



MARIANISTS

District of Eastern Africa
Letter #16

26. March 2007

Feast of the Annunciation

Dear Brothers,

I am writing this from Rome where Bro. Chola, Fr. Gabriel and I are taking part in the “Spirit of Saragossa” retreat seminar. You might remember that we did a pilot project of this retreat last November for the five members of our District who were preparing at that time for perpetual vows under the direction of Fr. Bill Behringer. There are 20 participants from many units of the Society of Mary and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate. We have passed the mid-point of our programme which ends on Wednesday, March 28. Bro. Chola returns on March 29 and I will return to Nairobi on March 30.

Before the celebration of Easter and the beginning of the April Council meetings, I wanted to communicate a number of news items, especially concerning personnel. I will list these in random order. I thought it would be better to send this information now, rather than waiting until after the Council meetings when a more regular letter would be expected.

Anthony Wanyoike: After the death of his father in 2005, Anthony asked to leave the novitiate programme and to attend to the needs of his family. He has requested to re-join the novitiate and to resume his formation programme. This has been approved by our District Council and ratified by the Provincial Council. Anthony has joined Samuel Goko with whom he will complete his first year of novitiate. Welcome back, Anthony!

Lynn Maroon: The mother of UD graduate and MIRACLE volunteer, Matt Maroon, is presently visiting in Karonga, Malawi. She and Matt will arrive in Nairobi on April 1 for a few days before returning to their home in Cleveland, Ohio. Matt will spend the month of April in North America, doing fundraising for the Karonga Mission, and return in early May to complete his volunteer commitment. While in the US, he will meet with four other volunteers, all UD graduates, who will be spending a year as volunteers in Karonga beginning in August of this year. The District Council supports this development as a “pilot project” in view of a possible African placement for the Marianist Volunteer Programme (MVP) which is sponsored by the USA Province. No final decisions have been made yet about this long-term placement for volunteers by MVP.

Teaching Practice: Bro. Hanson Sitali continues his teaching practice experience at Ofafa High School in Jericho-Nairobi; Bro. Daniel Odero continues his at Highway High School in Nairobi. As of the end of February, both were progressing well and seemed to be gaining much from the experience “on the other side of the desk.” Both also claimed to be tired!

Bro. Phillip Kalului: As of the end of February, Phillip has joined the novitiate community in Limuru with ministry at the Cheshire Home. He is also assisting with various aspects of the Limuru programme. We welcome Phillip back to full life in the District and pledge our fraternal support and encouragement. We look forward to a fruitful and happy life and ministry among us.

Bro. Jomo Mwaura: While in the USA for the Provincial Chapter, I was able to spend the evening of February 28 with Jomo. That day also happened to be his 39th birthday. Jomo has done very well in the academic part of his programme and has found the actual counselling experience both stretching and enriching. Because of the sale of the Roland Avenue property in mid-February, the community has now shifted to another location in Baltimore. His new address is:

Marianist Community
317 South Broadway
Baltimore, MD 21231-2408

Let’s continue to support Jomo and the other members of our District who are in “diaspora” by our prayers, our support, and our correspondence.

District Seminarians: While here in Rome, Chola, Gabriel and I have been able to spend some time with Callistus, Mike Jun and Wanyo. Both Callistus and Mike are completing their final term of study at the Gregorianum University and will take final exams in June. Wanyo is finishing his first year of study. All of these Brothers have performed very well in their academic programmes and have taken this time of preparation for priestly ministry very seriously. We hope that Michael and Stephen will be able to attend a course in Spiritual Counseling at St. Anselm’s in the UK during July and August. Callistus and Mike have been busy blessings houses during this Lenten season, a particular custom in the Diocese of Rome. Unofficially and not yet confirmed, we are hoping for an ordination to priesthood on October 13 for Callistus and Michael.

Bro. Peter Kiama: Kiama will soon be completing his diploma in Pastoral Ministry at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila and will officially join the community in Davoa City, Philippines. Congratulations, Peter, and best wishes for a fruitful ministry in Davoa City. Peter will be in the community for the Easter celebrations, having completed his course on April 4.

Fr. Tony Jansen: Fr. Tony has been in Kenya since November, undergoing a prostate operation and attending to some medical issues that have followed. Presently, he is staying with the novitiate community in Limuru and assisting with some clerical services. If proper approvals are given by respective doctors, we would hope for Fr. Tony's return to Lusaka in the near future.

Faustino Formation Centre: The deadline for completion of the centre is April 27 and Bro. Jack is scheduled to return to the US province on May 23. This project has taken far more time and been far more complicated than we originally anticipated. Bro. Jack has done an admirable job in keeping things on track, on pushing contractors, and on attending to the finances. He, Bro. Erick and Bro. Fred are also making plans for the furnishing of the house and for the upcoming Live-in which begins there on May 10. In his latest communiqué, Bro. Jack says that the schedule is tight, but he is doing his best to have the project finished before he departs the District. In due time, we will make plans for an official dedication of the Faustino Formation Centre and for a blessing of the new facility. We are hoping that this new centre will greatly support our recruitment and formation efforts in the southern part of the District.

Bro. Carmine Annunziata: Bro. Carmine has been on his regular home visit since early January. He is due back in Lusaka just after Easter.

George Opala: As some members of the District are aware, George suffered an eye injury about seven months ago and has been under supervision by the doctors at the Kikuyu Eye Clinic. Recently, he had eye surgery to remove blood from the back of the eye. He is healing, although his sight is still impaired. It would be good for us to continue to pray for George and for a full recovery.

Annual Retreats: Fr. Paul Marshall, Marianist Rector at the University of Dayton, has agreed to come to the District this year and to lead the annual retreats for us. The retreats will be based on the document of the XXXIII General Chapter of 2006, "In Mission with Mary." Copies of this document were posted from the Provincial Office some weeks ago but have not, as yet, arrived at the District Office. When they do, they will be distributed to the communities of the District. It would be good for all of us to read through the document before the retreats since Fr. Marshall will base his conferences on the sections of the document. We are grateful to Paul for his willingness to serve us in this way. The retreat for the communities of Karonga and Lusaka will be held in Lusaka from April 30 until May 6. The Kenya retreat will be held at Tabor Hill from May 14-20.

Solidarity & Sharing Fund Grants: We recently received word from both the General Administration and the Provincial Sharing Fund about grants that have been made to ministries of the District. Bro. Chola will be in contact with ministry directors about these grants and about the expected reporting and accounting for them. We are also grateful to the General Administration and its Education & Formation Fund for the grant they have given towards the completion of the Faustino Formation Centre in Lusaka.

Letter to Community Directors, Ministry Directors, and Fundraisers: Before coming to Rome, Bro. Chola sent a letter to all community Directors, Ministry Directors and others involved in fundraising activities concerning the proper procedures for processing grant proposals and making funding requests for ministries and projects. These procedures have been developed in conjunction with both the Provincial Office and the General Administration. I would request that all members of the District read this letter carefully as these procedures take effect immediately. Any questions along this line can be directed to Bro. Chola and the Office of Temporalities.

Vow Renewal Requests: In preparation for the April Council meeting, formation directors and other members of the District are being consulted on requests for renewal of vows or the profession of perpetual vows. This is a serious process for us and an important service to the Brothers making these requests. Your timely cooperation in preparing the consultations and returning them to Fr. Mike Nartker by the date indicated is very much appreciated. Let us also pray for the Brothers involved in renewing their religious vows or requesting perpetual vows.

We await an announcement from Bro. Stephen Glodek and the Provincial Council about the leadership of the District of Eastern Africa. Let us join together in prayer for this intention and pray, as well, that the rest of Lent be a graced time for all of us.

**In a flash, at a trumpet crash, I am all at once what Christ is, since He was what I am.
And this jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond ... is
immortal diamond.**

(Gerard Manley Hopkins)

Happy and joyous Easter.

Fr. Martin A. Solma, SM
District Superior