



# The Prophetic Witness

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*Consecrated Persons in a memorial photo in front of St. Mary's Cathedral Rubaga, during the day of Consecrated life led by His Grace Paul Ssemogerere, Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

**By Sr. Specioza Kabahuma - DST**

## ARU PROFILE/PROGRAMS...

**T**ransformative Education and Faith (TEF) has started in Uganda Martyrs University – Nkozi (UMU). It offers philosophical, theological, psychological counselling and pastoral training for deepening faith. After this training some of the sisters will continue with a formation of Formators course which prepares them to serve in the Formation Houses and Spiritual Centers.

While Sister Led Youth Initiative in Uganda (SLYIU): focuses on giving hands on work–skills to the youth between the age of 15 -25. Some of

whom dropped from school because of reasons beyond their control. The term 'out-of- school youth' means eligible youth who is a school dropout; or who has received a secondary education or its equivalent, but is basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed.

Empowering youth is therefore an effort towards making a course for them to sustain and adapt as per the situations, aiming at improving the quality of life they are living. By giving them such an opportunity, the youth can build confidence and work in the direction of attaining growth and transformation, which is a gateway to personality development desired by Sister Led Youth Initiative in Uganda.

Therefore, the program aims at empowering the youth, so that they become agents of positive change in the Northern Uganda and elsewhere; where it will roll out. It also ensures they are employable or self-employed and are living improved lives.

In conclusion the programme is most appreciated and was received very well. ARU is most appreciated for extending a hand to the youth in Gulu Ecclesiastical Province. The programme aroused interest in the youth and are eager to embrace it. There are plans to roll it out to the all the four Ecclesiastical provinces after the survey report.



*The ARU Executive members in a meeting. Photot by ARU Reporter*



*The youth (with disability) in the bakery department making dough in Tororo. Courtesy photo.*

# The Editorial



Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC

**T**oday, when one looks at the world from the Gospel perspective, the obvious deduction would be; the world is characterized by sin, evil and wickedness. In daily interactions you would come across statements like; “Our society is worse than Sodom and Gomorrah,” “I regret being part of this contemporary world,” “we are heading for the doomsday,” “the media only produce bad news....” such negative statements go on to bombard us.

Yet faith rooted in apostolic age keeps us going while gently steering unto eternity. Flavored with a living hope, we believe that God is in control as manifested in the Words of Jesus the Christ; Mt. 16: 18, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” With this confidence, a Christian immersed in the gift of faith would not worry about what goes around him or her because this individual would remain focused on the creator who is always

present when called upon for help. The world is awash with the vulnerable poor and needy, who look upon the good-will for provisions. This includes young girls who conceive prematurely and face consequences of birth injury. The child mothers who would not know how to fend for the baby. The street persons and drug abusers need our attention too.

Yet another tragedy is the agenda of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender, Queer, plus (LGBTQ+) movement. Thus, taking humanity back to pre - civilization era! The moral and ethical choices are questionable and people are living in denial of realities of life. It is an illusion to say children’s identities should not be disclosed, until they choose what they want to become! Some of our brothers and sisters have decided to live that way. As Pope Francis says, “we should not condemn the sinner but the sin.” We are called to pray and care for one another as we strive for common good in our common

home especially from this Easter.

Thanks to the Consecrated Persons involved in the Socio - Pastoral and Integral Human Development Ministry of caring for our needy brothers and sisters. Consequently, the effects of moral decadence is in the play. The need for nursing the injury of the needy victims is ongoing. Let charitable works take their course as justice follows up the causes and effects of questionable incidences.

Thanks to God that the Consecrated Persons, as disciples of Jesus reach out to bring hope to the people in dire need. They are able to reach out through of the pastoral - oriented interventions that include and not limited to; Safeguarding, Anti-human trafficking - Talitha Kum Uganda Network, Sister Led Youth Initiative, on-going formation, response to the cry of the poor, care for the elderly, health care and the like.

Special appreciation to Sr. Angela Nakitende, SMR, and Sr. Specioza Kabahuma Akiiki, DST, for services well rendered at ARU Secretariat. Their service cannot be underestimated after adding multiple bricks in the growth and development of the vineyard of the Lord. May the Lord bless and accompany you where ever you will be to continue with similar services. May the Lord bless and keep you, may his countenance shine upon you Amen.

Thank you! Be filled with the grace and Blessings of the Holy Week as we await the Peace and Joy Esther will bring for you and Your loved ones.

**HAPPY**

**EASTER**

**2023!**

# Birth Injuries Camp Rejuvenate Women



*Dr. Sr. Priscilla Busingye, DST, with two young mothers who had fistula repaired, Courtsey photo.*

*By Sr. Juliet Asiimwe, DST*

**B**irth injuries camp, an initiative established by Sr. Dr. Priscilla Busingye, an Obs/Gyn Specialist breathes new life into women injured at child-birth in South West Uganda. “This program has rejuvenated the dignity of affected women a great deal!” a beneficiary remarked.

Sr. Dr. Priscilla is the former President of the Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in Uganda and one of the 65% of the women in the health work force in Africa.

She has conducted over 10,000 safe deliveries during her practice and over 500 women have

recovered from birth injury repairs with conditions such as Vasco Vaginal Fistula (VVF), uterine prolapses and perineal tears since 2021. Sr. Dr. Priscilla is passionate about women of all ages and ensures that they receive standard care and management during their course of pregnancy, delivery as well as in their postnatal times.

Besides the above-mentioned services, Sr. Dr. Priscilla, a member of the Institute of Daughters of St. Therese of the child Jesus (DST) also known as Banyatereza Sisters in Uganda, is also a member of the current leadership team of her Institute. She has also helped many mothers with various gynecological conditions. She (Sr. Dr. Priscilla) was the first African

woman to receive the L’chaim Prize for providing life changing care in rural Uganda in 2020. The Prize was worth USD 500,000 award in support of her medical work and was the largest dedicated to direct patient care. The prize sponsor was Mark Gerson, an Africa Mission Health Care Co-founder who observed Sr. Dr. Priscilla as someone who optimizes everything that a compassionate, community-minded person could possibly aspire to regardless of their faith tradition.

The L’chaim Prize is provided through the generosity of Africa Mission Health Care Co-Founder Mark Gerson and his wife Rabbi Erica Gerson. Established in 2016, the L’ Chaim Prize is awarded in appreciation of the contribution that the Christian Missionaries and Mission Hospitals have made to the service of God and Humanity.

The Prize is the first step in achieving Dr. Priscilla’s ambitious dream of saving mothers and rejuvenating their dignity through Child-birth injury repairs. Birth injuries are upsetting conditions, affecting between two to three million girls and women across sub-Saharan Africa. The exact number is difficult to estimate; however, due to a lack of commitment to address and resolve this problem, the stigma it brings to the person with it, as well as a lack of

...Pg.4

awareness within the healthcare systems and communities, the problem continues to grow exponentially.

It is estimated that each year between 50,000 and 100,000 women worldwide get Childbirth injuries which pushes many women into a world of depression and loneliness with some resorting to suicide.

However, the story is unique for the Women of South Western Uganda. The survivors currently beam with smiles after getting relief from birth injuries through the correction procedures of those with Fistulas, perineal tears, and uterine prolapses done at Rwibaale Health Centre IV. This is a hospital to be soon founded by the Banyatereza Sisters and her partner sites of Uganda Martyrs Hospital Ibanda, Karoli Lwanga Hospital Nyakibale Rukungiri and Our Lady Of Good Health Hospital Rush-



*The Staff at Rwibaale Health Centre IV sharing smiles with Dr. Sr. Priscilla after a successful birth injury camp, safe motherhood and clinical audit. Courtesy photo.*

oroza in Kabaale; all being partner sites of Africa Mission Health Care.

The beneficiaries and partners will live to appreciate Sr. Dr. Priscilla for the work she does in rejuvenating the dignity of women and thanks

to Africa Mission Health Care who have supported the dream of Sr. Dr. Priscilla.

With honour, we and all people of good-will are invited to support Sr. Dr. Priscilla and her mission.



*Dr. Sr. Priscilla addressing mothers who turn up for birth injuries camp. Courtesy Photo.*

# Learn to listen in the presence of God-Fr. Dominic Tamale Anyanzo



*Consecrated persons share a light moment with ARU Executive during the inauguration ceremony of the new formation candidates for the year 2023/24 at Uganda Spiritual Formation Centre, Namugongo (USFCN). Photo by ARU Reporter.*

*By Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC*

**L**et us treat creation and all creatures with reverence because, what God made was good. Jesus is the pinnacle of creation because creation reveals the glory of God through Jesus,” Chaplain Uganda Spiritual Formation Centre, Namugongo, (USFCN), Rev Fr. Dominic Tamale Anyanzo, remarked during his inaugural homily at USFCN, on February 6, 2023.

He also urged the participants to learn to listen in the presence of the Lord than yearn for physical healing. “Let us wait for answers to our prayer in faith, *your faith has saved you* as Jesus said. Jesus has not stopped healing because the Sacrament of reconciliation is a great healing moment.”

Fr. Dominic also called the community to do so, in that God intervenes in personal and societal life in our time. On unfortunate note, as Pope Francis leaves South Sudan after the apostolic visit, more people were killed in Kejikeji near the border of Uganda and South Sudan!

The inauguration ceremony of the new candidates for the year 2023/24 attracted 24 participants. The Director of USFCN, Sr. Rita Nabukalu, and the formation team symbolically animated the inauguration. The participants were welcomed from the gate to the ‘holy ground.’ Where they received a welcome embrace before Holy Mass.

The President of Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), Mother Speranza Namusisi during this occasion observed that,

“Uganda Spiritual Formation Centre Namugongo (USFCN) is the heart of ARU. It is where different institutes with varied charisms meet as a family. This rightly connects with ARU’s motto, “No Longer Strangers but Friends.”

She added that, many people fear formation because it is not easy. However, much as we may not have much to offer, whether trained or not, we are Formators to our brothers and sisters. “The desire to renew and transform is good, believe me, you will leave this place fulfilled. The symbolic candle light is that we are in the light and light itself.”

With confidence in the participants, Mother Speranza assured the group; “...open up to the Holy Spirit, relax and let go as you are treasured by your institutes and the superiors have seen a trait in your ability to support others. Let us trust in God for support as we pledge to play our roles.”



*Participants processing from the gate to the Holy ground. Photo by ARU Reporter*

... Pg. 6

In the same vein, the Chairperson, ARU Formation Committee, Mother Noelina Namusoke, who doubles as a member of the Executive Committee ARU, addressed the Participants for the formation of Formators program and welcomed them to the Centre. In addition, thanked them for deciding to do so. "Thank you for accepting to take up the challenge that was put before you. The Religious Institutes that send you had high hopes in you."

Mother Noelina cautioned that the future of each religious institute depends on the formation of the formees of the institutes. "In this regard as you participate in the program, remember what lies ahead of you and make use of whatever will be provided to you in the program. Feel at home in the forming environment of USFCN."

The Secretary General ARU, Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, reminded the participants about the letter from the Dicastery for the International Day of Consecrated life and Synodality. "It is about participation and co-responsibility in the synodal journey, which has reached continental level. The theme is "widening the tent." Mission is the oxygen of Christian life, making it a garden of divine love."



*New candidates celebrating Mass during the Inauguration ceremony. Photo by ARU Reporter.*



*The new formation candidates for the year 2023/24 light up candles during the inauguration ceremony, before Mass at the USFCN. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

Sr. Lydia told participants that they are the source of continuity of the various institutes they represent. She added that, they should be 'seasoned' so as to 'season' others. "As we are born in the Church, try to bear fruits for the Church. Avoid temptation of temporary earthly goods. You were carefully chosen to be formable because you cannot give what you do not have. Have a positive attitude and bloom in God."

The program concluded with lunch and the participants got induction into the system of the new environment of USFCN. The induction later extended to ARU Secretariat on March 11, 2023, when the whole team toured ARU compound, interfaced with ARU Administrative Staff members and shared a meal before returning to their campus at USFCN.



*Some members of the Executive; extreme right is the President, ARU, Mother. Speranza Namusisi-IHMR, in the middle, Executive Member, ARU, Mother Noeline Namusoke, DM, and on the left is the Secretary General, ARU, Sr. Mary Lydia Apili Bwor-LSMIG, preparing to welcome the Participants during the inauguration ceremony at USFCN. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

# “Let logic of God prevail over human wisdom:”

## Most Rev Paul Ssemogerere



**Consecrated Persons in the company of His Grace Paul Ssemogerere during the commemoration of the Consecrated Life at St. Mary's Cathedral Rubaga. Photo by ARU reporter.**

**By Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC**

**I** warmly welcome you on this day of your pilgrimage to the Diocesan Mother Church, that you may be confirmed in the faith by the successor of the apostles in this Diocese in my person to celebrate your gift to God and the Church through Consecration.” The Most Reverent Paul Ssemogerere heartily welcomed and congratulated the Men and Women in Consecrated Life and Christian Community to Lubaga Cathedral on the day of Consecrated Life, February 2, 2023.

The Archbishop thanked the Episcopal Vicar for religious, Rev. Fr. Richard Nnyombi, M.Afr., for organizing the special day.

“Accept our sincere congratulations, we are grateful to God for your faithful service in different areas of appointment; we pray for a continued renewed zeal. I extend my Congratulations to the temporary and perpetually professed Consecrated Persons for the achievement. And I welcome new members of different institutes who have recently been appointed to serve in the Archdiocese of Kampala.”

Basing on the readings of the day, the Prelate challenged the Consecrated Persons, saying that, God manifests himself through the weakest members of communities with dire needs. Due to challenges and temptations, one may experience hunger, thirst and nakedness. Such people are in need of love,

consolations and care. While others may be tempted to abandon evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. “Let the logic of God prevail in the pastoral activities and avoid the temptation of human wisdom to overtake us.”

Citing Caritas in Veritate, 4, he added, “Pope Benedict XVI (RIP) reminded us that, the present socio-cultural context, is characterized by relative truth. Practicing charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is essential for building a good society and for true integral human development.”

Being salt and light of the world has been freely given to us, “that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us...and in dying through burning like a candle, the world may receive life. Citing St. Sophronius, “The candle we light is a sign of the divine splendor of Christ who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of his eternal light.” Quoting St. John Paul II in 1978, “With Jesus our light, we shall conquer satan.



**Sisters celebrate Mass at Rubaga Cathedral on the day of Consecrated life. Photo by ARU Reporter.**

The Prelate called for true service among the religious; “Serve as servants of the world through schools, hospitals, social services and other duties. As the Church serves through you, the world receives light. Put ego behind and avoid racism, nationalism and tribalism.” He also urged the congregation to remember to pray for Pope Francis who was on Africa mission in DRC Congo and South Sudan.

The Archbishop challenged the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) to help identify some of the religious communities who are not registered with ARU. “Some of them enter illegally into the jurisdiction of Kampala Archdiocese, let them start serving after seeking permission and consultation with Diocesan authorities. You can also serve in the rural areas because Kampala Archdiocese is bigger than the city.”

Archbishop Augustine Kasujja, Apostolic Nuncio Emeritus to Belgium, currently a resident in Kampala Archdiocese noted the steady growth of Consecrated Persons and said it is a sign of growth of the Church in Uganda and the entire world. The Consecrated Persons are channels of service of the Church to the poor of the poorest.

The prelate lamented over moral decadence; “The moral standard of Uganda has gone down due to corruption, homosexuality (LGBTQ+) and it is our duty to do something about it. The vows are challenged by the dynamics of contemporary society.



*Most Rev. Paul Ssemogerere, main celebrant during the day of Consecrated life enters, St. Mary's, Rubaga Cathedral to preside over the Mass. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

The vow of poverty is challenged by destitution of humanity and chastity by LGBTQ+. This has been propagated in Europe where multi million dollars were sent to East Africa. Watch out the volunteers who are often paid for propagating this vice. Follow up what they teach in schools. Yet educational institutions are sources of vocation to Consecrated Life! Pray to keep the light of faith brought up by our ancestors in faith.”

While Fr. Cyprian Binaka, on behalf of the President of ARU, invited members to read, reflect and integrate the letter on Synodality, Communion and Participation. It calls for all to jointly celebrate in the spirit of synodality. Strive for grace to be a living memorial of Jesus' way of living and acting. Be united with all communities across the world, we are part of the whole body of Christ. Let the Gospel be translated as a way of life as reflected by the charisms. The continental phase of the synod with the theme; Widening the Tent is about closeness, compassion and tenderness.

He further reminded members that; mission is the oxygen of Christian life which reinvigorates and leads to ‘widening the tent’. Do we frequently invoke the Holy Spirit for missionary fire? Missionaries are free gift to others from God. It calls for care of creation, integral development and transformation. Conclusively, he said with God's love in our hearts, we shall live our missions as consecrated persons.

The Secretary General, ARU, Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, reminded the religious about the need to protect the youth and children, “The Commission for protection of the young is calling us to embrace our duties, young people are left unaided, let us create space for them. We are the light and salt of the earth for the needy and so we should avoid leaving things undone.” Sr. Lydia concluded by citing Hebrews 13:20, “May the God of peace who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd...who ratified an eternal covenant be with us all.”

...Pg. 9

On behalf of the Consecrated Persons, Fr. Richard Nnyombi thanked the Archbishop for the rich homily he shared out with the congregation. He also appreciated all those who joined the Consecrated Persons in prayer, work and help fulfill their religious obligations. Fr. Richard thanked those who prepared this day particularly the Cathedral Rector and his team. He also used the platform to inform the congregation about pilgrimage to Kigungu in February and November, 2023.

Similarly, Pope Francis marked the World Day for Consecrated Life with a Eucharistic celebration in Rome's St. Peter's Basilica.

It should be noted that, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted the annual observance of the Catholic Church, marking it for the first time in 1997. He designated its celebration on February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

For the 26th edition of the celebration this year, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life has addressed a letter to the world's consecrated men and women inviting them to walk together as a community in the synodal spirit of participation, where members exercise responsibility for one another through mutual listening, excluding no one. (*Vatican News Staff Reporter*).

## UEC, ARU Partner to Restore Child Safeguarding Through Marriage and Family Institutions



Director Lay apostolate, Rev. Fr. Frederick Tusingire (sixth from right, and the National programs Coordinator, Family Office, Mrs. Kwesigabo Florence UEC, in a memorial photo with representatives of Marriage and Family Institutions from Archdiocese of Kampala during the training at ARU. Photo by ARU Reporter.

**By ARU Reporter**

**U**ganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), Lay Apostolate Department in partnership with Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) is promoting child safeguarding and family values at all levels. This time round, Lay Apostolate Office organized a National Family Apostolate

program workshop on March 3, 2023 at ARU Secretariat, Kampala in Nsambya.

The workshop saw invites from many key leaders; head of married Men, Women and the Youth belonging to Kampala Ecclesiastical Province, which entails five Dioceses; Masaka, Lugazi, Kiyin

da-Mityana, Kasana-Luwero and Kampala itself converge at ARU Secretariat, Nsambya in Jubilee Hall.

The workshop aims at promoting family apostolate in Uganda, according to the National Programs Coordinator, Family Office at Uganda Episcopal Conference, Mrs. Florence Kevin Kwesigabo. "We are aiming at re-awaking the importance of the family, to sensitize people about being in good family relationships and offer children supportive family environment. It is all about promoting a peaceful family living, through promotion of Catholic Church values." Mrs. Kwesigabo revealed.

Mrs. Kwesigabo told this reporter that this is a training of trainers (ToT) being equipped with information on pastoral care, marriage and family and participants have received a manual, which they will use back home.

...Pg.10

## Parenting and Formation

According to the National Director, Lay Apostolate at the UEC, Fr. Frederick Tusingire, parenting in the present-day life is more complicated than ever before due to parents devoting more time to work and ignore children and single parenting; both parents must raise a child.

Fr. Tusingire emphasizes that formation of children starts at an early stage, right from the time of conception; what you say, eat and where you go has an impact on the formation of a child. Formation must be age appropriate and holistic, covering all areas of life. These include; faith, morality, culture, manners, and academic values. All these are far better than money.

## Child Safeguarding Policy in the Church

Fr. Tusingire said that to avoid forms of abuse to children like physical and emotional torture, inhumane treatment and neglect of support, "Silence is no option; anyone can/should be a whistle blower." He added that the foundation of Child Safeguarding is rooted in the church teachings where all people are created in God's image and are equal. They deserve equal rights, dignity and respect.



*The newly appointed Assistant Secretary General, ARU, Sr. Grace Kyomugisha addressing participants during Marriage and Family institution training at ARU Jubilee Hall, Photo by ARU Reporter.*

Fr. Tusingire therefore advises all Christians to create an environment that minimizes the livelihood of all forms of abuse and exploitation that is in line with the Child Safeguarding policy in the Church.

According to the National Pastoral Coordinator, Fr. John Baptist Kaganda, there is need for ardent pastoral care for marriage and family institutions. These institutions deserve a unique attention of the Church because couples have the responsibility to inculcate faith in the children.

Fr. Kaganda also noted that there is an increase in number of marriage and separation, with divorce on the rise. Young people are running away from responsibilities and marriage. "There is need for a pastoral plan to accompany marriages and families by guiding and supporting members to have reconciliation with God, themselves and with other people. There is need for healing both physical and psychological in families." Fr. Kaganda advised. Fr. Kaganda also urged parents and members in the Small Christian Community and Church leaders to accompany members of Marriage and Family Programs. This helps to sustain people to preserve the family unit. "The success of marriage and family life lies in the pastoral care provided through accompaniment and journeying with you. The word of God above all, must be at the centre of the pastoral care." Fr. Kaganda added.



*The National Pastoral Coordinator, Rev. Fr. John Baptist Kaganda making a presentation to marriage and family institution participants during the training session, Photo by ARU Reporter.*

## Participant's view

Mr. Vincent Kisagala, head of Diocesan Youth Coordinator, Lugazi Diocese admitted that this workshop was very important because it has helped him realize the importance of marriage and family in the Church. "I have learnt that in marriage, we become co-workers to take the Church on to another level," Mr. Kisagala noted.

He added that he is going to embark on training his fellow youth together with the married couples in his Diocese of Lugazi and mobilize them to join the church so that they can firmly stay in their marriages. He will counsel and advise single parents to reform and go for Holy Communion.

Kisagala believes that Bishops and Priests have realized that there is information gap among pastoral agents concerning marriage, family and parenting. There is need to bridge the information gap about family life and children by promoting Church teachings and values for a healthy family life. "The workshop was good and has come at the time we are amidst a big challenge of Lesbianism, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer plus (LGBTQ+) in the country and worldwide," Mr. Kisagala admitted.

This is the second workshop of the kind as the first one was organized a week before which constituted; the Pastoral heads, Pastoral Coordinators of the Dioceses and key Priests from the 19 Dioceses across the country. The next workshop will be in Tororo Ecclesiastical Province, then Gulu and finally to Mbarara, according to Mrs. Kwesigabo.

# Networks and Collaborators synergize with ARU Branch Coordinators



*Members attentively listen to the presentations tailored at synergizing them during the meeting held at ARU. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

**Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC**

**W**ith objectives to know one another, share knowledge and build synergies for collective impact, ARU Branch Coordinators had the opportunity to interface with leaders of other networks on February 10, 2023, at ARU Secretariat.

Among the Committees and Networks present were; Life Net, Counselling Hub, Formation Ministry for Religious in Uganda (FoMRU), Sister Led Youth Initiative Uganda (SLYIU), Talitha Kum Uganda Network (TAKUN) and Communication Network.

ARU seeks to grab another opportunity in the near future to bring more groups, programs and committees on board in order to plan and offer integrated services. The core goal

was all about promoting the Gospel values, being charism driven and avoid duplication of activities. The group went ahead to elect national team of Coordinators, with duty to enhance top-down administration of ARU. The results were as follows: Sr. Leonidas Komugisha (Coordinator), Fr. Gabriel Angella (Assistant Coordinator), and the Secretary is Sr. Flavia Ainembabazi. The trio were given mandate to co-opt members to build their full committee.

Among others, the group shared success stories, challenges and planned activities. ARU was pleased to meet this group because of being their representatives in the hard-to-reach areas. The group was encouraged to have regular meetings with action points and resolutions. They were also encouraged to improve on the statistical data and information.

...Pg 12

Sr. Lydia Apili, encouraged the group to work together in the synodal spirit. And be abreasted with the church documents, equipped with management and governance skills so to serve in unity and diversity. And in so doing, respond to the needs of the church and the world. The team were called to work with the continental theme of the Synod of synodality; Widening the Tent thus, a call to missionary action, a centre of our being, with the Holy Spirit as oxygen of the Consecrated Life.

The team was called to share pertinent issues on their platform. ARU branches are encouraged to open bank accounts and develop a customized constitution based on the one of ARU. The members with gratitude pledged commitment and collaboration with ARU.

## Catholic Sisters skill up Needy Young Women



*Former home administrator, ARU, Sr. Angela Nakitende hands over a qualification certificate to a young woman who successfully completed the hands-on short course during their graduation at Garuga. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

### ARU Reporter

In a bid to respond to the current challenges the youth face in coping up with the dynamic society, Catholic Sisters under their umbrella organization of the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) use various avenues to skill up the youth.

On January 27, 2023, 44 students obtained certificate awards after three-month course in housekeeping, basic computer skills, food production and foods and beverage services.

Apart from the official Sister-Led Youth Initiative and Bakhita Partnership for Education, the sisters mobilized young women in November 2022, trained by Kyoga Foundation an Umbrella organization of Pearl Crest Hospitality Centre.

The project is a joint courtesy of Jesuit Justice Ecology Network Africa (JENA) and ARU. The two entities mobilized resources to create impact on ARU's youth outreach. "This would lead the youth to cause a positive peer influence among fellow youth," one staff member remarked.

Special recognition and gifts were given to students who did their best and exhibited keenness in learning, practice and in following instructions. Among others, Asinduru Valentina was awarded for promoting team spirit, by uniting and reconciling parties. Munguleni Scovia was awarded for being hard working student and Nanyondo Matilda was rewarded for being the best overall student, determined by cumulative marks.

...Pg. 13



**In shot are candidates among whom participants elected a national team of coordinators. Photo by ARU Reporter**



**Participants attentively listen to a presentation during the meeting. Photo by ARU Reporter.**

The Woman Councilor of Bugabo-Mbiru, Katabi Town Council, Hon Mmeeme Christine Ssemengo, Guest of the day gave thanks for training the girl-child. "Many girls are victims of early pregnancy, child marriage and indiscipline. The success of the girl child, trained in computer skills and hospitality is for the good of the society. Thanks to the parents who sacrificed and trusted Kyoga Foundation that has gathered people from different families and backgrounds."

Hon. Mmeeme continued with advise to the graduates and added, "Be a woman of difference and substance! You are not going out the way you came. What you do can speak volumes for itself. With your value of respect, parents can learn from you. Keep on with self-discovery and screening; ask what would you want to be?" The Guest of the day added that, with responsibility and hard work, the women could make a difference wherever they go. "I thank Pearl Crest and promise to fish ladies to bring to this institution. The girls are elegant in a tidy environment! It is worth-noting that they have done very well."

Fr. Charles congratulated the graduands and thanked God by citing the scriptures; Phil. 1:3-6, thanking God who has brought to completion what He begun. "Think of and pray for those who care for you." He also quoted Mark 10:27, "With man it is not possible, but with God everything is possible. Lastly, he quoted Jer. 29:11, "God has a plan for you..." Full of hope, drive your car where you want to reach. Where do you what to be?" he challenged them.



*The Director, JENA, Rev. Fr. Charles Chilufya, the Administration of ARU and the graduands pose for a memorial photo for the successful initiative offered to these young women to become self sustaining, Photo by ARU Reporter.*

While the Secretary General, ARU, Sr. Lydia Apili, thanked Director JENA, Fr. Charles Chilufya for responding to a short notice invitation. She thanked Madam Eunice and the team for collaborating in instructing the girls. She urged the girls to respond positively by diligently practicing what they have learnt. "I'm humbled by God's designs having come from this far." she concluded.

Sr. Specioza Kabahuma, the Assistant Secretary General-ARU expressed joy for the success the young ladies scored. "I'm all smiles because it is time to celebrate after the successful journey. Be today what you want to be tomorrow." She thanked the girls for surprising the

community for registering success after the winding path-journey. She appreciated Pearl Crest for offering mentorship; which is the most important aspect of the course.

Students' representative, Matilde Nanyondo, thanked the sponsors for bringing them this far. "We cannot thank you enough for educating and caring about us. We came blank but now filled to the brim.

This learning opportunity has transformed and mentored us. Disciple, respect and love for others will make us win in life and earn job opportunities for us." Matilde also begged pardon on behalf of fellow learners.



*Outstanding graduands who were awarded share a light moment with the Secretary General, ARU, Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor and Fr. Charles Chilufye shortly after graduation. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

**...Pg. 14**

The group expressed gratitude to their parents and instructors for all round opportunities they were accorded. They were particularly grateful for spiritual growth they acquired through Bible sharing, accompaniment and the holy Mass. The participants promised to share what they learnt and avoid disappointing care givers.



*Graduands in a joyful moment with Fr. Chilufye and Sr. Specioza Kabahuma about to cut the cake in congratulations for the successful completion of the different courses offered. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

Instructor Alice Ayakaka was particularly surprised by the group of learners; "...the girls have surprised me! They came shy and pretending not to speak English for the first two weeks and translators were availed but soon, they

opened up for free interaction. You are autonomous now, the ball is in your court. No one will supervise you, take up the responsibility now!" Alice challenged them. Incidentally, Alice is also a graduate of Pearl Crest!

In another development, this day, primary seven leavers, who undertook holiday program also received certificate awards in computer skills. The learners successfully completed their training after three months of study. The Guest of Honour, Fr. Charles and ARU Team facilitated the certificate award for the students: primary seven leavers and ARU students

who were recruited from various educational levels ranging from primary to Advanced Certificate levels, particularly school dropouts who could not proceed further with studies.

## Talitha Kum Uganda Network synergizes Religious Institutes to combat Trafficking in Persons



*Participants of Talitha Kum Uganda Network (TAKUN) training, pose for a memorial photo shortly after the successful completion of the workshop to synergize Religious institutions to combat Trafficking in person. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

*By ARU Reporter*

**T**alitha Kum Uganda Network (TAKUN) convened at Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) Secretariat, Nsambya on February 19-23, 2023. The goal was to train and integrate the new and old members of Talitha Kum Uganda; to strengthen their networks and build synergies of religious institutes to combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and modern slavery in Uganda.

*...Pg. 15*

“The main objective of the workshop is to prepare the Religious Institutes to participate in the processes of combating human trafficking from an informed perspective.” The TAKUN Coordinator, Uganda, Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, revealed.

In a background review, Sr. Lilly added that, Talitha Kum Network started when ARU sent four sisters to attend Talitha Kum conference in Nairobi Kenya in 2011, which prompted the sisters in Uganda to get involved in anti-trafficking activities immediately after the training. However, the networking process has prolonged to take root due to circumstances beyond control.

In 2016, a representative from Uganda attended the second International Coordination Committee of Talitha Kum in Rome and the following year, the International Coordinator of Talitha Kum Sr. Gabriella Bottani, CMS, visited Uganda and ARU to support the organization of the Network. In 2018, the religious sisters in Uganda were able to organize an inter-congregational group of religious sisters working on this issue and establish the bases for a Uganda Network.

Representatives from ARU also attended the first General Assembly of Talitha Kum international in Rome, 2019. The team came back with the hope of igniting the fire of Talitha Kum Uganda. However, due to a non-functional committee, it could not take off as expected. Another big blow to the growth of the network was the offset of COVID-19 pandemic, (2020-21).



*Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor addresses TAKUN members during the synergy meeting with Religious institutions at ARU Secretariat, Nsambya, Photo by ARU Reporter.*

The Secretary General, ARU, Sr. Lydia, in her opening remarks reminded the participants about network membership and the importance of staying connected. “With communication network in place, the task force for effective communication about charity works, health, anti-trafficking, care for the elderly and the like would ensure group sustainability and enable sharing of success stories and good practices.” She urged the religious communities to be proactive and open about discerning and combating human trafficking cases. Sr. Lydia further implored members to collaborate and attract more institutes to fight this evil.

The Leadership of TAKUN noted that, they would do the needful to uphold the network through strengthening the internal collaboration and networking of the sisters in the shared mission of the church. They would expand and strengthen external networking with organizations on key human development issues. And increase service delivery of the sisters in their respective ministries through teamwork and shared vision.

“This workshop is expected, among others, to forge a way forward. In addition, streamline the committee, activities and introduce the sisters of the Holy Cross as Fiscal Agents to propel TAKUN to another level.” The Coordinator noted.

TAKUN hopes to enhance continuous education to Families and Communities on the misuse of workforce and human trafficking, facilitate the generation of collective data that will demonstrate and highlight the collective impact of the sisters’ ministries. Empower survivors of human trafficking, promote awareness creation through the media and other platforms to combat human trafficking, amplify advocacy on critical elements of human development and share experiences and best practices with one another if the network is to flourish in its activities.



*Some of the survivors of trafficking in person share their experience to the participants, painting a picture of how it feels. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

The four-day workshop discussed various topics. Among others, it tackled the evil of Human Trafficking in Uganda, gave a platform for the Survivor's testimonies, success stories, challenges and plans of the original group Talitha Kum, with experiences of network collaborators, connectivity and network of Talitha Kum International, Regional and National expectations and plans of Uganda situation. Internal Human Trafficking, the case of Karamoja, participating Institutes also shared their experiences in terms of TIP, Research updates, and the role of the media in TIP and a presentation about TAKUN, building synergies were shared.

Thirteen Institutes of Consecrated Life attended the workshop, which culminated in selecting a new committee. These include; Talitha Kum Uganda Network Coordinator; Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC, Project Coordinator; Sr. Semerita Mbambu, CSC, Kampala Arch Diocese Coordinator; Br. Dominic Joseph Bwambale, BSCL, Tororo Arch Diocese Coordinator; Sr. Fernanda Christinelli, CMS, Gulu Arch Diocese Coordinator; Br. Rogers Mwanasa, M. Afr., Mbarara Arch Diocese Coordinator; Sr. Rose Mary Kemigisha, DST. And Ex Officio members would be coopted accordingly.

TAKUN looks forward to strengthen Talitha Kum Network of religious against human trafficking in Uganda. To enhance the capacity of at least 36 institutes out of 114 Religious Institutes in the four Ecclesiastical Provinces, to prevent, respond and provide after care services to victims and survivors of trafficking in persons.



*Facilitators animating Q & A during the TAKUN synergy meeting with Religious institutions at ARU Secretariat, Nsambya, Photo by ARU Reporter.*

The network would raise massive awareness at family, community, and district levels in the country about the dangers, challenges and effects of trafficking in persons. To carry out activities of rescue, treatment,

resettlement and legal interventions by the already active institutes in human trafficking mitigation. There is need to engage advocacy, communication and the use of technology to track cases of trafficking in persons.



*The Executive Secretary, Social Communication UEC, and Coordinator, UCTV, Rev. Fr. Philip Odii, facilitating on the role of the media in Human Trafficking as young people are seduced and trafficked through social media and other channels. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

**Check out UCTV on their Social Media Channels and please subscribe!**

# Commemorating International Day of Prayer and Awareness on Human Trafficking



*Courtesy picture of hands in chains, an act of trafficking in person and modern day slavery.*

*By ARU Reporter*

**T**he ninth International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Trafficking in Persons (TIP) is commemorated annually on February 8, the feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita. A universal symbol of the commitment of the Church against trafficking. This year, it was no different as a delegation of young people met in Rome.

The participants in the online pilgrimage dubbed **#PrayAgainstTrafficking** are the expression from over 50 countries on all continents and are all people of good-will; young and old, women and men, lay and religious people, survivors, and activists were united against trafficking.

Similarly, Talitha Kum Uganda Network (TAKUN) participated online in the international event by contributing videos and pro-

duction on prayer and advocacy song: ***Making the world a better place.*** Others participated through the shared link for the event. TAKUN - ARU and Collaborators went to Radio Maria for a three-hour program of prayer and talk show on prevention through awareness creation. The collaborators were John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre (JPJIPC) and Equal Opportunity Woman's Desk of Moroto Diocese.



*ARU and Collaborators for Radio Program on trafficking in persons at Radio Maria Uganda, with a survivor, Courtesy picture.*

This year's Prayer and Awareness Campaign rides on the theme, ***"Journeying in Dignity: all continents united in prayer,"*** chosen by an international group of young people involved in the campaign against trafficking in persons.

This anti-trafficking network of more than 6,000 sisters, is an initiative coordinated by Talitha Kum International. It is a friendly collaboration, promoted by the International Union of Superior Generals (UISG); in partnership with the Dicastery for Promoting the Integral Human Development and the Dicastery of Communication.

"The theme chosen this year, 'Journeying in dignity' is an invitation to all people of good-will to walk with the victims and survivors of human trafficking, and in particular the migrant populations, as pilgrims of human dignity and hope. Young people, adults, children as well as people of different religious traditions, cultures and generations are invited to collaborate in this common cause. "Together, as a community, we can put an end to this scourge. Safeguarding the dignity of every person is only possible if we know how to uphold peace and protect the environment." Sister Sr Abby Avelino, MM, Coordinator, said. The steps, journey, and the shared road between people who are committed to combating trafficking...

*...Pg. 18*

victims and survivors were at the heart of this day when many witnessed thousands of people around the world - in many parishes, communities, groups - come together, reflect, pray and send messages to the world against this global evil.

For the first time since its establishment, in 2015 at the request of Pope Francis, 15 young representatives of the partner organizations gathered in Rome from all continents for a week of meetings and training on trafficking in persons.

At the end of the week, the group (youth) were expected to launch a statement of commitment, which will start the process of preparation for the tenth anniversary of International Day of Prayer and Advocacy against Human Trafficking (IDPAAHT).

The week of gathering commenced on February 6, with an ecumenical vigil prayer in English and Italian at 7.15 p.m. in the Parish of Santa Lucia, in the Prati District of Rome, an area of the capital,

where three women in prostitution were brutally killed last November and the Catholic community joined the interfaith community.

*"For the first time since its establishment, in 2015; 15 young representatives of the partner organizations gathered in Rome"*

**"One Ugandan victim of human trafficking alone is one victim too many for us as Christians as humane people. We should have zero tolerance for this evil..."**  
**No. 20, Break the Yoke, A Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda on Human Trafficking.**

## SISTER LED YOUTH INITIATIVE UGANDA ON PHASE II



**ARU staff meeting with administrators of Bake for Life College -Tororo.**  
*Courtesy picture.*

### ARU Reporter

**H**aving successfully piloted the project of Sister Led Youth Initiative Uganda, SLYIU, with achievements made, challenges faced in addition to discoveries; a clear way with key note points for Phase II was paved. This

called for on-site visit by the national team to the Eastern Region where successful assessments were done.

The program that started in Northern Uganda in 2021, now rolls out to the Eastern Region that suffered different forms of instabilities

leading to numerous challenges in the lives of the people especially the youth.

The second phase of the initiative focuses on the newly added Dioceses in Tororo Ecclesiastical Province. The project will engage four training institutions in Kamuli and Tororo respectfully and two in Northern Uganda. This gives a total of two Ecclesiastical Provinces with Seven Dioceses capturing sixteen training institutions with 376 trainees enrolled and are already being trained.

"This is a great achievement made in the life cycle of the project. The implementation of the preliminary and the already planned activities in Phase II proposal have taken off effectively as seen in the pictures attached," said Project Coordinator, Sr. Caroline Bacia.

...Pg. 19

The coordinator is challenged by the overwhelming number of youths interested in the program. "This is a call to search for more financial agencies interested in funding youth empowerment programs so that Association of Religious in Uganda, ARU, can increase the number of youths for skills training and expand the program to other regions which are not yet reached," she added.

Sr. Caroline also said, the choice of trades is yet another challenge, where a program that targets the vulnerable needy, some caregivers misguide the trainees to take courses which were not their own interests and choices. Many got confused and started attending classes of their interest later on after being helped to be focused through career guidance.

The cost of training still remains a big challenge. The fees structures increased due to high cost of living and general economic crisis. This pushes the project to an awkward position. Thus, creating fear due to limited resources at hand.

However, according to Sr. Caroline, the experiences didn't pass without lessons learnt. The program is already well known in the operational regions. The number of youths interested to join is overwhelming and it is a challenge to ARU to think about it and act accordingly. Some Parish priests who sent youths for skills training are very appreciative of ARU staff and request to build rapport and meet ARU team to build and grow in collaboration. This comes in time when networking is key in the growth, development and sustainability of any given project, Sr. Caroline noted.

The approach of involving ARU Branch Coordinators in this program in the dioceses is effective. This is because the coordinators can take lead when the central staff are expected to be present in some activities. For instance, recently, in Adraa Agriculture College, where 11 trained in Sustainable Agriculture graduated, ARU Branch Coordinator of Nebbi Catholic Diocese represented the project coordinator at the function.

***"Human Trafficking constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights..." St. Pope John Paul II***



***The Bakery department, a training centre for beneficiaries, Courtesy picture.***

***"Priests, religious and laity should be trained...to acquire the competence needed to use the media for apostolate," Inter Mirifica, No. 15***



***Youth (a cripple) in the process of making dough - Tororo. Courtesy picture.***



***Sisters at Divine Mercy Vocational Training Centre, Nebbi, tailoring department. Courtesy picture.***



***A group photo in front of Benedictine Vocational and Production Centre Tororo. Courtesy picture.***

## HOME ADMINISTRATOR, ARU, COMPLETES HER TENURE



*Sr. Angela Nakitende (3rd from right), outgoing home administrator joined by Fr. Ambrose Bwangatto (left), Sr. Lydia Bwor, Sr. Euphrasia Masika and the support staff, ready to cut a farewell cake in honor, Photo by ARU Reporter.*

*By ARU Reporter*

**S**r. Angela Nakitende, SMR, is a former Home Administrator at Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), a position in which she has served for five years. “I thank the Lord who has helped me to serve ARU for a period of five years. It has been by the grace of God that I have been able to make my humble contribution to this Association.” Sr. Nakitende remarked during her handover ceremony.

Sr. Nakitende also extends her sincere heartfelt appreciation to Sr. Rita Nabukalu and Sr. Agnes who trusted and chose her to serve at the national level. “My special gratitude goes to the two respective administrative Secretary Generals namely; Sr. Margret Kubanze and Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, for their maternal support and guidance all these years. I continue

to appreciate you for mending my brokenness over the time, thank you very much dear Sisters.” She noted.

“ARU activities have given me an opportunity to serve and meet different categories of people and organizations both local and international. My trips up country in some remote areas have given me a chance to interact with several religious and the laity from various cultures. This has been a great blessing to me and to my vocation in general.”

she admits that the work has not been a walk over, but had its problems and challenges. She however, says it polished her character to be more understanding and acceptable to people of different characters and she realized that in most cases people are not difficult but just different.

*‘People are not difficult but just different’*

Sr. Angela expressed joy in some of the milestone achievements, “I am happy to have been part of re-modelling and construction of the Jubilee house in preparation for ARU Golden Jubilee. I was requested to carry out bulk purchases for the work, which was a sign of trust yet a challenge. Thank you, Lord, that I did my best to deliver at the right time.”

Conclusively, Sr. Angela appreciated the staffs for the collaborative service, “my renewed gratitude to the core administrative team, Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, Sr. Specioza Kabahuma, Sr. Josephine Kamau, Sr. Ester Nangibi, Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru and Sr. Elizabeth Kidega. It is said good friends never say good bye, they simply say see you soon. You have showed me patience, guidance and motivated me whenever my spirit went down. May God bless you abundantly, I will miss you.”



*Sr. Nakitende in the middle receiving a gift from ASEC Country Director, Sr. Germina Keneema, witnessed by Sr. Lydia Apili, Photo by ARU Reporter.*

...Pg. 21

"I thank the support staff with whom I have worked closely. To have you on our team made my work easier than it would have been. Thank you for keeping ARU a clean and welcoming place. To the kitchen staff I sincerely appreciate your assistance for taking care of my dietary needs wherever I was challenged with health issues. Our drivers what can I say, we have travelled long and short trips; I admire your commitment and prudence in your work. Keep it up. Gate men and guards; thank you for your noble work. Finally, I would like to apologize to any one I may have offended during our working together. Kindly forgive me. You will always remain in my sweet memories and prayers. May God bless you all." Sr. Angela confessed.

## Sr. Specioza Kabahuma Completes Her Tenure as Assistant Secretary General at ARU



*In the picture is Sr. Specioza Kabahuma, addressing her guests who came to bid her farewell after a handover ceremony as Assistant Secretary General, ARU. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

*By ARU Reporter*

**S**r. Specioza Kabahuma, DST, completed her tenure as Assistant Secretary General, Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), a position she has been serving for a stint of five years following expiration of her contract on February 1, 2023.

At a handover ceremony held in Holy Family Hall at ARU Secretariat, Sr. Grace Kyomugisha, OLGC, took over the mantle from Sr. Kabahuma as the Assistant Secretary General.

Sr. Specioza Kabahuma's service at ARU has registered tremendous success in line with her duty, which among others include; policies that help ARU do things right like preventing employee conflicts, complying with statutory obligations,

formalizing ARU staff, COVID 19 mitigation project, St. Bakhita Partnership for Education Network and the like.

She also registered a remarkable achievement in realizing the dream of Centre of Excellency in Research, Information Management and Program (CERIMP); a partnership between ARU and the University Of Kisubi (UNIK), ACWECA formation programme with Hilton N. Foundation, Fund-raising project proposals which were honored, to mention but a few.

As part of her duties and responsibility, Sr. Kabahuma managed to Keep ARU Branch coordinators well informed

...Pg. 22



*In shot is Sr. Nakitende, the outgoing home administrator, ARU.*



*From front is Sr. Betty, Sr. Angela, Sr. Lilly and Sr. Josephine, sharing a light moment together.*

about ARU programs and initiatives and following up their performance, hold annual meetings and planning with them. She collaborated with the administrative secretary to ensure effective and timely communications. Sr. Kabahuma has supported the Secretary General, Sr. Mary Lydia Apili Bwor, to enhance resource mobilization and



*Sr. Kabahuma with a beaming smile serves Sr. Lydia Bwor a cake during a handover party at ARU. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

grants management. They both collaborated with the finance office to mobilize financial resources for ARU various programs in line with strategic plan through proposal writing.

She also participated in monitoring and evaluation of ARU programs and operationalization (implementation tools and plans) of ARU strategic plan, policies and above all, humbly doing any work, in line with her position of Assistant Secretary General, and as assigned by Secretary General.

In an inspirational and touching farewell speech, Sr. Speciaoza Kabahuma thanked the Lord for the gift of life granted onto all of them.

"I wish to take this opportunity to humbly express my sincere gratitude to the president of the conference, Rev. Sr. Speranza Namusisi, IHMR, and the entire Executive committee for the support you have given me during my time of service at ARU.

Your guidance gave me direction and strength to do my work comfortably," Sr. Kabahuma exclaimed.

According to Sr. Kabahuma, she has no appropriate words to express how grateful she is to Sr. Mary Lydia Apili, LSMIG.

"Thank you for being the person you are; hardworking, loving, generous, wise, articulate, visionary, patient, diplomatic, prayerful and consecrated woman of God. Thank you so much for the cordial working relationship you accorded me this time I have served with you. Please keep it up." Sr. Kabahuma remarked. She also commended the Treasurer General,

"Thank you my Sisters for making ARU a loving and hospitable family." She said.

The out-going Assistant Secretary General thanked all the program staffs of CCCU, ASEC, AACSS, FoMRU, SLYIU, USFCN and CERIMP for their cordial working relationship with her.

She promised them her prayers that the Good Lord who knows well their hearts' desires may grant them in abundance.



*Friends and staff attending Mass as part of the farewell ceremony of Sr. Kabahuma at ARU Secretariat, Nsambya. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

Sr. Kabahuma commended the support staff for the warm and comfortable working relationship they enjoyed together. “You have been my friends and whenever we were together, I felt that you mean a lot in life at ARU. I thank you for the commitment and love you put into your services at ARU. If we are successful in all we do at ARU, you are part of that. I thank you,” She proclaimed.

### Special THANKS to the following;

In a special way, she thanked Sr. Carol Bacia, LSMIG, whom they closely coordinated the Sister Led Youth Initiative Uganda (SLYIU) for the hard work, cooperation and experience she brought in the work, which is making the programme to flourish smoothly. Similarly, she thanked Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMAC, with whom she coordinated Justice, Peace and integrity of creation as well as Anti-human trafficking work; together with the sisters of the Holy Cross. She could not forget the coordinators of ARU social ministries especially the Health practitioners Network and the Catholic Sisters Communicators’ Network, respectively.

“However, I am quite aware that in my line of duty, I made errors here and there. I might have stepped on your toes and angered you, hurt you or even wounded most of you. Sincerely, I ask for your forgiveness for those painful moments I may have created to torment you,” Sr. Kabahuma submitted in her sincere apologies.



*Consecrated Persons and support staff of ARU, pose for a memorial group photo as a family during the farewell ceremony of Sr. Kabahuma. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

She proceeded to thank her Superiors Rev. Maama Goretti Kabakaali Amoti, DST, with her council who assigned her to ARU with trust that she could do something for the people of God. She thanked her new Superior General, Rev. Mother Seraphine Kaite-sirwa Akiiki, DST, and her council for the tireless support received.

In her final remarks, Sr. Specioza Kabahuma confessed that ARU has been her home for the last five years and she is leaving ARU with profound treasured memories that will

continue to empower her in the new ministry she has been entrusted with.

“What we are doing now gives a bearing for the legacy of ARU now and in the future. The future of ARU is today not tomorrow. Let us do the best we can in our little ways,” Sr. Kabahuma said. She wound up her speech using the words of the venerable Catherine McAuley; “I have given all to God without reserve. I desire nothing but the accomplishment of His Will.” May His name be blessed forever, Amen.



*Sr. Specioza Kabahuma shares her joyous moment with the support staff at her farewell ceremony. Photo by ARU Reporter.*



*The Secretary General, ARU, Sr. Lydia Apili addressing guests and appreciating the great work done by Sr. Kabahuma during her tenure at ARU. Photo by ARU Reporter.*

# Catholic Sisters Respond to the cry of the poor



*Catholic Sisters in a meeting with the refugees at Imvepi and Omugo settlement camps - Arua Diocese, in response to the cry of the poor*

*Courtesy picture.*

*By Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, MSMMC*

**I**n response to the mission of Christ and listening to the cry of the poor, abandoned and vulnerable persons (the second goal of Laudato Si), many sisters are reaching out to the needy through their various apostolates. ARU's Prophetic Witness caught up with Sr. Rosemary Limio, a member of Daughters of Merciful Love of Jesus and Mary Queen of Apostles (DMLJMQA) and Sr. Catherine Amunu, a member of the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu (LSMIG). In **Qn** and **Ans** with Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru. You are welcome to have a glance at the outcome.

**Qn.** *Welcome Sister, can you please introduce yourself to the reader?*

**Ans.** I'm Sr. Rosemary Limio, DMLJMQA, a Formator and Social

Worker. I use Child Safe Guarding Policy as one of the tools for formation in the Novitiate and apostolate among the refugees.

**Qn.** *What are your areas of apostolate as an institute?*

**Ans.** We take care of the poor, visit and care for the vulnerable especially the aged. The vulnerable include; the destitute, homeless and refugees. We do youth apostolate especially in the area of counseling and guidance. We also teach them some skills for self-reliance like tailoring and agriculture. We teach Catechism, carry out family apostolate and passionately reach out to the refugees who need our attention. I have the advantage of speaking Arabic, so I have no language barrier. Currently, I'm nursing Catechist Peter Lado, one of the key Pastoral Agents in the Refugee Resettlement Camp.

**Qn.** *What impact have you created among the refugees?*

**Ans.** We have been able to unite some of families that were in conflict. Sisters also lead prayer service and this has strengthened the small Christian communities. And consequently created sense of identity for those who suffer identity crisis. Refugees freely identify with us and the sense of belonging and relationship is important in life. We have bridged the gap of language barrier and assist in translations... There is a growing improvement of good relations among the different tribes. Self-reliance has been created through petty trade, hand craft and soap making. Some of them were lucky to find sponsorship with some NGOs who have sent them to technical school to strengthen self-reliance.

**Qn.** *What are some of the challenges you face in this apostolate among refugees?*

**Ans.** We face the challenge of transportation. With the current fuel crisis, transport fare has risen and sometimes we find it hard to take care of transportation to the settlement. As a social worker, I find it hard to handle the challenge of land wrangle. Today poverty has ravaged the camps because refugees receive UGX 10,000 (USD 3.00) per month. They are encouraged to get land and settle among the host community. You find a property/land owner,

selling and re-selling the same plot to several people and land conflict is prevailing in the community. The Office of the Prime Minister is helping us to handle this situation.

**I**n the same vein, Sr. Catherine Amunu, LSMIG, now serving as Youth Animator, Aliwang Parish, Lira Diocese shares her experience with the Prophetic Witness;

**Qn. Thank you Sister, would you like to share with us who you are?**

**Ans.** Yes please. I am Sr. Catherine Amunu, LSMIG, a retired teacher and a professional Counsellor. I once served in the Congregational Leadership. Now my passion is pastoral work. My concern and passion is for the youth who need our guidance and direction.

**Qn. How do you go about your pastoral work?**

**Ans.** As a counsellor, I love sharing my knowledge and skills with the needy and thereafter, pray together for more discernment.

**Qn. Where was your previous apostolate before you came to Lira Diocese?**

**Ans.** I was serving at Palabek refugee settlement Camp. We strived to establish Small Christian Communities. Due to the challenge of tribalism among the refugees, we had to settle them according to their tribes, age and special need groups. The dominant tribes were the Acholi, Lotugo and Dinka. We introduced the seven steps of sharing the Word of God.

**Qn. How would you evaluate the efforts you made to promote prayer in the camps?**

**Ans.** Most of the people were overwhelmed by the problems and challenges they go through. A few were able to share and relate their life experiences and actual life issues to prayer. While others would rather close up due to hyper-stigma and stress they go through. I'm hopeful that they will pick up with time.

Sometimes you would come across expressions like; "Today God has come to my house! For about 30 years I have been down with sickness, old and weak. No one has visited me with the Word of God!" And tears would drop with such expressions. One is motivated to continue with the apostolic outreach. Others shared wonderful testimonies like breakthroughs and wonderful works of God back home in South Sudan.

**Qn. What are some of the challenges you faced in the Settlement Camps?**

**Ans.** The need for pastoral care is immense. Some pastoral agents had primary duties. As so become overwhelmed. The refugees are wounded and need healing. Some have lost homes, property and natural family ties. They need hope assurance.

**Qn. What is your last word to the reader?**

**Ans.** I appeal to the pastoral agents, lay, consecrated persons and the clergy to intervene through various programs in the camps. The refugees and even the host community are hungry for the Word of God. If possible, let some dedicated time be given to address the need. Other mushrooming sects are snatching some flocks!

**Thank you, Sisters, for your time with The Prophetic Witness. Let us take the challenge.**



**Catholic Sisters sharing the Word of God with some of the refugees, Courtesy picture.**

## A PICTORIAL OF MAJOR EVENTS



*Consecrated Day at Rubaga Cathedral*



*Participants USFCN Visit to ARU*



*Talitha Kum Uganda Network (TAKUN)*



*Catholic Sisters Skill up needy Young Women*



*Family and marriage institutions training*



*Network & collaborators synergize with ARU Branch Coordinators*



*Sr. Specioza Kabahuma's Farewell Party*



*Sr. Angela Nakitende's Farewell Party*

*Blessed Triduum and Joy-filled Easter 2023!*