



Christian Brothers
East Africa District

East Africa District Newsletter

DRAWN BY MYSTERY, DESTINED FOR LIFE.

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WEEKLY REFLECTION



Let yourself be silently drawn by the strange pull of what you really love. It will not lead you astray.

Jalaluddin Rumi
Essential Rumi, versions by Coleman Barks
(photo by Mohamed Nuzrath)

“We are all meant to be mothers of God...for God is always needing to be born”
(Meister Eckhart)





———— **BR MARTIN BINYENYA** ————



My God and my all, I am challenged with my lived experience to continue seeking your face as a Christian Brother. I have the burning desire to continue being a sign of your love and justice to all humanity. I am aware that this call is demanding, but with your help I have hope and assurance that everything is possible.

(Quotations taken from the profession mass booklet)

———— **BR JULIAS OLUOCH** ————

“What keep me alive is being open to the unfolding mystery of God. I am not sure what tomorrow holds for me, but I am hopeful that I will see a new day. I look forward to each day’s challenges with hope and trust in God as they unfold. May this hope and trust continue growing in me everyday of my life”.

(Quotations taken from the profession mass booklet)



———— **HISTORIC DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION
TWO BROTHERS SAY “FOREVER”** ————



L-R Brs Julius Oluoch, Michael de Klerk (Province Leader) and Martin Binyenya during the profession mass

Fifty women and children from the Education for Life Program, which the Christian Brothers administer for disadvantaged people in Eldoret, danced and sang, making two rounds of the gardens in front of Assumption Parish Church in Eldoret. In the middle of this





group, two tall dancing men stood out: Julius Olouch and Martin Binyenya had come to Eldoret to pronounce their final profession for life in the Christian Brothers.

Waiting for them to enter the Church were some 500 people who had come from near and far to witness this important moment



Section of the congregation during mass

- in the life of the East Africa District,
- in the life of the African Province and
- in the life of the Congregation.

Many of those present had made major sacrifices to be

present to witness this historic moment:

- The Bishop of Eldoret had accepted the invitation to preside, even though he had to leave that day for a meeting in Rome.
- Br. Michael de Klerk, Province Leader had come from Johannesburg, South Africa as the representative of the Congregational Leader.
- Despite problems at the border, two brothers came from South Sudan, where both Julius and Martin had been in ministry in the past.
- Brothers from Arusha, Tanzania had made the journey from Arusha to Nairobi, only then to **begin** the six hour journey from Nairobi to Eldoret.
- In fact, everyone present had travelled long distances: the number of people present testified to the important contribution made to their lives by these two brothers.

The word “forever” rang through the Church four times as these brothers made their final profession. How thrilling it is to hear that commitment from men who have lived our life for many years and still have a passion for the vocation of brotherhood. They know to what they are committing their lives.





Tony Shanahan, the District Leader, began his remarks of thanks at the end of the liturgy by reminding us that Christ is risen, and that for Christians this makes everything new and different. Referring to the very challenging homily of the Bishop (see below), he reminded us that, having witnessed the wonderful sign of grace operative in the lives of these two men, we all



EFL Choir outside the Church's compound

are now missioned to do the same according to the circumstances of our vocations. He told us that, when we meet one of these brothers in the future, we can say: "I witnessed your final profession. Are you being faithful to that commitment?"

Among those Tony thanked on behalf of the Congregation were the four choirs that provided lively, beautiful music throughout the liturgy; at many times this animated those dancing in procession. At the conclusion of the liturgy, many volunteers served a wonderful meal to all who attended.



Martin signing his vows formula



Julias signing his vow formula

Both brothers had written their own vow formula and each had provided a statement in the program (see below) which summarized their mature understanding of how Christian vocation is understood today. They had also selected one common statement, which might have shocked some, but which reflects the consciousness that they brought to this day:

We are all called to be mothers of God....





Everyone who was able to be present for the day left filled with gratitude and joy for the work of grace within these two brothers and within the Congregation and challenged to birth God in their own communities.

Richard DeMaria

———— **EFL CHOIR STEAL THE SHOW** ————

I am not sure whether this energetic EFL choir, mostly women and a few men, was invited to the celebration or not. Having said that, let me say that it was wonderful having them at the celebration of our two brothers making their final commitment as Christian Brothers. This group is one of the reasons why we are in Eldoret.



EFL Choir animating the gathering

What moved me most, was when I looked back to the year 2009 when I worked at EFL (Education for Life), meeting these desperate individuals who were begging money for rent, school fees, medicines and so many other small things. The Christian Brothers accepted responsibility for the program about 3 years ago and, with the help of various supporters, the program has become a sign of hope for these people living with HIV.





These women and men have now formed a community that supports each other in every way. They sing, dance and pray together. The people are happy and energetic. They have a purpose for which to live; they can now support their families through the various supports offered at the program. One of these support programs is SILC (Savings and Internal Lending Communities), whereby the group participants can save money and give loans to each other.

The EFL choir was at the ceremony as our brothers and sisters. We belong to them and they belong to us. Fr George Okoth, Diocesan Development Coordinator, thanked the Christian Brothers during the reception for the transforming influence that we have had in the lives of these wonderful people. Witnessing their liveliness, I felt it was God breaking into their lives and filling them with so much life. I felt proud and humbled being a Christian Brother in their midst.

George Massay

———— **ANY VOCATION IS MEANT FOR EVANGELIZATION** ————



Bishop Cornelius Korir giving a homily

Bishop Cornelius Korir of Catholic Diocese of Eldoret reminded the two brothers making their final profession (Julias and Martin) that Jesus who called them gave them a mission, and the mission is to evangelise people, to bring people to Himself. “Your vocation is to lead people to Christ”, said Bishop Korir. He reminded all present that every baptized Catholic

has a vocation to evangelise.

The Bishop also warned the brothers against the secular mentality of “It is my right”. He said this kind of thinking does not belong in Religious Life. He said that this concern for one’s human rights belongs to the secular world. He urged them to be satisfied with what is provided to them. He reminded them they receive so that they can give to the people.





The Bishop reiterated that the Diocese of Eldoret is happy to have Christian Brothers working with them. "We are very happy to welcome Christian Brothers in the Diocese" said the Bishop. He thanked the Brothers for the contribution they are making in changing the lives of the people.

George Massay

———— TAEKWONDO BECOMES A FAVOURITE GAME AT EDMUND RICE SINON SECONDARY SCHOOL ————



Student of Edmund Rice in training

It is amazing how students at Edmund Rice Sinon Secondary School have fallen in love with Taekwondo. Taekwondo is a Korean word which means unarmed combat that involves the use of body and mind. In the actual sense, *Tae* means "to Kick" or "Smash with the feet," *Kwon* implies "punching" or "destroying with the hand or fist," and *Do* means "way" or

"method." Taekwondo therefore is the way of kicking and smashing someone using empty hands and feet. In short, it is unarmed battle mainly for self defense. It is a form of karate that utilizes various techniques including punching, jabbing, chopping, blocking, choking moves, powerful leaping, jumping, kicking, dodging, and parrying actions with hands and feet. Apart from physical fitness, the game comes along with so many advantages including equipping trainees with some skills for self defense. Furthermore taekwondo is highly credited for its great emphasis on personal discipline and uprightness of moral character. It is also a source of employment. At Edmund Rice, there are about 60 students who daily utilize their free time training. Thanks be to Mr. Richard Kitolo, the karate teacher, also known as "Master" for his energy and commitment in training the students.

Br. Simon Kaswahili

———— NEWS FROM ELDORET ————

Saturday the 11th was a joyful day not only for Martin and Julius but also for us as Eldoret Community for getting the privilege of hosting one of the biggest brothers gathering in the history of our community. It was a bonding time, sharing of meals and drinks. Julius and





Martin's families and friends joined the Brothers to mark this joyful day. The evening was also graced by our Province Leader Michael de Klerk and few former Brothers.



Vincent and Sunday played a central role in making braai for the visitors.

Paul Mutuku

———— A WORD OF THANK YOU ————

In the past recent days and weeks we have received overwhelming congratulatory and well wishes messages from Christian Brothers, ERN and friends from all over the world for our decision towards making final profession. Indeed we had a wonderful and challenging celebration on Saturday 11th of April 2015. The eye witnesses can testify how great the celebration was. It was a big milestone in our life journey. Our heartfelt appreciation to all who send their well wishes as well as those who prayed for us. It was a big encouragement. We want to thank Eldoret community for their hard work towards the celebration and all the Brothers and friends who sacrificed their time to come and be with us and support us as we took our life commitment. We felt the Brotherhood and friendship we share. For sure Kazi imeanza! Kazi imeanza is a Swahili phrase which means work has started.

Brs. Martin Binyenya and Julias Oluoch

BIRTHDAYS

APRIL	17	DOMINIC MWANIA (Second year novice – Lusaka)
	18	JULIAS OLUOCH (Otiende)





Calendar

APRIL

29 DLT Meeting

MAY

1 Labour Day
1-3 Annually Professed Workshop
5 Blessed Edmund Rice Feast Day
11-15 PLT meeting
20 DLT meeting
24-26 ERMEA meeting
28-29 Formation Committee Meeting (Nairobi)

JUNE

1 Madaraka Day
3 DLT meeting
24 DLT meeting
28 June – July 4 PLT Retreat (Nairobi)

Many blessings

George Massay

