

mission tomorrow

missio



"Finding their happiness in the Lord, missionaries are not content with a life of mediocrity, but burn with the desire to bear witness and reach out to others"

Pope Francis

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SPA is part of Missio, the Pope's charity for overseas mission



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Prayer for future priests

Please pray regularly with us:

Heavenly Father

We pray for the men you have called as they prepare for the priesthood.

Bless them with courage and perseverance in their desire to serve you.

May their hearts overflow with your compassion, understanding and generosity.

May they inspire others to answer your call.

Fill their hearts with the fire of your love, and give them the grace to follow you on their journey of faith.

Make them holy as you are holy through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Image on front cover:
Pope Francis walking through the Door of Mercy with young people at World Youth Day 2016
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Mass being celebrated with the Maasai people, Kenya

National Director's Message

I am writing this on the thirty-fifth anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood as a Mill Hill Missionary. It is a day I remember with deep gratitude.

The joy of that occasion has echoed on throughout my 35 years of missionary ministry. I have indeed found happiness in the Lord, and would not have had it any other way. Though I am guilty of mediocrity on many occasions, I realise that real joy and authentic satisfaction lies in reaching out to others, welcoming and serving them. After 35 years I am still on a journey of discovery, learning how to serve the Lord!

During these years I have met, worked alongside of, and lived with priests from Africa and Asia. I have watched with satisfaction the growth of the young Churches in those countries and the dramatic rise in the number of local clergy, whose vocations continue to spring from the natural enthusiasm of vibrant Christian Communities. I have yet to visit a seminary in Africa that is not full!

The three areas of the ministry of a priest are teaching, sanctifying and governing. Many years of formation are needed to bring out and develop the best in those who are preparing for ordination. Without the help of the SPA there is no doubt that many seminaries throughout the world would be forced to reduce their numbers or compromise the quality of the formation given. Thanks to you, many young men from Africa and Asia have been able to share in the joy of serving the Lord and His people as priests.

Let us continue to share in their joy and enable many more to do the same.

Father Tony.

Fr Anthony Chantry



SPA Update

Thanks to your support:

£5.5 MILLION
RAISED BY MISSIO
IN ENGLAND AND WALES

£516,659
raised specifically
for the SPA including
legacies, supporting

2,219
SEMINARIANS TRAINING FOR
THE PRIESTHOOD, INCLUDING

376
STUDENTS WITH
SPONSORS, OF WHICH

- 93 Our Lady of Lanka Seminary, Sri Lanka
- 92 Christ the King Major Seminary, Kenya
- 65 St John's Regional Seminary, India
- 65 St Peter's Major Seminary, Malawi
- 61 Bigard Memorial Seminary, Nigeria

Find out more about joining the SPA Sponsorship Scheme in the insert.

Updates from the seminaries



In August, the newly ordained priests from **St John's Regional Seminary, India** offered a Mass of Thanksgiving, praying for the benefactors who supported them spiritually and financially to reach ordination. Afterwards they held a football match and a community lunch together. The Rector, Fr Marianna, says 'It was a very happy moment to see the new, energetic priests ready to serve the Lord. I thank you sincerely for all the help you are giving to our seminary.'



Students at **St Peter's Major Seminary, Malawi** are continuing to run a wide range of apostolates alongside their academic studies, including youth ministry; teaching in the local schools; visiting people in hospital, in prison and people who are housebound; and an adult literacy programme. The seminary is hoping to begin a major building programme this year as some of its buildings are no longer fit for use.

Changes of Rector

Malawi: Fr Wezi Mfuno has taken over as rector of St Peter's Major Seminary from Fr Samuel Malamulo.

Sri Lanka: Fr Expeditus Jayakody is the new rector of Our Lady of Lanka Seminary. The former rector, Fr Elias Dias, has been appointed parish priest of Kandana Parish, about 15km north of Colombo, with about 4,000 Catholic families.



Focus on: Kenya

What strikes you about the Church in Kenya is how proud it is of what it has achieved, and how much it wants to be self supporting and stand on its own two feet

The people of Kenya are immensely grateful for all of the selfless missionaries who gave so much of themselves to share God's love with this east African nation. However, they now feel that it is time they come of age. With the support of their sisters and brothers around the world, this can become a reality.

This attitude is very much evident in the seminary of Christ the King based in Nyeri, north of the country's capital of Nairobi. The opposite of so many European seminaries, Christ the King Major Seminary continues to see an increase in the number of people studying there. It currently has 278 men training for the priesthood under the watchful eye of Fr Peter Maingi Mutune, himself an alumnus of the seminary. He returned to the seminary in 2010

when he was appointed lecturer in Canon Law before becoming Dean of Philosophy, and now Rector.

In the seminary are men from many of the tribes which make up the Kenyan population. People's tribal identity can sometimes prevent them from mixing well together. However, Fr Peter thinks it is important that members of the various tribes learn together at Christ the King Seminary. And it is when working on the seminary's farm or playing team sports that the men seem to gel together and break down boundaries.

"Africa will give back to the world because it has received through the missionaries."

The farm is an unexpectedly important part of the seminary, and another part of the Church in Kenya's plan to become as self-reliant as possible.

The seminary is on 400 acres of diocesan land. Some of this now

contains the dairy farm and kitchen garden which help provide milk and vegetables for the seminary community. With milk being expensive, the dairy farm now produces 160 litres of milk every day, all milked by the hands of four people for the community's use, saving costs. During the seminary break, milk is also sold to the nearby dairy company for some extra funds.

Similarly, the courgettes, cabbages, kale, carrots, spring onions, corn and spinach produced in the kitchen garden helps ensure a nutritious diet for the students at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Two local women are the main gardeners, helped by a hard-working team of seminarian volunteers.

Alongside their studies in theology and philosophy, the work on the land helps the students maintain their link to creation, as called for by Pope Francis, and ensures they have the skills to grow crops in the future to support themselves and encourage their local community to do the same.



The work on the land helps the students maintain their link with creation

Fr Peter hopes the success of the farm will continue, ultimately being able to produce milk both for the students, but also to sell to the local community at a reasonable price.

With the crops and milk, the seminary is not only becoming self-reliant in terms of food, but with the increase in seminarians, the Church in Kenya hopes to be able to support the Church across Africa and beyond with missionaries to those places which need their support. As Fr Elias, seminary lecturer, says, 'Africa will give back to the world because it has received through the missionaries.'

Serving the Lord by serving his people



John Baptista Kiratu Machira, 30, is from Nyeri, where Christ the King Seminary is based. He is from the Kikuyu tribe and the third of six children

John Baptista is an excellent sportsman, and was ranked number two in Kenya in badminton. From an early age he was an altar server, and would play being the priest with his brothers and sisters as his congregation. He says, *'I don't remember a time when I thought of anything else, of any other profession.'*

Growing up, he was influenced by Salesians of Don Bosco in his home parish who have a particular charism of working with young people. For John Baptista, 'The diocese of Nyeri is my home and like Don Bosco I want to be a pastor of the souls among my own people, then later to go out into the world following the call of

Facts

- Kenya lies on the equator and is bordered by Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia
- There are approximately 45 million people in Kenya
- It seems that humanity began in the region six million years ago
- There are 40 tribes, including Maasai, Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Meru
- 83% of Kenyans are Christian, mainly Protestant, with Catholics making up a quarter of the population

Jesus to bring the Word of God to every nation, race and people.

'I want to work with young people. I have worked with children from the streets and want to continue helping them get out from that life of poverty by supporting them through education.'

John Baptista is conscious of all those who support the men to study at Christ the King: 'This has been possible because of the great generosity of people who sacrifice their money for the upbringing of future priests. I look forward to ascending to the altar to serve the Lord in serving the people he has called to himself as Christians.'

See the insert to find out how you can help students like John Baptista

Doing what Jesus tells us to do

Francis Mwenda is in his fourth year at Christ the King Seminary. From the Embu tribe, he comes from a strong, charismatic Catholic family

'Before I joined the seminary I had served in the church as an altar server, as a youth group member and leader, as an animator of children in Missio's Mission Together and as a service leader in our parish's outstation. My experience as a leader in the celebration of the Word of God and my experience as a teacher shaped my spiritual life even more and the reflection on the Word led me closer and closer to the Lord. This also led to my increased desire to serve the young children. I also realised the need for more priests



to offer Mass and administer sacraments. Especially in my home village where people hold so much to the traditional beliefs and in particular to witchcraft and magic.

'My favourite bible verse is John 2:5 where Mary, mother of Jesus, told the servers at the wedding in

Cana, "Do whatever he tells you." For me, this verse is a powerful reminder of the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in our lives as Christians and more so as priests in the making.

"I also realised the need for more priests to offer Mass and administer sacraments."

'The Church in Africa is still struggling to be self-reliant and self-propagating. With the immense support that we continue to get from England and Wales, we will eventually give back to the universal Church through service in the field of the apostolate.'

Relying on God's love



Michael Gachagua, 27, is also from Nyeri and part of the Kikuyu tribe, and the second born of a family of four

Michael's journey to the seminary hasn't been smooth. Sadly, both

his mother and father died of AIDS. At the time his father was ill, there were no medicines to help him, so they tried traditional medicines and natural remedies. Michael saw both his parents decline in health, and he became their carers.

"I want to follow the example of Christ and serve the people of God."

Despite feeling the call to the priesthood since childhood, his grades meant that he left St Paul's Minor Seminary at the age of 18. He went to Uganda with his uncle to work in construction for a year.

He then studied mechanics for two years in Uganda, getting good grades which meant he was finally successful at getting into Christ the King Seminary.

However, despite being accepted at the seminary, it was at this time that his mother's health deteriorated, so he went home to look after her. After she passed away, he began at the seminary.

Michael says, 'I want to be a priest so that I can help to uplift the status of the poor and work with those who are poor. Having been through what I have, I know the need to be able to rely on God's love. I want to follow the example of Christ and serve the people of God.'

Labourers for the Lord's harvest Communities of faith



Four of the sisters alongside the seminary rector, Fr Peter

Christ the King Seminary in Kenya is not only a home to future priests, but also to a community of religious sisters. The Companions of the Little Flower Sisters were founded in 1990 in the Archdiocese of Nyeri, where the seminary is based. It is a small, close knit community of welcoming smiles

The sisters are an invaluable part of the seminary as well as to the whole diocesan family. Their care and commitment to their local community is evident through their interaction with visitors to their home. They are dedicated to St Thérèse of Lisieux, the patron of missions, with a particular charism for evangelisation through small Christian communities (SCCs).

These SCCs are the bedrock of the Church in Kenya. Every parish is

divided into groups who meet on a weekly basis to share what's going on in their lives, to pray and read the Bible together, and support one another.

The groups are run by local parishioners who are trained over two years as catechists by the sisters, alongside priests, seminarians and current catechists. The role is pivotal to the pastoral care of the community as it encourages sharing, compassion and mercy, in addition to sharing practical skills. Sr Agnes, who has been a sister for 25 years, says that 'the SCCs help Christians to grow in faith and development'.

Every day, at least one of the sisters goes to a SCC to support the group. Whilst within the community they not only take part in the faith-formation, but help out in whatever way they can. This can involve teaching the families about chicken rearing, or different

ways to grow vegetables so that the families can become evermore self-sustaining. As Sr Joan says, 'when the family is stable, then the Church is stable'.

It's also a role they take at the seminary, where Sr Ellah is in charge of the seminary kitchen and Sr Joan is in charge of the dairy farm. Many of the seminarians volunteer to help with the farming. When we think of the religious life, rearing chickens and milking cows isn't usually the first thing that springs to mind. However, the sisters are living out one of the challenges from Laudato Si', the letter from Pope Francis on the care of our common home, enabling the students to engage with the gift of creation:

'It is my hope that our seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God's world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment.'

Laudato Si', 214



Mongolia's first native priest

In August 2016, the first native priest was ordained for the country of Mongolia. It was a day of great joy for the people of the world's youngest Catholic church, and especially for Bishop Padilla who arrived in the country in 1992 from the Philippines as one of three missionaries

'When we arrived there was no church, no convent, to welcome us,' recalls Bishop Padilla. Now, almost a quarter of a century later, this country which had been under Communist rule until 1989 has its first native priest. Fr Joseph Enkh studied at Daejeon Catholic University, South Korea before being ordained deacon in 2014 when he returned to Mongolia.



One of the first churches in Mongolia, housed in a traditional ger

During his ordination, Fr Joseph gave thanks for the support he had received, saying, 'I thank the Lord who has called me to serve him through priesthood. I am



Fr Joseph with his mother on pilgrimage in Rome

also grateful to all the people who helped me answer this call. I hope there will soon be other vocations to priesthood and consecrated life among the youth of Mongolia.'

The Catholic community in England and Wales supported Fr Joseph in becoming a priest through Missio, which continues to support our sisters and brothers in Mongolia.

Bishop Padilla, who visited the UK for World Mission Sunday in 2015, compared the ordination of Fr Joseph to having a child: *'Having a young Mongolian ordained to the priesthood for the local church is like giving birth: she is a young mother who gives birth to her first child.* Let us pray and trust that Fr Joseph Enkh is faithful to his vocation, takes up his cross daily, and follows Christ always, in every circumstance of his life'.

Congratulations to Fr Joseph and the Catholic community of Mongolia. We will continue to hold them all in our prayers.

'Another worker in God's vineyard! I can imagine angels rejoicing for him and all those men who have realised their vocation.'

Mrs Madeleine Paskin, West Midlands, on hearing about the ordination of Fr Reginald, a student she has supported.

Part of the Missio network, the Society of St Peter the Apostle (SPA) trains the Church leaders of tomorrow, bringing the love of Christ to vulnerable communities, and passing on the gift of faith to future generations in over 157 countries around the

world. Every year Missio's SPA supports the training of 30,000 future priests and 11,000 religious sisters in the mission dioceses. Only the SPA, as the Pope's own charity, has this unique role in every mission diocese throughout the world.