



The Prophetic Witness

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ARU EXECUTIVE MEMBERS



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Sr. Mary Lydia Apili Bwor
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Montage of ARU Executive Members November 2022 - November 2024 Photo by ARU Reporter.

By: Sr. Specioza Kabahumuza, DST

1. Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI)
a) Basic Computer Skills and Web-design
b) Administration and Finance courses (For this course members from the Computer groups choose an area of interest which they specialize in; either the area of Finance or Administration, but other members are also free to apply). The duration of each category of courses is determined by the USA sponsors. Certificates are awarded by Marywood University at the completion of each category of courses.

i) Finance Course: Budgeting and budgeting control, Stewardship and Accountability, Project Management and Evaluation, Financial Management, Preparation of Financial Statements
ii) Administration Course: Effective Report writing, Time Management, Proposal writing and Resource Mobilization, Interpretation of Financial Statements and other records, Effective Communication, Leadership Skills, Planning,
2. HESA: Higher Education for Sisters in Africa.
i) The programme offers sponsorship to Sisters for Diploma, Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses in education, finance and administration.

ii) Currently members are recruited from participants of the Finance and Administration groups. However, in case of shortage of applicants other Sisters can be recruited.

3. Catholic Care for Children in Uganda (CCCU)

Background

The history of CCCU dates back to 2015 at the University of Notre Dame where Kathleen Mahoney contacted Sr. Margaret Kubanze, LSOSF, and introduced the idea of how Religious can become champions of Child Protection and care reforms in Uganda. The meeting suggested two studies: a) Rapid assessment of the work of Religious with OVCs in Uganda and b) Emerging legal framework for the care of vulnerable children and its implications for care providers.

After the two studies were made it was resolved that in order to realize a smooth and effective transition to community based care for children, it is crucial for the Religious taking care of child to plan and implement a paradigm shift particularly in as far as institutional care is concerned, the philosophy and practice of child care has to be deliberately community oriented.

*To be continued in the
October - December issue.*

Sisters of Charity celebrate the Jubilee of Mother Theresa



Priests process after Eucharistic celebration on the jubilee celebrations of Mother Theresa, Photo by ARU Reporter.

By Mary Lilly Driciru - MSMMC

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the foundress of Missionaries of Charity accomplished her earthly journey on September 5, 1997. “I have a vivid memory of her diminutive figure, bent over by a life spent in the service to the poorest of the poor ... with inexhaustible interior energy: the energy of Christ’s love...” Pope St. John Paul II remarked. On September 5, 2022, Missionaries of Charity celebrated the Silver Jubilee, (25 years) of her eternal birth in the Heavens! Msgr. Charles Kasibante of the Archdiocese of Kampala, who presided over the celebration, thanked God for the great Saint of our time, St. Mother Teresa! “I thirst was the fire behind Mother Teresa’s mission. She was a contemplative and saw God everywhere, in everything and particularly in the poorest of the poor. She shines out as an example for us all. She was a world leader who won several awards including peace price in 1979,” said the presider.

“The mission of Mother Teresa and Missionaries of Charity remain at the centre as they focus on the poorest of the poor. The contemplative life before the Eucharistic Lord, praying for the priests and the apostolic mission has kept them focused. The church will take the challenge and education, Mother has exemplified. As a true witness, she can intercede for us with the Lord Jesus, as we reach out to serve our needy brothers and sisters,” the prelate added. Six years after her death, Pope John Paul II beatified Mother Teresa on October 19, 2003, during which the Holy Father referred to her as “one of the greatest missionaries of the 20th century.” The Pope emphasized that it was her relationship with God, nourished by prayer, which inspired all her undertakings and made her mission so fruitful in the world (“*Jesus is my All in All*” A Novena to Blessed Teresa of Calcutta).

Mother Teresa, who hailed from Albania (Eastern Europe), became a missionary in India where she served the poorest of the poor. In her path to sanctity, she noted, “Prayer is nothing but oneness with Jesus.” On September 5, 2017 (the year of mercy), Mother Teresa was canonized (St. Teresa of Calcutta). Sr. Linette, MC, narrated that, based in their community near Namugongo Martyrs’ Shrine, the Missionaries of Charity care for 65 disabled inmates, they reach out to Kireka peri-urban settlements (Acholi Quarters) to meet the landless and homeless people. They also reach out to minister to children at Nsambya Police Barracks, carry out home visits and prepare Christians for marriage and Holy Communion.



The statue of Mother Theresa during her jubilee celebrations organized by Sisters of charity.

The colorful event that started with the Eucharistic celebration was punctuated with speeches, entertainments by the beneficiaries of the apostolate of the sisters, and shared a meal together.

A call to unity in diversity through interculturalization

By Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC

Culture ought to be pure and transformed in the light of the gospel to suit its purpose in the context of consecrated life. In so doing, the authentic Christian values become a suitable vehicle for the evangelization. However, dominant cultures (hegemony), secularism and materialism negatively affect culture of consecrated life. The International Union of Superiors General (UISG) has positively taken the challenge by organizing seminars on Interculturality with hope that the various conferences and institutes of consecrated life can draw some benefits and in turn disseminate to grass root communities. The presentation of the Executive Secretary, UISG, Sr. Patricia Murray, IBVM, on *Interculturality, Leadership, and Vows: Liability or Richness*, depicts a relevant theme today as it digs into the root causes of community challenges. Community members are further urged to embrace unity in diversity of cultures in their apostolate. Younger male and female religious live in multicultural communities or participate in networks of communion and mutual support that are “culturally, ethnically, theologically and ecclesiologically diverse.” This recent evolution within and across many congregations “...has made the challenge of integrating different cultures even more acute, some institutes now find themselves in a situation that is hard to manage.” In the seminar series, Associate Vice President of Program Operations and Head of Catholic Sisters



Unity in diversity as experienced during Talithakum Assembly in Rome (2019) by the global network of Consecrated Women: Courtsey photo.

Initiative at Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, presented on *Potential challenges of interculturality in African Society and Religious Life today*. “... This dialogue aware of my background, experiences, and limitations, Africa is not a monoculture or homogeneous continent.

In fact, each country consists of an array of diversity in cultural practices, languages, skin color, and belief systems. To illustrate this diversity, the population of Nigeria, is estimated at 214 million people with over 250 ethnic groups, and Egypt with 105 million people and over 80 ethnic groups.

This rich cultural and linguistic diversity is also present within the institutions, institutes, and religious communities. Each of the individuals in these communities is unique and brings cultural experiences, values, and talents that help create a montage of beautiful perspectives and interdependencies. That diversity can also bring challenges, conflicts, and stereotypes.” Sr Jane spelled out some cultural limitations, “I was born and raised in Kenya, where I attended school through my undergraduate studies. I encountered diverse individuals, students, and teachers at school, church, and communities in my studies and work.



Sisters in a seminar to animate local and missionary Sisters, a way of promoting unity in diversity. Photo by ARU Reporter. (Cont. to Pg 4)

These interactions shaped my perception of how I interpret realities in my life. There are noticeable and inaudible stereotypic undertones that influence many people right from ethnic/tribal communities. I recall some tribes were labeled based on unfounded stereotypes of weaknesses, including that groups are loud, lazy, or unable to manage their anger. Other tribes were labeled with positive attributes, including hardworking, businesslike, and wealthy, more likely to be scholars and lawyers.” These labels differentiated and identified the “otherness” of specific groups. These labels can also be present in our religious communities – for example, when individuals are careful to introduce their origin (East, West, North, South), they want to be sure they stand out and have allies and no confusion. The labels determine the in-group and out-group – and who is eligible or ineligible for a job offer or a promotion, she added. Conclusively, Sr Jane observed that, consecrated persons are inherently well positioned to be part of interculturality. The virtues of faith, humility, and love allow them to open their hearts to a deeper understanding of these encounters. This awareness and recognition of the dignity in each of these individuals fosters mutuality to give and receive from the other – and build relationships. That openness, born of deep respect for the dignity of every person, leads to trust the other.



Consecrated Men and Women of God showcase their various talents of a presentation during the cultural day celebrations at Namugongo Spiritual Formation Centre. Photo by ARU Reporter.

With that trust, the intercultural transformation starts to take root in a multicultural community – and helps seed positive and life-giving relationships. The Scripture exemplifies and illustrates this better. When Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman, he enters a dialogue with her and invites her toward him: “give me a drink.” The Samaritan woman’s response exemplifies cultural difference; she is aware and keen on the “otherness” of Jesus. Her response to Jesus is based on cultural nuances as explained in John 4:8-9, Samaritan woman asked (Jesus), what? You are a Jew, and you ask me, a Samaritan for a drink? Jews, in fact, do not associate with the Samaritans.” Jesus replied (pushing on to get into the real issue): “If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.”

In this encounter, Jesus demonstrates humility by taking the first step to invite the Samaritan woman. The culture of encounter to which both Pope Francis and St. Francis of Assisi calls us is both human and cosmic, (FT, 5). Each one is urged to open doors to embrace intercultural community, where people live as brothers and sisters in the planet earth, our common home.



Catholic Sisters interface with the laity during stakeholders meeting at ARU Secretariat. (File photo)

A call to embrace other cultures



A group photo of consecrated Men and Women on cultural day celebrations at Uganda Spiritual Formation -Namugongo. Photo by ARU Reporter

By Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC

Uganda Spiritual Formation Centre-Namugongo (USFCN) takes the mantle of interculturality by celebrating cultural day. “We decided to observe this annual event because all that God created was good, in this regard, we appreciate and respect culture and ethnicity,” said Director of USFCN - Sr. Rita Nabukalu, SMR. This falls in line with the efforts of International Union of Superiors General (UISG), who organize seminars on Interculturality to take care of unnecessary emphasis on cultural differences instead of living unity in diversity. Culture that refers to set of beliefs, customs, socialization, art and food of a group of people has become critical today. “The most dangerous person is one who has no culture,” some say. Much as cultural values are key in the socialization process, many people embrace distorted cultures and thus, pausing challenge to communities, society and humanity at large.

Sr. Monica Ajok, LSMIG, ASEC Coordinator-Uganda, and the guest of the day appreciated the various cultures in diversity. “It was a great joy to see diverse colors blending in harmony. We have enjoyed various foods, seen the beauty of diverse clothing styles and feel happy! I learnt from Karamoja why there is no need for the ordinary shoes. We can learn from one another. Let us be united and blend with all the cultures.” According to Sr. Rita, the celebration of culture should help to dispel



Participants on cultural day celebrations share a light moment during the celebrations

negative attitudes and bias towards other cultures. As UN designated cultural day, there is need to appreciate unity in diversity. When we appreciate different cultural values, we shall eliminate discrimination towards other cultures. Once upon a time, Ugandans became so segregative and one would ask, “What tribe are you?” (“*wewe ni kabila gani?*”) While Tanzanians expressed brotherhood! (*undugu*).

She also cited the parable of the weeds: Mt. 13:24-43. “Can we pluck out the weeds? “No” Jesus replied, let them grow and they will be separated at the harvest when the weeds will be burnt on the judgement day.” The master exercises patience and tolerance. The merciful God did not act according to the promptings of the servants; but he tolerates all. Hence, instead of judging and condemning others in their cultural settings, it is advisable to inquire and dig deep to find out why certain people behave the way they do. Sr. Rita added that, prayer changes people and so pray for difficult personalities as St. Monica whose prayer led to conversion of St. Augustine. People mature for heaven differently. Others mature faster. God is giving us grace period to qualify for heaven. Let us take this opportunity of ‘grace period’ to convert! The participants and facilitators of Uganda Spiritual Formation Centre -Namugongo with some invited guests from ARU Secretariat, observed cultural day that was organized on Saturday, July 23, 2022.

Consecrated Persons Progressively Celebrate the Season of Creation



Consecrated persons celebrate the season of creation as they take to action by planting memorial trees at Uganda Spiritual Formation Centre Namugongo. Photo by ARU Reporter.

By ARU Reporter

This year 2022, Africa begun the celebration of season of creation with a webinar to mark Preparation phase for the season of creation. The Association of Women Religious Institutes in Malawi (AWRIM) hosted this event on August 26, 2022.

Fr. Benedict Ayodi, OFM, the Main Presenter and Program Manager *Laudato Si* Movement Africa, took the participants through the theme of the year: *Listen to the Voice of Creation*. In this Season of Creation, the symbol of God's Spirit (fire) calls us to listen to the voice of creation. "A call to renew our relationship with our creator and all creation through celebration, conversion and commitment.

We join our brothers and sisters in ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home." The season of creation is an annual event that runs from September 1, to October 4 thus, concluding with the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis, patron saint of animals and environment could be viewed as the original Earth Day advocate. Francis' devotion to God was expressed through his love for all of God's creation (the humane society of US). During the Season of Creation, people of all Faiths around the world are invited to pray and care for creation. Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I proclaimed September 1, World Day of Prayer for Creation for the Orthodox community in 1989. It was later extended to October 4.

the event was later embraced by other European churches in 2001 and then the world council of Churches. Pope Francis made another turn-around in 2015 with the encyclical *Laudato Si*. Based on St. Francis, the Patron Saint of ecology, 2.2 billion Christians came together to embrace all the ecological realities. With *Laudato Si* Action platform animated by the consecrated persons, care for the common home is shifting to a higher level! The burning bush is the Symbol for the Season of Creation 2022. Today, the prevalence of unnatural fires are a sign of the devastating effects that climate change has on the most vulnerable of our planet. Creation cries out as forests crackle, animals flee, and people are forced to migrate due to the fires of injustice.



Leading by example, consecrated persons plant a memorial tree seedlings to mark the celebration of the season of creation 2022

On the contrary, the fire that called unto Moses as he tended the flock on Mt. Horeb did not consume or destroy the bush. This flame of the Spirit revealed God's presence. This holy fire affirmed that God heard the cries of all who suffered, and promised to be with us as we followed in faith to our deliverance from injustice.



***Sisters plant a tree seedling to animate environment.
File photo***

Other presenters of the day included; Sr. Mairead Ni Chuirc - Sisters of Charity of Kanzalendo, Malawi, Sr. Sarudzai Mutero - Dominican Missionary Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus, Zimbabwe, Sr. Rainer Boniface - Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM), Kenya, Sr. Mmamokotjo Mokoteli - Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Lesotho and Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru - Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church (MSMMC), Uganda.

KEEPING THE PLANET CLEAN



A spectacular view of L. Albert in West Nile, an example of keeping the planet clean. Photo by Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru - MSMMC

*By Sr. Mary Juliet Ahaisibwe
Sisters of Notre Dame*

The Sisters of Notre Dame, St. Julie Convent Buseesa, Uganda, resolved to “go green” having been enlightened about the cry of Mother Earth. “We are moving forward with determination and continually commit ourselves to care for our Mother Earth. As our action plan, we carry out a number of activities in response to the cry of Mother Earth,” they said.

Among other interventions, the sisters planted over 100 trees in their Butemba Farm, and over 50 trees in and around St. Julie Model School compound, St. Julie Nursery, and Notre Dame Academy. “We strongly believe that we are adding beauty and supplying oxygen to our environment,” Sr. Mary Magdalene remarked. The sisters took the initiative of eradicating plastics from the “common home.” After sensitizing and mobilizing their students and teachers at Notre Dame Acade

The sisters and local community went through a one-week seminar facilitated by the Head Teacher, Sr. Mary Magdalene Musila, a sister of Notre Dame, the entire community resolved to take action of cleaning a nearby trading center, Akasalaba along Kagadi Bubende road.

“It was a good gesture and sensitization exercise for all the people around the village and society including the students and teachers who joined the team work,” Sr. Mary added.

The students became very creative in designing different charts according to different houses and hostels. It was very nice seeing them move with their colored placards advocating for environmental protection.

“Together we can renew the face of the Earth and make our common home a beautiful place for everyone to live in. It is our duty and responsibility to uplift Mother Earth,”

AMECEA, ACWECA CONVENES SECOND MEETING ON SYNOD OF BISHOPS



ACWECA and AMECEA Secretary Generals pose for a group photo during the second consultative meeting on the Synod of Bishops at St. Mary's Ggaba Major Seminary, Kampala Uganda. Photo by ARU Reporter.

Association of Member Episcopal Conference in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) in close Collaboration with Association of Consecrated Women in East and Central Africa (ACWECA) convened a consultative meeting on Synod of Bishops at St. Mary's National Major Seminary, Ggaba Kampala on August 25, 2022.

The meeting which was graced by Msgr. John Baptist Kauta, the Secretary General, Uganda Episcopal Conference took two days under the theme *"For a synodal Church: Communion, Mission and Participation"* and was attended by Secretaries General from both AMECEA and ACWECA regions. This meeting is an on-going initiative between AMECEA and ACWECA secretariats to strengthen collaboration as part of the Synodal journey.

Sr. Bridget Samba, Secretary General, ACWECA in her opening remarks applauded members for attending in large numbers. She urged religious members to share stories and that this has acted as an opportunity for them to realize their responsibilities towards Christians. Quoting an example of the Uganda Martyrs, Sr. Bridget called upon members to be strong and resilient despite the many challenges faced in their apostolate. "Let's not be comfortable where we are but serve our brothers and sisters who need us because there's need for us to connect to the people who need consecrated persons." Sr. Bridget emphasized.

Fr. Kimumbo Emmanuel in his sharing on the Synod on Synodality, highlighted on the major theme basing on synodal journey in the AMECEA region.

He said Synod on Synodality is progressive and will move in three phases, starting from Diocesan level which involves consultations, listening to Christians followed by Synthesis to the final National report.

The consecrated men and women are playing an instrumental role of collecting National Syntheses from Episcopal Conferences and come up with Regional Syntheses to be forwarded to SECAM by October, Compile the Conference reports for reference purposes and identifying key areas that cut across the conference which may not need the attention of the universal church and make a mechanism to address them locally in the region.



A group discussion of ACWECA Secretaries General on the Synod of Bishops. Photo by ARU Reporter.

This is the second consultative progressive meeting of its kind, the first one was held in Dar-es-salaam. There will be such continuous consultative meetings until a final National report is published after two years, which the Synod on Synodality will take place.

Inter-Institutional National Novices' Course resumes after lockdown



Novices beaming with smiles after a successful completion of their inter-institutional National Course at St. Mbaaga Gaba National Seminary. Photo by ARU Reporter

*Course Coordinators &
Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC*

A joint venture of the Administration of Association of Religious in Uganda - ARU, the Formation and the Coordinating Team, for Inter-Institutional National Course for novices held at St. Mbaaga's Major Seminary Gaba, from July 2-30, 2022 yielded great fruits. "We believe that the various courses handled have helped participants deepen their understanding of consecrated life they wish to embrace," the Coordinating team remarked. The theme: *Embracing the treasure of Consecrated Life* guided the course. The process of organizing the first course, after interruption by COVID-19 lock down in 2021, started when the Team of Coordinators held a meeting with the Course Coordinators and the Coordinator for formation, Sr. Pauline Namuddu, LSOSF at ARU to plan and ascertain the necessities for the course.

The Vice President of ARU, Fr. John Bosco Kamoga, CSSP, who presided over the commissioning ceremony credited the coordinators and all who worked hard to ensure that, in Synodality all worked together without losing any of the 79 Novices. "Let us emulate Jesus who went about doing good. Novitiate should 'give birth to a bouncing healthy baby,' without only striving for success but faithfulness.

Note that witchcraft has become an issue that makes us live contrary to our noble call!" Fr. John Bosco added that, community life is NOT a means to mission BUT mission itself; if we mission to the community, the community will do it for us. Don't tell people what to do but let your life speak for you. Association with Christ makes a difference, as you hold God's people in your heart. St. Theresa of the Child Jesus who kept the beauty and purity of her heart is worth emulating.

Be the change you desire to see because one might ask; what is the community doing for me? Ask, what am I doing for the community? Be a beacon of hope, a presence that brings hope to the hopeless. In the same vein, the Secretary General, ARU, Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, LS-MIG, thanked the Administration and Staff of St. Mbaaga Seminary for hosting the group for the said course. Turning to the participants; she urged, "Be mature as you go for pastoral experience, now that you are equipped with all that you need to reach out to the people of God. Stand at the cross in prayer, and all will be fine. Much as consecrated life is sweet, we have decided to follow the Man of the cross! Strive to give Christ to people. Remember, if a religious is a Saint, people are holy, if a religious is holy, people are mediocre, if a religious is mediocre, people are wicked and if a religious is wicked, people are satanic! Tough situations makes us become people of substance: courageous and understanding towards others..." she concluded.



During the closing ceremony, the representative of the Novices full of zeal and determination promised; “We are ready to take the challenge of taking the lead to bring change that we desire. We thank the chaplain Fr. Joseph Harman for the spiritual nourishment, we thank you participants for accepting corrections and practical self-denial.” Amidst applause, the novices appreciated the catering services of Sr. Regina. They asked pardon for all offences and begged unity to prevail.



Novices continue to express their joy after the successful completion of the inter-institutional course at St. Mbaaga GGaba National Seminary. Photo by ARU reporter.



Some of the Novices share a light moment shortly after completing their Inter-Institutional Course at St. Mbaaga National Seminary. photo by ARU Reporter.

In the meantime, Br. Franklin Rukundo, FIC, on behalf of the Course Coordinators thanked the superiors and formators for quality novices they sent for the course. “If they continue to be what they exhibit, religious life will be reshaped in the next 30 years! We have enjoyed cooperation, good facilitators whom we recommend for future. Thanks for trusting the national formation team and for entrusting the formees to their care. Now we hand the Novices back to ARU Administration and then back to their various Institutes.”

Sr. Matilda Gratia Nekesa, SMK, Sr. Margaret Nakanjako, GSS, and Br. Franklin Rukundo, FIC ably coordinated course. The course officially opened on July 3, 2022 starting with mass celebrated by Rev. Fr. Joseph Harman Kalungi. The Secretary General of Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, LSMIG, officially opened it, witnessed by the Coordinator of Formation Ministry in Uganda (FoMU), Sr. Pauline Nnamuddu, LSOSF and Administrative Secretary at ARU, Sr. Esther Nangobi, SMK. The Novices were thereafter, choose their leaders and set norms for their one-month stay in St. Mbaaga. They created seven administrative families and these were; Good Shepherd, Blessed Sacrament, St. John of the Cross, St. Padre Pio, St. Joseph, St. Jude Thadeo and Holy Family. The novices then choose their overall leaders for various responsibilities.



Novices who are being prepared into brotherhood receive certificates of successful completion of the Inter-Institutional Course.

The total number of novices who attended the course were 79 (69 sisters and 10 brothers) from 14 institutes as shown in the table below.

NO.	NAME OF INSTITUTE	INITIALS	NO. OF NOVICES
1	Daughters of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus	DST	10
2	Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga	BSCL	02
3	Daughters of Mary - Bwanda	DM	07
4	Cistercian Sisters of Charity	CSOC	01
5	Brothers of Christian Instruction	FIC	08
6	Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary	MSBVM	04
7	Sisters of Mary of Kakamega	SMK	11
8	Little Sisters of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple	LSPM	02
9	Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate Gulu	LSMIG	12
10	Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing	OSB	02
11	Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – Moyo	SHS	07
12	Daughters of Providence – Nebbi	DOP	03
13	Mantellate Sisters Servants of Mary	MSM	06
14	Daughters of Divine Charity	FDC	04

Building an inclusive Community and Synod on Synodality which helped them to understand the three aspects about the synod; Communion, Participation and Mission.

In the fourth and last week, the novices were facilitated to understand the Challenges of Living the Vows in the Modern World: Pastoral challenges and possible Remedies. They were given input on Human Trafficking and Addiction Management as real pastoral challenges.

The one-month course was punctuated with entertainments, tour, games and sports, pilgrimage: the novices had a pilgrimage following the journey undertaken by the Uganda Martyrs to their death in Namugongo. T

he Novices were commissioned at the end of the course. The Holy Mass led by the Vice President of ARU - Rev. Fr. John Bosco Kamoga preceded commissioning which culminated in award of certificates.



Novices attentively listening to the pieces of advice offered by ARU during the close of the inter-institutional course at St. Mbaaga, Ggaba Seminary. Photo by ARU Reporter.



Novices attentively listen to Sr. Mary Lydia Apili Bwor, ARU Secretary General in their final day after the Inter-Institutional course at St. Mbaaga Ggaba Seminary.

Be change Agents -Junior Professed told



The Junior professed Sisters share a light moment with senior sisters shortly after successful completion of their course at St. Mbaaga Ggaba National Seminary. Photo by ARU Reporter.

By Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC

“God no longer listens to teachers but witnesses and if he listens to teachers, it is because they are witnesses,” Fr. John Bosco Kamoga, C.C.Sp, cited Pope Francis during the opening Mass of Inter – Institutional National Course of the Junior Professed Sisters and Brothers. The course was held at St. Mbaaga Ggaba Major Seminary from August 6 -27, 2022. The maiden course after COVID-19 lockdown and evaluation attracted 51 participants from ten Religious Institutes. (47 Sisters and 4 Brothers). Fr. John Bosco, the Vice President of the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) who presided over the event challenged the junior consecrated persons to follow the path of holiness at all times;

“A lot will be demanded from whom a lot has been entrusted. Be the good news! Beware of cases of double standards of taking Holy Communion alongside witchcraft in search for power! Is our faith in the Eucharist more than of those we serve? Let us avoid making our brothers and sisters twice fit for hell as ourselves.” The preacher urged the participants to think of what they need to add to their various institutes as change agents. “Change should not begin with others but me. What brand of quality do you intend to make as new brand of consecrated brothers and sisters? Promoting Eucharistic work should become our preoccupation, we should emulate Jesus who said, “This is my body given up for you.” We should respond by being willing to be broken for others!”

Fr. John Bosco further observed that sometimes we fail to give life to the community and yet we are very active outside the community. Let us choose to become beacons of light in the Church. Further citing the Holy Father, Pope Francis, he added, “... we should do more discernment in celebrating Synodality because we need strong faith to see beyond tribe and cliques, but see with the heart of Jesus. Let us remain faithful servants till the day of judgement and be ready to say, at last all-powerful master you give leave to your servant...” The Cleric advised participants to use their quality time for rediscovery. “Make the experience of the apostles and Jesus on the way to Emmaus (Lk.24:13-35) your own. Make a fruitful encounter with Jesus and only share vital experiences with others. In 2Cor. 4:7, we are reminded of being a mere earthen vessels. Do not over estimate yourself! Just imagine men and women full of irregularities carrying a treasure-Jesus! Have a productive time as you start the moment of introspection.”



Sr. Lydia Bwor, extreme left, Fr. Kamoga third and Sr. Mary Lilly, fourth, in photo with junior professed sisters.

Similarly, Sr. Mary Lydia Apili Bwor, LSMIG, the Secretary General, ARU reminded the participants on the theme: Here I am Lord, I come to do your will, that guided the course. "Continue with sense of belonging, love and commitment. This course did not take place for the last four years for some reasons. By God's grace, it has resumed.

Let us keep the candle burning. Your institutes and we love you because you are entering the future with charism consonance. Remember our hands and feet are God's mouthpieces!" Sr. Lydia cautioned the participants about phone abuse. "Are we still faith to the constitution and redeemable? The challenges and tough times help us to mature.

Balance between apostolate prayer and so lead by example. Take account before God at all times." Bro. Julius Gonzaga Mbuga, BSCL and Sr. Speranza Muhairwemujuni, DM coordinated course. They took care of welfare, games and sports, entertainment, discipline, procurement, health and liturgy.

The representation of the various institutes were as follows:

NO.	NAME OF THE INSTITUTE	INITIALS	NUMBER OF SISTERS/BROTHERS
1.	Daughters of Mary (Bannabiikira Sisters)	DM	12
2.	Good Samaritan Sisters	GSS	6
3.	Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing	OSM	3
4.	Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga (Bannakaroli Brothers)	BSCL	3
5.	Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church	MSMMC	6
6.	Mantellete Sisters Servants of Mary	MSM	1
7.	Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix	IHMR	11
8.	Missionaries of the Divine Master	MIDM	1
9.	Daughters of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus	DST	7
10.	Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary	MSBVM	1



Some of the junior professed sisters share a light moment with ARU members at St. Mbaaga Ggaba Natinal Seminary Photo by ARU Reporter.

The three – week course had different facilitators and taught different course units. In the first week, the Facilitators handled the topic of Deepening Personal Commitment to Consecrated Life. Under this topic, the facilitators emphasized on the following sub topics: Developing personal Spirituality for total commitment, Encountering Jesus of the Gospel and discipleship, Spirituality and practices of devotions, Discernment and decision making this was shared with life experiences and identifying current apostolic challenges. The course topics in this first week were handled by Bro. Denis Katusiime and Sr. Maria Josephine Nazziwa, while Fr. Fred Tusin-gire took the participants through Child protection and safe guarding. In the third week, the main topic was Catholic Social teaching of the Church.

Under this topic, the emphasis was on: The Prophetic role of Consecrated persons, The role of Consecrated persons in the mission of the Church, The role of Consecrated persons in promoting justice and Peace and Accountability and transparence (Stewardship).



It was facilitated by Fr. Tarcis Baguma, BSJ and Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC, with Fr. Joseph Sserunjogi, the Rector of St. Mbaaga Ggaba Major Seminary who guided the participants through Canonical norms of Consecrated persons. The participants and coordinators appreciated St. Mbaaga Major Seminary as a very conducive environment for the course. “It’s really a good place for meditation and formation at large. We are indebted for the warm welcome and cooperation we enjoyed while on this compound. We are grateful.”



Fr. John Bosco Kamoga, ARU Vice President issues certificates of successful completion of Inter-Institutional Course to the Novice. Photo by ARU Reporter.



Brother Franklin, Sr. Lydia Bwor and Fr. Kamoga issuing certificates of Completion for the Inter-Institutional Course.



ARU Sister Led Youth Initiative Register Success II



Sister Led Youth Initiative Register Success as some of the youth graduate. Courtesy photo from the field.

By Sr. Caroline Bacia, LSMIG

This year 2022, 338 youths in the Ecclesiastical Province of Gulu were trained under the program of Sister Led Youth Initiative Uganda – SLYIU this year, 2022. Hilton Foundation supported the program as key partner of the Association of Religious in Uganda, (ARU).

Besides, the efforts of Religious Institutions engaged in Youth Ministries as well as technical support accorded to the Skilled Youth on-site cannot be underestimated. ARU collaborates with nine training institutions and signed agreement with them. Focus on the objectives of the program continues to enable registration of success stories in program activities. The two key objectives include capturing information and strengthening relations with the training institutions with whom ARU has established partnership and the trainees

of both Sustainable Agriculture and Vocational Skills training. As a prophetic body, the Association of Religious in Uganda continues to transform the society in various ways; one of them being empowering the religious institutions that in turn empower the society.

The collaboration and teamwork of the Superiors General of the Institutions involved in the youth program is highly appreciated. The religious were motherly to the youth who experienced trauma due to domestic violence before enrollment and interfaced with them to empower them psychosocially.

The youth sharing their own personal success stories is a powerful motivation and encouragement to others. Such moments were very remarkable for the youth. It made them feel the love and care of God and encouraged them to do better.

The youth need to be encouraged to follow their passion if they are to be successful and productive in life. As part of humanity that live with no confidence and hope for better life, when they meet for the first time, they fear each other, do not feel free to share and interact among themselves.

We are happy to report that the youth eventually built confidence, now do networking among themselves freely and through the hands on skilling, they have high hope to live a better life. One of the key areas that enabled us document and register success is the fact that the project implementation was closely monitored and evaluated to assess its progress. Meetings with the administrators of the training institutions made this possible. They assured us of the confidence trainees built with no doubt of employment.



Hair dressing, one the skills Sisters embarked on to help youth become self sustaining. Courtesy Photo from the field.

During the onsite and school visits made from March to April 2022, there is no doubt of youth employment either by self or by others for self-sustainability. This is because the training institutions played great roles of skilling the youth as expected of them ensuring that the trainees built confidence.

We are enjoying multiplier effect; more youth are motivated to join the skilling programme because of the high hope for self-reliance manifested by the youth. "Some whom I have not seen got my telephone number from the trainees, called me and they said they are now ready to go for the same training". The youth are working towards SHAMING POVERTY, and drawing the fellow youth to themselves and to the church through trainings in sustainable agriculture, leadership and life skills and engaging them in church activities.

The community around (Youth, others) are attracted by the practical skills of the youth. A good number joined them to work together as a team so that they learn the skills and the youth are happy to share their skills and drawing them to the church. Santos approached some politicians and shared his aspirations for the youth and they contributed for him UGX 300,000 for feeding the youth during the training. Community including Catechists contributed UGX 60,000. These are evidences of being change agents! Much as sisters try their best to free the youth from ignorance, poverty, social evils and remain agents of change, the youth in Karamoja region are back into



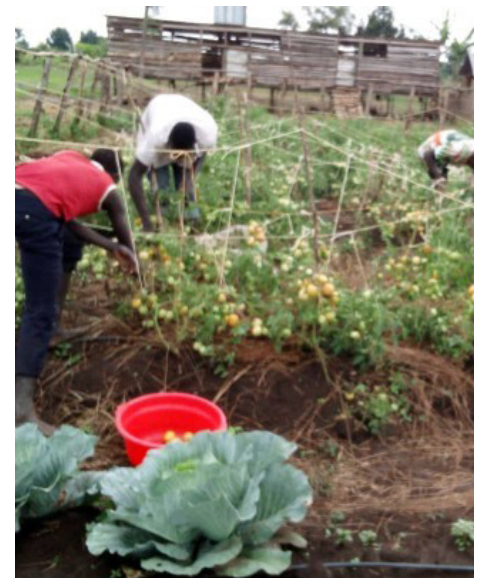
The youth undergoing tailoring skill training, initiated by Sisters to make youth self sustaining and self employed. Courtesy photo from the field.

cattle raiding, there is disarmament by the army, drought and hunger with resulted emaciated children and the elderly. Rain-fed crop production is extremely risky given the frequency of drought and crop failure in the region.

To determine the unique entry points into skilling of the youth and what best interventions suit them due to climatic conditions of the place and the historical cultural background of the people, it demands ARU to conduct some baseline assessment to determine the needs. The findings will inform the programme, and help to re-design for better-contextualized skilling.

By press time, the outcome of the nine training institutions were evident, the measurable indicators per institution enhanced, and the respective empowered youth with skills and knowledge as evidenced in pictorial illustrations. The confidence built, internal and external assessments by the training

institutions and Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) respectively are some of the outcomes of the enhancement offered to the training institutions. Assessments, internship and graduations successfully and crowned youth empowerment.



Farming activity as a way of eradicating poverty among the youth.. They are now yielding big from both tomatoes and cabbage. Courtesy photo from the field

All Africa Conference Sisters to Sister (AACSS)'s tale of success story



A group photo of Sisters during the ALL Africa Sisters to Sister (AACSS). File photo

By Sr. Celestine Lindrio, MSMMC

Since its inception in 2007, All Africa Conference of Sister to Sister has yielded fruits after offering Counsellors Training Programme for Sisters (CTPS) at the University of Kisubi and now with MA programme offered at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU). Additionally, from 2011, a theological course that translated into Transformative Education and Faith (TEF) at the Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) which after five years, is now being reviewed with a changed name Transformative Faith and Human Development a diploma and Bachelors programme is worth proclaiming! Apart from the training of the sisters in Counseling Psychology and Transformative Education and Faith (TEF),

AACSS offered three different phases of trainings in child protection and child safe guarding from 2020 - 2022 with a total of 80 religious men and women out of which 76 were religious sisters with one religious brother and four lay people. The second cohort of TEF training at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) graduated on May 6, 2022 with 15 sisters who graduated with diploma in TEF.

AACSS also organized reflective learning on New Wine in New Wine Skins for its beneficiaries in June 2022. Some of the AACSS graduates participated in the COVID 19 sensitization programme by visiting some of the needy communities and giving radio talk show on the theme while encouraging vaccine uptake with the support from the AACSS - sponsors from USA.

A three-year programme between AACSS-USA and Sub-Saharan Africa started with a one week training for Sustainable Development and fundraising in Malawi from April 23-30, 2022. Eight participants and one facilitator represented AACSS-Uganda during the training. The second phase of the training is to be done at country level, where the sisters who attended the first training in Malawi will train 25-30 sisters from different Institutes of the Consecrated Persons in Sustainable Development and fundraising to help eradicate issues related to financial challenges in various religious communities. Before the training of eight sisters, there will be, need to raise an equivalent of 10,000 US Dollars locally to enhance the training in the country. We therefore appeal to you for support to enable us get this money.



His Excellency Most Rev. Luigi Bianco hands over a certificate of completion to Sister. Photo by ARU reporter.

The third phase of this project, is giving country report on the activities of the second phase. The two sisters doing Masters in Mental Health Counseling Psychology (MHCP) at UMU have completed class work and are now working on their research dissertation and they will hopefully graduate in November 2022.

The three (TEF First Cohort Diploma Graduates) who were sent for Bachelors in Theology to Hekima University in Nairobi Kenya have completed their second year and are now left with one year to complete the Bachelors programme in Theology.

Some of the graduate Councilors Training Program and Transformative Education and Faith are working in the formation houses and others in schools, health centers, pastoral care above all some are in institute leadership among others.

We thank the superiors for their support especially for sending the three TEF diploma graduates to Namugongo Spiritual Formation for methodology and pedagogy at institute level these sisters were commissioned on the February 28, 2022. This was to enhance their skills in the mission as Formators.

The curriculum review of TEF programme is ongoing; the committee had several meetings with discussions focusing on the relevance of the course to those who train with the hope of getting job elsewhere after training in the programme. Finally, members resolved to change the name of the programme to "Transformation Faith and Human Development" (TFHD) instead of Transformative Education and Faith (TEF).



Consecrated Women graduate, as a tale of a success story of the All Africa Conference Sisters to Sister.



IT'S ALL ABOUT APPRECIATION



ASEC-Uganda Poem

*With joy filled hearts, we give glory to God and say thank you to ASEC Board of Directors, ASEC Executive Directors, Donors, ASEC Country staff, and facilitators,
What a blessing of generous hearts from our donors through ASEC upon the African consecrated women,
It's all about appreciation!*

A big thank you, to the founders of ASEC, an organisation that facilitates educational opportunities for catholic sisters in Africa,

*Thank you ASEC for initiating SLDI which has empowered us with leadership and technology skills,
Indeed we have acquired all it entails in technology to become relevant servant leaders in the world today,
It is all about appreciation!*

*Hmmm! Technology now, is our walk and talk! We follow your steps in this modern period,
Cards! We can design, brochures, we confidently make, booklets hahaha... very easy now to make.
Oh Technology!*

*Facebook, twitter, whatsapp, zoom, very easy way to communicate,
Now, we are ready to witness Christ and bear good fruits in the modern world.
It's all about appreciation!*

*Gone are the days, the time when the world was wide,
When the African consecrated women had no knowledge about ICT,
It has increased our technical competency,
It is all about appreciation!*

*We who had no idea of computer, have acquired the basic skills in Microsoft word, publisher, power point, excel and internet,
Each one can now access, and use Technology with ease and confidence,
Oooh, what marvels the Lord has done!
It is all about appreciation!*

*Indeed we have become enlightened leaders in the church,
All bridges and obstacles of illiteracy in ICT thrown away,
We are no longer strangers but friends as Technology brings us closer!
It is all about appreciation!*

Long live our donors! Long live ASEC!

Catholic Care for Children Uganda, (CCCU) animate Parenting Skills



A group photo of the facilitators and participants during workshop on parenting skills carried out by sisters. Courtesy photo from the field.

By Caroline Nansukusa – CCCU Staff

The two-year lock down due to COVID-19 pandemic unstabilized many families with domestic violence and poor parenting practices. CCCU in response to the hazard embarked on parenting training for the staffs and parents with vulnerable children under religious childcare programs.

Catholic Care for Children-Uganda is one of the programs under the umbrella of Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU). However, Catholic Care for Children International (CCCI) is a global platform to support religious women and men in their efforts to ensure that children grow up in safe, loving families or family-like environments, (UISG YouTube, 2020).

Catholic Care for Children (CCC) is a visionary initiative, led by Catholic sisters, to see children growing up in safe, nurturing families. Guided by the biblical mandate to care for the most vulnerable and animated by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching—especially the dignity of each person.

Catholic Care for Children (CCC) teams are reducing the need for institutional care by encouraging and facilitating family- and community-based care for children. CCC began in Uganda in 2016 after the government enacted legislation favoring family- and community-based care. The goal was to remedy the alarming increase in the number of children being cared for in institutions due to poverty, disability, and lack of social support. Catholic sisters and brothers ably read the signs of the times. With support from GHR

Foundation, ARU launched Catholic Care for Children in Uganda to help the Catholic Community pivot from institutional care toward family- and community-based care for children and persons with disabilities. (<https://bettercarenetwork.org/>) Among others, the Religious Sisters of St. Josephs of Tarbes at the Kakira Parish, Jinja Diocese organized a workshop with 92 participants out of 162 parents who were invited. The CCCU Staffs namely Sr. Stella Maris and Mrs. Nansukusa Caroline from August 22-27, 2022 facilitated the training.

The team noted that, better parenting practices is one of the remedies to reduce on the number of children institutionalized, abandoned/rejected, as well as child mothers, orphanhood, single parenthood and thus, leading to the need for child protection and safe-guarding.



The participants, mainly parents set out expectations such as a reminder on important parenting practices, new ways of parenting, what the law states, how to discipline without a stick, help fathers be part of parenting, among others. On knowing that this was within the package, on the first day by afternoon some of the participants invited parents and friends to come and benefit from the lessons. The facilitators covered nine topics, which parents rated as very important and pledged to share in parental network especially those who did not attend.

The organizers and participants were grateful for the training and confirmed: We thought we knew it all but as the training was ending, we felt it has just commenced and never wished to end but we had to end!”

While other parents shared; “Much as we are often annoyed by our children, we have also devised other corrective measures other than sticks. We choose to understand and give quality time for our children among others.”

The Training attracted parents from different religious affiliations. Catholics were the majority; however, Protestants, Muslims and Pentecostals were present. There was a Catechist, Local Council Leaders and Foster Parents amongst the participants.

Since there were cases psychological breakdown, the training ended with a moment of prayer and celebration of Holy Mass and all parents were commissioned to practice parenting styles in families and communities.



Parents attend in big numbers the parenting skills animated by Sisters. Courtesy photo from the field.



Some excercises and stretching during the animation of parenting skills carried out by Sisters. Courtesy photo from the field.

Uganda scales up awareness on Trafficking in Persons



Hon. Betty Amongi+, Gender Minister (right) was the guest of honour, Mr. Avuni Alfred, director, JP II, Peace and Justice centre (left fore front) on the day of National Prayer on Human Trafficking at Kololo Ceremonial grounds. Photo by ARU reporter.

ARU Reporters

Annually, the world celebrates the International Day to commemorate Trafficking in Persons (Human Trafficking) on July 30 and this year, Uganda did it differently. On September 9, 2022, Religious leaders communally held a national prayer service on Trafficking in Persons.

The victims of Trafficking in Persons also testified at Kololo Ceremonial grounds under the theme “Technology and Human Trafficking.” The Most Rev, John Baptist Odam, Archbishop of Gulu presided over the ceremony and as the main Celebrant during vigil Mass held on Sept 8 at St. Peter’s Parish, Nsambya, Kampala and at joint service at Kololo ceremonial grounds. The event was jointly organized by the Association of the Religious in Uganda (ARU), John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre, JP IIJPC,

Uganda Episcopal Conference, UEC, and Partners like Inter Religious Council-Uganda and Uganda Joint Christian Council. It was noted that, hundreds of Ugandans especially young girls are driven out of the Country annually for greener pastures, seeking household jobs in the Middle East for a better pay due to the high levels of unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, among others. However, many of them who are unknowingly trafficked report harsh and inhumane working conditions while in the foreign countries or when they return by chance, still puts hundreds of lives at stake. According to the United Nations Office on drugs and crime (UNDOC), the most common form of Trafficking in Persons (79%) is sexual exploitation and hard inhumane labour. The victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly women and girls in Uganda and the world at large.

Aisha Namaweje, a survivor of Trafficking in Persons says, she was connected by an in-law to a recruitment firm in Dubai for a waitress job that was supposed to pay her 1.2 million Shillings a month. However, on receiving the visa, it indicated she was to first have an experience in Oman where she received 700,000 shillings before she could go to Dubai. Namaweje recounts that the suffering she experienced resulted in a chronic ailment which needed operation and still torments her to date. “It’s not safe even if you go through the right channels.” Namaweje advised fellow youth.



Left is Ms. Aisha Namaweje and Ms. Joanita Ndagire, the survivors of human trafficking share the ordeal they went through due to trafficking in person. Photo by ARU reporter.

“Promised to earn 1.2 million shillings and ended up earning 700,000 shillings.”

Joanita Ndagire, another Ugandan girl who wanted to work in Dubai as a waitress was taken to work in Oman as a housemaid via Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Kenya. Ndagira narrated that she could work without rest, and broke down for seven hours while on duty. However, she was left to die when her condition worsened but her employers deported her for fear of the high cost of returning her remains if she died.



Archbishop John Baptist Odama celebrating a vigil Mass prior to a National Prayer on Human Trafficking. Photo by ARU Reporter.

His Grace John Baptist Odama, advised the government to break the chain of the thriving idolatry of wealth and riches linked to this inhuman trade which attracts huge sums of illicit profits, complicated by rampant unemployment and poverty and the education system which produces job seekers instead of job creators. Re-echoing Pope Francis' lamentation, Archbishop Odama exclaimed "It's a disgrace that people are treated as objects; deceived, raped often sold many times for different purposes and in the end, killed or mentally damaged, ending up being thrown away and abandoned."



Rev. Sisters attending a National Prayer on Human Trafficking on Sept 9, at Kololo Ceremonial grounds. They spear headed the course. Photo by ARU Reporter.

Bishop Joshua Lwere, the head of the National Fellowship of Born-Again Churches in Uganda said that it should bother the government when young people flee their own country in search of jobs in a foreign land despite the abundant resources in the Country.

While Bishop Peter Oyet of Life-line Ministries observed that, "We are in the midst of a real battle. We have all fallen sort of help as religious and political leaders. But whoever wants to fight Trafficking in persons should first write his/her will. Because the business is part of corruption. There are known locations and addresses where the victims are kept. The police may even tell you to leave that fight after seeking lawful recourse to them!"

Gender Minister, Hon. Betty Amongi said that the government has proposed several measures to safeguard the rights of migrant workers already abroad or those intending to seek employment opportunities

The measures include hiring lawyers to represent those abused by their employers in court proceedings, digitizing monitoring and complaints management systems. Passports are being processed for those seeking to return home. Other activities include; intensified community awareness programmes, creating shelter centres, renegotiating bilateral agreements, creating new job opportunities for Ugandans in other countries, deporting those seeking to return home among others.



Rt Rev. John Baptist Odama handshake with a fellow religious leader shortly after completion of National Prayer on Human Trafficking at Kololo.

PICTORIAL OF THE MAJOR EVENTS

