

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya

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celebrated annually on Feb. 2, takes on special significance this year as the Church prepares for the Jubilee of Consecrated Life scheduled for October. The celebration coincides with the feast of the Presentation of the Lord and is marked by the symbolism of light. In his homily, the pope emphasized how evangelical poverty liberates religious from worldly attachments, enabling them to become “a blessing for others” by embracing “simplicity, generosity, sharing, and solidarity.” He warned against the dangers of “selfishness, greed, dependence, and violent use” of material goods.



Religious attending the celebration of the first vespers on the eve of the world day of the consecrated life at St. Peter's Basilica (Image Courtesy)

World Day of Consecrated Life

Pope Francis calls consecrated religious to be 'bearers of light' amid modern challenges

Pope Francis urged consecrated men and women to become “bearers of light” in today’s world through their faithful witness of the evangelical counsels as he celebrated first vespers for the World Day for Consecrated Life in St. Peter’s Basilica. Speaking to thousands of religious on 01/02/2025, the pope outlined how poverty, chastity, and obedience can transform society through God’s love, drawing from the biblical theme “See... I have come to do your will, O God” (Heb 10:7). The World Day for Consecrated Life,

In Nairobi, Kenya, religious men and women gathered at Msongari grounds to celebrate the day of consecration. The theme, “Pilgrims of hope on the path of peace,” resonated with those in attendance. Archbishop Hubertus van Megen,

the Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya, presided over the Mass and acknowledged the vital role of consecrated men and women in society. The event served as a powerful symbol of unity and shared mission, recognizing the significant contributions of these individuals to both the Church and the wider community. Their lives and ministries have had a profound spiritual impact, enriching the lives of countless people.



Religious women celebrating the world day of consecrated life at St. Mary's Msongari grounds in Nairobi Kenya on 01/02.2025. (Image courtesy of ACI Africa)

By Sr. Celine Makario, SMK

CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA (AOSK-CCCK)

Divine Mercy Children's Home Embraces Community-Based Care

Imagine a future where every child has the opportunity to thrive within the loving embrace of their family. This vision is driving a transformative shift at Divine Mercy Children's Home, Homabay, as the esteemed Benedictine Sisters of Divine Providence embark on a journey towards a community-based care model.

On January 24th, 2025, the AOSK-CCCK Program convened a collaborative meeting with the esteemed Benedictine Sisters of Divine Providence. The focus of the meeting was to guide the transition of Divine Mercy Children's Home, Homabay, from a residential care model to a community-based approach. This

vital shift in care philosophy prioritizes the well-being of children by emphasizing family-centred support and community integration. Recognizing this crucial change, the meeting aimed to equip the sisters with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate these evolving care reforms.

The discussion centred around the core principles of child welfare, emphasizing the paramount importance of prioritizing each child's unique needs and ensuring their safety, happiness, and overall flourishing. The meeting underscored the importance of supporting families in overcoming challenges and keeping children within their loving homes whenever

possible.

The principles of providing care within the least restrictive environment were explored, prioritizing family-based options like kinship care and foster care over institutional settings. The importance of involving children in decisions that affect their lives was highlighted, emphasizing the need for

age-appropriate explanations, opportunities for expression, and respecting their choices. The meeting stressed the importance of respecting and honouring the cultural background of each child, ensuring culturally sensitive services and maintaining connections to their cultural heritage.



Mr. Brighton Savayi Making a presentation on Transitioning and Child Welfare Guidelines

By. Mr. Joseph Wichenje

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL

Training of religious sisters on peacebuilding and active non-violence

Sixteen Sisters from Kisumu, Nakuru, and Kericho were trained in peacebuilding and active nonviolence in Nakuru. 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 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 the improvement of the living conditions of their communities.

Active nonviolence is a creative power for good available to everyone. It is grounded in the sacredness of all life and respect for every person. When drawn upon, active nonviolence interrupts the cycle of violence by refusing to inflict harm and by actively seeking out ways to promote the common good and

justice. It is not passive. The positive energy of active nonviolence is accessible in the everyday lives of individuals, as well as in organized ways of working for change. It recognizes we are all interconnected, respects the dignity of every person, and believes that everyone can be transformed. Violence is a comprehensive reality that cruelly tears at the fabric of reality. It is any physical, emotional, verbal, institutional, structural or systemic behavior, attitude, policy or condition that dominates, dehumanizes, diminishes, disrespects, or destroys ourselves, our fellow beings, or our world.

Nonviolence, on the other hand, is a paradigm of the fullness of life even deeper than this comprehensive violence. It is a force for transformation, justice, and the well-being of all that is neither violent nor passive. It is a powerful method for challenging and overcoming violence without using violence; for creatively transforming and resolving conflict; and for fostering just and peaceful alternatives. People around the world are using active nonviolence in grassroots nonviolent movements to build more democratic

societies, to champion human rights, to challenge racism and sexism, to struggle for economic justice, and to safeguard the planet. Recent quantitative research has demonstrated that nonviolent strategies are twice as effective as violent ones.

Principle of nonviolence, also known as Gandhian nonviolence, is often associated with a moral, ethical, or religious motivation or commitment. Its goal is to transform relationships, societies and adversaries through nonviolent direct action so individuals are not oppressed or exploited. The power concern is to build “power with others” to shape society. Ensuring continuity between means and ends is a key component of principled nonviolence. This requires that nonviolent means be used to achieve nonviolent ends. For instance, it includes a willingness to endure rather than inflict suffering and seeks to transform rather than defeat adversaries. Nonviolence is viewed as a way of life. The Sisters trained are going to champion nonviolence and peace building in their communities and among the youths to build a culture of peace and reconciliation.



Sisters posing for a group photo after successful finishing a training on peacebuilding and active non-violence.

By. Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG

AOSK UNITS

Jubilee Year for Consecrated Life: “Pilgrims of Hope”

The Jubilee Year for Consecrated Life, themed “*Pilgrims of Hope*,” is a call for Catholics to deepen their faith and hope amidst life’s challenges through prayer, pilgrimage, and sacramental repentance. Key aspects of the Jubilee Year 2025 include:

Opening of the Holy Doors: Pope Francis inaugurated the Holy Year by opening the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica on December 24, 2024. Other major basilicas will also have Holy Doors opened throughout the year, offering indulgences to those who pass through them in a spirit of faith.

Community Involvement: Religious sisters are actively participating in the Jubilee Year by leading and participating in community events such as prayer services, retreats, outreach programs, and charitable works, and by raising awareness of the Jubilee.

Themes: The Jubilee Year emphasizes several themes:

Renewal of Hope: Focusing on maintaining hope and deepening faith, inspired by the teachings of Jesus and Paul.

Acts of Mercy: Promoting forgiveness, reconciliation, and the sacrament of penance for all.

Pilgrimage: Encouraging visits to holy sites as a symbol of the faith journey. Sisters in various units have organized pilgrimages.

Focus on Justice: Addressing social injustices and supporting the marginalized.

Prayer and Reflection: Promoting participation in prayer, described as a “symphony of prayer.”

Celebration of Community: Fostering collective worship and shared faith experiences.

The Jubilee Year is a time for spiritual renewal, with religious sisters playing a vital role in guiding others as “Pilgrims of Hope.” The opening of the Jubilee Year was celebrated in all units with processions and the lighting of candles, symbolizing light in the world amidst life’s challenges

At the beginning of the year 2025, 52 representatives from 26 units participated in refresher training on safeguarding. This training equipped the sisters to continue their work protecting children and vulnerable adults in their workplaces during these challenging times. The training also focused on raising awareness within congregations about the importance of establishing clear safeguarding policies for their institutions. The organization appreciates the sisters’ work in safeguarding and raising societal awareness, and their focus on positive transformation.



Safeguarding team from the 26 units

By. Sr. Juliana Ndunge, LSOSF

HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SISTERHOODS OF KENYA

A Silent Threat and a Preventable Reality

Cervical cancer is a disease that affects the cervix, the lower, narrow end of the uterus that connects to the vagina. It occurs when abnormal cells within the cervix grow uncontrollably, potentially invading surrounding tissues or spreading to other parts of the body. The most common cause of cervical cancer is the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), that is HPV 16 and 18, a sexually transmitted infection. While many HPV strains are harmless, certain types can significantly increase the risk of developing this cancer. Several factors beyond HPV can heighten the risk of developing cervical cancer as explained below:

Smoking weakens the immune system and can interact with HPV to increase cancer risk. Individuals with weakened immune systems, such as those living with HIV/AIDS, are also more susceptible. Early onset of sexual activity and having multiple sexual partners can increase the likelihood of HPV exposure.

Early-stage cervical cancer often goes unnoticed as it may not produce any symptoms. However, as the cancer progresses, you might experience abnormal vaginal bleeding, including bleeding between periods, after intercourse, or after menopause. Unusual vaginal discharge, changes in the color, odor, or amount of vaginal discharge, may also occur. Persistent or unexplained pelvic pain and pain during intercourse can be warning signs.

The good news is that cervical cancer is largely preventable and treatable when detected early. The HPV vaccine is highly effective in preventing HPV infections and subsequent cervical cancer. Regular screenings, including Pap tests to examine cells from the cervix for abnormalities, and HPV tests to check for the presence of high-risk HPV strains, are crucial for early detection.

Treatment for cervical cancer depends on the stage and extent of the disease. Options may include surgery, such as hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) or conization (removal of a cone-shaped piece of the cervix). Radiation therapy, using high-energy rays to kill cancer cells, and chemotherapy, using medications to destroy cancer cells throughout the body, may also be used.

Early detection and treatment significantly improve the outlook for individuals with cervical cancer. By understanding the risks, taking preventive measures, and adhering to recommended screenings, you can proactively protect your health and well-being.



By. Sr. Jerusha Ncabani, CLFS

AOSK SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

Kenyan youth face numerous challenges, including unemployment, limited access to support services, substance abuse, radicalization, and crime. Youth with disabilities are disproportionately affected, experiencing heightened exclusion and discrimination. Many come from vulnerable families struggling to meet basic needs, and access to education is often hindered by a lack of essential learning equipment and materials. AOSK – SLYI is dedicated to promoting inclusion by providing equal opportunities for youth with

disabilities to benefit from technical and vocational training. Thanks to continued support from the Hilton Foundation, and in partnership with St. Oda for the Visually Impaired, Ancilla Technical Mombasa, St. Francis for the Hearing Impaired (Kitale), and St. Patrick's Technical Wote, the program will support 88 youth for a second year. This support includes school fees and learning materials, empowering them to acquire technical skills for self-sustainability.



Some of the beneficiaries from St. Oda for the Visually Impaired

By. Mrs. Caroline Wamiti

AOSK JUSTICE PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION

The Cry of Women, Our Daughters, Sisters and Mothers.

In the Kenyan constitution article 27 “Every person is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law” Equality to enjoyment of all rights and freedoms is a right to all people. In recent years, media reports have shown a concerning rise in cases of women being killed by their intimate partners and one would ask why? This are our Sisters, Mothers and Daughters. In a data by Africa hub “Over the last nine years, we meticulously examined news reports and court data and compiled over 930 cases of female murders from January 2016 to December 2024” . These are lives cut short and lost, in the Catholic Social teaching tells us that “every person has inherent dignity and every life is sacred. The innate dignity of each person is the foundation and inspiration of our vision for a just and compassionate world. We see the image of God in every person, no matter their circumstance”. If then this is true it is the call for every

person to reverence and protect life at all cost. Let us hear the cry of the innocent dying women and let each one of us arise and be a brother and sister to each other remember in Gen 4: 9 The Lord will ask each one of us Where is your Sister?

Kenyan Catholic clergy have actively campaigned against violence against women, preaching against this issue during Mass and urging both individuals and the government to take action. They've framed this fight as a core Christian value and encouraged community members to support each other. Thousands have peacefully marched, calling for government action to end femicide. The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya through its peacemakers, has also held public awareness forums on the issue.



By. Sr. Bernadetta Nzioka, DSH

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF RELIGIOUS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (SCORE-ECD)

Upcoming SCORE ECD Phase IV

Coming to the end of phase III of the SCORE ECD project. For the past ten years, CRS has continued to partner with Sister Associations in Ghana, Zambia, Kenya, and Malawi to implement the SCORE ECD project with support from the Conrad Hilton Foundation. In Kenya, sisters have increased their technical capacity with knowledge and skills in ECD, through training and mentoring over the years. Sisters have been effective in their work to offer ECD services in the target areas of the project implementation reaching out to caregivers, with a goal for Children <5 years to receive inclusive quality nurturing care. CRS has renewed the commitment to continuing to partner with national associations for the next three years 2025 – 2027 for phase IV of the project.



Sisters during training

The focus of SCORE IV remains improving sisters' and their associations' technical and organizational capacities, performance, and sustainability to provide high-quality, enduring, and inclusive nurturing care, and mental health services to vulnerable children and their parents, including children with disabilities, adolescent mothers/youth, and women and male caregivers/parents living in disadvantaged communities. Additionally, phase IV will address issues of climate change that affect children's health and household resilience and will add new interventions for parents of children with disabilities so they can meet their unique needs.

The SCORE ECD goal and objectives are as follows;

GOAL: Children 0-5 years old receive inclusive quality nurturing care by 2027

Objective1: Sisters deliver inclusive quality early childhood services to caregivers of children 0-5

Objective2: Caregivers of children 0-5 years old provide their children with inclusive nurturing care

Objective3: NACCS (National Association and Congregations of Catholic Sisters) has strengthened its organizational capacity.

From January 20th to 24th 2024 the SCORE ECD project CRS and the association staff held a workshop on Monitoring, Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL) and disability inclusion for the MEAL Sisters and Master trainers from thirteen congregations in preparation for phase IV. The purpose of the workshop was to deepen the understanding of MEAL and Disability Inclusive Programming and Inclusive MEAL methodology, approaches, and tools. Moreover, the sisters were encouraged to use the knowledge and skills gained not only for the SCORE ECD project but also for the betterment of their congregations.



CRS and AOSK SCORE ECD PM during training with Sisters

By. Sr. Teresa Yator, ASE

AOSK INSURANCE AGENCY

AOSK Agency Products

AOSK offers a comprehensive range of insurance and financial products designed to safeguard you, your family, and your assets. We understand that life is full of uncertainties, and we're here to provide peace of mind with tailored solutions for your specific needs.

Personal & Family Protection:

- **Motor Insurance:** Protects you, your vehicle, and other motorists against liability in case of an accident. Provides financial compensation for injuries or property damage.
- **Health Insurance:** A supplementary medical scheme covering hospitalization expenses (inpatient/admission services).
- **Life Insurance:** A whole life cover ensuring your family's financial needs are met in the event of your passing.
- **Last Expense:** Covers funeral expenses and provides a cash benefit within 48 hours of notification of death.
- **Travelling Insurance:** Protects against various travel risks, including medical expenses, lost luggage, flight cancellations, and other potential losses.
- **GPA (Group Personal Accident):** Provides compensation to a group of people in the event of an accident, injury, or death.
- **Pension:** An employee benefit where the employer makes regular contributions to a fund for employee retirement.

Property & Asset Protection:

- **Property Insurance:** Protects assets from risks like fire, theft, and some weather damage, including specialized coverage for floods and earthquakes.
- **All Risks:** Covers loss or damage to insured property from any accidental peril (with specific exclusions), ideal for valuable personal items or movable office equipment.
- **Cash in Transit Insurance:** Protects cash, valuables, and precious metals during transit or on premises, covering theft, fire, flood, explosion, and more.
- **Electrical Insurance:** Covers electronic equipment against sudden and unforeseen physical loss or damage, including theft and transit risks, with specific coverage for laptops, etc.
- **Mechanical Insurance:** Protects against losses from breakdowns of plant production equipment, electrical equipment, boilers, pressure vessels, heating and cooling equipment, etc.

Business & Professional Protection:

- **Professional Indemnity:** Covers costs of compensating client losses or damages resulting from negligent services (e.g., doctors, nurses, business advisors).
- **Public Liability:** Insurance for businesses of all sizes, covering claims for injuries or property damage to clients or the public due to business activities.

- [WIBA \(Workmen Injury Benefit Act\)](#): Provides wage replacement and medical benefits to employees injured on the job.

Contact us today to learn more about how AOSK can help you protect what matters most.

By. Mr. Francis Mutuku

AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA COLLEGE

INTEGRATIVE SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING (ISC) DEPARTMENT

A Blessed Start to the Semester

We begin this new semester, 2024/2025, with gratitude for God's grace and protection, bringing all staff and students back safely. We continue to pray for His blessings and guidance throughout this academic term. We especially thank God for the healing of our student, Felistus Biyaki Onkendi, following her accident last year. We are delighted that she can continue her studies, although online.

Academic Progress and Activities

The semester commenced on January 13, 2025, with lectures underway. All semester activities are aligned with the academic calendar, and we pray for a successful term.

Our second-year students have begun their practicum, alongside a few remaining courses. As they are now in the field, their two years of study are nearing completion. We offer our full support and wish them well in their practicum experiences.

First-year and module students are engaged in lectures, term papers, and other college activities. We are pleased to see their active participation in college life, including the recent Liturgical offertory procession and entertainment during the social afternoon. We encourage all students to maintain a healthy balance between their studies, college activities, and practicum requirements.

A Call to Action

As we share this newsletter, we urge our Institute leaders to consider providing training and preparation for the challenges ahead. Our country and society are facing increasing atrocities, including abductions and killings, which devastate families and traumatize communities. We are approaching a critical juncture, and proactive preparation is essential. Our communities need "*healed healers*," and this responsibility falls particularly to religious individuals, especially the Sisters.

We must discern the signs of the times and determine how to respond effectively. We ask for God's mercy and strength in the face of these challenges as we strive to provide holistic service.

By. Sr. Sophia Wanyama, LSMIG



ST. ANSELM'S SABBATICAL PROGRAM

“Come as you are”

Our sabbatical program welcomes participants from diverse backgrounds, regardless of academic credentials, race, color, culture, nationality, or gender, reflecting our motto of inclusivity. On January 6, 2025, we welcomed 18 participants representing 11 African countries: Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Rwanda, Eritrea, Ghana, DRC, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania. The group comprises two brothers, two priests (diocesan and religious), and 14 sisters.

The semester has begun auspiciously. A vibrant two-day orientation program helped participants transition into their new environment and foster a sense of community. Participants have already benefited from workshops on Journaling and Trauma, and are currently engaged in a workshop on Human Development.

We are encouraged by the participants' commitment to their personal growth and development as they embark on this journey of self-discovery. Their enthusiasm for learning, reflection, and community building is evident, and we wish them well in this process.

The sabbatical group actively participated in the college's opening mass and social afternoon on January 24th.



Sabbatical participants enjoy the music and dancing during social afternoon

By. Sr. Leocardia Kemunto, FSJ

FORMATION DEPARTMENT

Bringing New Gifts, Bearing Fruit

Rooted in Christ, We Journey On, Bringing New Gifts and Bearing the Fruit of Our Formation Experience.

Religious formation is a journey of faith, focused on individual development and the sharing of unique gifts within the community.

New Gifts Enrich the Formation Family

On January 6th, we welcomed a new cohort of 22 formators (2 priests, 1 brother, and 19 sisters) from various countries. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences enrich our community, reminding us that each individual brings unique talents and perspectives to the formation journey. We are excited to see the vibrant contributions they will make.

The Fruits of Formation Experience

Also returning on January 6th were the formators from the August intake, fresh from a week-long immersion experience in formation houses of different congregations. Their joy and enthusiasm were palpable as they shared the profound impact of their time with the formees. This week provided an opportunity to apply the knowledge gained during the first semester, explore new experiences, and build deeper connections. The wisdom, skills, and understanding acquired during this experience are truly the fruits of their formation journey.



Formation students engaging in a discussion.

By. Sr. Florence Nyamai, OSU

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS FOR BELIEVING IN US !!!!!



Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya.
P.o.Box 21068-00505, Nairobi Kenya
Telephone: 0708663399
Email: aosksec@aoskenya.org