

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya.

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Pope's January prayer intention: For gift of diversity in the Church



Pope Francis released his prayer intention for the month of January 2024, and he invited Christians to embrace the diversity of charisms in the Church as a richness.

“Let us pray that the Spirit help us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian communities, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions within the Catholic Church.”

As the New Year got underway, Pope Francis released a video to accompany his prayer intention for the month of January 2024, during which Christians celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

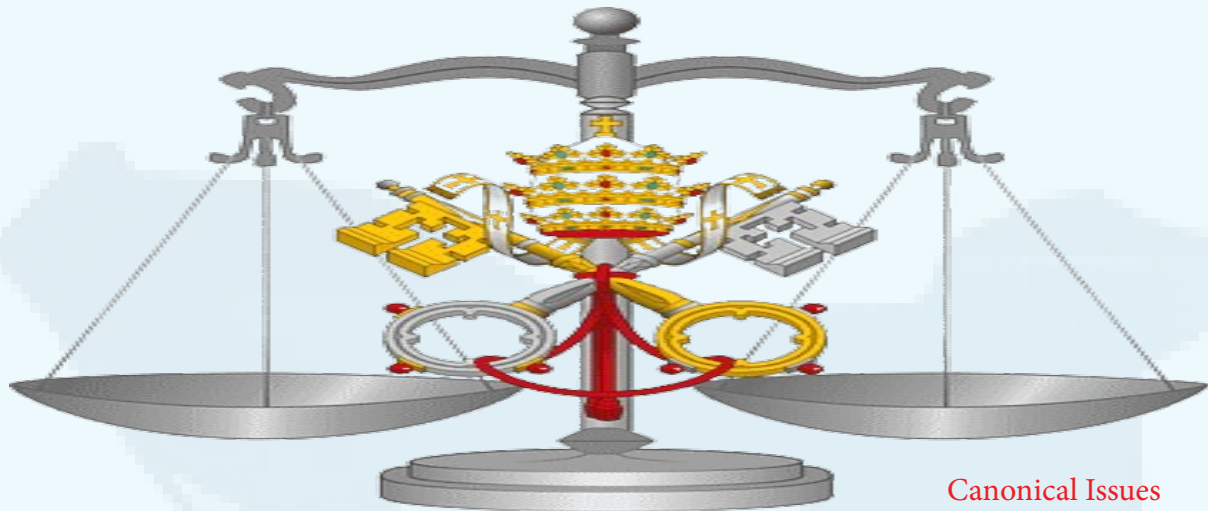
He noted that diversity and unity were already present in the early Christian communities, adding that the tension brought about by diversity “had to be resolved on a higher level.” However, the pope denoted that diversity in the Church includes our brothers and sisters of different Christian confessions. He offered the example of the diversity of rites within the Eastern Churches that are in communion with Rome.

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Let us pray that the Spirit help us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian communities, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions within the Catholic Church.

CANONICAL ISSUES

The Procedure for a Religious Institute of a Diocesan Right to Obtain Pontifical Right



It is the mind of the Church, that after a diocesan institute has developed its membership and spread to other dioceses, and has given satisfaction in its pursuit of good works, it may apply to the Holy See for pontifical recognition. In this mind when petitioning for pontifical right status, the supreme moderator should consult with the membership, since the change in status will affect the entire membership (Can. 119, 3°). The supreme moderator and the council should indicate the reasons for recommending the change in juridical status. The recommendation for a change in status may have come from the general council, a province, a local house or a member. Time should be allowed for the membership's understanding of the implications and discussion before presenting the proposal to the general chapter and then on to CICALSAL. Seeking pontifical right status is a free act of the institute. CICALSAL requires a history of the institute and the juridical steps leading to its erection as a diocesan right institute.

The documents and information that are to be sent to the Holy See for pontifical recognition are:

- a. Curriculum vitae for the founder or founders of the first superior general of the institute.
- b. A historical-juridical report of the institute from its beginnings.
- c. Two copies of the community prayer books, ceremonial and book of customs.
- d. Photographs of the habit of the professed and the novices.
- e. Eight copies of the constitutions and directory of the institute; revised in accord to the Code of Canon Law.
- f. Current statistics of membership: names and surnames of the perpetually and temporary professed members; number of novices and postulants; age of the perpetually professed members; number of houses and names of the dioceses where the members are living and working.
- g. Testimonial letter from the diocesan Bishop of the generalate of the institute and from the other Bishops of those dioceses in which the institute is present. Such letters are to be sent directly to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, together

with the opinion of the same Bishops about the following items, namely; stability and discipline of the institute; initial and on-going formation; ability to ensure responsible government of a religious institute of pontifical right, besides the present superior general; administration of goods; liturgical and sacramental dimension; collaboration with the local Church.

- h. Financial status: besides declaring any debts, if any, point only: a) the number of houses owned by the institute; b) the sum of money (in USA dollars) in Banks.
- i. A statement regarding the following points: a) any facts of an extraordinary nature with reference to the founder, such as visions, etc.; b) whether in the diocese where the generalate is located, there exists already any other religious institute with the same name and charism.

Written by Sr. Eutropia Mwakamba, CPS

LEGAL ISSUES

Housing Levy

Decent and affordable housing in Kenya is important as it affords dignity, security, and privacy to Kenyans. The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 mandates the State to take legislative, policy, and other measures to achieve the progressive realization of among others, the right to adequate and accessible housing. Kenya has made considerable strides in addressing decent housing but more is required, as has been recommended by recent studies. In July 2023, the government implemented the controversial Levy, compelling employees and employers to contribute 1.5 percent of their gross monthly salary to a fund designated for affordable housing. The Housing Levy is a mandatory financial contribution meant to help employees' get affordable housing and improve the housing situation in Kenya. The deduction is to help fund a national building project of up to 250,000 low-cost homes annually. The President championed the affordable housing fund as his flagship initiative, utilizing it to generate employment opportunities for millions of unemployed youth in the country. However, the project implementation encountered obstacles in addressing legal challenges, with stakeholders questioning its underlying framework.

The High Court asserted that the imposition of the housing levy against persons in formal employment to the exclusion of other non-formal income earners to support the national housing policy is without justification is unfair, discriminatory, and irrational. The Court of Appeal on January 26, 2024, declined to lift the suspension of the Housing Levy, thereby preventing the government from collecting contributions from both employees and employers. The Attorney General and National Treasury had petitioned the Court of Appeal to lift the suspension of the Housing Levy, imposed by the High Court in November 2023. However, the Court of Appeal rejected their request, arguing that it's in the "public interest" to wait for the determination of pending appeals against the High Court ruling. Further, it would not be in the public interest to grant a stay whose effect is to allow a statute that is constitutionally illegal to continue being in the law books pending the hearing of an appeal.

Written by Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG.

SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

Launching of the AOSK-SLYI Phase II Project Implementation

The AOSK Sisters Led Youth Empowerment is implementing the project's second phase thanks to the Conrad Hilton Foundation. The second phase was launched on 14th of January 2024, at Savelberg Retreat Centre. Before the launch, the program had brought together 50 Administrators from different technical and vocational training institutions for a two-day startup meeting for onboarding the new members and getting to understand more about the program and what is expected of them. In attendance during the launch was the AOSK Executive Secretary, Sr. Dr. Pasilisa Namikoye, LSOSF, and representatives from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Creative Economy led by Director Emily Maina, AOSK staff, Administrators, and Youth beneficiaries. The project goal aims to improve socioeconomic sufficiency and resilience among supported vulnerable and disadvantaged youth between 15 and 25 years of age. It has three specific objectives

SO1: Institutions Capacity strengthening: Supported

Catholic Technical Institutions have enhanced capacity to sustainably offer services to target vulnerable and disadvantaged youth between the ages of 15-25 years

SO2: Employability: Increased number of vulnerable and disadvantaged youth applying acquired market-driven knowledge and skills

SO3: Incultation of Values: Target vulnerable and disadvantaged youth to have enhanced psychosocial well-being.

The program will be implemented in partnership with 50 technical training institutions spread across 21 dioceses that include Mombasa, Marsabit, Isiolo, Meru, Embu, Kitui, Wote, Machakos, Nyeri, Murang'a, Nakuru, Kericho, Kakamega, Kisumu, Homa Bay, Kisii, Nairobi, Nyahururu, Kitale, Ngong, Eldoret and Siaya. Similar to Phase I the program hopes to support 1000 vulnerable and disadvantaged youth from these dioceses with scholarships to undertake technical and vocational courses of their choice for sustainability.



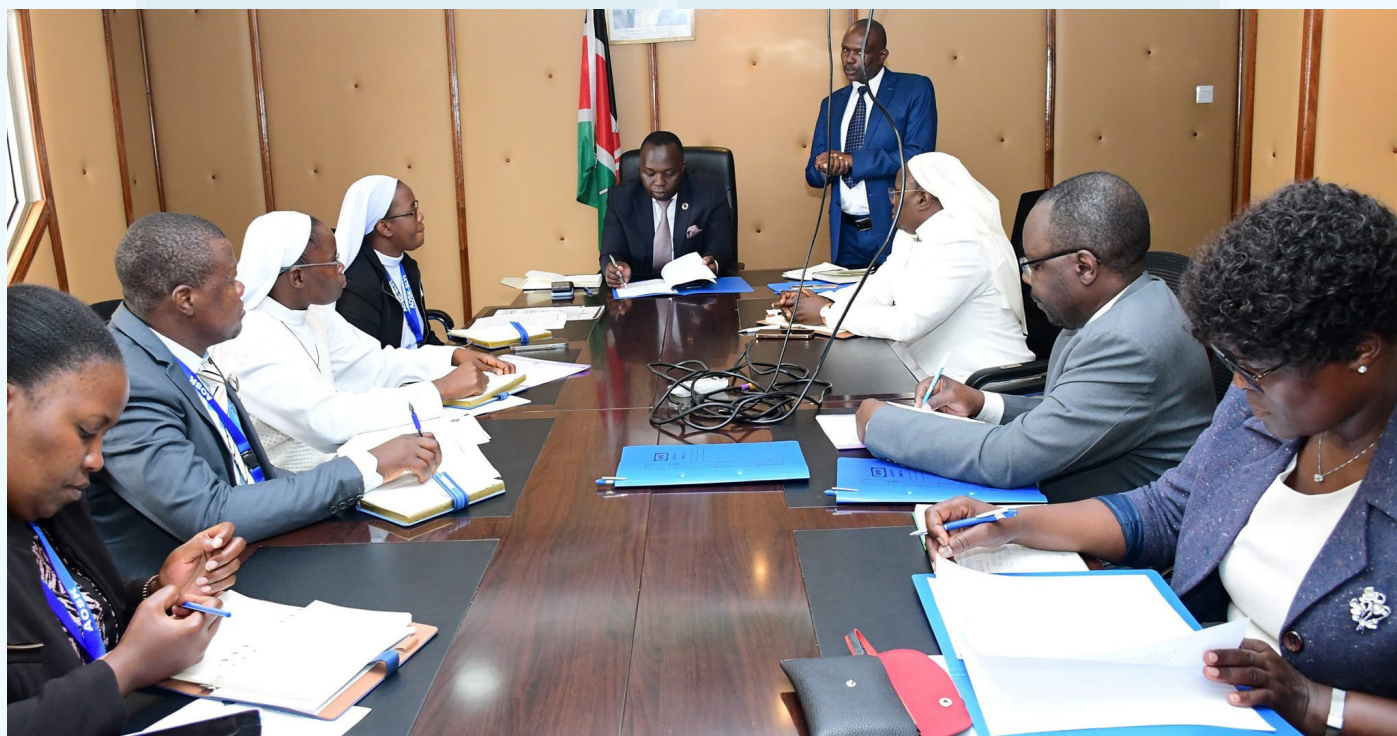
Administrators from the 50 Technical Training Institutions during their commissioning and launch of the Phase II project

Elsewhere, on the 17th of January 2024, the AOSK attended a meeting with the State Department for Youth Affairs and Creative Economy to discuss avenues of partnerships. Led by the Technical Secretary of Youth Development, Mr. Raymond Ouma the state department is willing to work and walk with AOSK by amplifying the

AOSK-SLYI Initiative. Through the partnership, the different youth groups that the AOSK is working with will have access to varying youth-related programs as well as access to financial institutions.

The State Department will also initiate AOSK-SLYI to various opportunities within the government and the State Department of Youth

Affairs and Creative Economy to broaden its visibility. the two organizations agreed to open up youth events to multiple youth-related matters to effectively empower the youth such as; Ajira Digital, Talanta Hela, and Kikao among others.



Mr. Raymond Ouma, technical Secretary Youth Development at the State Department of Youth Affairs and Creative Economy chairing the partnership meeting with AOSK staff at the ministry's offices.

Written by Sr. Mercy Mwayi, FSJ

THE CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA

“Rays of Renewal: AOSK-CCCK Illuminates Lodwar AU with Family-Centric Wisdom”

In the heart of the expansive Lodwar AU, where the sun casts its golden glow over the arid landscapes, a transformative initiative unfolded. The AOSK-CCCK Program, championing its goal of Holistic family and community-based care, arranged a week-long sensitization forum in the form of Chiefs barazas. From January 16th to 22nd, 2024, the program reached beyond conventional boundaries, actively engaging with over 600 community members.

The underlying objective of this grand undertaking was to infuse awareness into the fabric of communities

in Lokichar at John Paul II Children's Home, Christ Risen Parish Napete in Nakwamekwi, Nadirkonyen Catholic Centre, and St. Patrick Nomadic Girls in Lokitaung. The focus was clear to illuminate the significance of upbringing children within the embrace of a family setup.

Choosing the unique approach of Chiefs barazas was strategic. It aimed to harness the influence and presence of local administrative government units. This platform provided a conducive environment for communities to openly discuss parenting challenges and collaboratively formulate tangible solutions.

The echoes of positive parenting resonated through the sensitization forum, gently reminding community members of their profound parental obligations. The emphasis was on creating family environments that are not just caring and loving but nurturing, providing children with the optimal conditions to thrive.

The importance of families took center stage, drawing

inspiration and reflection from the timeless wisdom of Catholic Social Teachings. The Mother Church's call to care for children reverberated through the discussions, emphasizing the sacred responsibility bestowed upon communities.

As the sun set on the last day of the sensitization forum, a tangible shift was felt in the air. The community ignited with newfound insights and expressed a collective desire to uphold best practices in parenting. Their commitment extended not only to their own families but also to the broader community, echoing a pledge for positive change.

In the vast expanse of Lodwar AU, where the winds carry stories through the ages, the AOSK-CCCK Program left an indelible mark. It wasn't merely a forum; it was a baraza of change, a communal gathering that sowed the seeds of positive parenting and safeguarding, nurturing the promise of a brighter future for the children of Lodwar.



Sr. Delvin Mukhwana, DHM addressing the community members during a field visit in January 2024.

Written by Mr. Joseph Wichenje

JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Environmental Peacebuilding & Interreligious

In environmental peacebuilding, we integrate care for the environment into our work for peace and justice. Our vision is one of peaceful communities in which people support one another, everyone's basic needs and rights are recognized and met, and natural resources are used in such a way that they are preserved and renewed for future generations. We know that our life and our future depend immediately on those of other living beings and the planet, and we acknowledge our special responsibility, as humans, for what Pope Francis has called "our common home". Environmental peacebuilding has become urgent in the background of environmental degradation, mass extinction, and climate change. People around the world are feeling the impacts of these massive changes, caused by human behavior. Many of the conflicts brought to peacebuilders' attention these days are triggered or sharpened by environmental factors. Conflicts during droughts between farmers and pastoralists in the ASAL are a case in point. However, there is good news, too. Joint environmental projects can be a very effective way of getting people from different sides of a conflict to work together on shared practical problems, and to build trust and relationships in the process.

JPIC Gender Desk

Femicide is a term for the hate crime of systematically killing women, girls, or females in general because of their gender and/or sex. There has been a cry from the public calling on the activists in Kenya to say the country is experiencing increased rates of Femicide. In Kilifi the JPIC Peacemakers and Human Rights Teachers joined other civil societies to call on the protection and stopping of this inhuman act that is spreading widely in the country .

What environmental peacebuilding looks like in practice, depends on the situation in any given location, and the needs, strengths, ideas, and networks of particular communities and the peacebuilders who work with them. AOSK-JPIC has begun exploring their experiences and ideas with Sisters, Peacemakers, and Human Rights Teachers in Nakuru and will continue in Mombasa and Lodwar soon. Within Tumaini Center, AOSK-JPIC is collecting waste paper to support a recycling project in Malindi that supports disadvantaged girls and women. Small steps, too, count when it comes to caring for people, the community, and the planet. If you would like to share with us how you are already working for peace, justice, and the environment, please get in touch.



JPIC team handing over waste papers for recycling





Peacemaker Ms Patricia and Human Rights Teacher Mr. Athuman in Kilifi.

Written by Sr. Bernadette Nzioka, DSH

AOSK SCORE ECD

SCORE ECD enhancing the potential of caregivers in nurturing care in Siaya County story of Franciscan Sisters of St. Anna.

The AOSK SCORE ECD Team visited the Franciscan sisters of St Anna in Siaya County. This visit aimed to give support supervision on ECD implementation. The team attended caregivers' group sessions which are facilitated by community health promoters (CHPs) who give ECD messages to the caregivers who are supported by the sisters' master trainers.

Sr Mary Jane and Sr. Irene Inviolata FSSA have been master trainers in the project since the inception of Phase III. Sr Irene Inviolata, exclaimed "*The nurturing care framework (good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, security and safety and opportunities for early learning) has proven to be a dispensable tool on the journey of the SCORE ECD III project which is being implemented in East Asembo Ward in Siaya county*". The sisters have registered a total number of 447 (60 Male, 387 female) caregivers in SCORE ECD III Cohort 2. This is to create a better environment for the current and future generations, starting in early childhood. Currently, the project has 30 neighbor groups (26 females and 4 for males). The ECD sessions are going on in the villages of Katom-

bo, Kaminogedo, and Nguka. SCORE ECD uses the group model approach to deliver the key messages on nurturing care to these caregivers. Sister involata continued to express "*we are also glad to have the male involvement picking up strongly in these areas because of the SCORE ECD III project which has taught them to be supportive of their wives helping them in the household work and even accompanying them for the ANC/PNC clinics since that will make them confident, caring and respected*". Through the project, caregivers have improved in responsive caregiving whereby all parents are participating in the holistic growth of their children. "*These achievements in implementing the nurturing care model is so inspiring to us as the ECD Champions. our love and desires as SMTs are to ensure that every child can realize the right to survive and thrive and now our caregiver's eyes are opened, to embrace the SCORE ECD project which is helping children to Survive and Thrive to Transform health and human potential we needed to empower more sisters who will scale up our ECD work,*" Sr. Mary Jane explained.



Components of Nurturing Care Framework



Sr. Inviolata and Sr. Mary Jane

Written by Christine Nguna

AOSK INSURANCE AGENCY

Kenyan Pension and Retirement Plans

According to Sections 9 and 10 of the Employment Act of 2007, an employee is hired under a contract of service that covers pensions and plans for which the employee is eligible (section 10(3)(iii)). This indicates that participation in pension plans by employees is permitted by law. An employee with a defined benefit pension typically has limited options when they quit their job. They now have the option of accepting the funds as a lump amount or an annuity, which is the promise of future payments on a monthly basis. They could even be able to obtain both in combination.

Using benefits from pension plans prior to retirement

Where an employee of a defined benefit scheme leaves employment before attaining retirement age, he or she will receive not more than 50 percent of the accrued benefits. The remaining 50 percent will be retained in the scheme and will be paid to the member in accordance with the trust deed and rules upon attaining the normal retirement age.

An employee of a defined contribution scheme shall receive his or her contributions and 50 percent of the employer's contributions, if he or she retires before attaining retirement age. The remaining 50 percent of the employer's benefit will be retained in the scheme and will be paid to the employee in accordance with the trust deed and rules upon attaining the normal retirement age.

Utilization of Retirement Benefits for Mortgage Purposes

Following the gazettelement of the Retirement Benefits Regulations 2020, members of retirement benefits schemes can now purchase residential houses using a portion of their pension savings. According to the act, members will be allowed up to 40 percent of their benefits for the purchase of homes provided it does not go beyond seven million shillings. By the time of its implementation, scheme members on retirement or receiving their pension earnings could not benefit from this provision.

Written by Mr. Francis Mutuku

AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA INSTITUTE

Reopening for 2nd Semester 2024 at Chemchemi Ya Uzima

Formation Department

The academic year 2023/2024 for the second semester started on 3rd January 2024 with the 31 student formators in training who came back excited due to having had formation experience in formation houses of different congregations for a week. The experience was enriching and it exposed them to various dynamics of formation.

For the formation department, it was a time of receiving a New Year's gift as it opened its doors for the January intake of 16 new members (14 Sisters and 2 priests) from different countries. The new group underwent orientation as the old formation group was welcomed back from their formation experience. It was rich with shared experiences and expectations

of the unfolding of the formation program ahead of them.

The orientation was followed by a series of Workshops shared by both the new and older groups of formators. The formators took part in a social afternoon activity to welcome new members to Chemchemi. It was a lively event full of fun and creativity as they used their God-given talents in various presentations.

The short courses have also kicked off so well and the students are very enthusiastic and willing to learn.

We remain open as God nurtures and moulds the life of the formators in the training so that they too may be his instrument as they prepare to form others.



Students Keenly following up a Presentation during the Transactional Analysis Workshop

Written by Sr. Florence Nyamai, OSU

Institute of Psycho-Spiritual Counselling.

Why ISC at Chemchemi Ya Uzima?

A home away from home, mindful of the human person holistically, thinks about healing relationships and interacts with students as human persons. The institution takes Integrative Spiritual Counselling as a holistic growth facilitation course. It is a place that facilitates holistic growth. Meaning, that the clients are made to understand that they are being facilitated to grow spiritually, psychologically, and above all emotionally. This is a place where a person is given the skills to first introspect self (examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes), then grow and restore the image of God. With these skills, one can facilitate the growth of others.

That is why we focus on the Personality Model which includes;

1. Higher Self (the Spiritual Self).
2. Middle Self (Conscious and Intellectual Self).
3. Lower Self (Unconscious Self).

Come and discover more as growth is facilitated and Relationships strongly build among people, families, and nations.

Given the fact that we are living in a challenging and dynamic world, we are wounded in various ways and forms. We are all affected by the poor economy, social breakdowns, death of loved ones, wars, lack of jobs, and poor earnings to sustain our daily lives among others. Such situations need to be keenly dealt with, but without the skill to handle them, we do not make any headway. There is a need for one-on-one facilitation to process their emotions and psychological challenges before being able to facilitate the challenges of their clients. We welcome you to Chemchemi Ya Uzima to attain these skills.

Written by Sr. Sophia Wanyama, LSMIG

HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SISTERHOODS OF KENYA

For the year 2024, The Health Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (HASK) will continue with awareness, advocacy, and screening of NCDs in the communities served by Catholic sisters. Among the non-communicable diseases include Hypertension, Diabetes, Cancer, and Mental illness. HASK's experience from last year's outcomes is that people fear being screened for mental health problems. These barriers to mental health-seeking behavior can be linked to diverse factors that are widely influenced by cultural, societal, individual, or systemic. Some of the factors include but not limited to;

Social stigma: This is the fear of being judged and discriminated by the family, friends and society. This fear can also be associated with the personality and characteristics of the individual.

Lack of knowledge about mental health. Many people have no idea of mental health issues and causes. This leads them to blame themselves and self-stigmatizing. If they knew that this was a sickness just like other illnesses, it would be easier for them to seek help.

Poverty/Economic status: The economic crisis and lack of finances can lead people not to seek for help on mental problems. The cost of treatment especially psychotherapy is not affordable for many.

Culture: Culture has been a barrier to health seeking behavior across the globe. Different cultures understand mental illness as a curse or witchcraft related. This leads to the sick believing that they will never get better. Together with culture is **language barrier** especially when outside your own locality or ethnic group. Age-gap can lead to fear of disclosing self to a younger or older persons as one seeks help. In other areas gender differences and gender roles play an important role.

Lack of Access to services: Mental health services are limited in the rural areas and so little knowledge as well.

Interventions

- Dissemination of accurate information about mental illness
- Improving outreach program for mental health in the rural areas
- Promoting cultural competence among mental healthcare providers
- Advocacy for improved insurance coverage on mental health
- Offer educational programs in schools and communities to reduce misinformation and improve knowledge about mental health conditions, and carry out anti-stigma campaigns to increase awareness and promote understanding of mental health.

There is hope and mental illness is preventable and treatable. All barriers can be broken when there is willingness and good support systems around the sick. Let us be part of this support system so that our communities and families can experience the fullness of health and wellness.

Written by Sr. Regina Nthenya, SSJ.

WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE

The World Day for Consecrated Life is celebrated every year on 2nd February. It is intended to help the entire Church to esteem ever more greatly the witness of those persons who have chosen to follow Christ through living the evangelical counsels consecrated to God by the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. At the same time, it is intended to be a suitable occasion for consecrated persons to renew their commitment which should inspire their offering of themselves to the Lord.

The annual observance was instituted in 1997 by Pope Saint John Paul II and is celebrated on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, 2 February. The theme chosen this year is: *“Pilgrims of Hope on the Path of Peace.”* As the Church marks the 28th World Day for Consecrated Life on Friday, Pope Francis encouraged the world’s religious men and women to always be open to be moved by the Spirit, and in conformity with the Gospel to nourish the reawakening of a

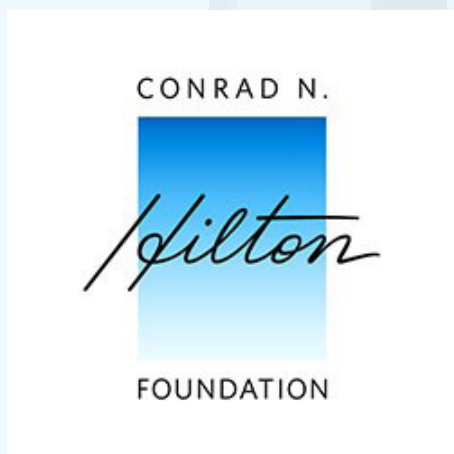
longing for God. In his homily during Holy Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica with members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life as well as participants in an International Meeting in preparation for the Jubilee 2025, Pope Francis invited those present to “await patiently, vigilant in spirit and persevering in prayer” as by “safeguarding our interior life and in conformity with the Gospel, we will embrace Jesus, the light and hope of life.” The Catholic Religious Sisters under the Umbrella body of the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya had their celebration of the World day of Consecrated Life in various Units. They were united with the Religious Men and the Bishops of their respective Units to commemorate the day and renew their commitments in the services of God and his church. They also prayed for more vocations to Consecrated life.

Written by Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG.



Sisters during the Celebration of the World Day of Consecrated Life

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



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