



The Prophetic Witness

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Editorial >>>



*Immaculate Tusingwire, MMS
ARU Communication Manager*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ, In the past few months since our last issue, a lot has happened especially transitions. We are reflecting on the movement of the Spirit in the life of our Association. The pages below are not just updates—they are stories of grace, faith, gratitude and the enduring call to continue walking together in the spirit of synodality.

In this issue, we capture moments of heartfelt transition: Celebrating the late Pope Francis and welcoming Pope Leo XVI, bidding farewell to the Apostolic Nuncio, whose presence among us was a sign of communion with the universal Church; the handover of the Secretary General's office and the

Assistant Secretary General. A moment both of gratitude for past leadership and hope for new beginnings.

We thank you for your continued support to ARU communication department. This issue has diverse contributors and I am so grateful to each one of them.

We also thank the ARU Radio Maria team that sustains 'THE BE-ATTITUDES', an ARU Radio Maria program which airs every Saturday at 5pm. We hope you always listen in. We have a slot for Vocation Animation of different congregations. Reach out to us if you wish to share about your congregation.

As ARU Communication team, we continue to collate and share these stories with reverence. For in each narrative lies the quiet pulse of our shared mission—the Gospel made visible in our diverse charisms and ministries.

I also truly thank the editorial Team; Mr. Benedict Mukoni, ARU communication officer and Sr. Justine Nalugya, IHMR, ARU Assistant Secretary General who are committed to bringing these stories to you.

May this edition encourage deeper communion, ignite reflection, renew our hope, and invite each of us to recognize the sacredness in our daily journeys as 'Pilgrims of Hope on the Way to Peace.

We remain united in mission and prayer.

The Beatitude Hour

With the Association of Religious
in Uganda (ARU)

Now Airing Every Saturday
Live on 103.7 FM, Radio Maria Kampala

5:00PM - 6:00PM E.A.T

ARU bids farewell to the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda



His Excellency Luigi Bianco, handing an official letter to Rev. Fr. John Bosco Kamoga C.S.Sp. from the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

Immaculate Tusingwire, MMS

The Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), thanked and bid farewell to His Excellency Luigi Bianco, the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda during the official opening of the General Assembly on 5th June 2025.

The Nuncio was visiting ARU during their General Assembly which he has done twice every year during his term of service in Uganda. As he always did, he opened the Assembly with a Eucharistic celebration, co-celebrating with the bishop liaison for Religious in Uganda, Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Obbo-AJ Archbishop of Tororo Archdiocese.

The Assembly begun on 5th June to 8th June 2025 under the Jubilee Year theme for the Religious, **“PILGRIMS OF HOPE ON THE WAY TO PEACE”**

His Grace Luigi Bianco thanked the Major Superiors for the good collaboration he has had with them especially the people he has closely worked with including the Former President of ARU, Sr. Speranza Namusisi IHMR and the out-going Secretary General Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, LSMIG. He congratulated the new president of ARU, Rev. Fr. John Bosco Kamoga C.S.Sp and handed over to him an official letter of confirmation and instructions from the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (Dicasterium pro Institutis Vitae Consecratae et Societatibus Vitae Apostolicae).

Fr. Kamoga ceremoniously received the letter and in turn thanked the Nuncio for his availability and love for the association during his apostolic mission in Uganda and wished

him the best in his new mission. Additionally, Fr. Kamoga thanked the out-going Secretary General for her dedicated service to the conference and introduced the New Secretary General and the new Assistant Secretary General to the Nuncio and to the Superior Generals present. He appealed to the members to continue focusing on the social injustices that affect the people as we were invited to do at the beginning of the Jubilee year. He concluded his address by praying for the congregations who are preparing for their general chapters which among others include Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix Gogonya and Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu.

As a symbol of their appreciation, the Assembly gave the Nuncio a souvenir of a glass plaque designed with a group photo of the major superiors taken with the Nuncio.

Bishop Obbo's words to the Nuncio and the conference were those of gratitude and caution. He thanked Nuncio for being his friend and a friend of ARU. To the members of the Association, he said, “thank you for all that you do to wake us up”. He recommended embracing technology for evangelization at the same time, cautioning them not to allow to become slaves of technology.

H.E Bianco has served in Uganda since 2019 and his new assignment is in Luvenia which he officially began on 20th June 2025.

Passing on the Mantle to the New ARU Secretary General



The New Secretary General Sr. Jane receiving the Handover Report from Sr. Lydia



The team that witnesses the handover ceremony. It Included the executive committee, ARU Administrative staff and a few other invited guests

Immaculate Tusingwire, MMS

For the past good six years, Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, LSMIG, has faithfully served the Association in the position of Secretary General. She accomplished her term of service on 21st June 2025 during the handover to the New Secretary General Sr. Jane Yatuha, OLGC.

Looking at her face during the handover, she radiated fulfilment, joy and peace as if she was quietly singing the 'Nunc Dimittis'.

Sr. Lydia opened the handover event with prayer and gratitude to God for his faithfulness, love, mercy and grace which sustained her during the term of service since 2019. She extended gratitude to her congregation for the trust they put in her, to the previous and current executive committees, the three former presidents and the current, the Assistant Secretaries General with whom she worked and the support of all the program coordinators and support staff.

Present during the handover were ARU President Fr. Kamoga John Bosco C.S.Sp, members of the Executive Committee, two superior generals of the out-going and in-coming Secretaries General, Administrative team and other few members who were present to witness the handover.

Fr. Kamoga applauded Sr. Lydia for her spirit of Sacrifice especially the fact that when she was asked to take on this role, she was in the middle of her studies which she had to leave unfinished and come. He further thanked Sr. Lydia for adding a human heart to the Association, for she did not only work but made ARU a home.

Sr. Jane graciously received the handover report and other small items which Sr. Lydia handed over to her. She shared that at first, she had fears reflecting on the immense responsibility that lay ahead but she was consoled by realizing she is not alone in realizing the tasks ahead.

"This Hand-over is not only to me, but also to the members of the conference especially the administrative staff and that consoles me," she said.

Everyone presents truly expressed their gratitude to Sr. Lydia's contribution to the conference and wished her well in her next assignment.

Sr. Jane has served as the Assistant Secretary General for the past one year and she too officially handed over to the new Assistant Secretary General Sr. Justine Naluggya, IHMR.

To the new Secretary General and the new Assistant Secretary General, as a food for the journey, Fr. Kamoga invited them to get accustomed to the systems and traditions of the conference and keep them working without becoming slaves to them. He reminded them that they are not competitors but collaborators in the ministry, thus calling upon them to work together for the good of the conference.

Message from the New Secretary General of ARU



*Sr. Jane Yatuha, OLC
ARU Secretary General*

Dear Members of the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), and all Esteemed Readers of the ARU Newsletter, 'The Prophetic Witness',

It gives me great joy to share with you this maiden message, filled with warm greetings and heartfelt prayers for peace and blessings upon you all. I warmly welcome you to my space as the new Secretary General of ARU and thank you for the support you have offered to the ARU leadership and management team over the years.

I use this same opportunity to thank all those who have played a role in shaping ARU into its present status.

The line of successes and milestones that ARU has registered since its inception are attributed to the selfless service, ingenuity, hard work, commendable governance and leadership ethic of the persons who have been in position of responsibility in the ARU governance structure. The history of ARU will always demand of the subsequent generations of religious men and women in Uganda to hold in respect and perpetuity the contributions of these great women and men of God.

I welcome and applaud all ARU partners, collaborators, friends and well-wishers, whose support has made ARU what it is today. I look forward to upholding the existing relationships and to receiving new ones for the cause of ARU and the Glory of God.

I commend the ARU Governing body, currently headed by Fr. John Bosco Kamoga, for upholding and strengthening the management systems to ensure that ARU remains aligned with the purpose for which it was founded. I credit their mode

of governance which supports effective management at the secretariat level.

I also wish to express my deep appreciation to my immediate predecessor, Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, LSMIG, for her remarkable leadership and service during her term of office, that earned immense credit and left a lasting impact on ARU

I congratulate her for the successful completion of her tenure and recognize the visible achievements she registered for ARU. Her input added a significant part onto what her predecessors put in place and challenge us to keep the pace.

As we work and walk together on this pilgrimage, may the grace of God accompany and enable us to be the witnesses we are called to be. I end by echoing the words of Pope Leo IV: "God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail!" Indeed, may God's love accompany us all as we walk this pilgrimage of hope loving and encouraging each other.

God bless you all

Sr. Jane Yatuha (PhD) is a member in the Institute of the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel of Mbarara in Uganda (OLGC). She is a professional teacher and has worked with Mbarara University of Science and technology as an instructor and researcher in the field Biological Sciences since 2005. Sr. Jane is passionate about the integral development of a human person in their different vulnerabilities. She loves to interact with nature and advocates for biodiversity conservation. Jane treasures sharing her spiritual, intellectual and experiential resourcefulness with groups of people aimed at improved quality of life for all.

Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor Reflects on a Six Year Journey of Service at ARU



*Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, LSMIG
ARU former Secretary General*

ARU Communication Office was pleased to reach out to Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, LSMIG, to share her story and journey as the Secretary General of ARU for the last Six Years. Below is the question and answer with Sr. Lydia.

For those who have not had a chance to know you, who is Sr. Lydia?

Sr. Lydia Apili Bwor, LSMIG, is a member of the Institute of the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu and a teacher by profession.

What are you most grateful for as you complete your Six Year term at ARU?

I am most grateful to God for His Faithfulness, Love, Mercy, and Kindness and the Valuable support

from many people I served as the Secretary General of the Association of the Religious in Uganda - ARU. I am grateful to the leadership of my Religious Institute—the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu—for entrusting me with the opportunity to serve ARU.

What has been your greatest source of inspiration during your term?

The positive attitude towards my responsibility as Secretary General was a source of inspiration and stability for me. Every day I had new experiences to appreciate and learn from in many ways.

The cross-functional collaboration, efforts and the input of so many people led to the achievements ARU registered and a strong, supportive team made all the difference during my leadership at ARU.

I also drew inspiration from the willingness and shared knowledge, the extra efforts and the commitment from many partners and key stakeholders.

The opportunity to connect, learn more and network with many organizations was a big strength for me, which helped me to grow in many ways as a leader. I thank the Board of Trustees, the Executives and the staff for their hard work and dedication.

Looking back at the past six years, what moments stand out most to you?

The remarkable growth and many success stories and achievements ARU has made over the last six years. I always cherished and attributed the achievements to the staff and the partners who are the heart and core of every organization, and play a critical role in its growth, productivity and development. Without the hard work, collaboration, and dedication from the staff, any organization would cease to survive.

Time is one of the most valuable resources anyone can give. I wholeheartedly recognize and respect everyone who dedicated time to support, collaborate, or assist in whatever ways. Whether they offered guidance, a mentor who shared their expertise, or a team member who stayed late to help.

What do you see as your biggest achievement as a Secretary General?

The biggest achievement for me has been the power of collaboration and networking with so many partners, both national and international and with other key stakeholders as well.

How has the Association grown or changed during your leadership?

Together with different collaborators, teamwork and shared intelligence, we championed ARU to another level of Institutional Visibility through many programs between ARU and other organizations.

What do you feel has been your most meaningful contribution to ARU?

I was always present and available to carry out and support the ministries of ARU, and I had to let go of other ministries which were so dear to me in order to give quality time to serve ARU.

What initiatives or programs launched during your term do you hope will continue long into the future?

All the initiatives launched when I was Secretary General will continue because they were meant to support the people of God through ARU.

How can ARU deepen its contribution to the implementation of Laudato Si', Synodality and Justice and Peace?

Through advocacy and lobbying in collaboration with other like-minded partners and by sustaining the ongoing awareness creation in communities and institutions.

Where do you see ARU in the next 10 years?

I would love to see ARU more visible, reaching out to areas such as

family ministries, participating in policymaking or development, and its implementation.

What message would you like to leave with the members of ARU and the wider Church in Uganda?

I would like to encourage all the consecrated persons and the members of ARU to be prophetic signs in the building of the kingdom of God. Train servant leaders for the Church and the Nation. Train Formators and improve the Initial

Formation for the Formees and the Seminarians.

As children of God, let us be present, available and support each other in the mission of Christ as Pilgrims of Hope.

What is your prayer and message to the New Secretary General of ARU?

I warmly welcome the New Secretary General and pray for her to take ARU to another level with the support of God and other key stakeholders.



During the Handover Ceremony, in-coming and out-going Secretaries General together with their Superiors General



Being at the Service of Consecrated Life as a Synodal Witness of Hope and Communion



*Sr. Justine Naluggya, IHMR -
ARU Assi. Secretary General*

ARU New Assistant Secretary General

and celebration of the Jubilee year of Hope. This demands from us a spirit of service rooted in the theological - ecclesial understanding of religious life as a sign of communion and prophetic hope. This is the vision of our call to service animated by a commitment to discipleship and prophetic synodal witness defined by kenosis, the self-giving love modelled by Christ (cf. Phil 2:6-11).

I am humbled with deep humility to be called at the service of Consecrated life in Uganda under the conference of the Association of Religious in Uganda. I am certainly confident that the God who has called me for this mission, will sustain me for his grace is sufficient (2Cor.12:9)! It is not me, but Him in me, I am just his instrument of love and service to his people.

Together with the New Secretary General, we trust in the Divine Accompaniment and the unwavering support and collaboration of the administrative and governance bodies of ARU with all our collaborators and partners. This appointment comes at a time of renewed reflection on the identity and mission of consecrated life in the Church focusing on the implementation phase of synodality

Being at the service of consecrated life as a synodal witness to hope and communion responds to the call of Pope John Paul for the religious to be builders of communion and architects of peace, not only in their communities but in the wider Church and society (VC, 46). In this particular moment when I am embracing the new leadership role of service, my heart leans into an invitation directed to all religious to embark on the synodal journey as pilgrims of hope on the way to peace.

Pope's invitation rejuvenates my passion to concerns of religious life and commitment to fostering a synodal spirit in the ministry, encouraging processes of listening, dialogue, and discernment across the spectrum of religious.

I am privileged to work with the Association of the Religious in Uganda (ARU) which to me is a vibrant locus where inter-congregational collaboration and intercultural encounter converge, fostering a communion that is both celebrated and deepened through shared charisms and mission.

This synodal approach mirrors the ecclesiological vision of Fratelli Tutti, which calls for a culture of encounter and solidarity (FT, 30-36) seeking to build bridges of trust and mutual cooperation in the mission of Church. This is all possible by the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for when we are weak then we are strong! (2 Cor. 12: 10).

Sr. Justine Naluggya (PhD) is a Canon Lawyer with expertise in Consecrated Life, she is deeply committed to collaborative pastoral ministries, transformative engagement with young people, promotion of justice and women empowerment mostly religious. She actively fosters networking and motivates emerging young leaders in the Church.

HABEMUS PAPAM – Pope Leo XIV:

What to Expect from the New Pontiff



*By Fr. Fred Tusingire, UEC
National Director - Lay Apostolate*

On 8th May 2025 at around 6.07 pm, the white smoke was seen above the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. Amidst shouts of joy and expectant waiting, the words of the traditional formula “Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum Habemus Papam” followed, pronounced from the central balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica overlooking St. Peter’s Square.

The names of the new pope were announced as Robert Francis Prevost followed by his chosen name Leo XIV which was chosen for his office as Bishop of Rome and Pontiff of the Universal Church. Until then, he was not one of those focused on by the media as the most favorable candidate for the papacy.

In accordance with tradition, the fisherman’s ring of Pope Francis

had been destroyed by the Cardinal Camerlengo marking the official end of Francis’ papacy. Pope Leo XIV, thus became the pope of the Catholic Church and the first one from North America.

One of the questions we may all be interested in is, ‘what awaits Pope Leo now and what are the indicators from his life about what we might expect under his papacy’?

It is important to understand that the pope is a spiritual leader, a universal shepherd and as such his work is to be seen in line with the guidance of the universal church in matters of faith and morals. Like any shepherd, he is expected, among other things, to lead the Church, with the help of the various tools at his disposal including scripture, tradition and other instruments of the Church hierarchy, and help the church to remain faithful to her faith and mission.

In recent days, some people have been heard saying that a certain Pope wore old shoes and did not stay in the official residence, therefore, he should be declared a saint. While all this might be true and good indicators of what one stood for, I am not sure that the greatness of the pope is based solely on that. Certainly, the gauge of the effectiveness of a pope, let alone his sainthood must go beyond this.

I believe that what would be more important should include virtues

such as humility, faith, love and the spirit of sacrifice. Basically, this should be guided by how one has been faithful to his vocation, first as a Christian, then as a priest and bishop and later on how he has been dedicated to guiding the church and her members to the true faith handed down by Christ.

The conclave that convened this year guided by the Holy Spirit seems to have given us a pope well prepared for our times. With the Augustinian spirituality under the patronage of the African Saint Augustine, he has a sure foundation to count on. His earlier responsibilities are certainly a good help for his new mission.

The Church is missionary by nature, and it exists to evangelize. His life as a missionary in Peru will come in handy as he guides the Church in that essential aspect of the Church. His experience as superior of the Augustinian Order for two terms will help him in cultivating a broad view of the Church he now presides over. His choice of the name Leo XIV seems to say something about where he could be headed in leading the Church of Christ. Following in the footsteps of his immediate successor in that name, Pope Leo XIII, he might be intentional in taking some of his examples. Pope Leo XIII is the pope who fought against injustices and promoted true dignity of persons. Besides writing a lot about Mary.

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and the Holy Rosary, he also wrote on important topics relevant to us today. Some of his teachings could be seen in the encyclicals he wrote: *Inscrutabili Dei Consilio* (On the Evils of Society 21.4.1878), *Arcanum Divinae* (on Christian Marriage 10.2.1880), and *Inter Graves* on the Church in Peru (1/5/1894). In all he wrote over 80 encyclicals. But one of his most popular encyclical is *Rerum Novarum* (on Capital and Labor 15.5.1891) in which he spoke strongly about the rights of workers and against injustices in favor of human dignity. Many of the major issues addressed by Leo XIII are still relevant today. He was also a pope who promoted the missionary work. No wonder that it was under his reign that the first Catholic missionaries were sent to Uganda – the White Fathers in 1879.

Pope Leo XIV, following in the footsteps of Pope Francis, right at the initial stage of implementing the Synod on Synodality, he is on good grounds. Let us pray for our pope, Leo XIV to lead us with courage and fidelity to Christ and his teaching. Let us listen to him and walk with him under his guidance. Let us be good followers of what he stands for and what he teaches as the successor of St. Peter.



Pope Leo XIV

Sr. Caroline - A Pilgrim of Hope on the way to Namugongo



Sr. Caroline Pifwa, a Little Sister of Mary Immaculate of Gulu

*By Immaculate Tusingwire MMS
and Benedict Mukoni*

Thousands of devoted Catholic pilgrims from Uganda, Africa and beyond embark on a journey to Namugongo every year, braving heat, rain, and rough terrain to Commemorate the Feast of the Uganda Martyrs' Day on June 03, 2025. Some pilgrims walk for over a week, demonstrating their determination and devotion.

At the age of 75, Sr. Caroline Pifwa, a Little Sister of Mary Immaculate of Gulu (LSMIG), started her journey on foot to Namugongo with 200 other pilgrims from Nebbi on 15th of May and arrived on 27th May.

Braving the journey of 460 kilometers, her intentions were clear: To thank God for the Jubilee Year of Hope; to pray for all humanity, for the New Pope, for the New Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Nebbi;

to thank God for the 50 years in religious life and praying for the success of their forthcoming General Chapter. Even though Sr. Caroline had these as her major intentions, she intended also to pray for her family especially her brother who is a priest and for all those who have asked for her prayers.

Sharing her experience on arrival, Sr. Caroline said, *'I have been healed spiritually through the Uganda Martyrs, and I have been asking them to intercede for me, I know that going forward, even after my Golden Jubilee, God will help me'*.

A true definition of a pilgrim of hope, one could not tell that the 75-year-old sister had just completed a journey of 460 kilometers, she shared that she felt so light and so happy for having taken this journey which she described as healing and renewing.

With radiating joy, peace and gratitude, she told me about her set mate, Sr. Mary Rufina Aling, LSMIG, aged 75 and is similarly celebrating her Golden Jubilee this Year. Sr. Mary had walked from Gulu which is roughly 330 kilometers. Her prayer was of thanksgiving for the 50 years of her religious life and for the gift of her parents who are both still alive and in good health. Like her mate, she was praying that their coming General Chapter will be fruitful.

The Uganda Martyrs' Day Commemoration is held annually on June 03, led by a different diocese every year. The 2025 Martyrs' Day commemoration was led by Lugazi Diocese who triumphantly arrived at the Namugongo Martyrs' Shrine on June 1, 2025, filling the atmosphere with songs of praise and worship ahead of the grand commemoration.



Sr. Caroline Pifwa, LSMIG and Sr. Mary Rufina Aling, LSMIG

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Bishop Christopher of Lugazi Diocese Presiding over the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Under the theme: “Oh Lord, let me see again, I, your pilgrim of Hope,” the commemoration commenced with a procession of bishops and priests, to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which was led by Bishop Christopher Kakooza of Lugazi Diocese in commemoration of the courage that Uganda Martyrs had in their faith. It was inclusive in nature that the first reading was taken by a blind person.

In his homily, Bishop Kakooza told pilgrims that a pilgrimage of hope is an eternal spiritual journey that unfolds in daily life through prayer and acts of charity. All pilgrims participate in this spiritual journey in communion with God and others, he added.

“Though full of challenges, the pilgrimage of hope is a journey of resilience, moments of doubt and suffering but hope enables us to persevere. Hope reminds us that our struggles are temporary. The holy martyrs of Uganda were inspired to understand this and were ready to suffer in hope of what was to come.” Bishop Kakooza comforted the pilgrims.

The Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese, His Grace Paul Ssemogerere Congratulated Lugazi Diocese under the reign of Bishop Kakooza saying “You have offered us not just a celebration, but a deeply moving spiritual encounter. We thank you for shepherding this mission with clarity, grace, and zeal.”

According to His Grace Ssemogerere, pilgrims are not only merely remembering history, but they are reawakening a national conscience and renewing a flame of hope, that no darkness can extinguish.

He appealed to the pilgrims to pray through the Martyrs for clarity in a time when the world tempts and compromise them.

He also urged the congregation to avoid tribalism and sectarianism politics because unity in Christ is stronger than any ethnic bond.

“We are all one in Christ Jesus, as we read in Galatians 3. Let us reject hatred, reject division and violence. Let us say no to bad language. Let our only label be, we are all children of God.” His grace noted.

The out-going Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, H.E. Luigi Bianco, was grateful for his service as the apostolic nuncio in Uganda. He expressed gratitude to all the people of Uganda for being hospitable and collaborative during his mission in Uganda.



Remembering St. Francis of Assisi and His Influence on Society in these Modern Times



**Kirigwajjo Nicholas Kugonza,
OFS**

In a world weary of division, greed, and environmental crisis, the quiet voice of a 13th-century saint still speaks with power and clarity. St. Francis of Assisi, affectionately called the poverello—“the little poor man”—lived a life of radical simplicity, love for all creation, and deep spiritual joy. Though born into wealth and privilege, he chose poverty and humility, walking barefoot among lepers, preaching to birds, and rebuilding the Church, both literally and spiritually. More than eight centuries later, St. Francis remains a relevant and radiant witness for our modern age.

A Saint for the 21st Century

"Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our Mother, who sustains and governs us."

*"All the darkness in the world cannot
extinguish the light of a single candle."*

St. Francis of Assisi

Those are words of St. Francis extracted from his Canticum of Creatures which is 800 years this year. Francis' love for nature was not merely poetic, but it was prophetic. He saw all of creation as a family, united in praise of the Creator. This vision is echoed in Laudato Si', Pope Francis' encyclical on care for our common home, which draws heavily from the spirituality of the saint from Assisi.

In a time of ecological destruction, St. Francis urges us to live in harmony with creation, to tread lightly, and to honor the Earth not as a resource, but as a sacred gift. St. Francis taught us that we are not masters

as we understand it, but siblings with creation.

**Simplicity in a Complicated World
and a Messenger of Peace**

*"For it is in giving that we
receive."*

Francis lived without possessions so that he could be rich in spirit. In today's consumer culture, his embrace of poverty stands as a counter-cultural challenge: to live with less, to find freedom in simplicity, and to remember that our worth is not in what we own, but in how we love.

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"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace."

St. Francis was a peacemaker in an age of violence. During the crusades, he crossed battle lines to meet the Muslim Sultan Malik al-Kamil—not to fight, but to speak, listen, and share peace. In our polarized world, where conflict often replaces dialogue, his example offers a powerful model of courage, humility, and bridge-building.

A Heart for the Poor and Outcast

"What you are before God, that you are and nothing more."

Francis saw Christ in the faces of the poor, the sick, and the rejected. He embraced lepers, served the destitute, and insisted that love for the least of these was central to the Gospel. His life reminds us that our faith is not abstract, it is lived by how we treat the most vulnerable.

His Legacy Lives On

"Francis of Assisi... shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace."

Today, people of all backgrounds—religious and secular alike—find inspiration in Francis' message. He speaks to our longings for peace, purpose, and simplicity. He reminds us that holiness can be found in humility, and joy in self-giving love.

We thank Pope Francis as we commemorate him, for bringing St. Francis and his canticle of Creatures to life in the church at the time we most needed to hear it. Like St. Francis, Pope Francis lived his Papacy reminding us of importance of compassion, solidarity and action for the poor. He often called for a world that prioritizes the marginalized and treats those who have nothing with dignity.

How we can live the Message of St. Francis re-echoed by Pope Francis

"Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

St. Francis of Assisi does not call us to escape the world but to transform it—by how we live, how we give, and how we love. His example is not about becoming perfect but becoming present: present to God, to others, and to creation.

As we face the challenges of our time, may St. Francis, the Little Poverello guide us with his gentle wisdom, and help us become instruments of peace in a world that sorely needs it.



The President and the Secretary General of ARU together with the facilitators and Novices, planting a tree during the official opening of the Novices' one month program



**PEACE
WITH CREATION**
SEASON OF CREATION 2025

FoMRU Launches a Campaign to Strengthen Formation for Pastoral Agents



Sr. Romina B. Nyemera, OLGC giving a keynote address

Immaculate Tusingwire, MMS

In a bid to improve formation of religious men and women in Uganda, the Formation Ministry of the Religious in Uganda (FoMRU) launched a campaign to strengthen Formation for Pastoral Agents.

The event took place during the General Assembly of the Association of Religious in Uganda graced by Rt. Rev. Serverus Jjumba, Bishop of Masaka Diocese, Msgr. Charles Kasibante, Fr. Kamoga John Bosco, the president of ARU, together with the major superiors who were attending the assembly and other invited guests especially those in the field of Formation.

According to Sr. Mary Pauling Namuddu, Coordinator FoMRU, the main purpose for the Campaign is to sensitize all stakeholders in the Catholic Church within Uganda regarding the continuity and strengthening of Consecrated amidst the

challenging trends of the 21st Century. This points to the urgent need to focus on improved quality formation of pastoral agents.

Sr. Romina B. Nyemera, OLGC in her Keynote address narrated the journey of FoMRU and appreciated ARU, the staff of FoMRU and Porticus, for sponsoring the program over the years. Sr. Romina emphasized the importance and urgency of renewing our formation programmes and the formation of formators, given that formation is a determinant factor for the continuity of religious institutes.

In his address, Bishop Serverus thanked Loyola Center for Media and Communications for partnering with FoMRU to produce a video that elaborates more on the purpose of the launched campaign. He stated the need to have formators who can pay attention to the pillars of formation and formators who are ready to

be formed by those they are forming.

Sr. Pauline further elaborates that the dissemination campaign is meant to take at least five months of intensive continued sensitization of all people in the Church and in society using the different communication media centers and social media to reach a wide range of population.

“As an office, we plan to carry out the dissemination activities within the four (4) Ecclesiastical Provinces so as to reach the different parts of the country. If we get funding, we may reach out to Institutions of learning to share with them some information of youth formation into good citizens and possible evangelizers”

ForMRU invites the consecrated persons to participate in the dissemination campaigns by taking part in the planned activities, sharing their lived formation and community experiences as agents of evangelization.

Unlike other campaigns we know, this one is not to last for a given period, it is expected to continue at different levels in the individual Institutes and at ARU. Sr. Pauline says,

“Since formation is the powerhouse of consecrated life, it is a lifelong campaign, and it is done following the signs of the time and according to the needs of the stakeholders and the changing trends”.

Pictorial Highlights of the Launch



STORY OF HOPE

From Loss to Purpose: How My Dad's Demise Inspired My Career in Medical Imaging



Growing up, I was torn between becoming a doctor or a lawyer. For years, I had no clear career choice—until a life-changing event gave me purpose.

It was in 2014 when my dad began battling a mysterious illness. He visited several hospitals and was repeatedly diagnosed with stomach ulcers. After a series of examinations and X-rays, the results stayed the same, his pain persisted, and his condition worsened. I remember one quiet Saturday, he confided in me that his pain had intensified, and he had begun staining his clothes with blood. I was just a child then—still in primary five—but I could see something was terribly wrong.

That worried me so much but at my age, I just looked on with a painful expression. I remember he even joked about us (his children) coming back from school for the holidays when he was no longer alive. That moved me with my younger sisters to say it was a lame joke. That's how he managed to brush it off casually but, in his heart, he knew that he meant it since it came to pass.

After my dad had passed on, amid that unbearable heart-break, one question haunted me: Why wasn't this caught earlier? My father had gone to multiple hospitals, how could something so serious have been misdiagnosed repeatedly?

That question sparked my decision to become a medic and when it was time to specialize, I specifically chose the field of medical imaging. I wanted to be part of a healthcare system that catches what others might miss. I may not be able to prevent every misdiagnosis, but I am determined to make a difference wherever I am placed.

More than anything, I desire to embody kindness, empathy, and professionalism—because healing begins with trust in a medical practitioner.

I could not save my dad, but I believe that I can help others who may find themselves in my dad's situation.

Manuela Keneema – Imaging Student at Earnest Cook University

Missionaries of Hope Among all Peoples

DARVA Vocation Animation in Kabale Diocese



Group Photo of DARVA Team that went to Kabale

Immaculate Tusingwire, MMS

The Diocesan and Religious Vocation Animators Committee (DARVA) has existed for several years, supporting the work of vocation animators for congregations through a joint animation in order to have multicultural religious vocations.

In the Spirit of this year's World Day of Prayer for Vocations, **'Missionaries of Hope Among all Peoples'**, after a one-day meeting, the DARVA team comprising of 16 vocation animators from 13 different congregations, headed to Kabale Diocese for their group yearly routine vocation animation on 22nd June 2025.

Before embarking on the mission that took them, the team visited Rt. Rev. Callistus Rubaramira, Bishop of Kabale Diocese, to introduce themselves and ask for his blessing. Even though the bishop confessed that he didn't know about DARVA, he received them and welcomed them in the Diocese.

They then set off to inspire the next generation to listen to the voice of God and consider the call to religious life.

During their week-long stay, they were able to visit and animate 14 schools where they generally talked about vocation. Each congregation had the opportunity to present their charisms and mission. They however did not stop on talking about vocation, they added a campaign message against betting (gambling) which was appreciated by the teachers and students.

According to DARVA Chairperson, Fr. Josephat Diyuo, a Missionary of Africa who led the team, the vocation is booming in Kabale Diocese, for in all the schools they visited, the response was wonderful, and the team hopes that many will apply to the different congregations.

Braving the chilly days in the hills of Kabale, the team accomplished their mission with contentment and fulfillment.

Their journey is a testament and a reminder that the call to religious life is still alive and that God's voice continues to echo through the hills, classrooms, and hearts of young people in Uganda, waiting to be set on fire for the Gospel.

During their one-day meeting at ARU Secretariat before heading to Kabale, DARVA looked at general issues affecting the Association. They plan to strengthen the Association in the dioceses and provinces and to engage the diocesan animators.

For next Year (2026), DARVA plans to have only one group animation in Moroto Diocese and instead of a second animation, they hope to have a workshop on vocation animation to refresh themselves and be able to tackle emerging issues in our time.

Fewer member congregations participating in DARVA activities remain a challenge and Fr. Josephat calls upon all congregations to support DARVA by paying their annual contribution and supporting their animators to participate in group Animation.



The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor: A reflection on the Environmental Justice in Uganda



Sr. Josephine Kamau, DM

From degraded forests to flooded villages, from poisoned water to barren farmland, environmental destruction hits the poor the hardest. The cry of the earth is heard through the suffering of the poor, the voiceless, the vulnerable.

This cry is echoing through Uganda—not from the animals or the trees, though they too are wounded. It's the cry of people; of mothers standing by flooded homes; of farmers staring at cracked soil; of children walking miles for clean water. They say:

“We didn’t cut the trees, but now we can’t grow our food.”

Inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*, I am reminded that caring for creation is not just about protecting nature—it is about protecting people.

Environmental justice means giving every person, regardless of background, a fair voice and fair treatment in environmental decisions. But in Uganda, this justice is often denied.

When a forest is cleared for profit, a community loses its rainfall, its shade, its medicine, its life. When a river is poisoned, it's not just fish that die its children who fall ill. When land is grabbed, it's not the wealthy who go hungry, it's the poor who lose everything.

Environmental degradation is not random. It is caused by greed, corruption, weak enforcement of strong laws, and by silence in the face of injustice. Big companies are going unchecked and unpunished for their ecological crimes. We need to remember that **“Justice delayed is nature destroyed”**.

In Uganda, we have good Laws and policies on environmental protection like The National Environment Act which lacks implementation. One wonders, where is action, where is accountability when corporations pollute or displace entire villages sometimes in the name of improving the economy and creating jobs for the people?

God gave us the land as stewards, not

as destroyers. When we hurt nature, we sin against God, our children, and our children's children who will be there in the future suffering the consequences of our actions today.

What Can we do?

There is hope. Across Uganda, ordinary people are rising with extraordinary courage to protect our home and to protect their life. They plant trees, clean rivers, go to streets and in court, speak out and create awareness through ecological education. And so can we!

We can:

- Speak out against unjust land evictions.
- Support reforestation and clean water projects.
- Reject corruption in environmental schemes.
- Teach children and youth about ecological values.
- Choose renewable energy and better waste systems.
- And most importantly, reduce or reject plastics which produce a big percentage of global warming.



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Sr. Josephine Kamau, DM visiting a Recycling factory in Masaka

Participate in environmental activities like;

- Youth-led tree-planting drives.
- Community clean-up campaigns.
- Environmental litigation and advocacy.
- Local innovations in sustainable farming.

No action is too small. Every voice matters as St. Francis reminds us:

“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” St. Francis of Assisi.

Environmental justice is possible if we all take part. The cry of the poor and the cry of the earth are one voice. And that voice is calling for action.

Call to Action

Pope Francis teaches us that we must view ecological and social issues together. He calls this "integral ecology". He says: “The cry of the Earth is the cry of the poor.” We cannot solve poverty without caring for nature. And we cannot protect nature without fighting poverty.

Environmental protection is about justice, faith, community, dignity and our future. We must rise together, to respond to the cry. We must respond to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. We must remember that when the earth suffers, the poor suffer first and worst because environmental justice is not just about trees, it’s about people, their dignity and survival. Let us listen, act and be stewards of both creation and community. The time is now!

Expanding Horizons



Mary Mother of the Church Pioneering Sisters on arrival in the Diocese of Hamilton, Canada

The Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church are expanding their missions globally! On May 19, 2025, three sisters from Uganda journeyed to Canada’s Hamilton Diocese for a mission survey, receiving a warm welcome. Their efforts reflect our founder Bishop Caesar Asili's vision and God's grace. Meanwhile, a new community was inaugurated in Fort Portal on May 23, 2025, and plans are underway for a team to begin missionary work in Germany, having overcome language barriers. These endeavors are blessings of Jubilee 2025, empowering our sisters to boldly witness and serve in today's diverse society

Strengthening the Mission for Formation Agents



Sr. Pauline Namuddu, LSSF

Uganda's youthful Catholic Church is primed for greater impact through quality-trained formators and committed consecrated women and men with other pastoral agents who are ready to give their lives for Christ like the Uganda Martyrs.

All consecrated persons are invited to recommit themselves to Christ and His Mission and have as their "Motto": Christ's Life is our life; His Mission is our Mission"

The Formation Ministry of the Religious in Uganda although is at its youthful stage, has greatly impacted the consecrated persons who are zealous in getting closer to their spouse. Those who are keen to listen to the voice of the Master inviting them to spend some quality time with Him in personal and communal prayer.

Those who through their Superiors take time from their professional ministries and avail themselves for

renewal courses which are regularly planned for members at different stages in their espoused life with Christ.

Formation for Mission:

Spiritual formation for ministry is the intentional process of developing a deeper relationship with God and growing in Christ-like character, which is then expressed in ministry and service. It involves practices like prayer, bible study, spiritual reading, spiritual accompaniment and community engagement, all guided by the Holy Spirit. This process is meant for every person who treasures friendship with the Creator. It aims to transform a person's inner life, leading to outward actions that reflect God's love and purpose.

In the Catholic Church, as we celebrate this Jubilee Year of Hope, the Formation Ministry of the Consecrated women and men in Uganda invites all its members to embark on personal and communal renewal. I invite all readers of this message to reflect on these Key Aspects of Spiritual Formation for Ministry in order to benefit from this Jubilee Year 2025.

Transformation- a process of becoming more like Jesus Christ, not just as outward behavior modification, but through a transformation of the inner self.

Community – Spiritual formation is often fostered within a transformative community of believers who provide support, encouragement and accountability as we live as synodal Church community.



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Sr. Pauline Namuddu giving an Ice-breaker to the Junior Sisters

Biblical Foundation – Spiritual formation is rooted in the bible, with scripture serving as a guide for understanding God's character and will.

Ministry Expression – The goal of spiritual formation is not just personal growth, but also availability to effectively serve God and others through ministry.

Prayer – Regularly communicating with God, both in formal and informal ways, to seek guidance, express needs and cultivate a deeper relationship.

Silence and solitude – Creating space for quiet reflection and listening to God's voice. **Increased Effectiveness** – Spiritual formation equips individuals with the charac-

ter and spiritual maturity needed for effective ministry.

Holistic Growth – It addresses the whole person – mind, body and spirit, leading to more integrated and balanced life.

Service – As invited to embrace living in Synodality, to actively participate in acts of service and ministry to others, reflecting God's love in practical ways.

Purpose and Meaning – Formation helps individuals discover and live out their God-given purpose in ministry.

Resilience – Formation equips individuals to face challenges and setbacks with faith and perseverance.

Main Challenges in Faith Formation

- Limited Family Catechesis
- Uneven faith education backgrounds from families.
- Shortage of Formators
- Financial Constraints
- Growth in membership outpaces trained leaders

Way Forward

- Youth Formation Support – focus on catechesis programmes.
 - Encourage institute leaders to promote formation apostolate urgently.
 - Support for Religious formation and lay leader education.
- Together, we will overcome challenges and build a Church rooted deeply in faith values.*



Junior Professed having a class during their one Month Program at St. Mbaaga's Seminary

Technology transforming child safeguarding in Uganda; ARU-CCCU not left out



*By Sam Bernard Gumisiriza,
ICT Manager & M&E Officer,
ARU*

There is an old African proverb that says, “It takes a village to raise a child.” In today’s world, that village is no longer just made of people, it includes technology. And in the mission to protect and nurture Uganda’s vulnerable children, technology has quietly become one of the most trusted guardians.

The Catholic Care for Children in Uganda (CCCU) programme holds a simple yet profound vision: that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, loving, and nurturing family. Since 2019, over 1,884 children have been transitioned from child-care institutions back to families. But behind these numbers is a quiet transformation driven by more than compassion—it is powered by data, digital tools and innovation.

There is wisdom in the saying, “What gets measured, gets managed.” Digital dashboards in the

CCCU Online Case Management-System display real-time data on the status of children in care, family re-integration progress, and risks that demand urgent action. These tools empower leadership, inform decision-making, and drive accountability at every level.

Beyond case management, technology has become a bridge. Virtual trainings equip social workers with safeguarding skills. Secure communication platforms connect child-care institutions, families, and field teams. Data-driven reporting enhances transparency, helping stakeholders understand not just the impact of CCCU’s work, but the stories behind the numbers.

Gone are the days when files would gather dust in locked cabinets. Today, every child’s journey—from assessment to reintegration—is captured digitally, ensuring no child slips through the cracks. GPS mapping guides social workers to families in distant villages, while automated alerts remind them of

follow-ups to ensure children remain safe and supported in their new homes.

Imagine a rural social worker standing under the shade of an acacia tree, tablet in hand, entering the details of a child’s family tracing visit. What once involved handwritten reports and days of travel to submit forms is now instant. The information is uploaded in real-time, feeding directly into secure systems that track the child’s safety, well-being, and progress.

This is more than modernization, it is a moral responsibility. At ARU Secretariat, we believe that technology, when used ethically and wisely, becomes an extension of our hands and hearts. It is not replacing human care; it is amplifying it.

In a world that constantly evolves, one truth remains: “A child’s safety is the foundation of their future.” Through the thoughtful integration of ICT, CCCU continues to build that foundation—one child, one family, one story at a time.



ARU and LifeNet Equip Sisters for Mental Health Outreach and Family Dynamics



A Sister Presenting during the LifeNet Session

Benedict Mukoni, ARU Communication Officer

Through a partnership and collaboration between the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) and LifeNet International (LN), more than 200 sisters across Uganda have been equipped with knowledge and skills to conduct Mental Health and matters on family dynamics.

The comprehensive training initiative aims to empower Sisters—many of whom serve in healthcare, pastoral care, and community outreach—to respond effectively to the growing mental health challenges affecting individuals and families, especially in underserved communities and vulnerable populations in Uganda and beyond.

Participants included Sisters from various age groups and leadership positions, including Superiors General, healthcare workers, and pastoral ministers. Regardless of their background, each Sister received

practical skills to support psychological resilience, promote mental well-being, address family-related concerns and balancing faith with service in the different dioceses across the country.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health issues are on the rise globally. Contributing factors include the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing social isolation, and the pressures of modern life—including the impact of social media.

Mrs. Sarah Muhanguzi, Administration Officer at LifeNet International, emphasized the urgency of regular mental health engagement:

“You can’t pause mental health issues for a year. These trainings are a great start, but they must be ongoing to bear real fruit,” she noted.

According to the administration officer of LN, Mrs. Sarah Muhanguzi, the trainings should be more frequent in order to bear more fruits. “You can’t pause mental health issues for one year. The trainings are good for a start, but not enough.” She advised.

Through collaboration with religious Sisters Counsellors Network Initiative – Uganda, LN incorporates mental health awareness and family dynamics training covering issues like; Psychosocial resilience for sisters serving in healthcare, Supporting mental well-being for patients and care-givers and Vocational wellness and balancing faith with service in the different dioceses across the country.

The initiative is being funded by the Hilton Foundation to train Catholic Sisters to help mitigate on the mental health issue.



During the Session with LifeNet

Forming Hearts for Mission: FoMRU Hosts National Courses for Novices and Junior Professed

The Formation Ministry of the Religious in Uganda (FoMRU), an arm of the Association of Religious in Uganda, this year is delighted to host two of its annual outstanding programs; the Inter-Institutes Novices' and the Inter-Institutes Junior Professed National course at St. Mbaaga's Major Seminary Ggaba. The Novices' Course was hosted from May 24 – June 21, while that of

the Junior professed started on June 28 and it is on-going up to July 28, 2025.

The purpose of these courses is to prepare Novices for their first vows in consecrated life and to deepen the Junior Professed understanding of the contemporary world ahead of their perpetual/ final vows.

The topics covered in these two courses slightly differ from one cohort to another but a few of them among others include; Canonical Norms, Mental Health understanding and living as a human person, integration of cultural beliefs and practices into consecrated life and Embracing Synodality in the Mission.



Novices with the formators and ARU Administration Team during the official opening



Junio Sisters together with the formators and ARU Administration Team during the official opening

Catholic Religious Sisters Lead a Fistula Free Surgical Camp to Empower Women



Group Photo during the Surgical Camp

Benedict Mukoni, ARU Communication Officer

Catholic Religious Sisters Health Care Initiative Uganda (CRSHCIU), a network under ARU organized a 5-day free obstetric fistula camp at St. Francis Hospital, Buluba in Mayuge district, Jinja Diocese in April 21 – 25, 2025. This was the third kind.

The fistula free surgical repair and treatment camp served as a beacon of hope for many women who have long suffered in silence due to this debilitating condition. Obstetric fistulas, often resulting from prolonged labour without access to proper medical care, can lead to chronic incontinence, social isolation, and emotional distress.

According to the National Coordinator of CRSHCIU, Sr. Maria Goretti Kabakaali – DTS, the camp attracted 47 patients for screening mainly from the outskirts of Jinja district with two

special cases referred from Moroto district. It focused on surgical interventions, holistic care and psychosocial support for the women affected. This initiative, sponsored by the Global Solidarity Forum, marks a significant step towards addressing the health needs of vulnerable women in the community.

The CRSHCIU involvement in the initiative demonstrates remarkable compassion and dedication to caring for women affected by obstetric fistulas. The efforts of the initiative has helped to create a safe and supportive environment, where women can receive the medical attention and emotional support they need to heal and rebuild their lives.

The fistula camp initiative is not only about providing medical care but also about empowering women and communities. By addressing the root causes of obstetric fistulas and providing support to those affected, the initiative aims to promote women's health, dignity, and well-being.

The success of the fistula camp initiative is a testament to the power of collaboration and partnership. The Global Solidarity Forum, St. Francis Hospital, Buluba and the CRSHCIU have come together to make a meaningful difference in the lives of thousands of women, demonstrating the impact that can be achieved through collective effort and commitment.

The fistula camp initiative has transformed the lives of countless women, enabling them to regain their dignity, confidence, and place in their communities. As the initiative continues to grow and expand, it will have a lasting impact on the lives of women and families, promoting a brighter future for generations to come.

One of the victims, real name withheld, extended her heartfelt gratitude to CRSHCIU, Global Solidarity Forum and St. Francis hospital, Buluba and appealed to them and other collaborators of good will to continue with the initiative so that other women can also benefit from it.

Dr. Asiimwe, a fistula surgeon who also led the surgical team during the Fistula Camp advised mothers to make sure that they give birth in the hospitals such that if such eventualities happen, they can be properly rectified and monitored to avoid cases of fistula that can even escalate to higher levels.

Pictorial Highlights of the General Assembly

