



THE PROPHETIC WITNESS

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Editorial >>>



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Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, Happy new Year! It is with great joy that we welcome you to the 2026 **first edition of our Bi-Monthly Newsletter, THE PROPHETIC WITNESS.**

Until now, our Newsletter has been quarterly. Our decision to move to Bi-Monthly gives us an opportunity to share more timely updates, celebrate achievements as they happen, and stay inspired by the faith-filled lives around us. We invite you to read, reflect, and engage with these stories, whether by sharing your own experiences, supporting ARU programs, or simply being encouraged by the faith and hope shared.

In this edition, you will find up-

dates and stories from ARU programs across the country, initiatives that continue to transform lives, strengthen communities, and bear witness to God’s love. We feature an Institute of the Month and highlight a person whose story exemplifies Commitment, Faith, and Service. Our “Story of Hope” section brings a narrative of resilience and Hope that remind us, even in challenging times, God’s light shines through.

We remind you of the ARU Radio Maria Kampala Program; **“THE BEATITUDE HOUR”**, every **Saturday Live on 103.7 FM at 5:00 - 6:00PM.** This enriching program is animated by the different ARU networks and programs, showcasing their diverse ministries and

service across the country. Each week, representatives from ARU various networks share experiences and expertise from the field, and offer practical insights rooted in Gospel values and the Beatitudes. We hope you listen in.

We are always a call away if you have a story you wish to share with others. Reach us at arucommunication2@gmail.com or at [+256744177533](tel:+256744177533).

May this year be one of growth, connection, and renewed commitment to our shared mission. Together, through prayer, service, and solidarity, we continue to witness God’s love in action. Thank you for journeying with us.

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

Religious Men and Women across Uganda Celebrate World Day for Consecrated Life



Rubaga Cathedral during the celebration of the day of religious men and women.

By Immaculate Tusingwire - MMS

Religious men and women across Uganda on 2nd February 2026, gathered in their respective dioceses to celebrate the Day of Consecrated life in vibrant and prayerful ceremonies. Some dioceses could not celebrate on the exact day, but they all celebrated in the month of February.

The celebrations were organized by the different dioceses in collaboration with the branches of the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), bringing together priests, sisters, brothers, and lay faithful in thanksgiving for the gift of consecrated life.

Across the four ecclesiastical provinces, the celebrations began in a symbolic solemn procession of candles. The lights, carried by consecrated men and women, served as a powerful reminder of Christ, the

Light of the World, and the mission entrusted to them through their profession of the evangelical counsels.

In the Archdiocese of Kampala, the Archbishop, Rt. Rev. Paul Ssemogerere, who was the main celebrant expressed heartfelt gratitude to the religious for their steadfast presence and service in the archdiocese. He thanked them for believing that God is enough and for courageously holding the light in the darkness of today's world. He commended their ministry in schools, hospitals, parishes, and marginalized communities, noting that their fidelity continues to strengthen the life of the Church.

Meanwhile, in the Archdiocese of Tororo, the Vicar General, Rev. Fr. Christopher Emuseet presided

over the Eucharistic celebration of the Mass and in his homily reminded the consecrated persons present that through their profession of vows, they become visible signs of Christ's light in a world often marked by confusion and uncertainty. He emphasized that consecrated life is a living memory of Jesus' way of living and acting, a vocation that remains at the heart of the Church.

ARU Assistant Secretary General Rev. Sr. Justine Naluggya, IHMR, attended the Tororo celebration. In her address, Sr. Justine summarized the message of the International Day for Consecrated Persons from the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated life and the Societies of Apostolic Life. The theme for the message was, "Prophecy of presence, consecrated life where dignity is wounded and faith is tested." Sr. Justine invited the religious to be present in the places where dignity is wounded especially in the current Ugandan situation and to be prophets of hope as concrete signs that God has not abandoned his people.

All the celebrations across the country, as shared by ARU Branch coordinators, reflected expressions of joy and gratitude for the gift of consecrated life. In every celebration, the message was constant: consecrated persons are called to be the light of the world and a beacon of hope.

Inauguration of the 2026 USFCN Sabbatical and Formation Programs



Group Photo of USFCN participants after the inauguration of the 2026 cohort.

By Sr. Agnes Nanyonjo, DM

The Uganda Spiritual and Formation Center Namugongo (USFCN), a program under the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), on 5th of February 2026, officially inaugurated its 2026 Spiritual Renewal/Sabbatical and Formation Programs, joyfully welcoming 37 participants drawn from various Institutes and Dioceses across Africa.

The welcoming Mass was presided over by Rev. Fr. Joseph Luyombya, O.S.M., a member of ARU's Executive Committee. Fr. Joseph warmly received the participants and thanked them for choosing USFCN as a place for their spiritual journey with God. He assured the participants that the Centre offers a conducive environment, experienced facilitators, and a supportive community ready to accompany them throughout their stay.

Reflecting on the 2026 theme, *"Yes, I know the plans I have in mind for you" (Jeremiah 29:11)*, chosen by the Centre staff, Fr. Joseph encouraged the participants to remain grateful to God who has called and chosen them from different places for this Sacred time of renewal and formation.

The Centre Director, Sr. Daisy Nakanwagi, DST, echoed the same message of hope. She urged the participants not to be afraid, but to fully embrace the special time God has granted them. Sr. Daisy emphasized that the participants' decision to attend the programs, was not a mistake, rather, part of God's loving plan and purpose for their lives.

She further explained that the programs would run for nine months and would conclude with an optional 30-day Ignatian Retreat scheduled from 20th October to 20th November 2026, a profound opportunity for deeper reflection and encounter with God.

Out of the 37 participants, 25 are for the Sabbatical program and 12 for Formation. They represent 8 countries: Uganda, Cameroon, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Benin and South Sudan. USFCN has always had participants from different countries and cultural backgrounds, which is a great blessing to the Centre.

Participants experience a rich environment that allows sharing of diverse experiences, different pastoral realities, and spiritual traditions. Each participant brings a unique story, shaped by the needs and challenges of their background.



CCCU Joins Global Catholic Leaders in Rome to Advance Action for Children in Crisis



Representatives from nineteen countries across the world welcome Pope Leo XIV during the convention.

By Immaculate Tusingwire - MMS

Catholic Care for Children in Uganda (CCCU) was honored to participate in a global initiative under the theme **From Crisis to Care: Catholic Action for Children** through in-person participation in Rome, which took place from 2nd to 6th February 2026 at Hotel Il Cantico.

The gathering sought to deepen collective commitment and action in responding to children in crisis, advocating for their rights and dignity, and accompanying them in developing resilience despite the serious challenges they face. This came in response to **Pope Francis's** call for concrete action following the International Summit on **Children's Rights: Love Them and Protect Them**, which Pope Francis convened on 3 February 2025.

Around 70 Catholic leaders and organizations in Child Care Mission

from nineteen countries across the globe attended the gathering with the aim of co-developing a Catholic-inspired **Global Action Plan** that strengthens families and communities, safeguards the dignity of every child, and promotes their holistic development.

Represented by **Sr. Euphrasia Masika, DST**, National Director of Catholic Care for Children in Uganda, CCCU was specifically invited to share with the participants its success in reintegrating children back into families, which has been deeply commendable.

In inviting CCCU to share, the Steering Committee of the convening stated that CCCU and the Association of Religious' work and unwavering commitment to children's well-being and the vitality of the Church's ministries make their voice and perspective especially valuable

to the process of developing a global action plan.

At the end of the meeting, members identified five key priority areas for collective action to strengthen the protection, dignity, and well-being of children, youth, and families:

1. Unified advocacy – calling on the Church and society to work together to promote children's rights through education, policy engagement, and a common voice that influences laws and strengthens child protection frameworks.

2. Networking – fostering collaboration among local Churches, religious congregations, Catholic-inspired organizations, civil society, governments, multilateral institutions, academia, and the private sector to break down silos and advance shared goals.

3. Centering children in the Church’s mission – ensuring strong safeguarding policies, accountability, and a culture of transparency and care. As highlighted by Pope Leo XIV, communities must actively protect minors and promote dignity through the prevention of abuse, honest accountability, and trust-building.

4. Formation and capacity building – strengthening families, communities, and Church-related institutions to better support children’s holistic development.

5. Inclusion and engagement – ensuring that children and youth participate in decisions affecting them, with particular attention to amplifying the voices of those who are vulnerable or living with disabilities.

Audience with the Pope

One of the highlights of the gathering was an audience with **Pope Leo XIV**, who in his address to the participants strongly lamented the lack of global progress in protecting minors. He urged immediate action to stop the exploitation, poverty, and abuse of children, emphasizing their right to love and safe environments. Pope Leo questioned whether global priorities have shifted away from the most vulnerable and wondered whether “global commitments for sustainable development have been cast aside,” as many children continue to live in extreme poverty, suffer abuse, are forcibly displaced, lack education, and are “isolated or separated from their families.”



The National Director, ARU-CCCU, Sr. Euphrasia Masika, DST greets Pope Leo XIV.



Sr. Euphrasia shares CCCU experience at the convention.



A Graceful Handover at ARU Secretariat



Sr. Elizabeth Kidega, left and Sr. Teddy Nakato, Right

By Immaculate Tusingwire, MMS

On 28th February 2026, after five dedicated years of service, **Sr. Elizabeth Kidega** of the Evangelizing Sisters stood ready to hand over her responsibilities as the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) Cateress during the handover ceremony that took place at ARU Secretariat.

Stepping into this new chapter was **Sr. Teddy Nakato** of the Daughters of Mary Sisters. With humility and courage, she accepted the responsibility entrusted to her. She warmly thanked her superior, **Sr. Noeline Namusoke**, for granting her the opportunity to serve at ARU. In her brief remarks, she pledged dedication, teamwork, and openness to guidance as she began her mission.

The handover ceremony was attended by **ARU President Fr. John Bosco Kamoga CSSp**, **Fr. Joseph Luyombya, OSM**, member of ARU executive committee, the Secretary General, **Sr. Jane Yatuha, OLCG** with the rest of the management staff, and the two superiors of the evangelizing sisters and Daughters of Mary: **Sr. Sylvina** and **Sr. Noeline Namusoke**.

Words of appreciation flowed freely. Though she had begun her assignment at an early stage in religious life, **Sr. Betty** had carried out her duties with remarkable maturity, balancing prayer and work with simplicity, flexibility, and diligence.

Fr. Kamoga, thanked the Evangelizing Sisters for their generosity and trust in releasing a young sister to serve the association. She praised Sr. Betty not only for her hard work but also for her beautiful spirit of letting go evident in the patience and care with which she oriented her successor. He further thanked the management staff for their continued commitment and encouraged them to remain united, to hope together, trust one another, and always have each other's back.

Sr. Jane, on behalf of the management echoed the same words of praise and gratitude to Sr. Betty. She wished her well in her next assignment, confident that the seeds she had planted would continue to grow. At the same time, they warmly welcomed Sr. Teddy, ready to walk alongside her as she began her journey of service.

Both superiors present expressed their gratitude to ARU as they entrusted the incoming and the outgoing Cateress in the hands of God and promised their ongoing support to whenever called upon and able to help.



Story of Hope

From Hardship to Hope How Education Gave One Girl a Future

By *Benedict Mukoni*

For Dorothy, a Form Four student, life once felt heavier than any child should ever have to carry. After her parents separated, her father returned to Sudan and her mother later left as well, leaving Dorothy, her brother, and their elderly grandmother to survive on their own.

With no stable source of income and a grandmother too old to work, the family struggled to meet even their most basic needs. There were days when putting food on the table was nearly impossible. At times, Dorothy and her brother were forced onto the streets to beg for money just to survive.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Dorothy's made a difficult decision. Determined to support her family, she began working as a housemaid. While the work was exhausting and the pay was small, she used every coin to care for her brother and grandmother. Even then, continuing her education seemed like a distant dream.

Dorothy later enrolled at Bishop Sisto Mazoldi Secondary School, juggling schoolwork with the weight of responsibility at home. Often, the money meant for her school fees had to be shared with her family. As a result, she missed classes, skipped exams, and struggled to keep up. Her future hung in the balance.

That changed when Bakhita Partnership for Education stepped in.

Through the organization's support, the burden Dorothy's had carried for years began to lift. For the first time, she could focus fully on her studies. She no longer had to choose between education and survival.

"Now I can sit in class without worry," Dorothy says. "I can do my exams, I can study at home, and my family is at peace."



The impact reached beyond Dorothy's herself. Her grandmother, once weighed down by worry, now proudly speaks of her granddaughter's success. Though she has never met the founders of Bakhita Partnership for Education (BPE) in person, she remains deeply grateful for the hope they restored to their family.

Dorothy's also credits her teachers, especially Madam Grace, for believing in her and selecting her for the program among many students facing similar challenges. Looking ahead, Dorothy's dreams are bigger than ever. She hopes to become a doctor and one day open an orphanage to support children facing hardships like her own.

"I want to show others that angels do exist in this world," she says. "Just like someone believed in me, I want to help other girls and children find light in their lives."

From a life marked by loss and struggle, Dorothy's story now stands as a powerful reminder that with support, education can transform pain into purpose and hardship into hope.

Featured Person

75 Years of Consecration

Sr. Maria Angelica Nabakooza, IHMR

By *Immaculate Tusingwire - MMS*

At 99 years old, with a clear and determined voice, Sr. Maria Angelica Nabakooza, a sister of the Immaculate Heart Reparatrix (IHMR), renewed her vows on 4th January 2026 as she marked her 75th Diamond Jubilee at the Mother House in Ggogonya, alongside three sisters making their perpetual vows and four sisters celebrating their Silver Jubilee.

The ARU Communication Office reached out to Sr. Maria days after the Jubilee to share about her 75-year journey of consecration, and we are glad to present this one-on-one conversation with her.

Who is Sr. Maria Angelica Nabakooza?

I am a member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix-Gogonya (IHMR). Before I became the only Angelica in the congregation, I was named Matilda Nabakooza Bibiana.

I was born on 6th October 1926 in Masaka to the late Mr. Dominico Ssaaka from the Nte (Cow) Clan and Mrs. Bibiana Nantume from the Mbogo (Buffalo) Clan. My paternal grandparents are Milia Mwemalansi (Kkobe Clan) and Maurice Luganda.

This year, 6th October 2026, I will become 100 years old.

I am the firstborn of my mother, who died while giving birth to my sibling. So I remained with my grandmother, Milia Mwemalansi, and my aunt, Victor Nabakooza, who loved me so much, took good care of me, and taught me how to pray. They became mother and elder sister to me. I come from the Diocese of Masaka in Kabuwoko Parish. Currently, I am a parishioner of Kkindu.



Can you take us back to the moment you first heard the call to religious life and your early life as a Gogonya Sister?

I believe the call to become a religious came from God before I was born, perhaps when I was still in my mother's womb.

I used to see the Sisters of Bwanda (DM) and silently make a sign of a veil on my head. But God had planned a different congregation for me. After Fr. Timothy Ssermogerere, the parish priest, learned of my desire to become a religious, he took me to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix. I stayed, and after completing Junior One before joining Junior Two in 1942, I was sent home to bid farewell to my parents. My biological father, who had just returned from war a week earlier, was happy to hand me over completely to become a sister.

During my early years, I was diagnosed with trachoma (a contagious condition that affects the eyes and can lead to blindness), together with many of my colleagues. My eyes were treated at the convent, while my colleagues were sent back home, which I saw as God's grace. I was very delicate, and somehow, I was given special attention.

After two years at the IHMR convent, I became a postulant, where I spent one year. I was then promoted to become a novice. I became even sicker during the novitiate and spent two years instead of one. I professed in 1951.

Over the years, what have you liked most about being a Ggogonya Sister?

All these 75 years of consecration have been possible because of my deep love for the Blessed Sacrament and for Mother Mary. Every time I encountered challenges, I would go and pray before the Sacrament and seek the intercession of Mother Mary. I have never regretted being a member of the Institute of IHMR.

My greatest happiness has been seeing young sisters with the desire to come and be with us, the elderly, and we become happier together. It is a sign that God has brought us together so that elders can become children and children can become elders without segregation. It is also a sign that the congregation is growing and continuing every time I see new life.

What ministries or missions have been closest to your heart since your first profession of vows?

I carried out many ministries and did them all with love. These included treating patients, teaching children the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and counseling women in marriage. I also worked in a seminary for a long time. The people I worked with loved me, and I loved them in return. I enjoyed being a member of the Central Organizing Committee at St. Mary's Lubaga Cathedral.

Seventy-five years is a long journey. How have you seen religious life change over time?

The major change has been growth in the number of institutes. Before, there were very few institutes, but over time many have emerged, with diverse charisms founded both locally and internationally. I thank God for this blessing. Young people can now join institutes of their choice according to their unique calling.

Were there moments when you struggled or doubted your vocation? How did you persevere?

There will always be challenges, and one can never be perfect. I also encountered challenges, but I did not give them much attention or dwell on why they came my way.

One challenge, especially in my later years, was when some sisters said I could not be in leadership because I was less educated than them. This pierced my heart at one point, but I remembered that even if I was not highly educated, I was following God in my Institute. Even though I was not educated enough to lead the Institute, God had still called me to other missions which I had to fulfill. I remained steadfast in my faith and service.

What would you say to the young ones who are just starting this journey?

What I would advise young people who are aspiring to or just starting religious life is that education should not take precedence over vocation. Please study, but with God at heart. Education is not bad, but faith should lead everything. They should remain faithful to the teachings of the Church, and this will help them live according to their call.

I invite young people who wish to sacrifice their earthly pleasures and join consecrated life in any Institute or seminary to do so, keeping in mind that there is more happiness in religious life than in earthly life.

At this stage in your life, what are you most grateful for, and what is your deepest desire?

I ask God to accept all that I am now. I know it all comes from Him, and I do not complain at all.

Before, I used to move very fast, and the sisters would say, "If you're walking with Sr. Angelica, lead her; if you don't, you won't find her." I can no longer move around as I used to or visit the sick in the villages, but one thing I do is ask Jesus to go and heal them, and Mother Mary to uplift and guide them. I also pray for the employees to work wholeheartedly and to love without complaint, doing everything for God.

Do you have anything else you wish to say as we conclude?

I am grateful for all that has been and for how far God has brought me; to all the people who have supported me over the years; to the current IHMR leadership; and to the members I stay with in Mary Queen of Peace House, we understand one another and live peacefully. I also thank our doctors at the Mother House. They have taken good care of us and counseled us very well. I pray that God blesses them all!

Featured Institute

Canossian Daughters of Charity Servants of the Poor in Uganda



Group photo of the Canossian Daughters of Charity

By Canossian Daughters of Charity

Founded in 1808 in Verona, Italy, by St. Magdalene of Canossa, the Canossian Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, are an international religious congregation rooted in the love of Christ Crucified. Inspired by His sacrifice on the Cross, St. Magdalene dedicated her life to sharing God's love with the poor and the marginalized.

Canossian Daughters presence in Uganda

Though the congregation has existed for over 200 years, in Uganda, it is 55 years since the sisters came for mission in 1971. They celebrated their Golden Jubilee in 2021. Here in Uganda, the Canossian sisters are in St. Joseph Catholic Parish Lweza, Kampala archdiocese and in Bethlehem Parish, in the Diocese of Masaka.

Mission

The Sisters live their mission by making Jesus known

and loved through education, evangelization, pastoral care of the sick, spiritual exercises, and formation of the laity. In addition to teaching catechesis in schools and parishes, the Canossians share the Word of God through recollections, retreats, and spiritual direction. The aim of the Canossian mission is the fulfillment of the greatest commandment of love, love of God and love of neighbor, while seeking the personal sanctification of the sisters and the spiritual growth of those they serve.

They run a school in Lweza - St. Joseph's nursery and primary with the aim of forming hearts and offers quality education, build on the care values of fear of God's love, honesty and hard work. They also organize programs for young ladies: a "come and see" for those who would wish to join them. The invited are those from S.4 onwards and are inspired to serve the Lord as

Canossian sisters. The program takes place in Canossian sisters' convent Lweza parish for a period of 5 to 7 days.

Saint Josephine Bakhita

A powerful witness to this charism is Saint Josephine Bakhita, affectionately known as “our universal sister”. Born in Sudan in 1869, she endured the suffering of slavery before encountering freedom and faith through the Canossian Sisters. Baptized in 1890, she later became a Canossian Sister and was canonized in 2000. Today, she is the patron saint of victims of slavery and human trafficking.

Spirituality

The Congregation’s spirituality draws from the example of Mary, Mother of Charity, at the foot of the Cross, guiding them in community life and service. Faithful to Christ’s command to “Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel” (Mk 16:15), the Canossian Daughters of Charity continue to touch lives through compassionate service, formation, and a living witness of God’s greatest love.

The sisters welcome young women with the interest of serving the Lord to join them who have finished at least S.6 with two principle passes and S.4 with professional training in areas of education, nursing, administration, accounting, etc. Their formation takes place in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania for around 4 years. The age limit is 30 years.

The requirements to come along with include: Baptism card, Academic results from P.7, Letter from parish priest, Letter from the parents, Personal effects, Transport to and fro, Pen and a notebook, Holy Bible.

You can reach out to the Sisters at

Canossian Daughters of charity- Lweza

P.O Box 21712, Kampala- Uganda

0705299237/ 0789601323/ 0741966460

josephinekembe@gmail.com and theosfdcc21@gmail.com

www.canossian.org



SLYI Uganda Launches Phase III with Expanded Focus and Strategic Partnerships



Group Photo of the representatives of ARU Executive, Coordinators of ARU-SLYI and participants after the workshop.

By Benedict Mukoni

The Sister-Led Youth Initiative Uganda (SLYIU), a program under the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), convened training center administrators and other participants from the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Gulu and Tororo at the end of January 2026 for an orientation on the Phase III Core Program Areas (CPA).

Among the administrators were principals, directors, headteachers, and delegates serving as senior trainers, educators, and mentors. Together, they shared experiences from Phases I and II and reaffirmed their role as builders of hope for young people, especially the most vulnerable, as they embark on Phase III. Six additional training schools have been included in this phase, bringing the total to 22.

The SLYI Program Coordinator, Sr. Caroline Bacia LSMIG, highlighted three key developments introduced in Phase III:

i. Of the targeted 1,035 youths to be skilled over the three years of implementation, 50 will be survivors of human trafficking/ Trafficking in persons, and 50 and 50 youth with disabilities will be recruited.

ii. Support will be extended to three selected ARU Member Institutes to establish Mega Businesses as a strategy to strengthen their existing production units, support already skilled youths, and sustain the sisters' communities in the long term. Over 90 skilled youths will be expected to receive apprenticeship or employment in the mega businesses.

iii. A functional Partnership and Employment Hub Office (PEHO) has been established, with an appointed officer to manage it. The PEHO officer will be responsible for linking skilled youths to employment opportunities and internships across the country, as well as tracking the progress and success of those trained and supported with start-

up kits in Phases I and II. The PEHO will also be linked to a website to increase the SLYI's visibility and draw in new donors and potential employers.

Participants also gained deeper insight into the Technical, Vocational and Education Training (TVET) Act through an in-depth presentation by Kampala Archdiocese Education Secretary, Rev. Fr. Nicolas Kiruma. The session was meant to help them understand the policies and standards required for an institution to qualify as a training center as well as those qualified to be trainers.

On behalf of ARU, the Assistant Secretary General, Rev. Sr. Justine Naluggya, IHMR, expressed heartfelt gratitude to all educators and mentors for their tireless service to young people. She urged them to remain committed, transparent, and donor-sensitive as they implement Phase III, emphasizing the importance of sustainability to ensure lasting impact.

The Sister-Led Youth Initiative focuses on restoring dignity, hope, and opportunity for young people facing hardships, build their confidence and empowering them to become agents of positive change in society. This is achieved through hands-on skills training in partnership with selected training centers operating under the Technical, Vocational and Education Training (TVET)

framework across the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Gulu and Tororo.

ARU commended the SLVI coordinators for creating a platform where partners could reflect on their shared responsibility and formally demonstrate their commitment through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).



The National Coordinator of ARU-SLYI, Sr. Carol Bacia addresses the participants during the launch of phase III of the program. Photo by ARU.



Sr. Carol Bacia left, the newly appointed officer of PEHO, middle and Sr. Elizabeth Musau. Photo by ARU.

ARU-CCCU Trains Child Care Institutions on Updated Protection Standards



By *Benedict Mukoni*

Catholic Care for Children in Uganda (CCCU), a program under the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), successfully conducted two intensive workshops aimed at strengthening compliance, accountability, and professional practice within Uganda’s residential childcare sector.

Held in February 2026 at the ARU Secretariat, the trainings brought together 19 Child Care Institution (CCI) Administrators and 21 Social Workers representing 19 institutions. Each group participated in three days of structured learning, two days dedicated to the proper application of the updated government-approved toolkits for separated children, followed by one day of orientation on the integrated digital Data Management System where the tools are embedded.

The workshops focused on improving documentation, case manage-

ment procedures, safeguarding standards, and alignment with the national alternative care framework. Facilitators from the Ministry and ARU-CCCU guided participants through the legal foundation of the updated toolkits and provided hands-on training in digital data entry, secure storage, and reporting.

The workshops ran under the theme **“Strengthening Quality Care through Proper Application of the Updated MGLSD Toolkits for Separated Children and Effective Data Management Systems,”** the sessions emphasized the integration of policy compliance, safeguarding, and professional documentation with modern digital systems.

The participants were targeted be-

cause they are responsible for oversight, supervision, compliance, and institutional accountability. Social Workers are directly responsible for case management, documentation, family tracing, reintegration planning, and follow-up.

Participants actively engaged in discussions, raising practical challenges such as transitioning from previous documentation formats, managing heavy workloads, and adapting to digital systems. Facilitators responded with practical demonstrations, technical guidance, and commitments to ongoing mentorship and support.

The case manager, ARU-CCCU, **Ms. Caroline Nansukusa**, described the training as timely, emphasizing the need for institutions to align with updated national standards and strengthen digital accountability. Participants returned to their respective organizations equipped to improve supervision, documentation, reintegration planning, and secure record management—steps expected to enhance the quality, transparency, and dignity of care provided to separated children.



Participants pose for a group photo shortly after a training session.

AAC:SS begins second Cohort of Leadership Training



By Sr. Anna Grace Alum - LSMIG

The All-Africa Conference Sister to Sister (AAC:SS) in partnership with the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) commenced the first phase of the second cohort of leadership training from February 15 – 21, 2026 at ARU Secretariat, Nsambya Kampala.

The program is intended to equip specifically women religious from various congregations and missions across Uganda with skills in human development, trauma recovery, and effective leadership to prepare them for the evolving demands of ministry and community services. It will help Sisters to have a firm grasp of how their actions impact others around them. Sisters will then apply this understanding to enhance their leadership efficacy and personal development.

Leadership training is particularly important at this time as Sisters face complex challenges in decision-making, communication, and team management. The training aims to enhance their ability to evaluate information, manage risks, communicate vision effectively, and motivate others within their communities and workplaces.

The 31 participants who attended the training were selected by their major superiors and representatives due to their leadership responsibilities within their congregations. The sisters also serve as representatives of their communities, making the training strategically important for broader institutional impact.

Key topics covered during the workshop include building self-esteem, healing childhood trauma and memories, emotional and social intelligence, human sexuality and celibacy, and conflict management through non-violent communication. Facilitators emphasized that these themes are essential for modern religious leadership, where interpersonal skills and emotional maturity are increasingly critical.

Participants are expected to apply the acquired skills in their daily ministries, congregations, and workplaces. Planned initiatives include community awareness activities, seminars, and workshops, as well as efforts to foster open communication, self-awareness, and harmony within communities.

Since the program began, there is visible positive impacts, including increased collaboration among sisters, improved communication, and a stronger focus on holistic well-being of mind, body, and spirit.

The workshop is important because it addresses contemporary leadership challenges like managing dispersed teams, integrating digital tools and artificial intelligence, navigating rapid technological change, maintaining staff motivation, and balancing mental health with performance expectations. Major superiors are encouraged to extend the program to sisters at all levels, including those in formation houses, emphasizing the importance of healing, self-awareness, and personal growth for effective community life and ministry.



Group photo of the participants with Sr. Josephine Nazziwa, facilitator-3rd from right

DARVA's Journey to Moroto

A mission of awakening Hearts to God's Call



*By Sr. Christine Marie Mugume,
Treasurer, DARVA*

On 21 February 2026, the Diocesan and Religious Vocation Animators (DARVA) began their journey from Kampala to Moroto for a week-long Vocation Animation Program.

The team composed of religious men and women from fifteen congregations: the Sisters of Notre Dame, Missionaries of Africa, Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Moyo, Marian Brothers, Mill Hill Fathers, Congregation of the Holy Cross, Holy Cross Sisters, Society of Jesus, Medical Missionaries of Mary, Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, and Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit.

The mission began with the visit at the Cathedral Parish where the members joined in Mass with **Rt. Rev. Damiano Giulio Guzzetti, M.C.C.I.**, Bishop of the Diocese of Moroto who warmly welcomed them in the diocese, introduced them to the faithful and gave them his blessing. Bishop Damian expressed gratitude for the team's collaboration in guiding young people toward responsible Christian lives and encouraged them to continue promoting authentic vocations.

In the days that followed, DARVA visited eight secondary schools: Katekile Seed, Moroto High, Loro Seed, Pokot in Amudat, Nadunget, Moroto Parents, Lorengedwat, and Kangole Girls. Each visit was marked by attentive listening, open dialogue, and sincere engagement from the students. The team faced long travel distances between in-

stitutions, unusually cold weather, limited time due to school schedules, and large numbers of students seeking individual attention. Despite these difficulties, the program was fruitful and warmly received. In several places, the team experienced generous hospitality, including shared meals that expressed appreciation and solidarity.

In every school, a moderator introduced the purpose of the visit and explained the meaning and various forms of vocation. The team presented priesthood, both missionary and diocesan, religious life as sisters and brothers, marriage, and lay missionary or celibate life as authentic paths of Christian commitment. Each congregation shared its identity, charism, formation process, areas of ministry, and the steps required for joining.

The students asked several questions for clarification which reflected their genuine discernment and a desire for clarity. They inquired about academic qualifications, age requirements, duration of formation, financial obligations, and community expectations. Some asked whether they could retain personal property, receive payment, or join if they came from different religious backgrounds, complex family situations, or lived with chronic illness. Members of DARVA responded patiently and thoughtfully, offering guidance and further explanations where needed.

Though diverse in charisms and apostolates, they were united in their commitment to promote vocations and

to help young people understand that vocation is a call from God and mission is the faithful response to that call.

As the week concluded, DARVA recognized that the animation had strengthened not only the students but also the team itself. The experience deepened unity among the vocation animators and strengthened collaboration with diocesan clergy. The mission to Moroto was more than a series of institutional visits; it was a pastoral outreach aimed at awakening hearts to God's call and encouraging courageous responses to that call.



Celebrating St. Josephine Bakhita Day in Gulu Archdiocese: United Against Human Trafficking



Marching at the beginning of the commemoration of St. Bakhita Day in Gulu Archdiocese.

By Sr. Semerita Mbambu - CSC & Sr. Martha Nambi - CSC

On 8th February, the universal Church commemorates the feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of victims of human trafficking. The Archdiocese of Gulu, however, marked this important day on 9th February 2026 to allow wider participation of the faithful.

The archdiocese organized the commemoration in partnership with the St. Bakhita Anti-Human Trafficking Network Uganda, the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Uganda, and the Association of Religious in Uganda – Gulu Branch under the powerful theme: “St. Bakhita: A Beacon of Hope and Freedom for Victims of Human Trafficking.”

The Eucharistic celebration was

presided over by Most Rev. Raphael P'Mony Wokorach, beginning with the lighting of candles and a solemn procession, praying for all those who have lost their lives due to human trafficking. In his homily, the archbishop expressed deep appreciation for the dedicated work of the St. Bakhita Anti-Human Trafficking Network Uganda and other NGOs and CSOs for their tireless efforts in combating human trafficking. He encouraged all Christians to become vigilant defenders of human dignity, reminding the faithful that the Church must stand firmly with the vulnerable and oppressed. He emphasized that the story of St. Bakhita is a living testimony that suffering does not have the final word—Christ does.

The event was attended by more than 300 participants, including catechists, religious men and women from various congregations, parish priests from across the archdiocese, civil leaders, and many other faithful who gathered in prayer and solidarity.

One of the distinguished guests, Rev. Fr. Jino Okech Mwaka, PhD, from Sacred Heart University Gulu, delivered a warm and insightful welcome address. Drawing from personal experience, Fr. Jino offered a rich and educational reflection on the realities of human trafficking. His remarks set the tone for the day, highlighting how trafficking continues to devastate families and communities, especially young peo-

ple who are lured by false promises of employment both abroad and within the country.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Avuni Alfred, Director of the John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre (JP II JPC), Kampala. He underscored the importance of collaboration among Church institutions, government bodies, and civil society organizations in preventing trafficking, protecting survivors, and prosecuting perpetrators. He called upon communities to strengthen awareness initiatives and reporting mechanisms at the grassroots level.

In his remarks, Rev. Fr. Norbert Samuel Ocamoi, Pastoral Coordinator of the Archdiocese of Gulu, pledged the archdiocese's continued commitment and support to efforts aimed at combating human trafficking. His assurance was received with gratitude and renewed hope.

One of the most moving moments of the celebration was the testimony of a survivor who courageously shared her painful yet inspiring journey. She had been trafficked to Saudi Arabia under false promises and returned home bearing deep emotional and physical wounds. With tears in her eyes, she said: "I regret not listening to my mother and going to Saudi Arabia, only to return with multiple challenges. But I thank God for the St. Bakhita Network for the services offered that have made me who I am today."

Her testimony deeply touched the congregation and brought the theme of the day vividly to life. It

served as a powerful reminder that behind every statistic lies a human story, longing for dignity, healing, and restoration.

The commemoration of St. Josephine Bakhita's feast in the Archdiocese of Gulu was not only a liturgical celebration but also a strong call to action. It reaffirmed the Church's unwavering commitment to defending human dignity and standing in solidarity with victims of human trafficking. Inspired by the life and witness of St. Bakhita, the faithful were reminded that even in the darkest experiences of suffering, hope and freedom are possible through faith, action and collective responsibility.

