

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya

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Pope's July prayer intention: For pastoral care of the sick

Pope Francis released his prayer intention for July 2024, and he invited Christians to pray that the Church might show God's closeness to people enduring illness.

"Let us pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick grants the Lord's strength to those who receive it and to their loved ones, and that it may become for everyone an ever more visible sign of compassion and hope."

The Pope invited the Church to pray for the pastoral care of the sick during July 2024. In his video, he recalled

that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is not only for people at death's doorstep. If someone thinks that a priest offering the sacrament means that they are about to die, then they have embraced a hopeless vision.

"Let us remember that the Anointing of the Sick is one of the 'sacraments of healing,' of 'restoration,' that heals the spirit," said the Pope.

He added that the sacrament is always available for people who are ill, especially the elderly.

"When a person is very ill," he said, "it's advisable to give them the Anointing of the Sick."

Pope Francis concluded by praying that the sacrament may become a more visible sign of compassion and hope.



For June, TIK was excited to share inspiring stories of resilience, empowerment, and collaborative efforts in its ongoing fight against human trafficking. From impactful training sessions organized by the Medical Missionaries of Mary to the heartening success of its capstone project in rehabilitating and empowering young girls, TIK continues to witness transformative changes in the lives of vulnerable individuals. Additionally, TIK's strategic partnerships underscore its commitment to addressing human trafficking on a broader scale. Join TIK as it delves into the highlights and achievements of June 2024, showcasing the unwavering dedication of its members and partners in creating a safer, more just society.

St. Mary's Parish Mukuru, nestled in the Mukuru Kwa Njenga slum, is one of the most vulnerable regions within its scope. The parish encompasses six outstations: St. Monica, Mukuru Lunga Lunga, St. Jude, Mukuru Reuben, St. Joseph, Mukuru Sinai, Holy Spirit, Pipeline, and St. Bakhita, Mukuru North. To address the area's significant challenges, including security threats, drug abuse, militia activity, and child trafficking, the Catholic Church established the Catholic Justice and Peace Department (CJPD).



In a notable initiative, the Religious Against Human Trafficking and the Medical Missionaries of Mary organized a training program for 40 CJPD members from St. Mary's Parish. The training, conducted from June 1-2, 2024, at St. Bakhita Catholic Church, focused on equipping participants with skills to identify, rescue, protect, and rehabilitate trafficking victims and manage cases efficiently. This impactful training was well-received, empowering attendees to combat trafficking through awareness campaigns and network building. Key lessons highlighted the importance of awareness, partnerships, and understanding the dehumanizing effects of trafficking.

Rehabilitating and Empowering Survivors

Talithakum International Kenya's capstone project reached a significant milestone with the repatriation of 11 Karamajong girls from Uganda in February 2024. At St. Bakhita Centre, six girls who continued with the program underwent vocational training, leading to their graduation on June 4, 2024. Their training spanned fields like beautician services, baking, and tailoring, marking a transformative phase in their lives. Despite challenges, these girls are now reintegrated into their communities, ready to contribute positively, showcasing the transformative power of education and support.



United Against Human Trafficking

On June 25, 2024, Talithakum International Kenya (TIK) collaborated with various organizations at the Ministry of Labor and Social Services to prepare for the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. The event's theme, "Leave no Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking," emphasized a collective commitment to addressing this critical issue, with notable participation from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Together, these initiatives underline Talithakum International Kenya's dedication to fighting human trafficking, empowering communities, and supporting vulnerable individuals through education and strategic partnerships.

Written by Mr. Wilson Kyalo.

AOSK-SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE.

June every year is dedicated to caring for Mother Earth and June 5th is specifically set to celebrate World Environment Day. This year the global community was invited to rally around the theme of "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience". This was not just a call for action but a reminder of the core value land holds for the sustenance and prosperity of future generations.

Environmental conservation is key to the survival of our ecosystem, humankind, and wildlife. However, human activities such as unsustainable agriculture, deforestation, and burning fossil fuels have led to the destruction of our environment. AOSK is committed to advocating for environmental conservation. Through the Sisters Led Youth Empowerment Initiative we acknowledge the critical role young people can play in environmental conservation. As the custodians of the future, the youth have a responsibility to protect the environment and ensure that it is preserved for future generations. We believe that young people are the best Environmental stewards and are best placed to protect and restore the Earth and fight against climate change and global warming. This is done in partnership with various Catholic technical

and vocational institutions the AOSK SLI works with. During the month of June starting from the 5th to 15th, these technical institutions carried out different activities to commemorate the day. They created awareness of the theme, did clean-ups, and planted over 14,500 trees.

Additionally, on June 14, 2024, the AOSK SLI in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Creative Economy and Catholic technical & vocational institutions within Nairobi Archdiocese celebrated World Environment day at St. Charles Lwanga Kibera. Mr. Mogire from the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) gave an input on the theme where he emphasized on the need to grow trees that can withstand the given climatic conditions and are favorable to the soil for land restoration. He gave an example of a bamboo tree which has a crucial element in the balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and this is a great way to reduce carbon footprint and help fight global warming. It is also a viable replacement for wood. It can be harvested in 3-5 years versus 10-20 for most softwoods and is a great soil conservation tool. It greatly reduces erosion with a sum of stem flow rate and canopy intercept of

25%. This dramatically reduces rain run-off, preventing massive soil erosion and making it very earth friendly. Ms. Evangeline from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Creative Economy took participants through the Ja-zaMiti App a mobile app that facilitates and enhances tree planting programs by allowing users to select suitable tree species for planting based on their location, document, track, and monitoring the growth of documented trees over time to aid in Kenya's vision of planting 15 billion trees in the coming 10 years to fight climate change.

The event culminated with the planting of trees at St. Charles Lwanga and a community service of cleaning Raila village in Kibera.



Sister Celine Makario, SMK leading the AOSK-SLYI youth in cleaning Raila village in Kibera during the Celebrations of the World Environment Day.



Students from Teresa Van Miert, Langata planting trees to commemorate World Environment Day



Students from Maria Zanelli Vocational Training Meru planting trees

Written by Mrs. Caroline Wamiti

AOSK-CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA

“Transforming Care: Milestones and Reflections from AOSK-CCCK’s Inaugural Phase”

As the AOSK-Catholic Care for Children in Kenya (AOSK-CCCK) concludes its inaugural phase, as we prepare for the second phase, we reflect with gratitude on the transformative journey we have embarked upon since 2019. This phase has been marked by a series of impactful initiatives aimed at strengthening the commitment of men and women religious to their charism of caring for children, ensuring they thrive in safe, nurturing environments. Throughout this phase, CCCK efforts have been dedicated to engaging and inspiring stakeholders at every level, from congregation leaders to community members, in raising awareness and advocating for childcare protection and safeguarding. Central to

Practical application has been fundamental to the CCCK approach, as evidenced by our comprehensive training programs in child protection, case management, and positive parenting. These efforts have yielded tangible results, facilitating the sustainable reintegration of children into loving families and family-like environments. Additionally, CCCK collaboration initiatives have fostered a network of support among CCIs, congregations, and community partners, further strengthening the foundation for lasting care reforms. As CCCK looks ahead, it remains committed to advocating for children’s rights and promoting collaborative efforts with governmental and regional bodies, ensuring alignment with policies and regulations that uphold the welfare of minors. CCCK’s partnership with AMECEA underscores its regional commitment to advancing care reforms within Eastern Africa, recognizing the crucial role of pastoral ministries in safeguarding vulnerable members of our society. In

CCCK’s mission has been the capacity development of sisters, supported through specialized education at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Courses in Social Work, Integrative Psychospiritual Counselling, Sustainable Children’s Rights and Protection, and more have equipped them to better serve children and families in need.



Workshop for AOSK-CCCK degree student on Project writing

conclusion, CCCK urges all congregations, regardless of their specific charism, to join them in embracing care reforms as an essential component of its shared mission of evangelization. Let us heed Pope Francis’s call to protect and nurture our children and vulnerable adults, ensuring they are safeguarded at all times. The Children’s Acts of 2022 reinforce these principles, emphasizing prevention, alternative care solutions, and the vital role of family support.



Celebrations of the day of the African Child at St. Patrick Nomadic Girls Centre on 16th June 2024

Written Sr. Delvine Mukhwana, DHM

CRS STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION (ECDE) HOCAI.

In June CRS held a two-day training in Kisumu on Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) HOCAI. The training was attended by program managers of CRS and Associations from Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, and Kenya, and three sisters master trainers from Kenya other participants included partners from Uganda, and Tanzania, and a representative from the County Government of Siaya. The objective of the training was to train facilitators and key assessors on the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) HOCAI Tool, so they can use the tool to assess the ECDE capacity of organizations for continuously improving the quality of ECDE service and programs. Additionally, organizations working in ECDE should have skills and knowledge on holistic and developmental approaches in ECDE interventions for all children aged 0-8 years. The HOCAI serves the purpose of assisting partners and stakeholders in identifying and prioritizing their needs, formulating a plan, and establishing realistic goals within the project's scope and the capabilities of the involved parties to sustain the program. The ECDE program assessment tool is intended to be utilized in conjunction with the HOCAI for comprehensive organizational capacity strengthening. The goal of the ECDE HOCAI Tool is to ensure that Sister's institutions and partners working in the field of ECDE exhibit the following; Leaders, Staff, and Institutional members equipped with robust knowledge and skills in relationship-based, holistic, and culturally appropriate ECDE interventions for children aged 0-8. programs demonstrating comprehensive coverage, particularly for children with special needs. – Delivery of

high-quality services and active participation in local, national, and international dialogues and collaborations concerning the holistic well-being of children, encompassing health, nutrition, early learning, rights, safety, and protection with the effort to improve ECD results. The ECDE HOCAI has five component areas; ECDE program policies, strategy, human and financial resources, ECDE Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes, ECDE Services Coverage, ECDE Service Quality, ECDE Advocacy & Networking.



***Sr. Pauline Acayo, CRS-SCORE-ECD
Regional coordinator-Opening remarks
ECDE HOCAI Training in Kisumu.***



***Sisters attending ECDE HOCAI Training in
Kisumu.***

Written by Mrs. Christine Nguna

AOSK- JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Celebrating the World Environment Day 2024.

“LAUDATO SI, mi’ Signore”- “Praise be to you my Lord” In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. The sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters entitled to plunder her at will.

Guided by the theme for this year, **land restoration, desertification, and drought resilience** the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya through the Gender and Units department embarked on planting trees and cleaning the environment in all the 26 units in 47 Counties.

The activities were done in schools, communities, quarries, and bare lands for land restoration. Information was shared on how to take care of Mother Earth and how humanity should live in harmony with nature to balance the ecosystem and work towards preserving it. In responding to the cry of the earth, we also respond to the cry of the poor, who rely directly on the land to feed their families. Environmental restoration restores and protects their livelihoods, we also echoed that we should restore our land for future generations so that they too may enjoy a good environment for the earth is our home and it is our responsibility to take care of it. Reduce carbon footprint, and together unite to protect it and create a sustainable future for all.



Members participating in a tree planting activity in different AOSK Units during the World Environment Day in June 2024.

Day of the African Child.

The Day of the African Child was instituted in 1991 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU in memory of the 16th June 1976 student uprising in Soweto, South Africa. At that time, students marched protesting the poor-quality education they received and demanding to be taught in their languages. During the protest, hundreds of schoolchildren were killed. The Day of the African Child is celebrated to commemorate these children and the brave actions they took to defend their rights. This year AOSK joined

the children from Migori and Murang'a counties to celebrate the day with the theme *“Education for all children in Africa: the time is now”*

Children from different Schools demonstrated African culture in different ways and called on for respect for their rights. One of the Synod calls is *“to Listen”*, Are you listening to the young people around you? Dear Sisters and Brothers if we don't, are you hearing what the Generation Z are saying loud and clear? Let us all open our ears and respond to the cry of the Children and have all voices included in whatever decision that is made.



Children Participating in different activities during the celebrations of the day of the African Child.

Written by Sr. Bernadette Nzioka, DSH

THE HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SISTERHOODS OF KENYA

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

As HASK continues to implement non-communicable disease awareness campaigns, mental health seems to pop up as a serious issue experienced in all the communities served by the sisters. In May, HASK highlighted on loss and grief as a cause of mental health issues. This month HASK will look at Trauma as a cause of emotional dysregulation that leads to severe distress in individuals across the globe. Trauma refers to the psychological and emotional response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event. It can result from a single incident or ongoing experiences that overwhelm an individual's ability to cope, leading to feelings of intense fear, helplessness, or horror. Trauma can have lasting effects on mental health and well-being. Trauma can result from various sources including but not limited to;

- . Physical violence.
- . Emotional abuse.
- . Natural disasters.
- . War and conflict.
- . Loss and grief.
- . Medical trauma.

All that which disrupts the sense of safety and security may lead an individual to traumatic experiences.

Complications of Trauma

Following a traumatic experience, immediate response is necessary to help reduce anxiety and stress. Untreated trauma can lead to several complications. The most severe complication is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which is characterized by persistent distressing symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, and hypervigilance. The individual will keep on playing the memory of the event and the more it is repeated the more it hurts them.

Another common complication is anxiety and depression characterized by persistent feelings of fear, sadness, or hopelessness. Some individuals may end in substance abuse as a coping mechanism to numb or reduce the emotional pain. This coping mechanism can lead to difficulty in relationships, mistrust, and difficulty in maintaining social connections. Physical complications as well leading to physical illness and autoimmune disorders.

Interventions for Trauma

There are some effective interventions that help to prevent complications and help the individual to live a normal life.

Therapy: Psychotherapy is a good remedy for those with traumatic experiences. Early responses usually give predictable results. Helping the client to process and manage trauma symptoms prevents further complications.

Medication: Antidepressants or anti-anxiety medications may alleviate symptoms of PTSD and related conditions especially when the individual's emotions are dysregulated.

Support groups: A support system is very key for the individual. Peer support can provide validation and encouragement. This helps to reduce incidences of stigma and builds the confidence of the person. The feelings of belonging and acceptance will facilitate healing.

Self-care: self-care is good and strengthening. Activities such as exercise, mindfulness, and relaxation techniques can reduce stress and improve coping mechanisms. Lastly, Safety planning is important in prevention. Establishing a sense of safety and stability is crucial in recovery. Keeping away from the aggressor will facilitate faster progress and prevent further damage.

In conclusion, trauma is a complex and deeply impactful experience that can affect individuals differently. Understanding its causes, recognizing its complications, and employing effective interventions are crucial steps in supporting those affected. By addressing trauma with empathy, awareness, and evidence-based treatments, individuals can find pathways to healing and recovery.

Written by Sr. Regina Nthenya, SSJ

AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA INSTITUTE

ST. ANSELM'S SABBATICAL PROGRAM

A sabbatical break provides a space to grow and restore self to health; we as religious also need this kind of break. Thus, the sabbatical period is a time to rest, take a break from the routine of our congregations get back to our inner self, and listen to the voice of the Lord that calls us "come to me you who are overburdened and I will give you rest" Matthew 11: 28. Mark 6: 31 there were many coming and going, and they had no time even to eat. So, He said to them "Come away by yourselves to an isolated place and rest awhile. St. Anselm's sabbatical Chemchemi welcomes you for that.

It is a time to refuel our spiritual life and time for rejuvenation of one's entire life, revisiting the areas in life that have been forgotten due to a lot of engagements in the apostolate thus making the life challenges unbearable. One takes a break to reflect on his/her own life for self-renewal and one's own life and this leads to a deeper discernment of God's will for us and gives us a humble time to sit back and re-focus on one's goals as a religious man/woman.

In life, we have gone through a lot unfortunately, some experiences are so traumatizing or hurting that unless we take a break and listen to our -selves, we cannot even move on with our normal life as religious men/women or clergy. It is for this reason that we are called upon to take a break and do self-introspection; look at our past life and what the future may mean for us.

There is a wrong notion among religious men and women that a sabbatical is for the people who have unresolved issues and those who find it hard to live with the communities or in the Dioceses, those who are giving their leaders a hard time. This has made many religious men women and priests to decline the offer of a sabbatical program. Sabbatical is not as a result of being troublesome but a need for each consecrated person to renew our life and the promises that we made to God during our consecration.

Sabbatical is not only for the elderly as some religious perceive it, depending on our background upbringing, some people may need a break after just a few years of profession or ordination because some may have had to carry out some responsibilities at a very tender age and this may lead to early burn out; Such people may need to be encouraged to go for sabbatical to be rejuvenated once more and save their vocation.

Benefits of a Sabbatical Program.

- Time to express my creativity and make new friends
- Time for self-awareness and setting personal goals
- To learn new skills of self- management and to express my creativity
- To achieve a greater deepening of their relationship with self-God others and the environment (i.e. integration of the whole personality) God, others, and nature
- Read more books and above all read the book about the 'self'
- Time to relax from the daily routine and for rejuvenation

- Time to fall in love with God and with the self again and start anew.
- This break can lead to significant personal growth and a renewed perspective in life
- It's a time when one can step out of their comfort zone, learn new skills, or even re-assess their career trajectory and life goals in an environment of discernment
- A time for new plans, visions, renewal of relationships, soul care, and back to work

All these benefits can be realized at AOSK Chemchemi Ya Uzima St. Anselm Sabbatical Program

Send your sisters, young, middle-aged, and old to the AOSK Chemchemi Ya Uzima St. Anselm Sabbatical program and experience how a single person's growth can bring newness to the entire congregation. ***John 12: 23-24 "Unless a grain of wheat dies, it remains a single grain"*** The only requirement is ***'COME AS YOU ARE'***



Sabbatical

rest | refresh | refocus

Written by Sr. Victorine Nyawade, FSSA

INTEGRATIVE SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING

The Integrative Spiritual Counseling program is grateful to God for the successful programs of the second semester January- May 2024. The program members are thankful to God for the far he has brought them, Second Years were heard speaking as they were handing in their Long Essay completed work. It was not easy as they termed it but finally, it was completed. Thanks to Congregation Leaders who supported their members fully financially to work on their projects.

The program is grateful to the second-year students who have contributed to the world of academics by closing some gaps by sharing their findings from the society that adds knowledge to what is being experienced by the faithful people of God as Integrative Spiritual counseling is concerned. It is always important to analyze

situations affecting people and find remedies for them. This is what our students embarked on and have finally brought out their contributions which will help their congregations, the church, and the entire society at large. The program is indebted for the students contribution and thank them for their efforts, sleepless nights, and hard work that has seen the copies of their books printed out. The challenge was getting the expected color, but the content matters.



The Final product of the Sisters who have finished a Diploma in Integrative Spiritual Counselling (ISC). A Requirement to graduate.

Written by Sr. Sophia Wanyama, LSMIG

THE FORMATION DEPARTMENT

A OSK Chemchemi ya Uzima College organizes a six-week program to prepare for final vows every year in the months May and June. The temporary professed sisters and brothers who have been granted permission by their congregations to prepare for perpetual vows are usually invited to participate in this program. This year's program kicked off from 13th May to 29th June 2024 and eighty-seven religious women and men thirty onsite and fifty-seven online participated from three continental locations: Africa, Europe, and Asia. The program was conducted both online and onsite, thanks to "blended learning" technology!



Onsite group



Online Group (Projection on the wall)

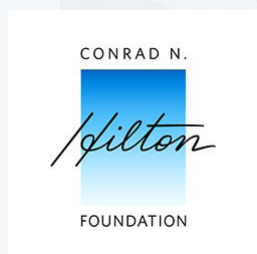
The religious spend six weeks preparing to embrace a lifetime commitment to consecrated life by reflecting on this call's prophetic mission and nature. The program had topics tailored to help the participants come to a better understanding and knowledge that concerns religious life and the Congregational charism/values, nature and creation, human behaviour and relations, faith, and prayers as well as all that pertains to life in general.

When the religious men and women make their final profession, they embrace the religious state by taking three sacred vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience. These vows are made to God and bind the individual to the rule of their canonically approved religious order and therefore, it is worthy of intense preparation. In appreciation, one participant remarked, "I am glad for the program and blessing received, so that I may truly be the visible instrument moulded in the image and likeness of God. May God bless the fraternity of Chemchemi." Another felt the program could be made to last three months in the future to digest well what is covered. The selection of the topics was so rich, especially for personal growth. Otherwise, the topics were wonderful and touching and this was a beautiful preparation for Vowed Life. Thanks a lot.

Preparation for a perpetual profession is a significant stage in the life of a religious. This time is sacred for deepening a lifelong commitment. At the end of such a successful program, a religious can't but give all the glory to God saying, "that in all things, God may be glorified"

Written by Sr. Catherine Mutuku, OSB

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



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