



# DIOCESE LAUNCHES THE YEAR OF MEN

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**THE FARM: SMALL LAND, BIG VISION: INSIDE EMBU'S INNOVATIVE FARM**

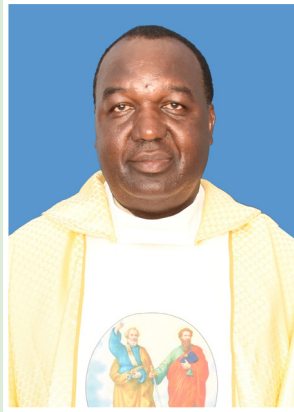
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## JOY AS DIOCESE OPENS THE NEWEST PARISH



*Fr. Paul Kinyua being installed as the first Parish Priest of Kangaru by Bishop Peter Kimani of Embu*

Lenten campaign officially started on Ash Wednesday when ashes were signed on our foreheads. The priest used these words, "Remember man/woman you are dust and to dust you shall return or Repent and believe the Gospel." The Holy Season of Lent invite us into forty days of a desert experience, as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the Paschal mysteries.



Lenten period calls us to deepen our spiritual lives by becoming instruments of mercy and compassion towards others by reaching out and identifying with the poor and suffering, consoling those in sorrow and forging bonds of communion with all.

Lent every time reminds us of the three pillars of attaining holiness: **prayer, fasting and almsgiving**. As we fast, we are invited to refrain from hurtful words and habits that offends our neighbors. "Let us cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in the Christian communities. If we do so, we will let words of hatred give way to words of hope and peace," says Pope Leo XIV in his 2026 Lenten campaign message.

In particular, we should disengage ourselves from corruption that has reached unprecedented levels in our Country and risk destroying the moral fabric of our society. Corruption has nearly brought our Country to its knees. This hurts the poor and the marginalized.

We have become a society that believes in short cuts and detests hard work. We should not allow ourselves to be enslaved by greed for money and wealth the root cause of all corruption being witnessed in our country. A halfhearted action towards the fight against corruption shows weak leadership.

The word of God in (Isaiah 1:15-18) says, "When you stretch your hands, I close my eyes to you, though you pray, the more I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves clean. Put away your misdeeds from my eyes, cease doing evil learn to do good. Make justice your aim, redress the wronged, hear the orphans' plea, and defend the widow. Come now, let us set things right."

Lenten campaign touches the individual person, family, the basic institution in our society that is faced with numerous challenges that threaten its stability and well-being. Parents and guardians should take their parental guidance seriously by finding time to be with their children under the current stress and responsibilities of work. They should find time to mentor them, seeking the help of counselors, school teachers, religious sisters and priests in parishes.

Enjoy reading!

## ELECT CREDIBLE CHURCH LEADERS, BISHOP TELLS THE FAITHFUL

BY FELIX MURIITHI

The Catholic Bishop of Embu Diocese, Rt. Rev. Peter Kimani Ndung'u, has exhorted the Church members not to confuse church leadership with secular leadership.

Speaking to a church congregation recently, he noted that Church leadership should be guided by the spirit of prayer rather than competitive campaigns.

He reiterated that the Church needs capable leaders who can move it forward spiritually and institutionally.

The Bishop cautioned against the secular style campaigns contests and leadership in Church, warning that they can lead to character assassination, division, and loss of dignity among believers.

"Church leadership should be sought through the spirit of prayer, not campaigns. Campaigns destroys the reputations of others, their names and ultimately, they hurt the Church itself. This is not the purpose of Church elections," he said, adding that prayer allows God to guide believers in choosing the right leaders.

The Bishop of Embu advised those elected to remain apolitical and avoid mixing Church elections with National politics.

While acknowledging that politics itself is not inherently bad, he warned that political interests and rivalries can destabilize the Church structures and distract leaders from their spiritual mandate.

He advised Church leaders to keep a clear boundary between their religious responsibilities and political activities, noting that blending the two "does not end well" and risks undermining the Church's moral authority.

Bishop Kimani strongly opposed the idea of giving politicians opportunities to speak from the pulpit.

He stated that although political leaders deserve respect, they can still share manifestoes and other political messages in other public forums outside the places of worship.

"Everything has its own place and purpose," he said, reiterating the need to preserve the sanctity, neutrality and unity of the Church.



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Fr. James Gatiti - Editor,

Fr. Philip Michael Ileri,

Fr. John Njue Mugo

Sr. Virginia Bickford FMA,

Fr. Eliud Wanyoike

Felix Muriithi- Design & Layout

## JOY AS DIOCESE OPENS THE NEWEST PARISH



BY FR JAMES GATITI

It was a historic moment in the life of the Church in the Diocese of Embu as hundreds of Christians of Our Lady of Assumption gathered for the installation of the first parish priest of the newly created St. John the Apostle Kangaru parish.

The installation ceremony took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026, the first Sunday of Lent. Before the beginning of Mass, the Bishop was warmly welcomed by the Catholic Women Association (CWA), the Catholic Men Association (CMA) and the Pontifical Missionary Children (PMC) for the historic occasion where after his arrival, he led in planting trees to mark the day.

At exactly, 10.00 am the Mass began. As the Mass was going on, Rt. Rev Peter Kimani Ndung'u, the Bishop of Embu read the decree announcing the creation of the new parish.

The new parish that came as the fruit of Jubilee Year of hope, took Canonical effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2026 when it was first announced at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral during the official closure of Jubilee Year, during the pontificate of Pope Leo XVI.

“In the name of the Most Holy Trinity. I Rt. Rev Peter Kimani Ndung'u, by the grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See, Bishop of the Diocese of Embu, having prayerfully considered the pastoral needs of the people of God entrusted to my care, having heard the Presbyterial Council in accordance with Canon (Cf: 515 §2 of the code of Canon Law)... considering the growth of the Christian faithful in Kangaru area, the expansion of pastoral activities, the presence of University of Embu and other institutions of learning and the need to ensure more effective pastoral care and access to the sacraments, by virtue of my pastoral office and ordinary power in accordance with Canons” (Cf: Canons 515 §§ 1-3 and 518).

After the Bishop read the decree, there were cheers and ululations from the Congregation. This became the 24<sup>th</sup> parish in the Diocese and the seventh parish within St. Joseph Allamano Deanery. It was also the first parish to be created by Bishop Kimani since his installation as the Bishop of Embu.

The new parish was created from Our Lady of Assumption and St Thomas Moore Kairuri parishes and shall comprise the following prayer houses: St. John the Apostle Kangaru, Kithungururu, St. Joseph Gatunduri, St. Helen Mutunduri, St. Charles Lwanga Kathangari and St. Stephen Kivunguru and Mary Mother of God Mikimbi. Mikimbi prayer house was previously under Kairuri Parish but falls under the newest parish.

St. Thomas Aquinas Chaplaincy of University of Embu will be served by the new parish, providing pastoral care to students, staff and University community in accordance with diocesan norms.

The new parish was placed under the patronage of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist. The parish Church shall be St. John the Apostle Church, Kangaru, which shall enjoy all the rights, privileges and obligations accorded to the parish Church by law.

The parish received her first parish priest: Fr Paul Kinyua and Fr Dr. Joseph Kirimi, Chaplain of University of Embu as his assistant.

The rite of installation included the profession of faith according to Canon 833 and the renewal of priestly commitments. This was followed by the signing of the documents and the enthronement as a symbol of taking possession of the parish.

Fr Kinyua assumed responsibilities over the people of God entrusted to his care that includes celebrating Mass for them on Sundays and other solemnities, exercising his pastoral ministry of teaching, sanctifying, governing and serving the people of God devotedly.

Bishop Kimani urged Kangaru parishioners to develop strong devotion for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. He informed them that the Blessed Sacrament was placed in their parish Church from 15<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

He encouraged the University Community to be attending Mass at the parish Church and not at the University Hall since the parish has become their convergence zone. Quoting St. Carlo Acutis the Bishop said, “The Eucharist is the express highway to Heaven.”

Bishop Kimani invited those living outside the sacramental life to grab the opportunity to solemnize their marriages in Church.

“We would like families that are Christ-centered. Let this parish become a candle of light.” He invited the priests to serve the people of God guided by love and humility: by being available at Small Christian communities, listening to the needs of the sick and Christians entrusted to their care.

He said that just like opening a new home, the new parish requires various things like the presbyters' house, proper means of transport, office... He urged Christians to continue supporting the diocese in self-reliance.

## THREE PRIESTS AND FIVE DEACONS TO BE ORDAINED



*Candidates for Diaconate Ordination on 25th March 2026*

### FELIX MURIITHI

At least three priests and five deacons will be ordained in the Diocese of Embu on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at St. Teresa of the Child Jesus - Kithimu parish.

In a letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026, addressed to all priests, religious men and women, and lay faithful, Rt. Rev Peter Kimani Ndung'u' the Bishop of Embu said, "With great joy and heartfelt gratitude to God, the Diocese of Embu looks forward to receiving the gift of five Deacons and three priests who will add laborer's in the vineyard of the lord."

The Bishop exhorted the faithful to pray for the candidates as they prepare to receive the Sacred Orders of Diaconate and Priesthood.

He also extended invitation to them to join the ordination celebration at Kithimu parish as one family of God to give thanks to Him for the precious gift of vocations in the Church.

Those to be ordained Deacons are: Nicholas Nzungi Muthoka, Joseph Murimi, John Njunji Mwangi, Alex Muriithi Nyaga and Gerald Murimi. Seminarian Muthoka full of thanksgiving to God says, "The Almighty has done great things for me, Holy is His Name," (Luke1:49).

Seminarian Joseph Murimi, who hails from Iriamurai parish compares himself to the children of Israel during their Exodus.

Murimi says that he has seen the hand of God on his side guiding him through trials, sustaining his vocation and leading him step by step.

"Through every challenge of formation, God's faithful hand has carried me to this moment of service." Quoting (Psalm 115:1) he says, "Not to us, o Lord not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness."

Seminarian John Njunji Mwangi is inspired by the words of Saint John XXIII who said, "Consult not your fears but your hopes and dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but on your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what is still possible for you to do."

Seminarian Gerald Murimi is inspired by (1Corinthians 9:16) that reminds him that preaching the Gospel is not something to boast about but a mission entrusted to him by God.

It calls him to respond generously to his vocation and to dedicate his life in serving God and His people with humility, commitment and faithfulness.

Seminarian Alexander Muriithi Nyaga, is inspired by Exodus 33:13 where he has always seen his vocation as a favor from God.

Like Moses, he says it is the prayer that he makes to God that will guide him in the ministry and lead him to a deeper relationship with God, as he leads his fellow pilgrims with love, humility and wisdom. "Like Moses, I seek to know God's ways and walks faithfully in His presence."

Those to be ordained priests are: Deacon Fredric Muchangi, Deacon Thomas Muchira Njeru sand Deacon Augustine Muchangi Kiambi.

### Nicholas Nzungi Muthoka:

I was born on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1986 to Patrick Muthoka Mulili and Agnes Katulu Muthoka of Kanguu Village, Kaewa Sub-Location, Kivaa Location, Masinga Division, in Masinga Sub-County of Machakos County. I am the eighth born in a family of eleven children, seven boys and four girls.

I was baptized on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1995 and received First Holy Communion same day. I received the Sacrament of Confirmation on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1996.

I began my primary Education at Kamuthumba Primary School from 1994-2001. I later proceeded to Masinga Boys' High School for Secondary Education from 2002-2005. After completing my Secondary School, I served as an untrained teacher for one year before joining Kericho Teachers' College, where I pursued Teacher Training from 2007-2009.

From 2010 after graduation, I worked as a professional teacher. While teaching, I continued and advanced my education by enrolling at Mount Kenya University, where I pursued a Bachelor of Education from 2013-2016.

After completing my University studies, I joined Seminary to pursue my priestly calling on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at St. Joseph's Major Seminary-Nairobi. I started the Propaedeutic Year, which lasted until May 2017.

In August 2017, I joined Christ the King Major Seminary in Nyeri for Philosophical Studies, completing in 2021. I began Theological Studies at the same Seminary in August 2021, and on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 I successfully completed after nine years of Seminary formation.

**Alexander Muriithi Nyaga:**

I was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1997 to my beloved parents Moses Nyaga Kiambi and Lucy Muthoni Ireri, from St Benedict Karau Parish, Mbuvari location, Kavari Village. I started my early childhood education at Kathuniri Primary School in 2001 and later transferred to St Paul's Mbuvari primary school where I sat for KCPE in 2011.

After successfully completing my primary education, I joined St Stephen Kavutiri High school and sat for KCSE in 2015.

After completing my Secondary education, I helped my parent at home and I also ventured into **boda-boda** business before joining Seminary.

On 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016, I began my Seminary formation at Christ the King Major Seminary-Nyeri for the propaedeutic year that lasted up to May 2017. In August 2017, I joined Philosophy School and completed in 2021.

From August 2021 to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025, I joined School of Theology and I completed my seminary formation after nine years of formation.

**John Njunji Mwangi:**

I was born on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1988 to Francis Mwangi Githinji and Lucy Wangui Mwangi. I am the fifth born in a family of five. I am from St. Nicholas Small Christian Community, St. Anthony of Padua, Dallas Prayer house, Our Lady of Assumption Embu Parish.

I was baptized on September, 1988 by Rev. Fr. Dr. J.B. Gichuhi. In 2005, I received First Holy Communion and in the same year confirmed by His Grace Anthony Muheria, the Bishop of Embu then.

I went to Embu County Primary School from 1995 to 2002 and proceeded to St. Stephen Kavutiri Secondary School (2003 to early 2006) and later Werus Complex, where I sat for my KCSE.

In 2007, I enrolled for a course in Advanced Computer Maintenance

and Programming and later joined Mount Kenya University (2008 to 2011) and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in IT with specialization in software Engineering.

On August 2016, I started my seminary formation at St. Joseph Meru Seminary in Nairobi for my spiritual year. On August, 2017, I joined Christ the King Major Seminary in Nyeri for my philosophical and Theological studies. On May 8<sup>th</sup> 2025, I graduated from Christ the King Major Seminary.

**Gerald Murimi:**

I was born on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1989 to John Martin Muriithi and the late Emily Marigu Muriithi from St. Teresa of the Child Jesus Kithimu parish, Kyetheru prayer house.

I attended DEB Rukira primary school from 1997-2005 and later joined St. Christopher Day Secondary school from 2006-2009.

After completing my Secondary School education, I joined Christ the King Major Seminary-Nyeri for philosophical and Theological studies.

During my formation I was nurtured in the four pillars of priestly formation: spiritual growth through prayer and sacramental life, human formation, intellectual and pastoral formation through service to the Christian communities.

“Young people discerning your vocation, fast from the messes in the world to be able to hear the voice of God calling you to different vocations and know who you are.”

One of the Greek Philosophers, Socrates, stated that one should know thy-self. Sit down pray and examine your life. An unexamined life is not worth living.



**D**eacon Thomas addressing social media challenges says, “There are many things that come with social media. What is required is individual responsibility and personal discipline. Everything should start with an individual person. I need to ask myself whether am responsible enough, am I doing the right thing? I need to think as an individual person not as a group.”

**DEACONS TO BE ORDAINED PRIESTS**



**D**eacon Fredric advises youth, who are yet to discover their vocation using the words of Pope Francis during 2024 Lenten campaign, where he exhorted us not only to fast from food but from noise coming from the world.



**D**eacon Kiambi, who faced financial challenges during his vocational journey, believes that when one works devotedly in the vineyard of the lord whether in the parish or in the office, he will never lack anything, for God will always provide. (Psalm 145:16) says, “God will open wide His hand and satisfy the desire of every living creature.”

## ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW WITH FR. PAUL KINYUA

### 1) Tells us about Kangaru parish?

St John the Apostle Kangaru parish took Canonical effect on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2026, when it was announced by Bishop Peter Kimani Ndung'u, the Bishop of Embu, during the closure of the Jubilee Year of Hope at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

The new parish came as the fruit of the Jubilee Year of Hope, that was the moment of grace, a period of thanksgiving to God and a call to responsibility.

### 2) Your vision for the new parish?

I desire a parish centered on the Holy Eucharist, the source and summit of our Christian life and where every Mass transform. A missionary parish and a formation Center where the Christians grow in faith, hope and charity. A parish deeply rooted in prayer and solid in doctrine.

A parish where Christians live authentic Christian lives and are active in witnessing Christ in their homes, places of work and serving others guided by Christ's love.

A parish where Christians encounter Christ personally on a daily basis during liturgical celebrations... A parish where Small Christian Communities flourish, where families pray together and where Christ is known, loved and served.

### 3) How did you feel after being announced first parish priest of Kangaru?

I had mixed feelings. It was a moment of humility and at the same time a difficult time for me. I imagined the teething problems I was going to face.

I was going to begin a parish where there are no systems and structures in place, no presbyters house, no office space among other infrastructural challenges. We are to be housed at staff houses of Caritas Department... At the end of the day reality sank in and I humbly accepted.

I thanked God for the appointment. I accepted the new experience, the new reality and the new challenge. It was a moment of blessing for me. We normally grow when we encounter challenges.

I said to myself, "Let me be the first to begin the new parish with new systems and structures in place." Above all it was a moment of renewing my obedience to my Bishop and his predecessors that I promised during my ordination.

### 4) What happened after the parish was announced?

On 15<sup>th</sup> February 2026, the parish Church of Kangaru was consecrated and the Blessed Sacrament placed in the parish Church.

From 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026, we started the daily Masses at the parish Church that begin at 6.45 am everyday lasting 30 minutes.

Christians working at Embu town and elsewhere have the opportunity to attend Mass in the morning. After Mass, I see few Christians being left behind for adoration. We shall establish adoration programs in the parish.

The parish was launched during the first Sunday of Lent on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026. We will walk this period of 40 days together as a parish.

We shall have the Way of the Cross on all Fridays starting at 4.00 pm with Christians belonging to this Church. The other

six prayer houses will have the Way of the Cross in their own prayer houses.

### 5) Your plans to serve the needs of University students?

Serving in a parish falling under the environment of the Chaplaincy of University is a unique apostolate. We shall be dealing with young people who are at the decisive stages of life. Through this Chaplaincy, through faith sharing groups, liturgical celebrations, Bible sharing sessions, mentorship programs and intellectual engagements, we shall be able to integrate faith with reason and responsibility.

With my pastoral team, we shall give special attention to vocational awareness, encourage openness to the priesthood, religious life and holy Christian marriage.

We shall guide and direct youth to be responsible Christians to live faithfully as Christian families and responsible members of the society.

### 6) How do you balance your responsibilities as a Parish priest with other responsibilities?

All this requires one to be disciplined. It calls for prayer where one asks God for strength and guidance and being a team player.

In the Vocations office, we have the Diocesan Vocation team of seven priests whom we closely work together. We have the Diocesan Liturgical Commission with whom I work together as well.

At the parish level, I have learnt to delegate effectively my pastoral responsibilities with my assistants.

### 7) Tells us your plans of implementing the Year of Men?

The declaration of the Year of Men by the Bishop was prophetic and timely. We shall implement his vision by having formation programs touching on spiritual, pastoral, moral and social aspects of men.

We shall have activities on men catechesis, mentorship programs targeting the boy-child, young men and adult men. We shall have recollections days, retreats and forums addressing men issues touching on their integrity, responsibility, safeguarding life and how they should practice faith in their daily living.

We shall affirm the dignity of the unborn male, men accountability, discipleship by helping them to be responsible pillars of faith in the Church and society.

### 8) How do you promote vocations in the parish?

By encouraging families to pray for priests, brothers and sisters, and give their offerings. I have plans of establishing a strong culture of Vocation team in the parish, by visiting Schools, Primary and Secondary, speak to the boys about priestly and religious vocations.

I will orientate the teachers' apostolate by urging them to talk to the students about vocations to the priesthood, religious life and good Christian families.

I will have a properly organized association of Mass-Servers and exhort every Christian to make a resolution to train one of their children in a Christian way to give him/her the possibility of becoming a good priest, brother or religious sister.



## JOY AS KIANJOKOMA PRESBYTERS HOUSE OPENED



**BY AMOS MURIITHI**

It was pomp, color and joy as the long-awaited St. Joseph Kianjokoma presbyters house was officially opened.

The news of its opening was received with great jubilation and gratitude by the entire Christian community and members of the Diocesan clergy, who came for its warming ceremony, affirming to the hard work and commitment realized.

Speaking during the occasion, Rt. Rev Peter Kimani Ndung'u, the Bishop of Embu commended Kianjokoma parishioners for their unity and commitment in completing the presbyters' house.

He specifically thanked the parish leadership, the planning committee and parish clergy for their total dedication and self-giving spirit.

Bishop Kimani, however, told Kianjokoma parishioners to improve the appearance of their main parish Church, noting that its roof requires upgrading to match the standards of the newly opened Clergy house residence.

This event coincided with Confirmation of 135 Christians. The Bishop urged them to remain firm in their faith and live out the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives.

The colorful event drew hundreds of Christians from various prayer houses of the parish. The dignitaries

were the area Member of Parliament, members of County Assembly and other civil authorities.

**Long journey to realizing the completion of Kianjokoma presbyters' house**

To realize the completion of Kianjokoma presbyters house construction project took longer than was expected.

During the period in office of the first Bishop of Embu, the Emeritus Archbishop of Nairobi, His Eminence John Cardinal Njue, Kianjokoma parishioners used to send a delegation of their leaders to request him to raise Kianjokoma to the parish status.

His Eminence, for some time used to respond by telling them to complete the presbyters' house first and then on his part, he will appoint priests to take care of their pastoral and spiritual needs.

On 6<sup>th</sup> April 2002, his Eminence finally heeded to their request by declaring Kianjokoma a fully-fledged parish, with Fr John Njeru Macharia, the current Nthagaiya parish priest, appointed the first parish priest. He was assisted by the late Fr Silas Maina Warui.

The priests were to be briefly housed at St. Joseph Primary School where self-contained rooms were prepared as they awaited the completion of the presbyters' house. The first and the second construction were condemned for failing to meet

the expected standards.

Provisionally, during the reign of His Grace Anthony Muheria, Archbishop of Nyeri, by then the Bishop of Embu, the 3<sup>rd</sup> construction was still condemned for the same reasons of failing to meet the standards.

On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Fr Macharia was transferred from Kianjokoma parish to St Teresa of the Child Jesus Kithimu parish as parish priest. He was succeeded by the ex-priest Fr Domisiano Muriithi as Kianjokoma parish priest. The ex-priest took less than a year as Kianjokoma parish priest.

Fr Robert Namu, succeeded him as Kianjokoma parish priest on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010 to August 2024 and continued with the presbyter's house construction works until he was transferred to St. Mary's Makutano parish as an assistant priest.

Fr John Henry Nyaga Mwanzia, the current Kianjokoma parish priest, who succeeded him, was appointed in August 2024. He took as his first priority the completion of the presbyter's house.

He mobilized funds from Christians using a rallying call, "**Operation remove our priests from the Classrooms.**" The cleric used various methods to collect funds from the Christians, friends, well-wishers and the people of good will to ensure the completion of presbyter's house in record time.

## SMALL LAND, BIG VISION: INSIDE EMBU'S INNOVATIVE FARM



*Sospeter Murithi in his farm*

### BY FELIX MURIITHI

Along the edges of his half-acre family farm in Kiangima village, Mutunduri in Manyatta Constituency, Embu County, Sospeter Murithi gently stirs the still water of a narrow fish pond with a simple stick, triggering a sudden frenzy beneath the surface.

Within seconds, hundreds of catfish rush upward, breaking through a thick green carpet of Azolla floating on the water as they compete for food.

"This is how I call them for feeding," Murithi explains. "It also helps fresh air mix with the water and releases nutrients from the manure sacks placed inside the pond."

The floating Azolla, a small aquatic fern, is one of the most valuable resources on the farm. According to Murithi, the plant is rich in protein and serves as feed for fish, poultry, rabbits and even goats.

Using it has helped him significantly cut feed costs while reducing reliance on chemical fertilizers.

Murithi, a professional accountant popularly known as Kiano, has transformed his modest piece of land into a thriving integrated regenerative farm where crops, animals and insects support each other in a carefully balanced ecosystem.

He simply calls the system "farming God's way," a philosophy that emphasizes working with nature rather than against it.

The idea for the farm was born in 2020 during the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, when many livelihoods across Kenya were shaken.

"That period forced me to rethink life," Murithi recalls. "I started this project when Covid-19 hit mainly to sustain my family."

What began as a small effort to ensure food security gradually grew into a full-time venture.

Murithi eventually made the bold decision to leave formal employment and dedicate himself to farming.

"I do not regret leaving employment," he says. "Farming has given me freedom, food security and peace of mind."

Across the farm are several 10-by-10-foot fish ponds, each stocked with at least 50 fish at different stages of growth.

Murithi mainly rears tilapia and catfish, species that are highly preferred by consumers in the region. What started as a family food project has gradually grown into a small business.

Murithi now sells his fish at the newly launched Kangaru Fish Market where they fetch up to Sh400 per kilogram, providing a steady income stream.

Near the ponds stands a greenhouse housing thousands of larvae of the Black soldier fly, an insect increasingly recognized as an important source of sustainable animal feed.

"The feeds I give the fish are supplemented with these larvae," Murithi explains. "They bridge the protein gap in an affordable and sustainable way."

The larvae feed on organic waste such as rotten fruits, kitchen leftovers, manure and even animal carcasses.

Within eight to fourteen days they mature into protein-rich feed containing up to 60 percent protein. Murithi harvests them, sieves them, kills them using hot water, dries them and mixes them with small quantities of commercial feed.

"Nothing is wasted here," he says. "If a fish, chicken or rabbit dies, the larvae handle it."

In another section of the farm, Murithi keeps red vigorous earthworms that

further support the farming system. The worms feed on organic matter and produce a nutrient-rich liquid commonly known as worm tea, which Murithi uses as a foliar fertilizer on crops.

"The water from the worms is very powerful," he says. "It improves plant health, boosts growth and reduces the need for synthetic inputs."

The farm operates as a closed-loop ecosystem where each element supports another. Goats, poultry and rabbits produce manure that nourishes crops including maize, beans, passion fruits, Hass avocado, oyster nut and improved Napier grass.

Rabbit urine is used as fertilizer and foliar spray, while recycled jerrycans serve as improvised poultry waterers.

"Everything here is connected," Murithi explains. "The animals feed the soil, the soil feeds the crops, and the crops feed the animals."

Despite occupying only half an acre, the farm now produces nearly all the food required by his household, with surplus sold for income.

Murithi has also turned the farm into a learning centre where visitors interested in sustainable agriculture come to learn about integrated farming systems.

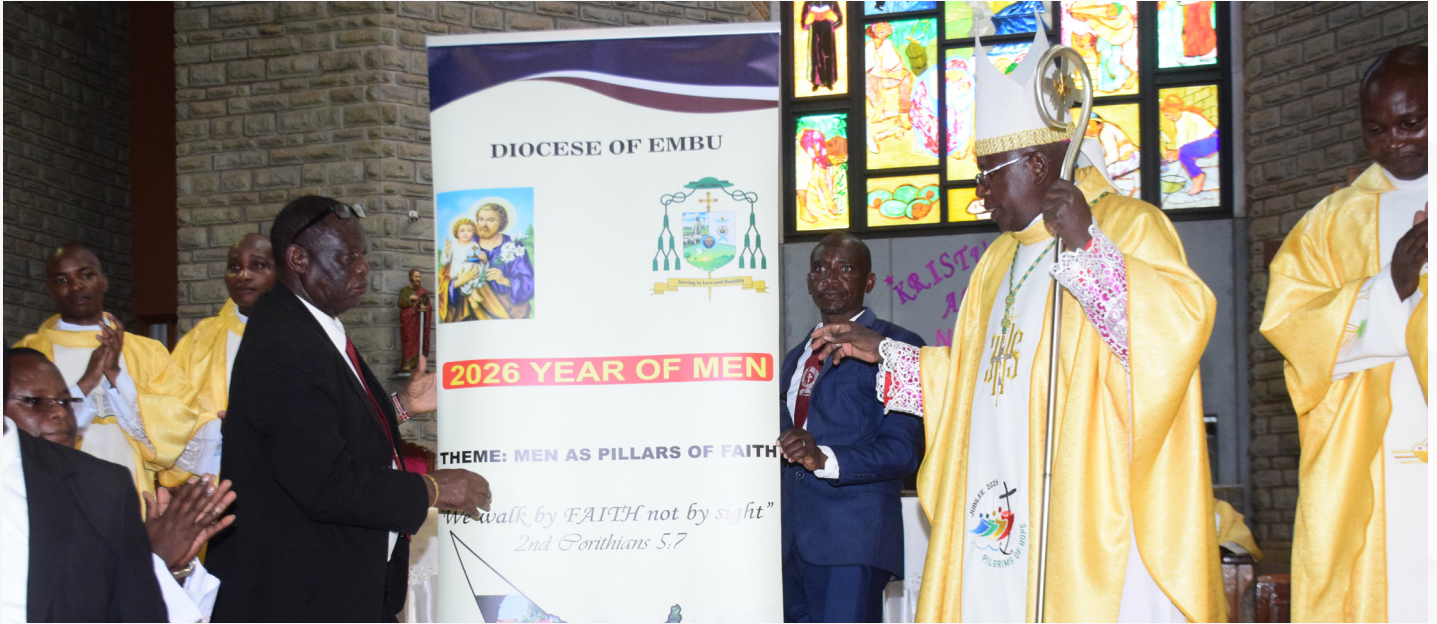
He trains farmers, students and agricultural enthusiasts at a fee of Sh500 per session, sharing the knowledge he has gained through practice.

His goal, he says, is to demonstrate that even with limited land, farmers can adopt sustainable methods that protect the environment while improving livelihoods.

For Murithi, the small farm in Embu is more than a source of income. It is a living example that with creativity, determination and respect for nature, even a small piece of land can become a thriving and sustainable ecosystem for families and communities.



# BISHOP DECLARES 2026, THE YEAR OF MEN



*Launching of the year of Men*

**BY FELIX MURIITHI**

The Catholic Bishop of Embu Peter Kimani Ndung’u declared the Year 2026, the Year of Men. He stated that the year targets all males beginning from the unborn child to the elderly, while calling upon the women to walk closely with men and boys in nurturing strong Christian families. He invited all Christians to be missionaries of hope in their families, the Church and society.

Speaking at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral during the closer of the Jubilee Year of Hope, that coincided with the official launch of the Year of Men on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2026, the Bishop said the year would be guided by the theme: **“Men as the pillars of the faith.”** It is based from (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:7), **“Walk by faith, and not by sight.”**

The Bishop clarified that declaring the Year of Men does not sideline the girl-child, insisting that men should remain the pillars of faith in their families, Church and society.

The Bishop underscored that activities targeting the boy-child begun last year (2025) during the boys’ initiation seminar that was held at Consolata Hospital Kyeni representing the entire Diocese.

He added that similar programs will continue throughout the year for mentoring different age groups.

He invited all other ecclesial groups to support and pray for the CMA members, observing that strong men contribute to stable families and a well-ordered society.

During the liturgy there was a symbolic closure of the Jubilee Door of Hope at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral, marking the end of the Jubilee Year of activities.

The Bishop clarified that “the closure of the Holy Door was symbolic, it does not mean stopping the good deeds or instilling hope in others. Only the activities have stopped, but the good deeds continue,” the Bishop clarified.

Bishop Kimani urged all faithfuls to remain bearers of hope in their homes and communities, noting that the families should be spaces of forgiveness, perseverance and mutual respect.

He stated the challenges our country is going through namely: economic hardships, political polarization, insecurity, corruption, drug and substance abuse, domestic violence and child neglect.

He urged the Christians to confront these challenges by restoring hope in social, economic, health and education systems.

“Children are the hope of our society. We must create structures that guarantee them a better future,” the bishop said.

He added, “The Jubilee experience reaffirmed the Church’s mission. We have witnessed the power of hope, and therefore all of us are missionaries of hope,” he said.

During the occasion, Bishop Kimani distributed banners bearing the theme of the year to all the CMA members from the 24 parishes.



# THE LENTEN



Lent is a sacred season in the Catholic tradition, calling us to humility, conversion, and a deeper awareness of our dependence on God.

In this spirit, the 2026 theme, **“Building a Just, Peaceful and United Kenya: Upholding Equity and Human Dignity,** reminds us that our spiritual renewal is meant to bear fruit in the way we treat one another and care for our nation, turn toward justice, healing and spiritual transformation.

The five weeks of Lenten observance invites us to walk in prayer and reflection as we seek to build a just, peaceful, and united Kenya, grounded in equity and human dignity. We are reminded that true national renewal begins with the choices we make each day.

**Week one** focuses on **leadership and integrity** as foundations for a just and flourishing society. It gently reminds us that leadership is a sacred duty rooted in service, accountability, and care for the common good, it calls each of us to renew our commitment to ethical leadership and to nurture a spirit of integrity in our homes, communities and nation.

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that God has written into every human heart a natural desire for goodness, truth, and justice, which echoes the call in (Micah 6:8) that invites us to walk humbly with God and act justly toward others. Leadership, therefore, cannot be separated from moral truth.

When those in authority ignore this divine law, the community suffers, trust is broken, and the dignity of God’s people is wounded. Jesus himself shows us that real leadership is service.

When leaders act with humility, listen to the needs of the people, and steward public resources faithfully, they strengthen hope and restore confidence in our shared future.

Every one of us is also a leader in our own space, and this week invites us to take that responsibility to heart. Kenya needs citizens who are prophetic in truth telling, gentle in their witness and intentional in choosing integrity over convenience.

The theme of **week two** is the heavy **burden of ballooning public debt and rising taxes** that have left ordinary Kenyan families struggling to meet even the simplest needs, and carry quiet pain that often goes unseen.

A central lesson is the sacred duty to handle borrowed money with accountability and complete transparency.

We cannot continue borrowing without clear benefits and still hope to hand over a healthy nation to our children.

This week also ask us to reflect on taxation, not just simply as a means of collecting money but as an expression of shared responsibility for the well-being of the nation.

When citizens give generously but do not see improvement in health care, education, infrastructure, or social support, taxation becomes unjust.

Development should never suffocate families or push them into despair. With reasonable borrowing, fair taxation, and honest stewardship, this country can flourish and build an economy that reflects compassion, justice, and respect for human dignity.

**Week three** invites us to reflect prayerfully on **the sanctity and dignity of every human life.** Human life is never a burden to be managed or a problem to be solved.

It is a sacred gift entrusted to us. Whenever society treats people as expendable or allows suffering to go unnoticed, we drift away from God’s vision for a just and compassionate nation. We are also urged to confront the painful reality of election-related violence.

Even before 2027 arrives, we have already witnessed lives lost, others permanently injured, and communities left grieving because of political competition.

This is not the Kenya we desire for our children such actions ignore the dignity of the desperate young people drown into violence through manipulation and financial enticement and the value of the lives harmed in the process.

All of us are called to become guardians of human dignity. Strong institutions, committed faith communities, and courageous citizens each have a role in protecting life whenever it is threatened.

# CAMPAIGN 2026

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman reminds us that God sees goodness in every person. When we speak against injustice, care for the vulnerable, and work together to heal the brokenness around us, we reflect the heart of Christ, and we help build a Kenya where every life is valued, protected and embraced as a precious gift from God.

**Week four** invites us to reflect on **youth and technology**. Today, media and communication technologies shape how young people learn, share ideas, and relate to the world around them.

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has opened doors for learning, creativity, and innovation in ways that previous generations could never have imagined.

It allows people to access global knowledge, develop creative projects, participate in problem-solving, and even engage in pastoral outreach across diverse regions.

Used responsibly, AI becomes a powerful tool that supports education, strengthen community life, and encourages the young people to contribute meaningfully to a globally connected society.

New technologies come with serious ethical challenges. Young people can easily encounter misinformation, harmful content, online manipulation, and digital pressures that affect their well-being and identity.

This reality calls for a strong commitment to digital literacy so that they can navigate online spaces with wisdom, caution and confidence.

Understanding how technology works and learning how to use it safely allows them to approach their digital world as an opportunity for personal growth, creativity and responsible participation in society.

The Church, guided by the recent Synod, recognizes digital culture as a real space of encounter, mission, and formation through digital literacy training, understanding technology and engaging in digital spaces with clarity and compassion.

Families, schools, Churches, community groups and national institutions all have an important role in helping to

build safe and supportive environments where technology uplifts human dignity and strengthens relationships.

**Week five** invites us to listen with compassion to the cry of **the Earth** and that of communities most affected by environmental destruction. When forests disappear, rivers dry up, or floods destroy homes, both creation and human dignity are wounded.

This week reminds us that caring for the environment is a spiritual responsibility rooted in love for God and neighbor.

Environmental challenges in Kenya touch the daily lives of ordinary families, yet they also awaken remarkable resilience.

Droughts, soil degradation, pollution, and changing rainfall patterns, cause real hardship, but communities that work together can restore hope.

Tree planting, sustainable farming, and community led conservation efforts can transform barren places into sources of life.

The Church reminds us that care for creation and the poor requires integrity in environmental leadership to secure a just and healthy future.

Protecting the Earth is not the duty of some institutions but a task for families, schools, Churches, and local communities working together.

As we enter the grace-filled journey of lent themed **Building a Just, Peaceful and United Kenya: Upholding Equity and human Dignity**, we are invited to slow down, listen deeply to God's word and allow His gentle call to shape our inner lives.

The nation's transformation we long for begins with the conversion of our own hearts. As we continue through this Lenten season, may God grant us the grace to become instruments of justice, and love in our country, so that Kenya may grow in hope, harmony and faithful service as one baptized community of faith.

**By Rt. Rev. Simon Peter Kamomoe  
Chairman KCCB- Catholic Justice and Peace  
Department.**



## BISHOP LAUDS KYENI PARISHIONERS FOR BUILDING MODERN SISTERS' CONVENT



*Bishop Peter Kimani with Fr. Alex Matii unveils the plaque of the new sister's convent in Kyeni Parish, Embu*

### BY AMOS MURIITHI

It was pomp, color and celebration as Our Lady of Jasna Gora Sisters Convent at the Sacred Heart Kyeni parish was officially opened.

This Sisters Convent began on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and has been built by Kyeni parishioners through communal work. The spirit of communal brought them together where they interacted and expressed their faith.

Speaking during the official opening day on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026, Rt. Rev Peter Kimani Ndung'u, the Bishop of Embu urged Kyeni parishioners to thank God for completing the Sisters Convent.

"Everything you did has succeeded through God's help. (Psalm 127:1) says, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build."

The Bishop quoting St. Joseph Allamano said that every good act should be done well, with humility and quietly.

Bishop Kimani lauded Kyeni parishioners for building a magnificent Convent with seven self-contained rooms, three at the ground floor and four at the first floor.

"I am delighted for taking good care of the sisters like your own daughters. You are not only building good presbyters' houses for the priests but you are also coming up with good sisters Convents. I thank you for taking them as part of the parish evangelization community and pastoral team."

He added, "It is my wish that other parishes may learn from your good example of taking good care of the sisters by minding where they live, take their bath, sleep and what they eat."

The Bishop thanked them too for equipping the Convent with new facilities.

Fr Josephat Waweru, the current Director at Consolata Hospital Kyeni and former Kyeni parish priest worked hard to ensure the sisters Convent was complete within record time. We congratulate him.

At the same time, Bishop Kimani urged the leaders who were elected to serve the Church with humility and the spirit of service.

"There were those who were chosen to be leaders in the Church but they declined. Remember the voice of the people is the voice of God. Be happy when others are giving you a chance to serve in Church. Don't expect to be given the seating allowance. You may not benefit directly but be assured that your children will benefit. Everything that is good should be done well and with joy."



## WHY THE YEAR OF MEN?



*CMA Members from the new parish welcome the Bishop for the Parish inauguration*

### BY FR JAMES GATITI,

On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2026, Rt. Rev Peter Kimani Ndung'u, the Bishop of Embu, declared 2026 the Year of Men in the Diocese of Embu at Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

The guiding theme: **“Men as the pillars of faith.”** It is based on (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5: 7) **“Walk by faith, not by sight.”**

The Bishop stated that the year targets all males beginning from the unborn male, the Pontifical Missionary Children (PMC), youth, Catholic Men Association (CMA), clergy and the elderly.

To declare the year dedicated to men, the Church in the Diocese wants to nurture strong, stable Christian families and a well-ordered society.

This pastoral vision of the Bishop is timely, relevant and in touch with the reality. We need male-oriented mentorship programs to empower men to realize themselves.

Men in their role as fathers in families should be the heads of families and of their children by providing spiritual formation, character formation and developing their God-given identity. In fact, dads are the first Bible their children ever read.

It is evident from research that the boy child is lost in peer pressure, drugs and substance abuse amidst other social challenges.

In some areas of Embu County, many are picking and chewing **Muguka**, a lucrative business picked early in the morning at around 3.00 am, known as **Mukei**.

This is the time the boy child is woken up to pick **Muguka** and take to the market before going to school. Arriving in school, the boy child is tired and

unable to concentrate because he is nursing the previous night hangovers. Education is not given priority.

While closing the Jubilee Year of hope in the Diocese, Bishop Kimani regretted that the boy child is left behind not only in matters education but also in faith and role modelling.

“We have boys who have drifted away from the Church for lack of mentorship and intentional involvement by male figures. You cannot plant and fail to water a tree and expect good harvest. Boys need consistent guidance, support and correction.”

He added, “We must show the younger generation what it means to be a man of faith, a man of integrity and a man who serves. They are yet to be rooted firmly in faith. We need to help them for it is these young Christians that we get vocations in the Church-Holy families, sisters and priests.”

We should discourage parents and guardians from engaging school-going-children in child labor whether it is picking **Muguka**, sand-harvesting, tea-picking or coffee harvesting.

A number of families are experiencing diminishing roles of the man, where almost all the responsibilities are left in the hands of women. We have marriages in crisis, where the husband fails to accept his duty, which impels his wife to be agitated leading to immeasurable stress.

Violence and unending wrangles dominate some homes and those concerned don't know how to deal with their conflict or they don't take apt means to remedy the situation.

Various reports in Embu County, indicates that there is increasing cases of gender-based violence (GBV). For instance, in 2021, *the Star Newspaper*

carried a lead story, where men from Kiriari area of Manyatta Constituency, “complained of their wives beating them and denying them conjugal rights.”

GBV refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will, encompassing the use of threat, violence or coercion.

It can be physical, emotional, psychological or sexual in nature. It can take the form of denial of resources or access to services. It can afflict harm on men, women, girls, and boys.

The glaring challenges coupled with the powerful means of communication threaten the role of the man. The net result is the inability of marriages to stand the test of time.

Other marriages are affected by unmet and unrealistic expectations, differences in the use of money, pressure to strike a balance between work and life, abandoning the marital bond and neglecting wife and children.

The bond of marriage confers upon the spouse's marital commitment alongside the effects of marriage, including physical well-being of the child, his education, cultural and social well-being.

Marriage partners should shun whatever is contrary to their marital status by upholding the virtues of marriage.

Despite this, couples should be trained on positive parenting to deter situations that regrettably may lead to painful separations and divorce.

Due to social pressure to achieve and be rich, corruption is getting deeply rooted in Kenya and everybody wants to be rich through whatever means.

## 98 YEAR OLD SALESIAN PRIEST, ENJOYS HIS RETIREMENT IN KENYA



*Former past pupils of Don Bosco with Fr. Vincent Donati the Rector of Don Bosco Embu 1986-1993*

### BY FR. JAMES GATITI

In January 2026, Fr Dr. John Njue Mugo and I, with two former aspirants visited Fr Vincent Donati (SDB), at Bosco Boys Kuwinda-Nairobi, where he is enjoying his retirement.

The 98-year-old priest is feeble, worn out by hard work, but still happy and cheerful. A legend, referred to by Don Bosco past pupils as “a living saint,” eagerly awaited to share a meal with us.

A true servant of God, confessor, mentor and educator worked diligently to see us grow to become good Christians and honest citizens.

The cleric since the days he was our Rector at Don Bosco School-Embu, was a very prayerful man, a man of strong faith and disciplined.

Even today, his activities for the day are well programmed. He wakes up at 5.00 am every day to go to Church to recite the Holy Rosary and other personal prayers.

He recites the Divine Office and celebrates Mass at 7.00 am with the rest of community members. He also shares meals with them and finds time to rest.

Every month he reads the Salesians News Bulletin written in Italian, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Papal Encyclicals, Newsletters, and the life of the saints like Don Bosco, Mother Teresa, to update himself.

Fr Vincent has a special love for the poor and jobless youngsters. Majority of Kenya's population are young people who even though educated are unemployed or do menial jobs. Every time they go in search of jobs, they are given the answer “no vacancy.” If they don't get jobs, they won't get bread-meaning a decent living-and their lives then become a hand-to-mouth-existence...

The cleric even today still aims high by ensuring youth get **job, bread and paradise**. Even though retired, he is not tired of writing proposals to various donors across the world looking for funds to assist them. He is currently engaged in mobilizing funds from well-wishers to construct a multi-million Vocational Training Center accommodating 1000 young people, that is 700 boys and 300 girls from the slums and streets of Nairobi City County.

He contributed immensely to nurturing vocations of many young men at Don Bosco Boys School-Embu. I first met him when he celebrated the Mass for us, then I was at Siakago Boarding Primary School. I was an altar server and I grabbed every opportunity to serve Mass. I envied him a lot from the way he celebrated the Mass, his interaction with the locals and his unshakable convictions. He did everything with so much love. You could see it in his eyes.

One Saturday morning, when going for my regular confessions, and after the usual proceedings, Fr Vincent asked me, “Will you become a priest?” This question completely changed my life. Right away, I answered yes, without knowing deeply what it really meant becoming a priest. When I visited him one year after his appointment as the first Rector of Don Bosco School-Embu, he removed his collar and put it on me and said, “You will become a priest.”

The cleric admitted me in the school from (1987-1990). My vocation was nurtured during my high school days at Don Bosco. He introduced us to Saint John Bosco, the school patron Saint, father and teacher of youth, who turned their hearts towards their God... as the song goes. We celebrated his feast day every year colorfully and in style.

I belonged to the School band of which he was the Director. We entertained students, teachers, fathers and visitors during St. John Bosco feast day among other occasions.

In August 1988, the band was invited for the Centenary celebrations of St. John Bosco's death (1888-1988), where 33 students travelled to Italy. During the event, Laura Vicuna, a 12-year-old girl from Argentina was beatified by Pope Saint John Paul II. The Emeritus Archbishop of Nairobi John Cardinal Njue, then Bishop of Embu travelled with us and concelebrated the papal Mass.

During my priestly ordination in December 2000, Fr Vincent wrote a congratulatory card to me quoting St. Paul's letter to (2Timothy 4:7): “You are at the beginning of your priesthood, am at the end, I hope you will fight the good fight, keep the faith and finish the race...”

Notwithstanding poor failing health, he felt a call to serve at Kakuma Refugee Camp and Darfur Camp-South Sudan until his retirement. He is committed to saving souls for Christ, imitating Don Bosco the founder, who says, “**Give me souls, and take away the rest.**”

Fr Vincent born on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1928, professed as a Salesian of St. John Bosco on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1944, and was ordained priest on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1954. He served as a missionary in Japan for 12 years and in Korea for 19 years. He was the second group of Salesians to arrive in Kenya from Turin on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1981 with Fr Felice Molino and Fr Mario Robustilino. They joined Fr Dario Superina at Siakago mission.



## POPE LEO XIV'S LENTEN MESSAGE CALLS FOR FASTING FROM HARSH WORDS AND RASH JUDGEMENT

Ahead of the beginning of 2026 Lenten period, Pope Leo XIV invited Catholics to open themselves to “Listening and Fasting, and Community,” urging them to abstain from words of hatred to make space for words of hope and peace.

BY DEVIN WATKINS,

“I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unprecedented form of abstinence, that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor.”

Pope Leo XVI made this invitation that is at the heart of his message for 2026 Lenten campaign.

As Lenten campaign began on Ash Wednesday, February 18, the Pope said this liturgical season offers Christians an opportunity to place the mystery of God at the center of their lives.

Every journey of conversion, he said begins by letting God’s word touch our hearts so that we may renew our commitment to follow Christ in the mystery of His saving passion, death and resurrection.

The Pope focused on the importance of listening to God and to those around us, allowing ourselves to enter into authentic relationships.

“In the midst of the many voices present in our personal lives and in society, he said, “Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering.”

Christians, said the Pope can cultivate inner openness to listening, as God does, by growing in awareness that the poor challenge our lives and economic systems, as well as the Church.

The Pope then turned to how fasting helps open us to the deep desire for justice, which he said frees us from complacency.

“Pricelessly because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we hunger for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance,” he said.

“Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our appetites keeping our ‘hunger’ and thirst for justice alive.”

Fasting, he added, teaches us to govern our desire by purifying, freeing and expanding it, in order to direct our desire toward God and good deeds.

However, we must fast in faith, humility and communion with the Lord, and not in a way that leads to pride said the Pope, adding that other forms of self-denial also lead to a sober lifestyle.

Pope Leo XIV pointed out to an under-appreciated form of abstinence, which is refraining from hurtful words.

“Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves,” he said.

“Instead let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities.” If we do so, we will let words of hatred “give way to words of hope and peace.”

The Pope went on to emphasize the command aspect of listening and fasting, which can be lived out in our parishes, families, and religious communities.

By listening to the cry of the poor and setting our hearts on the path of conversion to Christ, we train our conscience and improve the quality of our lives and relationships,” he said.

“It means allowing ourselves to be challenged by reality and recognizing what truly guides our desires— both within our ecclesial communities and as regards humanity’s thirst for justice and reconciliation.”

Pope Leo XIV concluded his 2026 Lenten Message with a call for Christians communities to become places where those who suffer are welcome.

“Let us ask the strength that comes from the type of fasting that also extends to our use of language,” he said, “so that hurtful words may diminish and give way to a greater space for the voice of others.”

<https://www.vaticannews>.

## BE SERVANT LEADERS, BISHOP TELLS CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS



*Priests during the day of Consecrated life at Gaciigi Diocesan Shrine*

### BY HENEST MURITHI

The Clergy and religious have been urged to be servant leaders, shining like living lamps that guide the people of God in the moments of darkness and disillusionment with humility, spirit of service and steadfast faith.

Rt Rev. Peter Kimani Ndung'u, the Bishop of Embu reminded them that their calling is primarily to serve the people of God.

He invited them to draw from the example of servant leadership from the Gospel where Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, describing it as a powerful symbol of meekness, humility, and self-giving service.

"Priesthood and religious life are about service, not status," he added, urging the priests and religious to remain devoted to their vocation and resist distractions that may pull them away from their mission.

He called upon them to be visible examples of faith and integrity in the Christian community.

The Bishop acknowledged the human struggles faced by priests and religious, noting that they too experience difficult moments coupled with emotional burdens. He urged the

Christians to support them through companionship and prayer.

"Be available to your priests and religious. Walk with them, pray with them and for them and be their companions so that together we may extend the light of Christ to our communities," he stated.

He offered words of encouragement to the priests and religious facing challenges of financial pressures, unfinished projects and demanding pastoral responsibilities.

He assured them that God remains their source of strength and guidance. He emphasized the importance of mutual care among the clergy and religious whenever such situations arise.

"Do not give up. Even when it feels like everything is in vain, God will make a way out. When things finally come together, let us not boast as if we achieved it on our own. We are only stewards and merely servants," he said.

The Bishop spoke on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026, at Gaciigi Marian Shrine, Kairuri parish during the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, World Day of Consecrated life, when

the priests and religious renew their commitment. They were joined by hundreds of Christians.

The Bishop urged the priests and religious to be authentic witnesses of Christ's light in both word and deed.

He urged them to draw Christians closer to Christ, cautioning them to avoid actions that could lead believers into spiritual darkness.

On pastoral care, the Bishop urged the priests to be available to listen to Christians, by guiding families grappling with challenges such as gender-based violence (GBV) and other domestic squabbles.

The Mass ended with a special appeal to the parents and guardians to encourage and mentor their children to consider vocations to the priesthood and religious life and affirming the role of families in nurturing future servants of the Church.

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, symbolizes Christ as the light of nations—a theme Bishop Kimani echoed throughout his homily as he challenged the faithful to keep that light burning in their daily lives.

## ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENTEN TRADITION

BY FR JAMES GATITI,

Ash Wednesday is a day that holds a special place in the heart of every Catholic. This is because on this day, ashes are signed on our foreheads.

This distribution of ashes is a Liturgical function of its kind; as there is no other time in the Liturgical Calendar where we are reminded in such a profound manner our origin, humanity and impending death. Some Christians ensure their ashes are not wiped away.

Pope Francis underscored that the mark of ashes on our foreheads is a reminder of our origin, that we are taken from the earth and so made of dust, yet God has breathed his spirit of life upon each one of us and still wants to do so (Homily on Ash Wednesday, 2017).

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season that invites us into forty days of a desert experience, as we prepare for the celebration of the Paschal mystery and the Easter celebrations.

We are invited to practice self-denial, make concrete steps towards repentance, carry out the examination of conscience and make amends by asking for the forgiveness of sins.

The ash used is made specifically from the burning palm fronds of the previous Palm Sunday. By using the palm fronds blessed on Palm Sunday, we reminded not only to rejoice at the triumphant entry of Jesus where we welcomed him with palms, but we also atone for our sins that caused his death for our salvation.

### The Scriptural meaning of Ash Wednesday:

Although, there is no explicit mention of Ash Wednesday in the Bible, it is traced to the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting, which include being signed with ashes, fasting and prayers.

Every year on Ash Wednesday, the first reading is taken from the book of (Joel 2: 12-18) which begins with the words "Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart with fasting and weeping and mourning."



*Very Rev. Fr. Eliud Wanyoike applies ashes to Bishop Kimani on ash Wednesday*

This is the invitation the Church extends to us all. It is a day of fasting and abstinence.

Ashes in the Old Testament symbolize death and repentance. Ashes are equivalent to dust and human flesh is composed of dust or clay (Genesis 2:7).

For example, Abraham told God, "I am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18: 27), a reference to his human mortality. We use ashes to remind us of our own mortality; that though we were all born here, but none of us will stay here forever.

Ashes are also a symbol of repentance for past sins. When Job's three friends came and found him in such affliction, "they sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven" (Job 2:12).

The sorrows of the daughters of Israel are seen in the dust upon their heads" (Lamentation 2:10). Daniel said his prayers to the Lord His God in fasting, sackcloth and ashes (Daniel 9:3).

Our Lord tells us that if the miracles in Judea had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes (Luke 10:13).

When the great city will be destroyed, its people will cry out with grief, putting ashes on their heads

(Apoc. 18:19). Ashes are a plea to God for mercy and compassion, pardon and forgiveness. The following are seven penitential Psalms (Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).

Ashes are a public admission of guilt, an expression of sorrow for sins that we have committed, a promise to reform and a pledge to resist temptation in the future.

When we come forward to receive ashes, we are saying that we are sorry for our sins and that we want to use the season of Lent to correct our faults, purify our hearts, control our desires and grow in holiness as we prepare to celebrate the Easter mysteries with great joy.

We are encouraged first and foremost to dispose ourselves to the spirit of the Lenten season. While living in this world, we tend to forget that we are mortal.

Lent reminds us that it is none other than God who created us and we shall ultimately return to him at the end of our lives.

To be worthy candidates of the Heavenly Kingdom, we are encouraged to repent by living pure and holy lives.

## MAN, AS THE FIRST CATECHIST



BY FR JAMES GATITI,

### Introduction:

In the Catholic Church, a catechist is a term used of anyone engaged in religious formation and teaching of the faith.

In fact, every Christian has the duty to teach the faith, beginning from the Pope, who is considered the primary catechist and the supreme teacher of the faith.

The Bishop in his diocese is considered the primary catechist while the parish priest is the chief catechist in his own parish.

Others teaching the faith are deacons, seminarians, school teachers, men and women religious.

However, the primary responsibility of teaching the faith remains with the parents especially the fathers. The family catechetical role has a special character that in a sense is irreplaceable.

Nevertheless, the role of fathers as catechists is frequently overlooked or underestimated, yet sacred Scriptures and the Church tradition both confirm that fathers are not just merely able or qualified to be catechists, they are entrusted with this responsibility as part of their vocation.

The home, referred to as the domestic Church, is the primary setting for catechesis and evangelization. It is the foundation of the faith where children learn to make the sign of the Cross.

The fathers have an important role of handing over the Church's teaching. Many fathers these days are missing in action from this important mission perhaps due to social pressures and brokenness of the modern life.

It's never too late to begin again! The future of the faith has to begin from the home and fathers have a sacred and divine role to play in it. There is need of equipping and empowering them to embrace their role as the primary catechists of their children.

### 1) The Biblical foundations of fathers as catechists in the family:

Throughout the Bible, the role of fathers in the family is extremely important. There are instructions on how to raise children with examples of good/bad fathers.

Fathers play a vital role in shaping how their children see the world and understand right from wrong.

As children mature into adults, they make their own choices about what to do with their lives, how to treat others, and how to understand their relationship with God. Dads have the privilege of helping to lay the foundation for those decisions.

In the Old Testament the role of fathers in religious instructions is clearly defined (Cf: Deuteronomy 6:6-7). **"These words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently to your children."**

This passage often cited as a foundational text for catechesis shows that God entrusted the transmission of the faith primarily to the parents.

Fathers as heads of families in the Jewish tradition bore a particular responsibility of ensuring that the commandments and traditions are taught and lived out in the household. They are called upon to take up their vocation to speak, to talk of God throughout their days and all its activities.

In the New Testament (Cf: Ephesians 6:4) St. Paul exhorts, **"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the lord."** Paul's instructions highlight the formative and educational role of fathers in the Christian households.

St. Paul admonishes fathers not to provoke, or neglect children but to form them in the ways of the Lord - bringing them up in "discipline" and instructions of the Lord, which is essentially a catechetical task.

### 2) The Church documents on Catechetical role of fathers:

The Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches all other forms of catechesis.

"The Church of the home" remains the one place where children and young people can receive an authentic catechesis (Cf: **Catechesis Today, Apostolic Exhortation: *Catechesis Tradendae* of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II p. 57).**

Education in the faith by parents should begin from the children's tender age (Cf: Second Vatican Council: Declaration on Christian Education: ***Gravissimum Educationis*, 3: AAS 58 (1966), p. 731.**)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) reinforces the Biblical mandate, affirming that "Parents have the first responsibility for education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule (CCC. 2223). It continues..." parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the "first heralds" for their children." (CCC. 2225).

This implies that the father's vocation to teach and form their children begins with the child's baptism.

The First herald highlights the parents especially fathers as first evangelizers and catechists their children will encounter.

Discipleship begins at the home not in the Church. Your voice, actions, and lifestyle will proclaim the Gospel even before they meet with other catechists in the Church.

Saint John Paul II in his ***Familiaris Consortio***: Apostolic Exhortation on the family (1981) said, "The task of giving education is rooted in the primary vocation of married couples to participate in God's creative activity: by begetting in love and for love a new person... they are by that very fact the first and principal educators of their children" (***Familiaris Consortio*, 36**).

This means that the parents having given life to their children, they are entrusted with the responsibility of forming them in every dimension-physical, moral, spiritual and social. The pattern of a father's life shapes a child's view and understanding of God before encountering any other person.



*Bishop Kimani plants a tree during the opening of the recent presbyters house at Kianjokoma Parish*



*Bishop Kimani introduces her mother Janet Wambui Ndung'u as he celebrates his first Anniversary of Episcopate*



*Bishop Mbatia and Bishop Kimani bless the congregations after Mass*



*Sacred Heart Kyeni Parishioners during the opening of the new sister's convent*



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