes at a member's home, to share God's word, pray together, and support each other in faith.

Our gatherings provide a warm

and accepting environment where we discuss our lives through the lens of the Gospel. Through these interactions, we learn firsthand what it means to truly be the Church, fostering a connection that is both spiritual and personal.

In addition to our monthly meetings, we participate actively in parish life, helping with Mass celebrations and taking part in spiritual activities, such as retreats, recollections, and Mass animation.

Our group is also dedicated to works of mercy, regularly visiting orphans, elderly homes, the sick, and prisoners, as well as organizing charitable events. Importantly, we also support each other by visiting members in times of illness, celebrating new births, and comforting one another during loss.

Our activities include team-building events, spiritual discussions led by priests or guest speakers, and social gatherings like get-together parties and gift-giving for various member milestones. Our fellowship at St. Joseph SCC is enriched by:

- 1) Sharing testimonies of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives and gaining insight into our baptismal mission.
- 2) Strengthening our relationship with God and with fellow Christians.
- 3) Deepening our faith through shared experiences and prepared spiritual resources.

St. Joseph SCC, visit our parish office on 1st Floor at Cardinal Otunga Annex Monday to Friday, between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.

**Cynthia is the Vice Moderator for St. Joseph SCC.**

# Advent: A Season of Hope and Renewal

By Albertina Sachombe



**A**dvent; a liturgical season that ushers us into the celebrations of the coming of our Lord is a season of hope, joy, love, and peace towards the coming of Emmanuel- God with us. It is a moment to renew our relationships; with God, with fellow human beings, and most of all with Mother Nature. The coming of Jesus was a moment of restoration of the broken relationship between God and humanity. Consequently, the Advent season encourages us to reflect on our relationship with the environment in our use, preservation, and restoration.

How did we get here? Genesis 1: 26-28 outlines the role of humanity as stewards of creation, entrusted with the care of cultivation of the earth. However, humanity through the years instead of being caretakers of God's creation through responsible management and care has plundered it to dominate and exploit. In ex-

ploiting Mother Nature humanity forgets what Psalms 24:1 point to, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it".

In the encyclical *Laudato Si- On the Care of Our Common Home*, published by Pope Francis quoting Colossians 1:16-17, "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible [...] all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him, all things hold together", reminds of the theme of interconnectedness. Therefore, humanity must be attentive and take action to the cries of the poor and Mother Nature LS#49.

The advent readings are directed toward the themes of preparation and transformation in the same way, *Laudato Si* calls us to the theme of Ecological Conversion by adopting sustainable practices and advocating for policies that protect the environment through simple lifestyles.

Both the encyclical and the Advent season emphasize the importance of community and solidarity. Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* encourages us to reflect on the needs of others by shunning away the culture of "Wastefulness". If we listen to this plea, then during this Advent season we will save enough for our charity activities.

Dear brothers and sisters, by embracing the spirit of Advent and teachings of *Laudato Si*, may this Advent season be for each a moment of preparation and renewal leading to us undertaking sustainable practices such as reducing waste, feeding and clothing the less fortunate, conserving energy, and supporting eco-friendly products.

***Blessed Advent Season!***

***Albertina is a member of the Youth Board and leader at St Jude Laudato Si Circle***

# Reflections on My Sister's Journey with Cancer

By Veronica Ojuro

During my sister's illness, I often found myself questioning what God might be telling us. Her suffering drew me deeper into prayer, clinging to faith as my only source of strength. Raised Catholic and as a member of the Holy Family Basilica since 2018, I began to familiarize myself with various church groups, such as the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Legion of Mary, Magnificat Choir (BMC), and the Catholic Women Association (CWA). This connection gave me a community of solace and support through our shared faith.

In my family, Catholicism has been our tradition, with all twelve of us—including my parents—baptized and confirmed. Now, only four remain, and I'm the last in the Catholic faith.

My sister Magdalene, one of the closest to me, passed after a long battle with illness. Despite our sibling rivalry, we shared a bond that only grew stronger through hardship. She had worked with Kenya Pipeline Company and managed her diabetes well until early 2018, when her health began to decline. After a fainting episode at work, she was transferred to Nairobi, where tests revealed the unexpected: stage 4 breast cancer.

On December 12, 2018, she began chemotherapy, and an urgent trip to India was arranged to pursue advanced treatment.

Despite family rifts and our own personal challenges, I prayed daily, finding strength in the morning devotions at Basilica. This practice, though new,

became my source of comfort. I encouraged her to pray the Rosary, our "deadly weapon" in spiritual warfare, and grew accustomed to attending daily Masses. I felt like a newcomer in my faith, but prayer helped me find stability and hope amidst the turmoil.

The burden of being the youngest in a family torn apart by differing beliefs often felt heavy. My siblings had left the Catholic faith to follow their spouses' churches, leaving me to advocate for Magdalene's spiritual well-being on my own. I encouraged her to reconcile with God, facing her directly to ask if she would want to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. She responded without hesitation, affirming her Catholic faith and her desire to reconnect with God through the sacraments. Her affirmation was a gift, lifting a weight from my heart.

In 2022, I shared Magdalene's situation with Fr. Hunja, then an assistant priest at Basilica. He graciously visited her at Aga Khan Hospital, guiding me to contact her parish priest in Kitengela. Sacred Heart of Jesus members, Legion of Mary, and CWA members joined in prayer. Faithful companions, they lifted us with support and prayer, sharing in the weight of Magdalene's struggles.

Father Felix, her parish priest, eventually held a private Mass for her at the hospital, bringing her the comfort of Communion again—a moment that filled me with indescribable joy.

The journey continued, and I found solace in the sacred words of Matthew 7:7-8, "...Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will



find..." I leaned on these promises, seeing them fulfilled as more people, including priests from various parishes, came to support her. On January 3, 2024, she passed, having shared final moments with her son and sister, and I found peace knowing that she had reconciled with God. My gratitude is boundless for the priests, Sacred Heart of Jesus members, BMC choir, and all who encouraged me. To Mwalimu Nicholas, George Wachira, and countless friends, thank you for reminding me that God's grace carried us through her last days.

In life and death, we belong to the Lord. As Romans 14:8 reminds us, "whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." I hold this truth close as I remember my beloved sister and the journey that brought us closer to God.

**Veronica is the treasurer of Sacred Heart of Jesus, HFMB.**

# Tribute

We pay tribute to our recently fallen members of the Basilica family  
We pause for a moment to honour our recently fallen members of the  
Basilican family for their contributions and the impact they have had on our lives.  
The women who dedicated their time, talent, treasure, and interests to the work  
of God. A great example to those left behind to emulate.



**Grace Lucy Waruguru**

**December 18th 2023**

Grace was a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, representing the Basilica Self-Help Group in charge of Capacity Building from 2019 to 2023.

She also served in the Basilica Magnificat Choir (BMC) from its inception in 2018, choosing to sing Alto despite her Soprano background.

May the Lord welcome her into  
May Grace's soul rest in eternal peace. Amen



**Susan Nduta Muchai**

**March 2024**

Susan was a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, representing St. Dominic Small Christian Community as Secretary from 2016 to 2023.

She also served in the Basilica Magnificat Choir (BMC) from its inception in 2018 until her passing. Additionally, she was a valuable contributor to The Basilica Magazine.

May Susan's soul rest in eternal peace. Amen



**Severina Nyambura Waititu**

**July 2024**

Severina served as the Organizing Secretary for the Parish Pastoral Council and later as the lead usher until she fell ill. As an usher, she deeply valued the connection between dress and self-esteem, teaching that our clothing reflects our inner character and respect for God.

To her, modesty was not just about appearance but about honoring God and ourselves. She would gently correct those who dressed immodestly, offering guidance with love and often providing a leso to cover up when needed.

May Severina's soul rest in eternal peace. Amen

# ENTERTAINMENT BIBLE JOKES



Q: What kind of man was Boaz before he got married?  
**A: Ruth-less.**

Q: At what time of day was Adam created?  
**A: A little before Eve.**

Q: Where was the first math problem mentioned in the Bible?  
**A: In Genesis, when God told Adam and Eve to go forth and multiply.**

Q: On the ark, Noah probably got milk from the cows onboard. What did he get from the ducks?  
**A: Quackers.**

Q: Which animal on Noah's ark had the highest level of intelligence?  
**A: The giraffe.**

Q: When was the first lunch meat mentioned in the Bible?  
**A: When Noah took Ham into the ark.**

Q: How many people went on board the ark before Noah?  
**A: Three, because it says "Noah went forth" (Genesis 8:18).**

Q: Why was everyone in biblical times so poor?  
**A: Because there was only one Job.**

Q: How long did Cain dislike his brother?  
**A: As long as he was Abel.**

Q: What was Noah's greatest worry?  
**A: The pair of termites.**

Q: Why did Noah have to discipline the chickens on the ark?

**A: Because they were using "fowl" language.**

Q: Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?  
**A: Samson. He brought the house down.**

Q: Why couldn't Noah's wife and sons play cards on the ark?  
**A: Because Noah sat on the deck.**

Q: The ark was built in three stories, and the top story had a window to let light in, but how did they get light to the bottom two stories?  
**A: They used floodlights.**

Q: What do they call pastors in Germany?  
**A: German Shepherds.**

Q: Who was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?  
**A: Moses. Because he broke all ten commandments at once.**

Q: Which Bible character had no parents?  
**A: Joshua, son of Nun.**

Q: Where was Solomon's temple located?  
**A: On the side of his head.**

Q: Which Old Testament character was known for having a foul mouth at a young age?  
**A: Job—he cursed the day he was born (Job 3:1).**

Q: What do you call a sleepwalking nun?  
**A: A roamin' Catholic!**

Q: Where is the first tennis match mentioned in the Bible?  
**A: When Joseph served in Pharaoh's court.**

## MOTIVATION QUOTES

- 1) We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them; **Albert Einstein**
- 2) Innovation is a mindset and that's where governance comes in ; **Pearl Zhu**
- 3) Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection ; **Mark Twain**
- 4) Whenever there is a challenge is also an opportunity to face it, to demonstrate and develop our will and determination; **Dalzi Lama**



**Lucinda is the Secretary to Lectors Society & PMC Animator,  
HFMB & Bernadetta is the secretary to St. Paul Youth Evangelizers**

# Holy Family Basilica Parochial School



Learners enjoying their trip



H.F.B JSS in Mombasa

## MISSION STATEMENT

To offer education that enhances spiritual, intellectual and character formation of the pupils through mutual co-operation among pupils, parents, teachers and benefactors.

## VISION STATEMENT

To be a model school that cultivates love for lifelong learning, spiritual growth and exemplary moral values.

## SCHOOL MOTTO

“Strive for Spiritual and Academic Excellence.”

## CORE VALUES

Love, excellence, integrity, teamwork, hard work, respect, commitment

## About Holy Family Basilica Parochial School

Holy Family Basilica Parochial School offers a unique environment founded on Christian values that guide our everyday activities and community life. Aligned with the Holy Family Minor Basilica

Catholic Parish, the school benefits from regular Mass celebrations and spiritual guidance led by Rev. Fr. Michael Ndichu, bringing faith to the forefront of our students' experience. Through catechism classes, we provide Catholic students with a firm foundation, preparing them for Holy Communion as they transition into junior and senior secondary school.

Under the dedicated leadership of Rev. Sr. Carol, our headteacher, we have engaged in enriching collaborations with other schools within and outside Nairobi County, excelling in academics as well as co-curricular areas.

Our students regularly shine in music, sports, and debate competitions, and our talented school choir recently released two songs available on YouTube. *(Check out Holy Family Basilica Parochial School on YouTube for more.)*

## Prime Location in Nairobi's CBD

Our location in Nairobi's central business district offers our students rich learning

experiences through regular educational tours both within and beyond the city. Though rooted in the Catholic faith, we welcome students from various religious backgrounds, cultivating a learning environment that promotes inclusivity and community.

As one of the top schools implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), we ensure hands-on, practical learning through diverse projects and outdoor activities, providing students with real-world experiences to complement their studies.

## A Note from the Headteacher

Welcome to Holy Family Basilica Parochial School! We are currently accepting applications for **Play Group, PP1, PP2, and Grades 1-9.**

Our school fosters a warm, joyful atmosphere where highly dedicated teachers work collaboratively to give young learners a robust foundation for life. Each day is thoughtfully planned to enrich students through academic and



**Act of Mercy (a visit to the Missionary of the poor childrens home)**



**H.F.B Parochial faculty team with their director**

recreational activities, making learning a dynamic, engaging experience.

In keeping with our motto, “Strive for Spiritual and Academic Excellence”, we prioritize spiritual growth through weekly Mass, confessions, and prayers, as well as preparations for sacraments such as baptism, First Holy Communion, and confirmation. Academically, we enhance our learners’ experience with field trips and projects that broaden their knowledge and skills.

**Guidance and Holistic Growth**

Recognizing the challenges faced by young learners today, we offer comprehensive guidance and counseling to help students navigate life’s transitions.

These efforts are part of our commitment to fostering strong morals, resilience, and empathy among students. As we approach our centennial celebration next year, we look forward to continued support from our community as we pursue our vision of a brighter, more fulfilling learning environment for our students.

**Why Choose Holy Family Basilica Parochial School?**

**1) Faith-Based Guidance:**

We offer a solid spiritual foundation, fostering students’ growth in faith through regular sacraments and spiritual activities.

**2) Co-Curricular Excellence:**

Our students thrive in a well-rounded curriculum that includes music, sports, debates, and other activities.

**3) Outstanding Achievements:**

From winning cluster sports competitions to securing a school van for transport, our achievements reflect our commitment to enhancing student experience.

**Our Recent Achievements**

1) Our school band performed at the ADN Catholic Education Day at Ngenia High School.

2) Both our soccer and basketball senior teams qualified for finals in cluster school competitions.

3) We acquired a new school van to better support student transportation needs.

4) We honored our former administrator, Bishop Dr. Simon P. Kamomoe, in a heartfelt celebration.

**Empathy in Action**

Each year, our students engage in acts of mercy that extend their learning beyond the classroom. Recently, our students visited the Missionary of the Poor Children’s Home in Chokaa.

This life-changing experience allowed them to share food, toiletries, and clothes with those in need, and to connect with the children and caregivers on a personal level.

Witnessing the strength, joy, and hope of the children despite their circumstances was a profound lesson in empathy and kindness for all involved.

Join us on our journey to educate and nurture future leaders grounded in faith, compassion, and excellence. We look forward to welcoming your child into our vibrant and supportive community!

## Our History



"The Basilica Self-Help Group is a savings and credit group under the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Nairobi and is registered under the Archdiocese of Nairobi Caritas Registered Trustees. It is owned by Christian communities and managed according to Christian values of love and charity. The group was formed in 1997 with 20 founding members. Currently, its membership exceeds 4,000."



## Our Products & Services:

**Savings Accounts:** Secure your future with flexible saving plans.

**Minor Accounts:** Teach your children the value of saving with our special accounts designed for minors.

**Loans:** Affordable business, development, education, agri-business and emergency loans with member-friendly terms.

**Dividends:** Enjoy annual dividends as a reward for your savings.

**Benevolent Fund:** Contribute to support the next of kin and family members in times of need.

**Group Membership:** Chama's, corporate bodies and other groups are welcome to join and benefit from our services.



### How to Become a Member: To register, you'll need:

- A copy of your ID or passport.
- KRA pin.
- A passport-size photo.
- Ksh 500 for the registration fee.
- Next of kin ID copy
- Birth certificate for a minor

### Join Us Today!

Become part of a community dedicated to your financial success.

**For inquiries, visit us at our office  
Cardinal Otunga Annex 2nd Floor or  
Call: +254 722128258 or +254 712508237**





**We the clergy of The Holy Family Minor Basilica wish you  
a joyous Advent and Christmas season, and a  
Happy New Year 2025**