

# NEWSLETTER

## The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya

### What is inside this Issue:

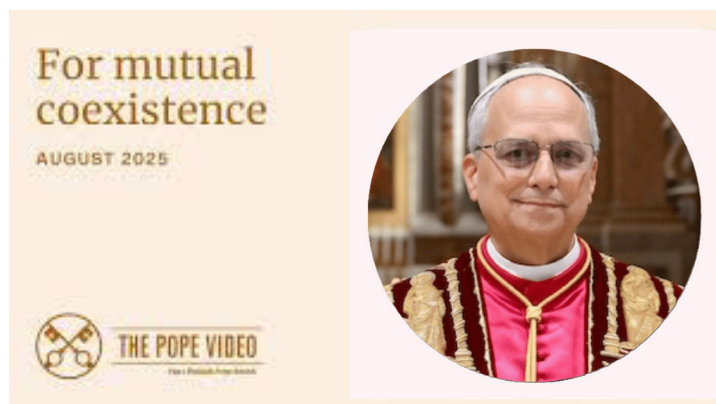
- > Pope Leo XIV August Prayer Intention
- > AOSK AGM 2025
- > AOSK SCORE ECD
- > AOSK Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation
- > Pax Christi International
- > Sisters Led Youth Initiative
- > Chemchemi ya Uzima College:
  - > Formation

*in a broken world". He expressed his hope that the National Conference would inspire members of Pax Christi USA to work to make their local communities "houses of peace" where one learns how to defuse hostility through dialogue, where justice is practiced and forgiveness is cherished".*

### Solemnities in August

August is dedicated to devotion of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. August 15 is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the close of her earthly life, was taken up, body and soul, into the glory of heaven, a Holy Day of Obligation. The Assumption completes God's work in her, since it was not fitting that the flesh that had given life to God himself should ever undergo corruption, is the crowning of His work as Mary ends her earthly life and enters eternity. The feast turns Christians' eyes in that direction, where all follow when the earthly life is over. The Transfiguration of the Lord is most notably, a feast celebrated on August 6. Our blessed Lord was transfigured and became radiant in glory upon a mountain, a lesson that all Christians, we are called to listen to Him, to behold His glory, and to be transformed by His grace, to share his glory with others, and to look forward to his coming again in power and majesty.

### Pope Leo XIV August Prayer Intention



**P**ope Leo XIV released his prayer intention for August 2025, inviting us to pray *"that societies avoid internal conflicts due to ethnic, political, religious or ideological reasons"* and encouraging us to *"seek paths of dialogue"* and *"respond to conflict with gestures of fraternity."*

Pope Leo XIV's monthly prayer intention for August, aligns with his message to participants in Pax Christi USA's annual National Assembly, of the international Catholic peace movement that met in Detroit, Michigan, in July 2025), theme: *"Reclaiming the power of nonviolence*

# The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK) Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2025

The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK) successfully held its 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) from 7th to 12th July 2025 at Chemchemi ya Uzima College, in Karen, Nairobi. The AGM brought together over 100 Superiors and representatives from member congregations, partners, and invited guests, under the theme *'Pilgrims of hope in mission: AOSK walks steadfast towards a future of resilience, self-reliance, and sustainability.'* The event provided a space for reflection, dialogue, and discernment as the sisters examined their shared journey and renewed their commitment to the Gospel mission in Kenya and beyond. The week was marked by daily Eucharistic celebrations, keynote addresses, panel discussions, and presentations on AOSK's various networks and programs, including CASAK, CERRA Africa, Chemchemi ya Uzima College, HASK, justice and peace, anti-human trafficking, and Catholic Care for Children. Participants also engaged in open forums to discuss current social, political, and economic realities affecting religious life and the people they serve. The superiors had an opportunity to engage in an indepth discusison on how to improve AOSK programs through World Cafe. During AGM, the superior of the year 2025, Sr. Alice Wanjiku, LSOSF, was recohgnized for excemplary service and awarded. The AGM concluded with a renewed sense of unity, purpose, and hope, as the sisters committed themselves to strengthening collaboration, prophetic witness, and transformative service in the Church and society.

***By Sr. Mercy Mwayi, FSJ***



***Sr Alice Wanjiku, LSOSF, being awarded for having emerged as Superior of the Year 2025***



***Superiors following AGM proceedings Hosted at Chemchemi ya Uzima College***



***Superiors during a World Cafe Presentation by the AOSK-CCCK Program Manager Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG***

### *Training on the Integrated Father Baby Course in Malawi (IFBC)*

Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in partnership with the National Association of Congregations in Ghana, Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, and Tanzania, is leading the Strengthening the Capacity of Women Religious in Early Childhood Development (SCORE ECD) project, with generous support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. As part of this ongoing commitment, CRS hosted a four-day training from July 14th to 17th, 2025, in Malawi, focusing on the Integrated Father Baby Course (IFBC). This course was specifically designed to empower male caregivers with tools to manage stress and strengthen their emotional connection with their children, a vital part of early childhood development.

The training brought together a dedicated group of individuals, including Country Program Managers, Association Program Managers, Program Officers, and Master Trainers from Malawi. The training focused on the two well-established psychological approaches:

- Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT)
- Attachment Theory

Together, these frameworks will help the male caregivers understand how their thoughts, emotions, and relationships affect their well-being and that of their children.

Participants explored three core components of Cognitive behavioral Theory:

- Pleasant Activities - Which encourage caregivers to engage in simple, joyful activities that can lift their mood.
- Contact with Others – emphasizes the importance of healthy social support and relationships.

Thoughts – which helps caregivers on how to recognize and challenge negative thinking patterns that contribute to stress and depression

No challenge is as sacred and as demanding as peace: peace with justice, equity, and opportunity, peace that honors elders, women, and youth, peace that builds on Africa's rich diversity, and peace that is in harmony with our planet's gifts. Peace is Africa's central challenge as it is for the African Union, as conflict and tension obstruct development and social harmony. The scriptural teachings call us to bless the peacemakers and those who welcome strangers. Therefore, an interreligious approach is key to the resolution of Africa's pressing and emerging needs.

There was also a rich discussion on the unique stressors that male caregivers face from societal expectations to emotional isolation and how these pressures can impact their mental health. Stress in the lives of male caregivers can have serious and far-reaching consequences both for the caregivers themselves and for the children and families they care for. The participants embarked on a profound journey, delving into the critical dangers that stress poses to male caregivers, which were outlined as follows:

**Mental Health Challenges:** The silent battles that often go unnoticed, affecting emotional well-being.

- **Strained Relationships:** The fraying bonds with loved ones, threatened by the weight of unacknowledged stress.
- **Poor Physical Health:** The toll on the body, where stress manifests as fatigue and illness.
- **Substance Abuse and Risky Coping Mechanisms:** The desperate attempts to escape, sometimes leading down darker paths.



Empowered by this knowledge, participants were inspired to become pillars of strength for caregivers. They were encouraged to share the message that overcoming stress is possible through simple yet effective self-care strategies. Engaging in enjoyable activities, confiding in trusted friends or mentors, and challenging negative thoughts can enable caregivers to manage stress in healthy, meaningful ways. The significance of establishing supportive relationships, opening up emotionally, and staying connected to a nurturing community cannot be overstated because it can transform one's outlook and experiences. But the impact of this training extended far beyond the walls of the room. Each participant left feeling equipped and motivated to spread their newfound wisdom throughout their countries and organizations, by training other caregivers using the IFBC model.



*IFBC Training in progress*



*Participants in group discussion*

*By Sr. Teresa Yator, ASE*

# JUSTICE PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

## *The Silent Struggle*

**M**ental wellness is often overlooked, and for many, it's a silent battle. Stigma, lack of awareness, and absence of support systems keep individuals from seeking help. The AOSK Gender and Units Department is committed to breaking this silence, creating spaces for open dialogue and offering support. Together, we can foster a culture of empathy and understanding.

### *The Gender Lens on Mental Wellness*

Gender plays a significant role in mental health, with different pressures affecting women, men, and non-binary individuals in unique ways. For instance, women face societal expectations related to caregiving and appearance, while men often struggle with pressures of stoicism and financial success. The AOSK Gender and Units Department is dedicated to addressing these gendered experiences through tailored support programs for everyone, regardless of gender.



### *Ongoing session on mental wellness*

#### *Breaking the Silence: Why It's Important*

The first step in improving mental wellness is acknowledging the issue. Silence around mental health can leave individuals feeling isolated. The

AOSK Gender and Units Department is actively working to normalize conversations about mental health through workshops, educational campaigns, and support groups. By encouraging open dialogue, we aim to reduce the stigma that prevents people from seeking help.

### *Moving from Silence to Support*

Once the silence is broken, effective support is essential. Mental wellness is a continuous process, and support systems must be accessible and tailored to individual needs. Such support programs include; Counseling Services which ought to be confidential, ensuring individuals feel comfortable discussing their mental health challenges in a safe space. Peer Support Groups-These groups provide a sense of community for individuals facing similar challenges, fostering mutual support and understanding. People who have gone through and overcome the same challenges.

*Workshops and Seminars*-Where people can discuss freely and discover their mental health issues and using gender-sensitive approaches then offer wellness support. Collaboration with Mental Health Professionals-By partnering with mental health experts, holistic care that meets the diverse needs of our community can be attained. Encouraging Self-Care-Self-care is crucial for mental wellness. The AOSK Gender and Units Department encourages everyone to take time for activities that refresh their minds and bodies, such as exercise, hobbies, or relaxation. For in prioritizing self-care, it helps maintain balance and resilience.

**Conclusion-A Commitment to Wellness:** Mental health is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including biological, psychological, social, and environmental elements. Understanding these contributors can aid in prevention, early intervention, and effective management of mental health conditions.

At the AOSK Gender and Units Department, we believe mental wellness is a collective responsibility. No one should face their struggles alone. By continuing to raise awareness and offer support, we can create a community of understanding, healing, and growth. We are living in a time when mental health is contributed by a number of factors and it's worth noting them and knowing how to avoid or even cope with it.

***Remember, silence is not the solution, support is.***

***By Sr. Juliana Ndunge, LSOSF***

### ***When Voices are Met with Bullets!***

**T**he month of July 2025 will be remembered in Kenya's human rights history as a moment of both awakening and tragedy.

On 7th July Saba Saba Day peaceful protests erupted across at least 17 counties, led predominantly by Gen-Z youth who were expressing their discontent over governance issues, economic hardships, and deepening inequality.

However, the state's response was brutal and disproportionate. According to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), the protests resulted in 31 civilian deaths, over 100 injuries, two enforced disappearances, and more than 500 arbitrary arrests. One particularly tragic incident involved the death of a 12-year-old girl, shot by a stray bullet while inside her home in Nairobi.

This excessive and lethal use of force stands in clear violation of international human rights standards. The UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990) provide that: "Law enforcement officials shall, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force. Whenever the lawful use of force and firearms is unavoidable, they shall exercise restraint and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence."

Furthermore, Principle 9 states: "Intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life."

Kenya, as a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), has an obligation to protect the right to life (Article 6) and the right to peaceful assembly (Article 21). These actions amounted to grave violations of those rights. Amid the chaos, women protestors suffered an additional layer of violence. Organizations such as FIDA-Kenya documented multiple cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). These acts are not only criminal under domestic law, but also violate Kenya's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security.

Gender-based violence in the context of protest policing reveals both the vulnerability of women in public spaces and the failure of law enforcement to protect rather than violate. Survivors deserve access to justice, psychosocial support, and restitution.

In yet another disturbing trend, health institutions were attacked. Hospitals in Kitengela and Embakasi were vandalized and looted, with medical staff threatened and essential equipment stolen. These



actions violate the principle of medical neutrality under international humanitarian law and disrupt access to life-saving services.

As the AOSK JPIC Human Rights and Safeguarding Officer, I am deeply concerned with widespread use of force against citizens, including children and women, undermines public trust in government and security institutions. The law is clear: force must be the last resort, and even when used, it must be proportional, lawful, and accountable.

Kenya's actions in July 2025 clearly breached international law and its own constitutional safeguards. It is not enough to mourn the dead; we must ensure that their deaths lead to change.

I believe July's events are not just political failures, they are moral failures. A nation that responds to peaceful

dissent with bullets has lost its moral compass. A government that turns its forces on its youth is nurturing anger, not unity.

As AOSK JPIC, we remain committed to working with congregations, youth, and communities to build a more just, peaceful, and compassionate Kenya. We will continue to teach, to heal, and to speak out, because silence in the face of injustice is complicity.

As it is written in Isaiah 1:17: "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow." May our voice remain loud, and our resolve remain firm, as we journey with the people of Kenya toward truth, justice, and reconciliation.

*By Sr. Bernadetta Nzioka, DSH*

## PAX CHRISTI

### *Through PCI empowerment, the religious continue to preach nonviolence in society*

#### *Active Nonviolence:*

This refers to a strategy of struggle of new humanism, consisting of the systematic denunciation of all forms of violence exercised by the system or people. That may appear in situations of noncooperation intervention, self-suffering, protest, and extra; therefore, needed is the reverse, e.g. use of peaceful means, not force, to bring about political or social change.

The group that comprised both adults and youth, making for a diverse and dynamic learning atmosphere, all key themes were introduced, though with some adjustments to suit the mixed audience. The training aimed to cultivate

inner and communal peace, and inspire action rooted in justice, empathy, and spiritual witness.

#### *Forms of Violence:*

The participants examined different forms of violence, both visible and hidden: physical, emotional, sexual, economic, and structural. The women shared about economic dependency and emotional strain within families, whereby the youth identified verbal abuse and neglect as forms of violence they often face in both school and home environments as emerging issues.

#### *Practicing Active Nonviolence*

The trainers and adults discussed handling con-

flict in parish associations with patience and clarity. The youth explored how social media can become a tool for peace or a weapon of division. Participants appreciated that nonviolence is not weakness, but a commitment to justice through love. Many resolved to change how they respond in moments of disagreement at home, school, and Church. The principle of active nonviolence was introduced as a moral and spiritual discipline, not just a reaction. Stories of St. Francis of Assisi, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. were shared as examples of courage rooted in compassion.

### ***Lessons learned***

- a) Active Nonviolence is to be taken by peace-seeking people as a task, a teaching, a responsibility that acts as a guide to pave the way in finding peace and maintaining it.
- b) When peace is accepted to lead by the Active Nonviolent Method of solving conflicts, such people will become well prepared and empowered in finding justice for all.
- c) Participants gained knowledge that those who embrace the Nonviolent method of solving conflicts have to bear in mind that this method requires consistency across their lives.
- d) Learners must know that active nonviolence is democratic, community-spirited, and fraternal, where ideas and rules are a core element to embark on in seeking peace
- e) The participants learned that active nonviolent method is not used to protect the benefits or defend those in wrong, but rather are used to provide a just cause to be able to attain peace and fairness, truth, justice, dialogue, tolerance, and openness to all.

- f) To do the Active Nonviolent method of solving our conflicts, our way of life, there must be a readiness to say a big NO to situations that would lead to violence, and we must shun violence

### ***Pope Leo XIV encourages Pax Christi to continue to promote nonviolence***

In a message to participants in Pax Christi USA's annual National Assembly, of the international Catholic peace movement met in Detroit, Michigan, on (25-27 July 2025 ). The *theme*: “*Reclaiming the power of nonviolence in a broken world*”. Pope Leo expressed his hope that the National Conference would inspire members of Pax Christi USA to work to make their local communities “*‘houses of peace’ where one learns how to defuse hostility through dialogue, where justice is practiced and forgiveness is cherished*”.

Jesus, he continued, “continues to send His followers into the world to become creators of peace in their daily lives”. Therefore “*it is all the more important for a Church capable of reconciliation to be present and visible*” in parishes, neighbourhoods, and especially on the peripheries of society.



***Sr Anastacia training the religious on Active Nonviolence strategies to solve conflicts***

***By Sr. Celine Makario, SMK***



## SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

### *Preparing young entrepreneurs for the Job Market*

The AOSK- Sisters Led Youth Empowerment initiative focuses on equipping young people with skills, resources, and opportunities to actively participate in their social economic life. It involves providing access to education through skill development, mentorship and provision of seed capital for self-sustainability.

On July 23-26 the AOSK Sisters Led Youth Empowerment initiative organized a two-day training for youth entrepreneurs. In attendance were 58 (48 females, 10 males) youth from different Sisters led technical and vocational institutions. The participants were selected having successfully finished their one-year technical and vocational training from their respective institutions and submitted their business plans for consideration. The objective of the two days training was to equip the young entrepreneurs with knowledge and skills on Entrepreneurship, Financial literacy, Group dynamics and Record keeping.

The training entailed understanding the basics of entrepreneurship, tips to becoming a successful young entrepreneur and challenges faced by entrepreneurs. On financial management the participants learnt on how to separate business and personal finances, management of long and short term finances and the overall monitoring and controlling of finances in their respective businesses. On record keeping the participants were taken through recording on a cash book, creditors and debtors book, purchase and Assets book. As young people looking forward to becoming entrepreneurs, equipping them

with knowledge and skills on entrepreneurship, financial management and recording keeping will help them become successful entrepreneurs. These also gives them an opportunity to gain life skills for critical thinking, problem solving techniques for successful businesses. Additionally, becoming young entrepreneurs will expose them to the labor market, becoming job creators hence boost the local economy for social change.



*Sr Celestine Therese giving her input on Financial Literacy during Youth Entrepreneurship Training*



*Instructor Patricia Sidi (Left) interpreting for the youth enabled differently during the Entrepreneurship Training*

*By Mrs. Caroline Wamiti*

## AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA COLLEGE

### *Radiating Life: Spotlight on the Formation of Formators*

**C**hemchemi Ya Uzima, Swahili for “Fountain of Living Waters”, continues to make a meaningful impact this July through its Formation of Formators Programme. Overseen by the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK), this transformative course, held in Nairobi, is shaping leaders who will guide others in religious life across Africa.

The programme emphasises the inner formation of the formator. In July, special focus has been placed on nurturing joy, commitment, and personal integrity, qualities that make religious accompaniment not only effective but also authentic. Formators are encouraged to live the values they teach, offering spiritual depth, presence, and credibility to those they mentor.

Currently, the January 2025 Intake group is actively engaged in a vital phase of the programme. Participants are immersed in lectures covering pastoral theology, human development, and spirituality. In addition, they are learning to write practical, context-specific formation programmes

tailored to the needs of their communities.

A key feature of this stage is Micro-teaching, a space where trainees practice delivering content and receive constructive feedback from peers and facilitators. This hands-on component sharpens their communication and instructional skills, preparing them to become effective and reflective formators.

What sets Chemchemi apart is its participative and holistic approach. The environment fosters not just academic growth but also spiritual and emotional maturity. Formation here is NOT about filling minds but shaping hearts, calling participants to personal conversion, leadership in community life, and a deeper encounter with Christ.

As July draws to a close, Chemchemi Ya Uzima remains a source of inspiration and renewal. It continues to raise formators who radiate life; women and men ready to accompany others with wisdom, compassion, and faithfulness in their mission.

***By Sr. Catherine Mutuku OSB***



*Participants from the formation of formators program, April 2025*

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



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