

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya.

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Pope's February prayer intention: For parishes to be open communities



In his prayer intention video for February, Pope Francis asked parishes to truly be communities: places of listening and welcome whose doors are always open to all, no one excluded. In the video, which began with an image of the outside of a beautiful but empty parish church, followed by that of the same church full of people, thus becoming even more beautiful, Pope Francis noted that every parish should put a sign on their door saying, "Free Admission". In a press release accompa-

nying the second prayer intention of 2023, the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network explained that with those words Pope Francis wanted to remind all of us that there are no special requirements for entering, because, as he said, "parishes are not a club for the few, which give a certain kind of social belonging." Indeed, in Pope Francis' vision, parishes are "close-knit communities, without bureaucracy, people-centered, a place where the gift of the Sacraments can be found."

LAWS IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



The Roman Catholic Church is a highly organized community of religious belief, worship, witness, and action. ‘Canon Law’ is the name for its Church order and discipline, its structures, rules, and procedures. [James A. Coriden, *An Introduction to Canon Law, Revised* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), xi]. The question is “why should there be rules in a Church community?” Our point of departure is that, every Church, although based on what its members believe to be divine revelation, is also a human institution, that is a society. As any other human society, Churches too require rules for the attainment of their ends. G.J. Woodall points out that: “The Church is the community of the baptized in Jesus Christ, united to him by the Holy Spirit and in him united to the Father. One justification that has been put forward for the existence of Canon Law is that every society or community needs to regulate its activities and behavior in an ordered way if it is to live in peace; wherever there is a society, there is also law, according to an ancient saying (‘ubi societas, ibi lex’). Like any other society, then, the Church needs its organization and system of law for its own specific community. It is similar to other forms of society in that it has a law, but differs from them in that it has its own law.” That is why we refer to it as a society (*sui generis*) in a class by itself. (G.J. Woodall, *A Passion for Justice. An Introductory Guide to the Code of Canon Law*, Leominster, Gracewing, 2011, 1). The Second Vatican Council taught both that the Church is perfectly holy and that it remains always in need of sanctification

THE AOSK LEGAL OFFICE

DATA PROTECTION: DATA PROTECTION ACT, 2019 LAWS OF KENYA

As data protection is becoming more and more valuable, the need for organizations to protect these data is also constantly increasing. Besides violating the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons, not complying with the data protection regulations can lead to risky situations that could harm an organization’s credibility, reputation, and financial status.

The constitutional right to privacy, which forms the backbone of most data protection laws, has been long guaranteed by the various iterations of the Constitution of Kenya. Notwithstanding the fact that the current Kenyan constitution guarantees the right to privacy in Article 31, it has proven not enough to protect people's information in the digital age.

The act has several provisions that deal specifically with several facets of data protection including the right to privacy, rights of rectification and erasure, and freedom from discrimination. For instance, every data controller or processor like government agencies, and other consumer-heavy organizations such as supermarkets must ensure the subjects' privacy rights are protected, the data is collected in a transparent manner and for a legitimate purpose, the data is limited to the minimum necessary for that purpose, and the rights to correction and erasure are preserved. This is outlined as the principles of data protection in **Section 25** of the Act. The Act provides for the rights of data subjects in **Section 26** among which are the rights to erasure, correction, deletion, and consent with regard to the collection and use of their data. Significantly, the Act provides for instances in which data may be collected from a source other than the data subject, such instances include; whereby data is already part of the public record, there is consent from the subject to that collection, the data subject does not have capacity (such as in the case of a minor) and in the case of criminal investigations or proceedings. Even then, the Act further provides that reasonable steps must be taken to notify the data subject that their data is being processed; these provisions are contained in **Section 28** and **Section 29** of the Act. Failure to (reasonably) notify the subject on the part of the data processor of any procession of their personal data is classified as an offense under **Section 30(3)** of the Act. The Act establishes the Office of Data Protection Commissioner who works in consultation with the Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and

Technology (ICT) the Act further provides that the ODPC may work with National Security Organs under Section 8(2). However, the gap is that regulation of information transmitted by mobile money transactions and internet remains a challenge. It has become especially rampant in the last few years due to increased use of popular mobile money platform like M-Pesa. It is clear that Kenya has a progressive law and administrative body in the form of the ODPC (**Office Of The Data Protection Commissioner Kenya**) in place. There are, however, improvements to be made to ensure the proper implementation of the Act and the office that comes with it



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



AOSK JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION (AOSK JPIC)

World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life Celebration in Units

In 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life. This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd. This Feast is also known as Candlemas Day; the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples. Throughout the world, all religious men and women celebrated the world day of prayer for consecrated life. At AOSK, all units celebrated this day with great commitment and reflection on their gift of vocation to religious life. The sisters celebrated at Unit levels together with the Bishops and priests of the respective Units. The purpose of such a day is threefold: in the first place, it answers the intimate need to praise the Lord more solemnly and to thank him for the great gift of consecrated life, which enriches and gladdens the Christian community by the multiplicity of its charisms and by the edifying fruits of so many lives totally given to the cause of the Kingdom of God. Consecrated life, be-

fore being a commitment of men and women, is a gift which comes from on high, an initiative of the Father “who draws his creatures to himself with a special love and for a special mission” (VC 17). This special love profoundly touches the heart of the one called, who is urged by the Holy Spirit to place himself or herself in the footsteps of Christ, in a particular way of following him, by means of assuming the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience. A stupendous gift!



The Sisters celebrating the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life at Ngong Unit.

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL

The main objective of the Pax Christi Programme is to train Sisters and Youth in active non-violence, peacebuilding, non-violent communication, and trauma healing providing them with the tools and skills necessary to become trainers themselves in their own local communities reaching out to youth and members of religious communities, empowering them to be artisans of peace and accompany victims of violence. The sisters and the young people trained in active non-violence are imbued with positive values as agents of change in their communities and significantly contribute to the restoration of a culture of peace, reconciliation, and tolerance, and to the improvement of the living conditions of their communities. Overall, the youth have discovered after training that conflicts are part of life and the only way out is to look for a better way to handle them. Trainers have illustrated that no particular party is right or wrong when it comes to conflict. The participants have appreciated the reality of it all. They have accepted and appreciated the uniqueness of each person and came to realize that their points of view can never be the same.



Sr. Elizabeth Training the Youth at M'bungoni on Active non-violence

Lenten Period



The theme of this year Lenten campaign is “Reconciliation for an Inclusive Nation” calling upon the People of Kenya to live as true brothers and sisters. During the Launch by the Catholic Bishops in Kakamega Diocese, the Chairperson of KCCB, His Grace Arch Bishop Kivuva in a statement read by the vice His Grace Arch Bishop Muhatia noted that the theme for this year was timely considering the current State of our Nation. “Reconciliation for an Inclusive Nation” is a wakeup call for all of us to examine our conscience and reflect on how to improve on our relationships as a people and as a nation. The 2022 General Elections left Kenyans divided and

there is therefore urgent need for an intentional public embrace of true healing and reconciliation in order for the nation to leap into a development trajectory. As we reflect together, our Lenten campaign this year 1st week calls for Reconciliation, invitation to reflect on ways in which we accelerate injustices, and work towards building opportunities of dialogue. Week 2, reflect on mental wellness, with the rise of mental illness triggered by economic hardships, family challenges among others. Week 3 is a call to reflect with the youth who are the hope of our society, a call to support the youth in their endeavor to make the world a better place. The 4th week is an invitation to reflect on economic justice, many Kenyans are finding it difficult to make ends meet, why is the cost of living rising? What is our contribution towards this? The last week is a call to join our Holy Father in protecting and caring for mother earth as we reflect on ecological education. Let the journey of lent bring us back to our senses as we “Rend our hearts and not our garments” (Joel 2:13) and be reconciled for an inclusive nation.

AOSK CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA

Each of us has a right to food and more precisely at least three meals per day. Unfortunately, food insecurity and malnourishment plagues millions of people around the world, worse in Africa and more particularly in some parts of Kenya. The most affected are women and children. The UNICEF Regional director Mohamed M. Fall put it right that we “need to save children’s lives but also protect childhood”. Children are losing their homes, their education and their right to grow up safe from harm due to food insecurity and other vulnerabilities narrowly in some parts of Kenya. Despite many efforts by the Kenyan government and other concerned parties to address food insecurity issues in arid and semi-arid lands, getting a lasting solution to food insecurity has been indescribable. There are worries that if a lasting solution is not found, repeated food insecurity would deplete the economic base of the arid and semi-arid communities exposing them to chronic food insecurity. In fact, the famine and drought situation in Kenya is likely to grow worse in most places in Kenya, the crops in farms have dried up before maturity. This denotes severe food insecurity, in this case, children and other vulnerable groups deserve more attention now than ever. The solution is not to ferry the children to charitable care institutions but rather transition donors and people of goodwill to support vulnerable, reintegrated children and those who are at risk by supporting their families to have sustainable income-generating activities. We too urge everyone in their big and small ways to be more sensitive and alert to taking care of our mother earth so as to reduce such extreme climatic degradation.

HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SISTERHOODS OF KENYA

Awareness creation on Mental Illnesses.

During the month of February, HASK conducted a series of trainings on NCDs. Among them was awareness creation and advocacy on mental health to health care providers. A mental illness is a dysfunction that negatively affects someone’s thoughts, emotions or behaviors and interferes in their ability to live a full life in society. Mental illness, also called mental health disorders, refers to a wide range of mental health conditions or disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior. Examples include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviors, extreme fears, and obsessive-compulsive behavior. Factors that facilitate mental illness are diverse, and some are preventable while others are biological or genetically acquired and we might have very little to prevent them. These factors include;

Nature vs. Nurture: It is believed that nature shapes behavior. Environments that do not allow positive personal development affect the mental stability of their members. It is not just about the family and the environment. The culture of a people, the kind of relationships we make, our choices and experiences.

Genetics and Family History: People can be genetically predisposed to mental health conditions like depression or anxiety disorders. This can be worsened by beliefs, traditions and culture like people believing that they have been bewitched while

ety in their lives. They offer a temporal relieve from their trouble and in the end make the situation worse. Mental illness can be managed by being kind to one self and understanding ways on how you can cope up with stress, strengthening social connections, thinking positively and seeking help when there is need.

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Benefits of Insuring your Travel !!!



case you are hospitalized. In case of any emergency, it would also cover the cost of transportation to the nearest town or your hometown. When you are travelling in a foreign country, the medical cost tends to be pretty high. Travel insurance comes in handy in such cases. There are also other health risks associated with travel, which are covered by a travel insurance policy. Travel insurance covers the expenses of rescheduling flights, as well as the cost of food and hotel stay for the period of the delay. It also covers expenses incurred in case of loss of passport. A travel insurance policy will cover the loss of baggage or misplacement, and also provide you with an amount to spend on buying essentials. Considering all these benefits, a travel insurance is indeed an absolute necessity that could well protect you and your family financially while travelling.

AOSK SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

Youth Empowerment

There are 3 main objectives of empowerment; self- empowerment through individual action, mutual empowerment, that is interpersonal, and social empowerment in the outcomes of social action.

The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya through the Sister-Led Youth Empowerment initiative work to ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged youth have improved socioeconomic sufficiency and are resilient. One way of achieving this is by supporting young entrepreneurs to use their skills in small enterprises for economic sufficiency, improved livelihood, and contributing to the building of the nation.

Entrepreneurs play a key role in any economy, using the skills and initiative necessary to anticipate needs and bring good new ideas to market. Entrepreneurship that proves to be successful in taking on the risks of creating a start-up is rewarded with profits, fame, and continued growth opportunities. There are 4 types of entrepreneurship: small businesses, scalable start-ups, large companies, and social entrepreneurship. The association of sisterhoods of Kenya supports small business entrepreneurship which is the idea of opening a business without turning it into a large conglomerate or opening many chains. A single-location restaurant, one grocery shop, a retail shop to sell your handmade goods, or a salon are some of the small businesses supported by the AOSK-SLYI program.

The AOSK-SLYI small business entrepreneurs go through various stages of preparation before they venture into the business world. First, they go through

training to polish their skills in various fields such as; hairdressing and beauty therapy, fashion and design, catering, electrical installation, mechanics, plumbing, masonry, and carpentry among other skills in various Technical Training Institutions. Apart from the technical training the youth are also trained in entrepreneurship during their school year after which they go through a workshop to prepare them on how to start and run a business, and since they start the business as a group they are also taken through a discussion on the importance of working as a team for better achievement and production. The youth also have a mentorship and coaching program where they are mentored and coached by business practitioners on the best practices of running a business.



Sr. Mercy Mwayi, FSJ during an Entrepreneurship training session with the youth at the little daughters of St. Joseph on February 2023

RELIGIOUS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

RAHT Annual General Meeting 2023

Last year culminated the official period of the RAHT board and thus to get started for the year 2023, a new management board was to be elected. The 2023 AGM brought together representatives from the five arms of RAHT; the then-sitting board members, AOSK, RSCK, member congregations and RAHT staff members. The AGM was a success with members rejuvenated especially by the in-

crease in interest of new congregations joining RAHT



RAHT representatives during the 2023 AGM

Radio Maria Visit

RAHT was invited to have a radio talk on child safeguarding with a keen focus on human trafficking at Radio Maria Nairobi. The sessions were informative as they surrounded the fact that human trafficking had become a large threat to children living in informal settlements. From the session, one case came of a child who was trafficked for organ removal in Tanzania. This definitely shows there is a need to have more sessions to create awareness in the communities surrounding us. The session reach was 900000 listeners which is an average listenership for the radio station

AOSK SCORE ECD

Windows of Opportunity in Early Childhood

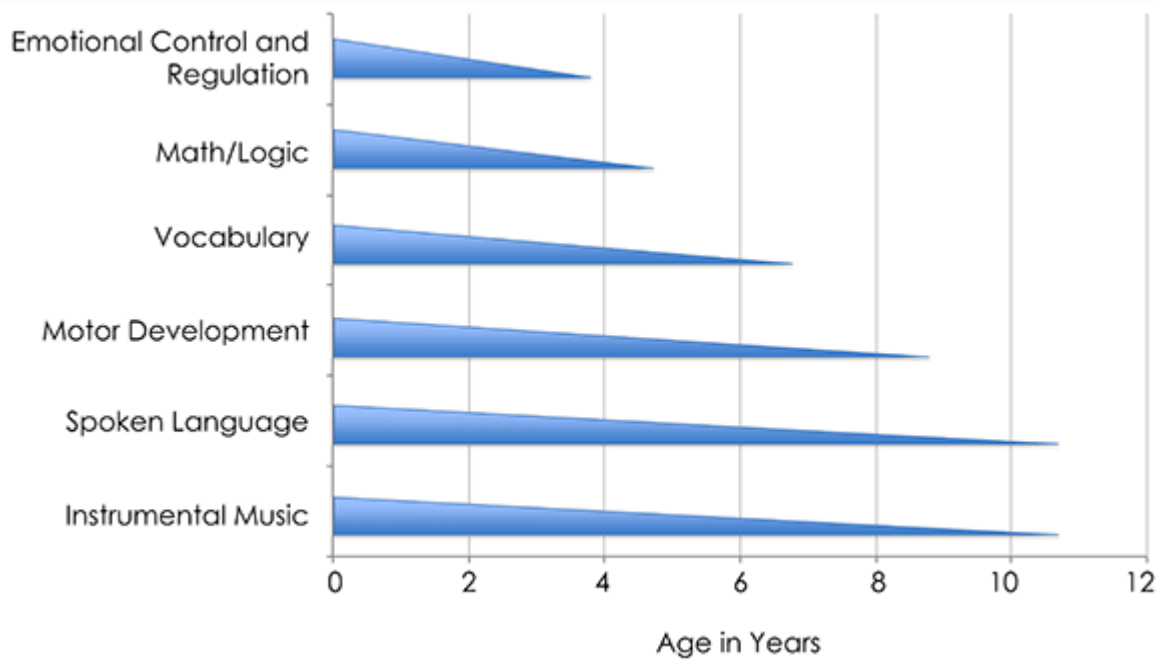
These are prime times for the development of important skills, referred to as “windows of opportunity.” Some of these “windows” start opening before the baby is born, and may close at different stages of the child’s early years and still others continue to open into their adult years. Even after the windows are closed beyond their prime time for closing, all is not lost. However, more effort, time and energy are needed to teach the missing skills.

These windows of opportunity are what Maria Montessori called “**sensitive periods**.” According to Montessori, all children experience these same, almost-magical

moments in their development, moments during which they soak up specific concepts with remarkable ease.

The graph below shows windows of opportunity for different capacities during early childhood.





A child's brain is almost fully developed by the time he enters Kindergarten. The period of the first 5 years is the most critical window of opportunity when brains develop connections faster than at any other time in a child's life. These connections power the brain and can impact lifelong learning and success.

The windows for Motor Control, Maths and Language all open at birth and continue to develop through the Early Childhood years to beyond the adult years, as long as children are exposed to activities which will nurture their language, problem solving and intellectual development through early stimulation activities.

The window of opportunity for emotional control and demonstration of emotional attachments start before birth until the child is two years of age. This window is only open during the first two years of life. Much of this development depends on how the caring adults in the child's life demonstrate their love and raises the child to demonstrate his language of love, security and caring.

Children have a very tight deadline to master the essential skills they need. That's why they are most likely to be frustrated when they feel that the adults and the environment around them do not support their needs to master those skills. Therefore, as adults we need to support more and restrict less.

Formation Department

The Reality of Incarnation

Aosk Chemchemi ya Uzima formation program has continued to offer quality in-service training for formators in the field as well as community animators. The department appreciates the support Hilton foundation has continued to offer to facilitate on-going formation programs and strengthening formators' capacity to address issues affecting religious life in our contemporary world. One of the challenges addressed this month was 'Cultural Ignorance, Distractions, Syncretism and Cultic Fears' through the topic: 'Integrated Religious Formation as a Discerned Empowerment in Consecrated Life Today' facilitated by Rev. Prof. Clement Majawa. In his introduction he made it very clear to participants that, 'a mature, good, quality, empowered and integrated religious formation and life is a balance between the divine culture of God 'John 1:14' and the human culture of a religious. He narrowed his focus on the Mystery of Incarnation and the Traditional Culture as the timely means of integration of religious formation and empowerment of transformative consecrated life today. He emphasized the challenges of cultism and superstitious believes are real challenges in the church today and encouraged the religious to be deeply rooted in prayer for the divinity to empower and transform humanity. The facilitator encouraged participants to strive and reach a point in their religious maturity where the divine in them must empower and transform their humanity. Jesus discerned and chose to do the will of the father in the midst of the devil's attacks and therefore as God's followers we are called to do the same.

The reality of incarnation compels, purifies, elevates and transforms a human culture. Thus, Culture of Christ teaches, purifies, elevates and Christianizes the human culture of a religious person. In the light of Incarnation, the Divine Culture descends upon the Human Culture, and in return the human culture ascends and is divinized to Integrated Religious Holiness. Therefore, integration of the two natures is a very important ingredient of integrated religious formation. Human culture and Divine culture always go hand in hand together. Formators are encouraged to seriously take up formation ministry and work towards their own integration to enhance good relationship between Cultural Formation and Spiritual formation: in particular, to look at the way in which Divine Spiritual formation is shaped by, or in turn reshapes the Human Cultural Formation.



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS FOR PARTNERING WITH US.



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