

NEWSLETTER



Finally, a Name! Arrupe-Am-ani Campus, the name chosen for the HUC Second Campus

Why Scholarship for Women in Theology?

HUC Laurenti Magesa Chair in African Studies: A Year after the Inauguration

God's Redirection: From Psychology to Theology, a change birthed by chance and necessity.

HUC Council Award Recipient (Valedictorian) Speech 2025

The Shepherd from the South: Pope Francis and the Quiet Revolution of the Gospel.

HEKIMA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDsOc-CCyD-M>

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Students on Exchange Program from Santa Clara University California

The Director's Corner RENEWING THEOLOGY IN AFRICA

My recent participation in a theology conference held in Bonn, Germany, in October and November 2024, reminded me that theology in Africa is still often viewed as an ecclesial, clerical, and male-dominated pursuit.

It is ecclesial in focus, a discipline deeply rooted in the Church's institutions. Theologians are mostly found in seminaries or church-founded universities. However, some state universities offer theology 'by stealth' through departments of Religious Studies, which are based in humanities and social sciences faculties.

As a result, theology is also clerically focused on the formation of people for ordained ministry, and in a heavily clergy-dominated faculty. Admittedly, this is changing with the arrival of an increasing number of Catholic women religious teaching in Catholic universities, although married lay theologians remain scarce.

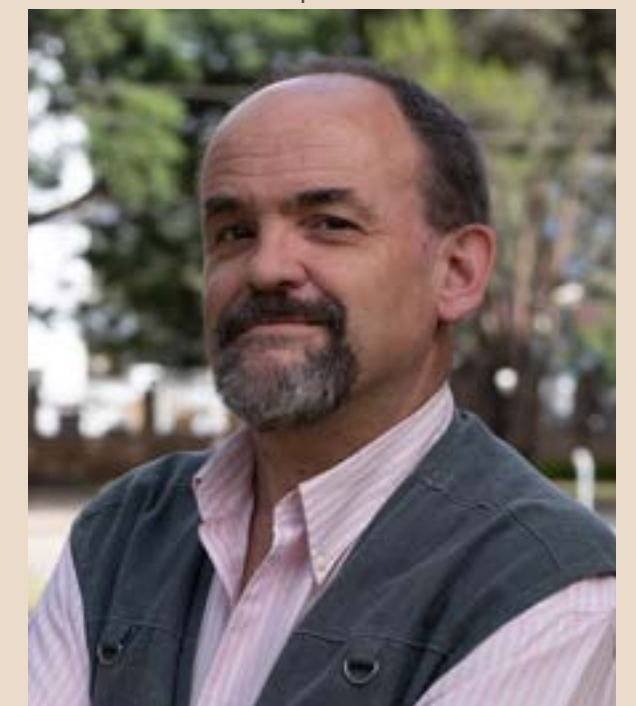
Given these two, it goes without saying that the academic study of Catholic theology in Africa is overwhelmingly dominated by males.

My experience of Bonn (and many years ago, the United States) showed me a different reality, where the opposite is the case. Theology is taught in state universities in Germany. Lay theologians, both teachers and students, seem to be a significant majority here. The vocation crisis even makes paid lay ministry a necessity.

Looking through this issue, it strikes me that

Hekima is moving, albeit slowly, in a direction that synthesizes the two realities. Many of the articles speak of a new generation of emerging theologians, particularly religious sisters, who will, I hope, change the face of African Catholic theology...perhaps at the moment, one graduate at a time.

We should be encouraged by it and encourage it further. For a theologically literate Church – lay, religious, and ordained – can only strengthen and deepen the vision of a Synodal Church, the greatest legacy of our beloved, late Pope Francis.



Rev. Dr. Anthony Egan, SJ
Director HUC Communications
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HUC Principal

HUC Principal's Reflection on 2024– 2025 and Looking Ahead.

A year of deep transformation, relentless pursuit of excellence, and tangible hope guided by the motto “Moving Forward and Upward with Hope!” What has been achieved and what the institution aspires to achieve in the future.

As we stand at the close of the academic year 2024–2025, our hearts are full. Like the Virgin Mary, we sign Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55). This has been a year of deep transformation, relentless pursuit of excellence, and tangible hope. Our motto, “Moving Forward and Upward with Hope,” was not simply a phrase—it became our compass, shaping every stride we took and every dream we nurtured.

This year, we witnessed a remarkable symphony of growth across every facet of Hekima. We embraced the call of Pope Francis to be not merely keepers of tradition, but agents of compassion, justice, and prophetic transformation. This spirit resonated deeply during the Convocation Lecture with Cardinal Peter Turkson and the thought-provoking lectures of Bishop Hassan Kukah, Bishop Rodrigo Mejia, and Rev. Prof. Dieudonné Mbiribindi, etc. We were reminded that to be Church in Africa today is to walk courageously with the wounded and to embody tender justice in a fractured world.

In academic excellence, Hekima shone brightly. From groundbreaking public lectures and a pivotal conference on African

Theology, to our vibrant research networks in Kinshasa and Bonn, we did not merely teach—we ignited minds, challenged assumptions, and inspired service. Our HIPSIR students reached into the diplomatic corridors of Foreign Affairs and the International Peace Training Center, learning to build bridges where others see walls.

This was also a year of strategic advancement. With the launch of our 2024–2030 Strategic Plan, we dared to dream boldly: new infrastructure, renewed digital capacity, and the paving of roads—not just of stone and gravel, but of vision and possibility. We secured historic support from partners like the Hilton Foundation and other friends of HUC, confirming that others believe in Hekima's dream as passionately as we do. We acquired the Mill Hill Property, now Fadhili Center. We have a new video and website to showcase HUC. We have welcomed Fr. Sebatine Adigwe, SJ.

We have been working on some new academic programs on Migration, Diplomacy, Business Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship, and Spirituality—timely and prophetic responses to a changing world. We gave thanks

for the accreditation of our Theology programs (BTh and MTh) and rejoiced in the continued flourishing of the Certificate in Theological Formation for Sisters, forming women to lead with wisdom and courage.

We honored our people: faculty who published and were promoted, staff who grew through training, and students who debated, explored, served, and were ordained. We became more than a college—we became a vibrant community of mission.

At the heart of it all is the beauty of Jesuit education—an education that forms the whole person: mind, heart, and spirit. It is an education that insists on reflection before action, that seeks depth over superficiality, and that pursues excellence not for prestige, but for service. At Hekima, this vision is alive. Every lecture, every pastoral encounter, every seminar and conversation becomes a moment of grace, an invitation to discernment, and a preparation for a life of generous leadership.

We are proud to walk in step with the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus. We strive to show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises

and discernment; we walk with the excluded—refugees, the marginalized, and those discarded by society; we journey with young people, helping them find purpose and faith; and we care for our common home with intentional sustainability. These preferences are not tasks to complete, but lenses through which we see and shape our mission. They breathe life into our curricula, our community outreach, and our global solidarity.

We also express our sincere gratitude to the HUC Council for establishing the University Award for Exceptional Student Excellence—a landmark initiative that celebrates not only academic brilliance but also integrity of character, leadership in service, and a spirit of innovation rooted in our Jesuit mission. This award affirms our belief that true excellence is holistic, touching intellect, heart, and society. We extend heartfelt congratulations to Deacon Grégoire Kaboré, the inaugural recipient of this prestigious award. Deacon Grégoire's academic distinction, maturity, and community-minded leadership made him a most fitting honoree. In addition, Deacon Grégoire was an A student throughout his six semesters, consistently excelling and ultimately finishing first in his class. Additionally, he has authored a forthcoming book on the Jesuits of Burkina Faso, has already translated one book, and is currently engaged in translating another. He has also represented HUC at an international conference outside Kenya, exemplify-

ing the global engagement we encourage in our students. We thank him as well for offering the valedictory remarks on behalf of his graduating class with grace and inspiration.

We did not ignore our own limitations. As we encountered diverse realities, we came to appreciate the vital role of wisdom and discernment. This year challenged us to face subtle yet corrosive tendencies—such as entitlement and gossip. At times, some individuals tried to make their personal issues everyone else's burden. We were reminded that time is sacred, and that true leadership demands clarity of purpose, humility of heart, and moral courage. While these lessons were sometimes uncomfortable, we recognize them as necessary graces—essential to our ongoing journey of transformation and renewal.

We bid farewell to Dr. James Campbell SJ and Fr. Benedict Eboogu, SJ. And now, dear friends, we cast our gaze toward the horizon. We look forward to integrating Dr. Agbo Chikere SJ and Fr. Matthew Bomki, SJ. We will continue our discernment and hopefully come to some concrete proposals of how best to use HUC Spaces.

The year ahead calls us to deepen our impact, widen our welcome, and anchor our hope in ever more courageous action. We prepare to welcome Rev. Dr. David Neuhaus, S.J., as our Inaugural Speaker—his voice a beacon of justice and reconciliation

in our fractured world. We anticipate new faculty, bold academic ventures, and continued renovations that reflect the dignity of our mission.

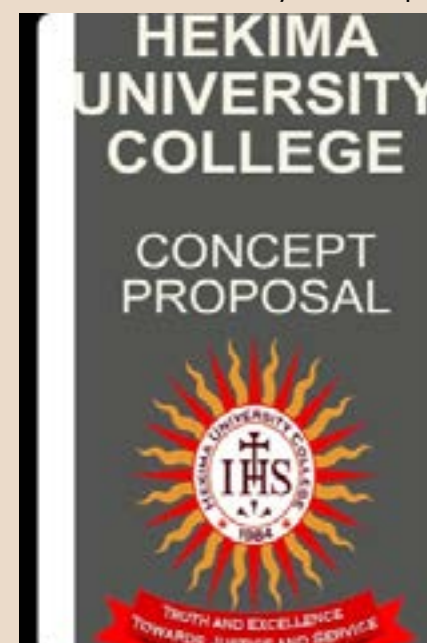
We will walk into our 42nd year with trust in the God who has never failed us. We continue to dream of what Hekima can still become: a center of excellence and transformation—not in competition with others, but in response to our own calling. We long to see it flourish into the best Jesuit institution in Africa, not merely by reputation, but by depth of intellectual engagement, rootedness in African realities, and service to the Church and society.

To our graduates: carry your mission with tenderness and strength. The path is yours, the load unique, and the goal sacred. As you move forward and upward, do so not in competition, but in conviction. Your pace is your grace.

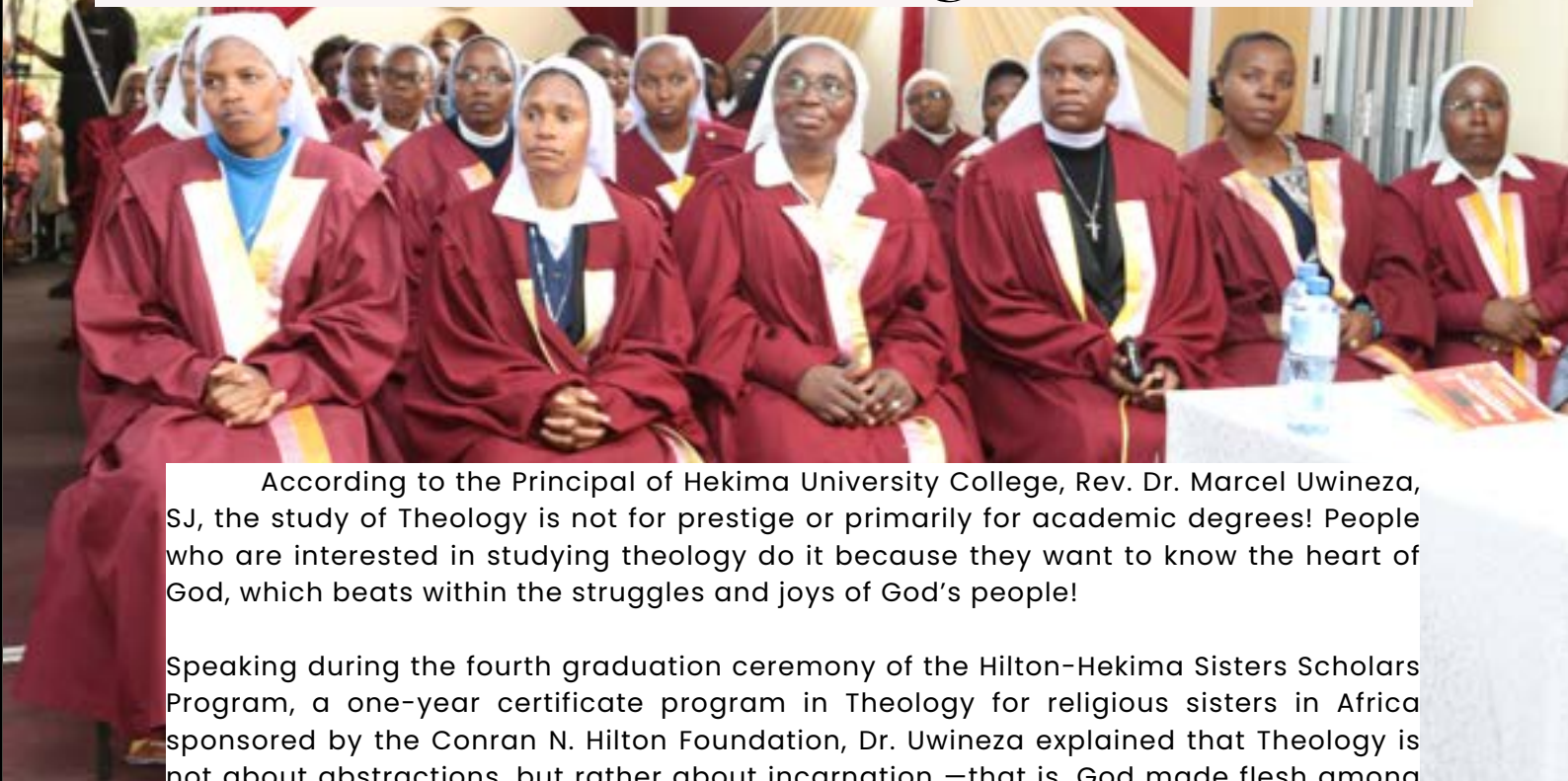
To the Hekima family: thank you. For your labor, your prayers, your sacrifices, and your faith. Where we fell short, forgive us. Where we soared, let us give glory to God. Let us press on—forward and upward with hope—knowing that the One who began this good work in us will surely bring it to fulfillment.

***Magnificat! Thank you!
God bless you! And may hope
always find a home at
Hekima University College.***

Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ
HUC Principal



Why Study Theology? the Hilton-Hekima Sisters' Scholars Program



According to the Principal of Hekima University College, Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ, the study of Theology is not for prestige or primarily for academic degrees! People who are interested in studying theology do it because they want to know the heart of God, which beats within the struggles and joys of God's people!

Speaking during the fourth graduation ceremony of the Hilton-Hekima Sisters Scholars Program, a one-year certificate program in Theology for religious sisters in Africa sponsored by the Conran N. Hilton Foundation, Dr. Uwineza explained that Theology is not about abstractions, but rather about incarnation—that is, God made flesh among us.

"It is about listening to the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor. As I reflected in my book *Risen from the Ashes*, the vocation of the theologian is not an escape from pain, but a call to enter it with eyes of faith and hearts of fire. It is to read the signs of the times with the light of Christ," Dr. Uwineza said, adding that Theology is about speaking into the world's wounds, not with easy answers, but with profound hope.

For the religious sisters who might be wondering what use studying theology would be to them, Dr. Uwineza shares that theology becomes a live experience when they can hold the hands of a grieving widow and comfort then, when they teach catechism to children who hunger not for bread but for love, and when they are in a position to challenge corruption and injustices in the society, not with bitterness, but with courage and peace.

Theology, the Hekima University College Principal added, is encouragement to the wounded. "I know that some of you may be carrying hidden wounds—wounds of discouragement, self-doubt, or even trauma. I want to say this clearly: you are not alone. God is not done with your story. Theology has room for your pain. Some of the most profound theological insights emerge from the ashes of suffering," he explained, adding a quote from his book *Risen from the Ashes* that "To be a theologian is to learn how to sit with ashes—and still speak of resurrection."

Dr. Uwineza told the graduating sisters that their pain could be the very place where God is shaping their voice for others. He urged them to be patient with their journey as they are seeds sown by the Spirit, and their harvest will come.

Hilton-Hekima Sisters Scholars Program

Hilton-Hekima Sisters Scholars Program is a one-year introduction to Theology Course offered to religious sisters working in Africa. The course, sponsored by the Conran Hilton Foundation, began in Hekima in 2021, and over 600 sisters have since graduated from the program. Out of those who have graduated, two are currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Theology at Hekima Jesuit School of Theology.

Hekima University College's Principal promised to offer scholarships to the four best students from the graduating class of 2025 to join the Hekima Jesuit School of Theology and pursue the bachelor's-level course, if they wish to do so and if their superiors approve.

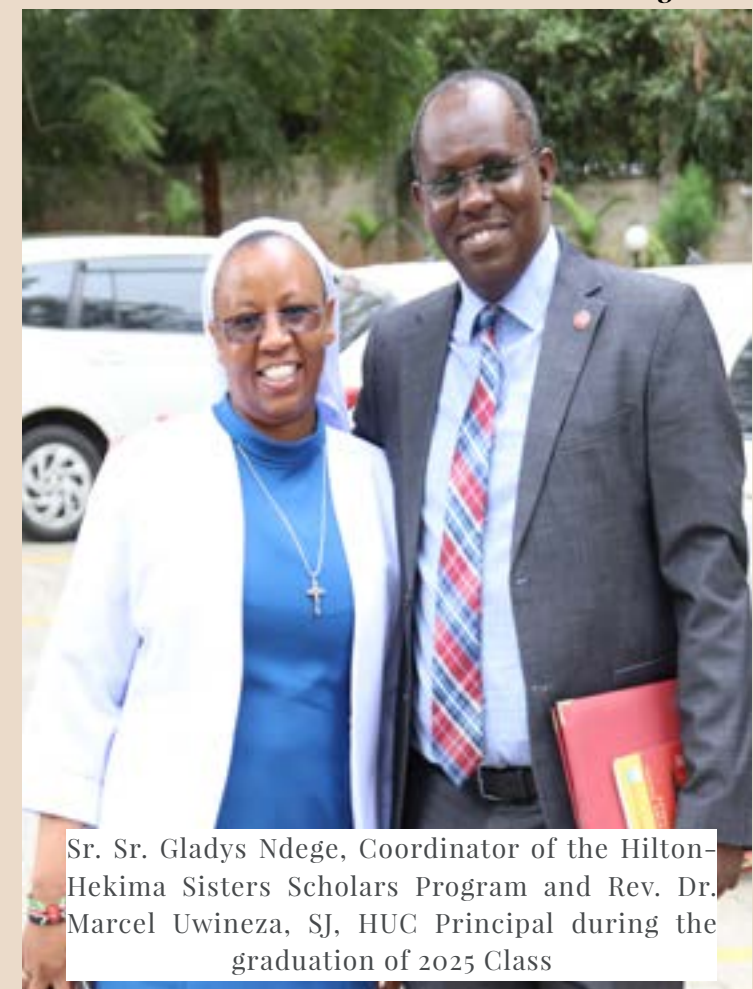
The program's course outline spans the two semesters of Hekima University College's Academic Year, which typically runs from August to May, comprising the first semester from August to December and the second semester from January to May. During the first semester, the students get to learn Theological Anthropology (2 credits), Canon Law: Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostles (1 credit), Service to Authority and the Vow of Obedience (1 credit), Introduction to the Old Testament (2 credits), Psychology, Cultural Personality and Pastoral Counseling (1 credit), Missiology (1 credit), Technical, Formation and Theology (1 credit), Theology of Religious Life: An African Inculturated Approach (1 credit), Personal and Family Ethics (1 credit), Introduction to Liturgy and Sacraments (2 credits), Psychology and Christian Formation (1 credit), Ecclesiology and Mariology (2 credits), and last but not least Child Protection and Safeguarding (1 credit).

The second semester covers Introduction to Moral Theology and Foundation of Christian Moral Life (1 credit), Introduction to the New Testament (2 credits), Servant Leadership and Fraternal Life in Common (1 credit), Spiritual Theology: Christian Spirituality, Discernment of Spirits and Communal Apostolate Discernment, Spirituality and Justice (1 credit), Canon Law: Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostles (1 credit), Spiritual Direction (1 credit),

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Sr. Jane Wakahiu (Left), Associate Vice President of Program Operations at Hilton Foundation handing certificates to a graduating student of 2025 Class



Sr. Sr. Gladys Ndege, Coordinator of the Hilton-Hekima Sisters Scholars Program and Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ, HUC Principal during the graduation of 2025 Class



Luis Franco, Hilton Foundation
Director of Workplace Services



Angelique Mutombo, Hilton Foundation
Senior Program Officer, Catholic
Sisters, Africa



Ian De Guzman, Hilton Foundation
Senior Director, Information Technology

Continued from Page 8

Introduction to Christology (2 credits), Evangelization and Faith Formation: An understanding of Theological and Social Psychological Foundation of Evangelization and Faith Formation (1 credit), Life according to the Evangelical Counsel (1 credit) Catholic Social Teachings (2 credits) and Child Protection and Safeguarding (1 credit).

From the rich content of the program, there is no doubt that Hekima University College remains steadfast in its commitment to the noble mission of forming women, especially consecrated women, as this is central to Hekima's mission. Besides, the formation received here at Hekima University College is deeply rooted in the Ignatian tradition of Jesuit education. This approach seeks not only to form minds but also to shape hearts for service. Jesuit education demands excellence, reflection, discernment, and a profound commitment to faith and justice, a reminder that theology is not complete unless it leads to loving action for others, especially the marginalized.

The graduating class of 2025 had 183 participants. Because the program is offered online, the participants were drawn from Angola, Cameroon, the DRC, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

"Since 2021, the Hilton-Hekima Sisters' Scholars Program has graduated a remarkable cohort of sisters. From across Africa and beyond, sisters have come to Hekima and gone forth renewed, not only as students but as theologians, leaders, and bridge-builders. They now serve in schools, clinics, refugee camps, parishes, and centers for peace and reconciliation," Dr. Uwineza remarked, adding that what began as a one-year program has become a lasting ripple of transformation.

He thanked the Hilton Foundation, whose vision and generosity, he said, have made the program possible. Specifically, he thanked Dr. Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSSF, who is the Associate President of the Program Operations and Head of the Catholic Sisters Initiative at the Hilton Foundation. Dr. Uwineza observed that Sr. Wakahiu's leadership echoes the spirit of the founder, Conrad Hilton, who believed in empowering Catholic sisters as a force for good in the world.

"The Hilton Foundation's mission aligns beautifully with our own: to form religious women who can transform their societies with wisdom, faith, and compassion. This program is more than an academic offering. It is a prophetic investment in the future of the Church and the world," Dr. Uwineza said.

By Pamela Adinda, HUC Communications Coordinator

Hekima University College Initiates a Community Learning Center, Launches a New Program Peace Leader.



First cohort of the Peace Leader Program with Dean of Hekima Peace Studies and International Relations Rev. Dr. Elisee Rutagambwa, SJ

As a member of the Jesuit Worldwide Learning, a program of the Society of Jesus that provides equitable, high-quality learning to people and communities at the margins of society, Hekima University College initiated a Community Learning Center on April 5 and launched its first certificate course, dubbed Peace Leader.

The course, according to Rev. Dr. Elisee Rutagambwa, SJ, Dean of Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations, will equip learners, mainly refugees in Kenya, to become architects of peace in the very communities where they live, thereby rebuilding their lives. Speaking at the inauguration of the program, Dr. Elisee told pioneer participants that by choosing to partake in the course, they are not just becoming survivors of conflicts but are also becoming leaders, as the course is designed to equip them with skills in self-awareness, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.

"This course is meant to help amplify your voices and empower you to ignite change from within in your communities as titles or positions do not define leadership, but by action, vision, and the courage to rise above adversity," Dr. Elisee told the participants.

The Peace Leader Certificate Course is a six-month professional course certified by Hekima University College, as various institutions of higher learning accredit all other certificate courses run by JW. The six-month course comprised 480 hours of instruction and three 40-hour practicums. The course is organized into twenty-four weeks of blended learning, composed of online sessions and Saturday in-person attendance.

The course explores how to mediate conflict whenever tension arises between host and refugee communities, a common occurrence. Course learners, therefore, get instructions on how to lead in situations where resources are limited and how to promote healing in the aftermath of trauma. Other skills that learners acquire from the course include communication skills, organizational skills, and resilience skills, which are not only vital but also revolutionary in a region striving for lasting peace.

Dr. Elisee expressed that in most urban settings across the region – Nairobi, Kampala, Kigali, Addis Ababa, Juba, and others – refugees and asylum seekers face unique challenges such as overcrowded living conditions, unemployment, limited access to education, health, and other social services, and at times, social exclusion. Even though Refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to all human rights and dignities, they are often invisible in policy-making, underserved by systems, and excluded from opportunities, yet amidst such harsh realities, among the majority of them lies the tremendous po-

tential to lead, mediate, organize, and to heal.

"You, our participants, are standing up and are stepping forward not only to find dignity for yourselves and your families but to become leaders of peace and transformation in your communities. Leadership must be redefined, not just by the corridors of power, but by the voices rising from informal settlements, youth centers, churches, and community halls. It must be defined by those who have felt the sting of exclusion and still choose to include others. That is you!"

Dr. Elisee expressed that through the modules of the Peace Leader Course, participants will not only learn but also build. They will build bridges where walls once stood; they will make understanding where there was once fear, and they will build futures grounded



in justice, respect, compassion, and hope.

"This course is your space to reflect, to grow, and to connect with others across borders and backgrounds. Together, you represent quite a mosaic of cultures, experiences, and ideas. And together, you have the power to create peaceful, inclusive urban communities across our region and even beyond," Dr. Elisee told the 21 participants who have registered in the first cohort for April 2025.

**By Pamela Adinda,
Coordinator HUC Communications Department & International Office**



HUC Laurenti Magesa Chair in African Studies: One year after the Inauguration

It's been a year since HUC Inaugurating the first African Academic Chair. So far, an official name for the chair has been decided. We take a look at what has been achieved and what next.



On April 26, 2024, Hekima University College made history by inaugurating the first African Academic Chair and announcing its first occupant, Rt. Rev. Rodrigo Mejia Saldarriaga, S.J., Vicar Apostolic Emeritus of Soddo, Ethiopia, and Titular Bishop of Vulturia. The event took place at the close of the Jubilee celebrations of HUC@40, which also marked the end of Academic Year 40 (2023-2024).

A couple of weeks shy of the chair's first anniversary, HUC Principal Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ, announced the official name on April 4. He explained that, after extensive consultation and thoughtful solicitation of recommendations for the position, the name "Laurenti Magesa Chair in African Studies" was settled on.

Why Laurenti Magesa and What Next as the Current Chair Holder's Tenure Comes to an End?

According to Dr. Uwineza, the de-

cision honors the profound and enduring legacy of the late Prof. Laurenti Magesa, whose scholarly contributions have significantly shaped African theology and intellectual discourse throughout the African continent and internationally. "Professor Magesa's work continues to inspire and influence contemporary thought in the field," Dr. Uwineza explained.

His sentiments are echoed by the HUC Deputy Principal for Academic Affairs, Rev. Dr. Jacinta Opondo, FSA, who said that the late Prof Magesa is considered a guru in contextual theology because, in Africa, Prof Magesa's contributions to the intellectual life of the African world has contributed a lot to theology in Africa, especially African theology.

As Bishop Rodrigo, SJ's tenure as chair comes to a close, the HUC has already sent out calls for applications. According to Dr. Opondo, some individuals have expressed interest, although they haven't officially applied.

"Several people have inquired about it, although they have not yet submitted applications. We

are therefore hopeful that we will receive the applications soon. However, it is also important to anticipate a negative response; therefore, if we do not receive any applications, which is a highly unlikely situation, we will honor someone just as we did with Bishop Rodrigo. We have several individuals who have made significant contributions to contextual theology. Therefore, the chair will not be vacant," Dr. Opondo explained.

She expressed that the position is not limited to theology alone but is open to African Studies in general, which broadens the horizons for interested candidates. One of the benefits of the Laurenti Magesa Chair in African Studies position is an office at Hekima, where the individual is required to stay for one year during their tenure, along with a stipend.

The expectations from HUC for the chair holder include delivering a public lecture at Hekima and conducting research that will lead to a publication. "We are expecting that this person is going to promote African studies to some extent; we are ex-



pecting that this person is going to publish something related to African studies; we are expecting that the person is going to do research, and that research is going to have some impact in society. In addition, we expect the chairholder to fundraise somehow," Dr. Opondo explained.

So, has the Current Chair Holder, Rt. Rev. Rodrigo Mejia Saldarriaga, SJ, Lived to these

Expectations?

According to Dr. Opondo, Bishop Rodrigo has indeed met HUC expectations. On January 29, 2025, Rt. Rev. Rodrigo Mejia, SJ, was among the key speakers at the Conference on "The Future of African Theology in a Continent Longing for a New World Order." The other speaker was Rt. Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto, Nigeria. Bishop Rodrigo's latest book, which focused on the small Christian communities—a phenomenon developed and initiated in Africa—was published during his tenure as the holder of the African chair.

"While sitting on that chair, Bishop Rodrigo has generated some income for Hekima. As a chair holder, one must do so through their deliveries, whether a conference or a publication; we expect these activities to attract some income. By virtue that you are sitting on that chair, those who know you are supposed to contribute to that chair, this is expected," Dr. Opondo explained, adding that the chair holder needs

to have a broad audience that values African studies and can contribute to any initiative that promotes African studies.

Sustainability of the Laurenti Magesa Chair in African Studies

The fundraising initiatives undertaken during the initial stages of establishing the chair have not ceased. Last year, HUC appealed to individuals to contribute towards initiating the African chair. However, Dr. Opondo noted that the chairholder now has significant influence over the contributions towards the sustainability of the course. "Those who contribute don't just do so because you have established a chair; they also want to know who is sitting on that chair and their contributions to African Theology and African studies. The holder of this chair must, therefore, be a person who is highly recognizable in terms of their contribution to academia, public life, or indigenous African knowledge," Dr. Opondo explained.

By Pamela Adinda, Coordinator, HUC Communications Department & International Office



Sr. Ines Okonabeng

From psychology to theology, a change birthed by chance and necessity

When my congregation sent me here for studies, our plan was psychology. From the beginning, I wanted to combine psychology with something else, which I referred to as spirituality. My religious experience inspired this; from my formation years as an aspiring religious, I went through many difficulties because of my personality, and I realized that, yes, God can help you, but at the same time, God needs your collaboration. You need to work hard yourself, and then God will send other people to help you. So that was my experience.

So, when I came to Kenya, my initial intention was to study psychology, and it was inevitable that I would join Tangaza University because the department under which psychology is taught is part of the Salesian family, which includes Salesian priests and sisters; this is my congregation. The spirituality department at Tangaza is called Youth Spirituality, and it is closely aligned with the Salesian charism. Most of the time, if another province wants to send its students to study in Kenya, Tangaza University is usually their first preference. So when I came, I went straight to Tambaza

God's Redirection

She never planned on studying Theology; her focus was on psychology, which she wanted to combine with a course on spirituality. However, as fate would have it, things didn't go as expected, and she found herself in a Theology class at Hekima University College, which had only two women out of 37 students; the rest were training to become priests. She prepared herself for the challenge, adjusting to being back in class after more than 10 years and enduring the demanding academic program of Jesuit education at Hekima University College. In the end, she developed a love for theology and intends to explore it further—highlighting the story of Sr. Ines Okonabeng Atangana at the Jesuit School of Theology-Hekima University College.

for psychology. However, a problem arose, and this changed everything: the issue of the grading equation. As you are aware, before joining a university in Kenya from another country, you must demonstrate that you meet the entry-level requirements. For a bachelor's degree in psychology, the entry-level requirement is a C+ or higher. So, when I arrived in Nairobi, my sister told me that it was okay; I could begin classes, as my documents had been taken for the verification process.

I was confident that everything would be fine, so I completed a whole semester, which is equivalent to six months of psychology at Tangaza University. At the end of that first semester, my documents arrived, and we realized that I had a C, not a C+, which is what we call a baccalaureate in Cameroon and an equivalent of the end-of-secondary-school certificate here in Kenya. With the realization that I had a C plain, my sister in charge at Tangaza informed me that I could not continue with the Bachelor's in Psychology because I did not meet the entry requirements. She suggested that I enroll in a one-year diploma certificate program in psychology to upgrade, after which I could be readmitted to pursue a bachelor's degree. This meant that I required five years of study



to earn a bachelor's degree in psychology. I reflected on it, and I concluded that it was not possible. My reason was that I did pretty well in the first semester. I didn't fail and had no reasons to discontinue, but they stood their ground. They insisted that I enroll in a diploma program and informed me that upon returning for the Bachelor's degree, I would not have to repeat the first semester but rather start from the second.

I said no. I argued that I finished secondary school in 2002; we were in 2021, that was more than ten years ago; therefore, comparing my level then and now is not fair, and even though I was still learning English, since I am from I believed I could proceed based on my performance during the first semester. I also argued that after secondary school, I pursued further studies before entering my final profession; I completed one year of theology in my country at the Institute of Theology for Religious, which caters to men and women. Usually, it is a three-year course, but for us, when we are preparing for the final provision, our superiors send us there to take a one-year course, after which we are finally professed.

They could hear none of it and still insisted that I do the diploma. My efforts to convince them to let me continue failed miserably. Even after I promised them that I would work hard, I couldn't convince them to give me a chance. I, therefore, decided to leave Tangaza. It was a tough decision for me because I was in Nairobi and didn't know anyone I could turn to, as my sisters had failed to stand by me and told me that I would not be accepted at any university in Nairobi.

But God is great; while I was still confused and hurt by the turn of events, I shared my dilemma with a friend, a Quebec Missionary priest from Cameroon, Fr. Emile Eteme. He told me that I could try another University but perhaps enroll in Theology first and then pursue psychology at the Master's Level. He suggested Hekima, where I would pursue theology for three years and then enroll in a master's degree program in psychology, which would take two years to complete. In total, it will be five years, but in the end, I will have both a Bachelor's and Master's Degree. The idea was perfect for me because my province had sent me to study for five years.

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Fr. Emile had just transferred their seminarians to Hekima from Tangaza, and so he told me that it was the best place to study theology. He, therefore, sent me to see Father Peter Knox, a Jesuit from South Africa who, at the time, was the deputy principal of academic affairs. When I met him, my conversation with Father Peter Knox was less than thirty minutes. He did not ask me about the secondary school certificates; he wondered whether I had done any further studies after secondary school. I brought my transcript from the Institute of Theology for religious men and women, and he said it was okay. He asked me for a few other documents, which I brought, and before I knew it, I was admitted to the Bachelor of Theology at Hekima.

When my sisters here abandoned me, I wrote to my provincial and explained that Tangaza was asking me to complete a diploma for one year, followed by a bachelor's degree for four years, which would take me five years to achieve. I told her I couldn't do it and was willing to return to the province or explore other options. Her response to me was that whatever you choose to do, I will support you! My provincial was very happy when I told her that I had been accepted at Hekima University College. She said that Jesuit schools are the best and was delighted that I got the opportunity. The three years that I have spent at Hekima studying theology have made me fall in love with the course.

Experience at Hekima



Jesuit School of Theology

My experience at Hekima has opened my mind and heart, helping me to heal, understand myself better, and strengthen my relationship with God, thanks to theology. I knew a few things about the Bible but very little, almost nothing, about the church before. Although we are religious, we take only a few courses in the novitiate regarding the Bible and the church, which is very little. The theology that I encountered is quite in-depth.

I'm not making any comparison because I know that each school is special and is unique. But when I shared my experience at Hekima with some sisters who are doing theology elsewhere, I realized that at Hekima, we have the best. We have excellent lecturers who are very supportive of the students, open to diverse opinions and ideas, and highly qualified, in my opinion.

Through my experience, I have come to understand myself better, my relationship with God, and my place within the church. Hekima is a blessing

for me because I have not only learned more about God and the church, but everything around Hekima is also an excellent motivator for my studies. The environment at Hekima itself is a church. For me, Hekima is a church, a home, a school, and a place for joy!

Hekima has a unique environment; for instance, when it comes to women's empowerment, Hekima does not claim to be loud about it, but what Hekima is doing for women is more than just promoting women's empowerment. Hekima understands that in the contemporary world, educating women is equivalent to educating the entire nation. You're educating Christians not only for today's church but also for tomorrow. I can say that Hekima is a heavenly place where women are valued and respected.

There are not many women at Hekima, but from my experience, I have felt loved and respected. Every lecturer wanted me to work harder, to

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do my best, and to be excellent. They gave me everything I needed to achieve excellence. I was sharing with one of my sisters here at Hekima, telling her that if you don't take advantage of the opportunities available to you at Hekima as a woman, I don't know where you will find this in the world! At Hekima, I could visit any office and be well received and attended to, even without a prior appointment. The family spirit is indeed present at the Hekima; it is very rare in today's twenty-first-century world!

So, what is it like to be in a class full of people being formed to become priests?

I will never forget the experience of beginning classes at Hekima, but thank God, things changed. At the beginning, it was tough because we were just two sisters in a class of 37, Sister Alice Nyaga and I. When the

lecturer asked us a question, the men in our class would start laughing even before we had a chance to answer; this was quite surprising, and I kept asking myself, what was happening? The situation continued for quite a while until I realized that they were laughing because they assumed we did not know the answer or did not know how to answer, simply because we were women.

With that realization, I decided to make a change. I said to myself, I'm not fluent in the English language, but I know many things; I cannot let these men laugh at me when the lecturer asks me a question. So, I put in my best effort and answered the questions asked as well as I could, regardless of my struggle with the English language. Slowly but surely, as I courageously answered the questions in class with confidence and to the best of my knowledge and ability, my classmates' perceptions of

me and Sister Alice began to change.

Although, as a Salesian sister, I have a good academic background, most of my classmates at Hekima, especially the Jesuits, have the upper hand in class. They already have degrees in philosophy; some even have Master's Degrees in other fields. As Salesian sisters, upon completing our secondary education, we begin our religious formation, after which we are professed. We typically receive training in catechism, complemented by experiences at the parishes, which provides us with a solid pastoral foundation. Although not academically strong, my pastoral background has proven valuable to me in class. Without a prior university education, the first year at Hekima University College is very challenging; it's tough answering questions in class, taking tough exams,

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and writing numerous articles and assignments. You need to put in a lot of work, effort, and reading to keep up. Once you get used to the drill, the second year becomes bearable. I came to Hekima after staying out of school for over ten years; I did not have the mindset of a student. Even after spending six months at Tangaza University studying psychology, the kind of work students are subjected to at Hekima is no match. But at the end of it all, you appreciate it; you feel it's worth it. Why Sisters Must Study Theology

The first obstacle or question I faced, and I still face with some people, is, 'Why are you doing theology?' For many, theology is for priests, and so the question is, do you want to become a priest? However, when you examine the reality of our church today, you see how women are often absent, especially sisters. It is essential for sisters to engage in theology. Most of the time, we sisters are limited to catechism.

Many sisters shy away when asked to prepare a talk on various topics because they lack knowledge, and the

majority of them would give excuses not to participate. The reason for those excuses is that they lack knowledge, and they are incapable. Take, for instance, preparing and giving a talk to couples preparing for marriage or a recollection for the youth in a parish; it is mostly the priests who take such responsibilities because the sisters are incapable. Many of them feel that they cannot stand in front of these adults and share with them about the Bible. When sisters are invited to give a recollection, many of them decline the invitation; I wouldn't have done it before coming to Hekima because I didn't know what I would say.

Sometimes, when Christians approach sisters at a parish and ask questions about the basics of life, the sisters will advise them to consult the priests, as the sisters are often limited in their knowledge. And when you see the reality of the church today, you realize that priests need qualified sisters. The church needs us. There are not many priests. It is high time the sisters took on most of these responsibilities, such as accompanying people, guiding them in recollection, conducting Bible studies, and even accompanying couples

to relieve the priests and allow them to offer other services that the sisters cannot undertake. To do all these, sisters must be qualified, and that's why theology is very critical for them.

For a long time, sisters have been limited to catechism, and even with catechism, if you push them to confirmation, it becomes somewhat challenging. So, today, you cannot say that sisters don't need theology. We must engage in theology because the church needs qualified agents of evangelization, and sisters are an integral part of this.

What next after a Bachelor's Degree in Theology?

I must admit that Hekima made me fall in love with theology, to the extent that my original plan of psychology is now second. However, I still want to pursue a career in psychology, and I plan to combine theology and psycho-spirituality. Marist University here in Nairobi offers a Master's Degree in psych-spirituality, and I want to go for it. I have had a long discussion with my provincial and reached an agreement. Theology won my heart,





especially during my second year of the program; systematic theology, in particular, had a profound impact on me. When we started discussing grace, sin, purgatory, heaven, and hell, I felt drawn in.

I said to myself, 'This is what I need to understand about myself.' This is what I need to understand God, the mystery of God. Psychology started losing its place in my heart, and this became a big crisis for me. I shared the dilemma with my spiritual director, and we started the discernment from which I decided to combine theology and psycho-spirituality. I have decided to pursue a Master's in systematic theology here at Hekima and then a degree in psycho-spirituality at Marist University. This combination is quite rich. In spiritual accompaniment, you sometimes realize that the person doesn't need spiritual accompaniment but instead has a psychological issue, or vice versa.

As sisters or priests today, we need to combine psychology and theology to help people navigate difficult situations, guide them in surrendering their lives to God, and collaborate with God in their pursuit of psychological well-being. My dream is to help people heal themselves and to understand that God can never abandon us; that whatever happens in our lives, God is always present, but he needs our collaboration.

Certificate in Theology for Religious Sisters: A Necessity & a Transformative Tool for the Sisters' Effective Pastoral Work

The Certificate in Theology course from the Jesuit School of Theology at Hekima University College, run under the program Hekima Hilton Sisters Scholar Program (HHSSP) has been applauded as a transformative journey that has not only broadened the perspectives of the religious sisters as agents of evangelization, but has also deepened their understanding of faith which is sure to impact on their pastoral work as they draw from a wealth of necessary knowledge acquired during the one-year journey of the program.

Speaking during their graduation, which took place on June 12 at Arupe-Amani Campus of Hekima University College on Riara Road,

Nairobi, Sr. Gisela Shy, a Cameroonian Holy Union Sister who was also the class representative for the fourth cohort, expressed that the church flourishes when all its members are formed, empowered, and mission-oriented. Taking into consideration that among them was a laywoman who stood out as an inspiring sign that the formation they underwent was not only enriching the religious women but indeed the entire people of God, Sr. Gisela expressed her appreciation for the enriching program which she recognized as an investment by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Hekima University College into the future of religious and pastoral leadership on our continent.

For many years, the study of The-



ology has been a preserve of men preparing to become priests. However, in recent years, the demand for pastoral care has outpaced the number of priests available, owing to the decline in priestly vocations. As such, the need for more qualified agents of evangelization who are not necessarily priests is imperative.

Hekima University College, in Collaboration with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Fund for Sisters, has offered a one-year certificate course in Theology for the past four years. Although it is an introductory course, the sisters who have completed the program testify that the course content is rich and has enabled them to broaden not only their understanding of God but also their knowledge of the church, the scriptures, and their faith. According to Sr. Gisela, the program has genuinely been a transformative experience, serving as a sacred opportunity for self-reflection, healing, and spiritual renewal.

"We were encouraged to revisit and strengthen our relationship with God, exploring the depths of our souls in connection with the divine presence of the Holy Trinity. For many, it felt akin to navigating the inner corridors of the soul, reminiscent of Saint Teresa of Avila's portrayal of a journey toward inner awakening and divine encounter," Sr. Gisela expressed adding that their exploration of canon law has enhanced in them an appreciation for the structure and beauty of church life, fostering a greater understanding of the rights and responsibilities within religious institutes as articulated in canon 573-746,



which highlights the delicate balance between freedom and discipline in community life.

"We were deeply moved by the writings of the mystics, which have now become companions on our spiritual journey. Their experiences of God's love, presence, and purifying grace mirror our unhidden struggles and silent victories. The counseling and psychology sessions enabled many of us to confront unspoken pain, embrace healing, and develop emotional resilience. This inner freedom is a gift that not only enriches us personally but also strengthens our ministries, families, and communities."

The group also had a unit on child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults,

and this, according to Sr. Gisela, awakened in them a renewed sense of vigilance and care as they became more aware and better equipped to uphold the dignity of every human being, especially the most vulnerable.

"One of the greatest surprises of the program was our encounter with Catholic social teaching. These teachings opened our eyes to the church's rich vision for justice, peace, human dignity, solidarity, and care for creation. As Pope Francis reminds us, we are called to smell the sheep, to be close to those we serve, to listen attentively, and to respond with love and compassion," Sr. Gisela expressed adding that inspired by Fratelli Tutti, they recognized that caring for the earth, standing

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in solidarity with the poor, and answering the call to universal fraternity are central to their Christian mission.

While expressing immense gratitude to Hekima University College administration, especially the Coordinator of the HHSSP, Sr. Gladys Ndege, Gisela is convinced that they are moving forward, renewed in their commitment to work alongside the poor, defend life, and be a voice for the voiceless. In order to keep the flame burning, the class of 2025 proposed that HUC establish and coordinate a network for all graduates of the program, where an annual online meeting could be held to provide a valuable opportunity to reflect on emerging issues in ministries, support one another in ongoing formation, and continue the journey they have begun. The graduating class also appealed to Hekima and the Hilton Fund to consider offering another one-year diploma course online, building on the certificate they have received, especially for those who wish to pursue further theological studies.

"While the desire to continue is strong, many of us still face serious challenges, such as limited access to laptops, internet data, and stable connectivity we request continued support for sisters who have completed this course and wish to pursue further studies, particularly at the PhD level in fields such as canon law, counseling psychology, and other areas relevant to our mission."

**By Pamela Adinda, Coordinator,
HUC Communications Department**



Message of Appreciation!

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for the invaluable education and experiences I received at Hekima College. Completing my degree in theology has been a transformative journey. I owe much of my growth to the dedicat-

ed faculty, supportive staff, and the enriching environment of this institution. From the inspiring lectures to the unforgettable moments of the campus life at Hekima, every lesson, both in and out of the classroom, has shaped me into the person I am today.

I would especially like to extend my appreciation to the leadership of Hekima University, who, in addition to their central aim of providing courses in theology for members of the Society of Jesus, also offer formation for men and women seeking to take their place in the Church's evangelizing mission. In doing so, they organize scholarships for women in religious life.

I have benefited from a scholarship through Porticus Africa, arranged by Hekima University. This scholarship has provided funding for tuition, stationery, and allowances, which have had a significant impact on my life. The support has not only aided me in theology but also in a course on safeguarding, equipping me with the knowledge to care for both myself and others. Their generous contribution has facilitated my studies, assuring me that my needs are being met.

During my studies, I gained spiritual formation through a course on retreat direction, focusing on Ignatian spirituality. This experience has contributed significantly to my personal spiritual growth and has equipped me with the skills to support others in their spiritual practices.

I am grateful to all the lecturers for their guidance and encouragement, which played a crucial role in my academic and personal development. Your teaching method pushed me to think beyond the ordinary. The institution has been more than just a place of learning; it has been my home, my foundation for theology, and my source of inspiration. I carry that wisdom with me every day. Although I leave the beautiful Hekima College, I will always carry its spirit with me wherever I go.

As I witness the rapid changes and complexities in the world, I believe that a bachelor's degree in theology is insufficient. I strongly desire to pursue a master's program here at Hekima so that I can be better equipped to serve God's people. I hope to make this desire a reality in the near future. Thank you for fostering a culture of learning, curiosity, and excellence. I look forward to building connections and contributing to the college in any way I can. May God bless you and fulfill your heart's desire.

Sr. Alice Nyaga, Holy Union Sisters.



HUC Principal gives Public Lecture at Fairfield University, USA

Rwanda has become a powerful example of post-conflict recovery.

"Through community-based justice (e.g., Gacaca courts), truth-telling, and a national focus on forgiveness and reconciliation, Rwanda has managed to promote healing and national unity," Dr. Uwineza explained. He highlights that forgiveness is not forgetting but a brave choice to break cycles of revenge and restore hope. Quoting figures like Pope Francis and Desmond Tutu, Dr. Uwineza argued that forgiveness frees both victims and perpetrators and is essential for rebuilding societies.

"Leadership plays a pivotal role in this transformation. Rwanda's post-genocide leadership prioritized justice, education, gender equality, sustainability, and inclusive development, turning trauma into strength. Institutions like Hekima University College embody this vision, focusing on ethical leadership and social responsibility," he explained.

Dr. Uwineza concluded his presentation by emphasizing that healing a divided world requires both forgiveness and visionary leadership. He offered that by learning from Rwanda's resilience and investing in inclusive, ethical governance, global societies can overcome past wounds and build a peaceful, united future. "Forgiveness, when coupled with justice and strong leadership, is a transformative force capable of restoring humanity and hope in even the darkest of histories."

Between 5 and 14 April, Hekima University College Principal Rev. Marcel Uwineza, SJ, traveled to the United States to give a public lecture at Fairfield University, a private Jesuit university in Fairfield, Connecticut, and for public relations engagements. In his lecture titled *Healing a Wounded World: The Miracle of Forgiveness and Sowing the Yeast of Leadership*, Dr. Uwineza explored the fractured state of today's world, marked by wars, inequality, and political instability across continents from conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, and Ukraine to economic crises in Latin America and Asia.



Seizing an opportunity to collaborate HUC explores ways of working together with Notre Dame University



Prof. Elias Opongo Director of Hekima Center for Research Training and Publications addressing the team from Notredam University during their visit at HUC.

On May 14, a group of professionals from Notre Dame University, USA, among them fourteen faculty members comprising of professors and senior lecturers, visited Hekima University College as they journeyed around the world visiting various Institutions and universities in Kenya in a quest to reflect on their community theme for the year 2024-2025: What Do We Owe Each Other?

Since 2005, Notre Dame University has established the Notre Dame Forum, which invites campus-wide dialogue each year about an issue of importance to the University, the nation, and the wider world. This year's theme, therefore, called for a reflection on What We Owe Each Other in a world where many observers are alarmed about a collapsing sense of community as fewer and fewer people feel a responsibility to care for others.

"With a growing and often welcome emphasis on individual rights and freedoms, how should we—individually and collectively—think about our responsibilities to one another? In a world where ideological and cultural divisions seem to have deepened, and wars in Ukraine, Israel/Gaza, and elsewhere have caused such terrible suffering, how can we bring people together to face the challenges of our times? How can Catholic social thought help us engage in fruitful dialogue with those whose perspectives are different from our own, bridge social divides, and promote healing amid suffering, division, and injustice?" Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame.

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According to Rev. George Macharia, SJ, Registrar of Hekima University College, Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, sent the group of people to Kenya in particular, to visit various institutions, various places, to seek a response to the question raised on the theme and to align themselves with the Catholic social teachings.

"This was a very reflective trip which is not only beneficial to them but to us too as an institution as it inspires us also to think about what we as members of Hekima University College owe to each other and our collaborators and associates," Rev. Macharia expressed adding that the delegation was also interested on knowing what Hekima does, how Hekima serves the church, what role Hekima plays in the Catholic Church and not only in the Catholic church but, to the humanity.

"We seized the opportunity to engage them in areas of collaboration, and they seem to be very interested. We identified several areas where we can collaborate and work together. As a way forward, Dr. Angie Appleby Purcell, the Managing Director of the Institute for Ethics and the Common Good and the Ethics Initiative at Notre Dame University, and I have been tasked to come up with a draft document that concretizes or rather gives a concept, a framework on future collaborations," Rev. Macharia revealed.

In as much as the visit was not directly just to Hekima but to other institutions in Kenya as well, Rev. Macharia sees it as a great benefit to Hekima because it birthed the idea of collaborations between Hekima and Notre Dame University as there are areas that the two institutions can collaborate and this would be beneficial to both.

"So we are going to follow this up by appointing one of our HUC staff members to work with me as we explore ideas on the areas we wish to collaborate on with Notre Dame University," Rev. Macharia said.



Why Scholarship For Women in Theology?

Dean of the Jesuit School of Theology Dr. Stephen Eyeowa, SJ, explores why Hekima University College offers scholarships only to Women from Certificate, Bachelor's, master's, to PhD.

Hekima University College, through the generous support of partners and collaborators, has championed the education of women in theology. Although the programs have mostly targeted religious women, their lay counterparts often find theology irrelevant in an economically pressed world of today, where women would choose more 'marketable' career paths. However, a laywoman from Cameroon, who is currently pursuing a PhD in Theology at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), has proved that lay women can indeed do Theology. Ms. Nicole Njine Facheux first became a beneficiary of Hekima's full scholarship, pursuing a Master's of Theology degree at Hekima, where she later graduated in 2023.

In 2021, Hekima introduced a one-year certificate in theology, a fully funded online program, to encourage more religious women to study theology, which is a necessary instrument for pastoral work. Through the program, which is conducted in collaboration with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Hekima has successfully graduated over 600 religious sisters with a certificate in theology. The fourth cohort, which

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graduated on June 12, 2025, consisted of 161 participants, including one lay woman, Ms. Lucy Wanjiru Gacheru.

Dean of Hekima Jesuit School of Theology, Rev. Dr. Stephen Eyeowa, SJ, while addressing the graduating class of 2025 certificate in theology, explained that the only scholarship available at Hekima Jesuit School of Theology, from certificate to PhD, is dedicated strictly and only for women because the name Hekima, Hokma in Hebrew, Sofia in Greek, and Hekima in Swahili, is a woman! Hekima itself is thus a Woman! And that is why, according to him, if you put all the Jesuit School of Theology students together, there are more women than men doing theology. "When you educate a woman in theology, you awaken the soul, the conscience, the character of a nation!"

Dr. Eyeowa confessed that the questions often asked of female theology students are: Why are you studying theology? What will you do with theology? To respond to these questions, Eyeowa used an African proverb that states, "When you educate a man, you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman, you educate the whole village." To be more specific regarding theology, Dr. Eyeowa stated that when you educate a woman in the-



Rev. Dr. Stephen Eyeowa, Dean Hekima Jesuit School of Theology

ology, you awaken the soul, the conscience, and the character of a nation. You help people, the village, and the nation to be rooted in faith, and you also stir the spirit of spirituality and creativity, because that is the power of women!

"From my observation, women doing theology over the years consider theology not just as a rigorous exercise, but a time for relationship. Gone are the days when we will begin to ask in theology how many saints and angels can work on the finger of God. Those are the preoccupations of men. From experience, women often ask, 'How can I be close and connected to God?'

Again, from my observation, doing theology by women isn't just an academic exercise. It is devotional. It isn't about the materials given. It is about me and my relationship. It is about making sense of an area of study, understanding a system that once told women they were not meant to speak about God, that they were not qualified to speak about God."

He emphasized that theology is not merely about speaking about God; it is also about understanding God and talking with God in order to transform the world, thus the goal of doing theology is not merely to complete a program, whether in certificate, bachelor's, master's, or PhD, but rather it is



A Section of the 2025 Certificate in Theology Graduation Class



for the sake of mission. This implies that people expect to hear sisters and lay women who have studied theology speak intelligibly about God. The completion of a theology program by women means the beginning of a narration of theological stories in a feminine voice, a lived experience.

According to Eyeowa, theology has been narrated in male voices for centuries, through male experiences and from male perspectives; such a theology is no longer sufficient. Therefore, paraphrasing the great Chinua Achebe's words, that until the lioness tells a story, the hunt will always glorify the hunter; until the sisters and lay women who have graduated with certificates, bachelor's, master's, and PhDs tell their stories, the male-dominated, centered theology will continue to be purified. "We need to hear theology, brewed, not just in an African context, but in women's voices. This does not mean denying others, especially the male folk, of their truth, but to complete the narrative of theology, that God is one of us. And that 'us' is male and female," Eyeowa remarked.

What Makes Theology Done at Hekima Special?

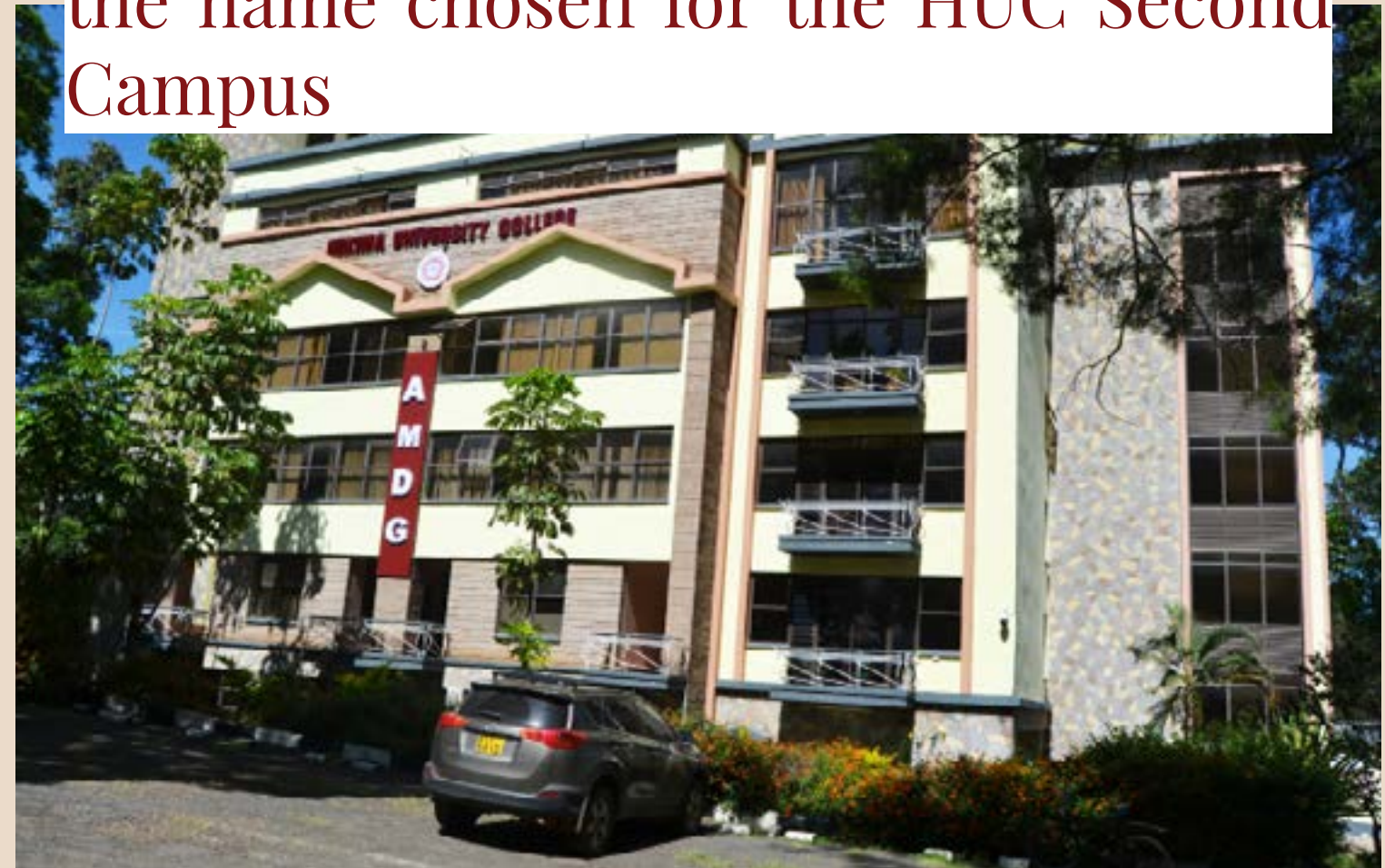
The study of theology at Hekima University College is approached with the Jesuit spirit of the Magis, which seeks to do more and be more for God. According to Dr. Eyeowa, the training is crafted in the Jesuit tradition, which challenges people to find God in all things, especially among the marginalized in our societies. The Jesuit Education tradition transcends mere academic achievements, certificates, diplomas, or degrees, focusing instead on holistic fruition with special emphasis on character, competence, commitment, and conscience formation.

At Hekima Jesuit School of Theology, students are encouraged to practice an imaginative theology, one that goes beyond discussing God, beyond discussing biblical texts and church documents, and beyond discussing sacred traditions. An imaginative theology challenges a person to envision new paradigms, new metaphors, and new models of being the church. These allow one to welcome dialogue and to hold tension without compromising conscience. The Jesuit School of Theology, in simple terms, aligns with and promotes the synodal church, a church for all, embracing men, women, and children.

"Theology done at Hekima makes the students fall in love with God in the parables of Jesus, especially in the New Testament; it helps them confront the confusing questions of dogma, for instance, why is it that women cannot be ordained? Why is it that the Eucharist has to be celebrated only by men? All these confusing questions, you've been confronted with them. It is a theology that has memory, which is the resounding spark that connects them with God, with separate texts, with sacred traditions, and with the human condition and daily existential dynamism —a theology that is abstract yet living," Dr. Eyeowa explained.

*By Pamela Adinda,
HUC Communications Coordinator*

Finally, a Name! Arrupe-Amani Campus, the name chosen for the HUC Second Campus



Hekima University College's Second Campus, situated on Riara Road, off Ngong Road, has undergone various name changes that seem to have evolved over time and in response to shifts in activities within this particular campus. However, after a discernment process that took more than three months, involving all members of the HUC Family (teaching and non-teaching Staff, students, and collaborators), a name was finally chosen: Arrupe-Amani Campus.

The iconic building, which was constructed to cater to the postgraduate program at the Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations - HIPSIR, is what, for the longest time, the campus has been known as. During the post Covid pandemic when Hekima resumed the normal in-class attendances, which also saw a significant increase in the number of students especially for the undergraduate program, Jesuit School of Theology (JST), HUC transferred the undergraduate programs to 'HIPSIR', which not only has bigger classrooms but also needed to be utilized during the day as the postgraduate program classes only takes place in the evening.

The name of "HIPSIR" therefore became inappropriate as it wasn't inclusive. Additionally, other programs unrelated to peace studies and international relations, such as the Center for Research Training and Publications (CRTP), the Jesuit Historical Institute in Africa, and the Jesuit Center for Safeguarding in Africa (JCSA), are also housed on this campus. The then Deputy Principal of Academic Affairs, Rev. Prof. Peter Knox, SJ, suggested in 2022 that the campus be known simply as the **Postgraduate Campus**.

This name, Postgraduate Campus, still didn't feel appropriate as a more inclusive name was needed. Apart from the other programs listed above, HUC has established another program, the Center for Interfaith Studies in Africa, also located at this second campus.

In an attempt to make the campus' name more inclusive and more appropriate, the administration branded it **AMDG Campus** following the renovation of the main building that was done in 2022-2023, although this was not officially communicated to the Hekima Family. **AMDG**

is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase **"Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam,"** which translates to **"For the greater glory of God!"** However, this was only temporary; a suitable, permanent name that was more neutral and inclusive for the new Campus was still needed. A name that would be more inclusive, a name that resonates with Jesuit Education advocates, a name that embodies the values of the Kenyan people.

HUC Principal Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ, therefore formed a discerning committee led by Rev. Fr. Benedict Ebogu, SJ, in November 2024, to lead the process of finding a suitable name for the campus. Following their meeting on November 7, 2024, the discerning committee developed eight criteria to guide the Hekima family in prayer and discernment regarding the naming of the post-graduate campus. The criteria included a name that is: accommodative and neutral (inclusive), reflects the Jesuit identity and mission, reflects an African dimension; a name that reflects uniqueness and creativity, that takes into account the history and the future prospects of the campus, a name that reflects an academic dimension, a name



that is an acronym of the founding fathers of HUC and finally, a name of a great African figure (Jesuit theologians, or anyone who has made significant impact in Africa).

The committee therefore invited the entire Hekima family to actively participate in the discernment and naming process guided by the text from the Gospel of Luke "... and thou shalt call his name John" (Lk 1:13). A link was therefore provided to the HUC family to give their discerned name for the campus online.

At the end of the discernment exercise, a name, Arrupe-Ama-

ni Campus was proposed. The name will be confirmed at the beginning of the new academic year in August 2025.

According to HUC Principal Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ, the name Fadhilli Center was proposed by the Rector of the Hekima Jesuits Community, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Foro, SJ, for the newly acquired former Mill Hill Missionaries Residence. Fadhilli is a Swahili word that means kindness, which perfectly captures the spirit of hospitality service and formation that is envisioned for the property.

By Pamela Adinda,
HUC Comm. Coordinator.



In Gratitude

Rev. Dr. James Campbell, SJ

On 23rd April, 2025, Hekima University College bid farewell to her Chaplain, Rev. Dr. James Campbell, SJ, who has been missioned back home, having served Hekima for eight years as a professor of Canon Law, chief librarian, and chaplain.

His students applauded him for his dedication as their professor of Canon Law, while the commitment and resourcefulness he demonstrated during his tenure as Chief Librarian has made the HUC Library a great oasis of knowledge.

As a chaplain, many have benefited from his commitment to the spiritual well-being. For instance, he managed to organize retreats for the non-teaching staff during the two academic years he served as a chaplain, and this, according to many of them especially the residential retreat held at Mwangaza Jesuits Spirituality Center, made them taste the true spirituality of the Jesuits and is something that they say they will truly miss.





Tribute to Fr James Campbell, SJ

It is my great honor to address a few words to Father Dr. James Campbell, SJ, as he is leaving Hekima University College. When the principal asked me to say a word of thanks on behalf of the students, I was challenged because I asked myself what exactly I had to say about this man who had lived a seven-year tour of duty at Hekima and whom I had known for only three years. However, I immediately convinced myself that three years is also a good period of time to gather experience and form lasting memories. And I think the choice of Father Marcel was rightly done since I worked hand in hand with Father James, him as the chaplain of the College and me as the one in charge of Liturgy for one

year.

Many of us have benefited immensely from the wisdom of Father James Campbell in many ways: some, in class during his canon law lectures, as a librarian through summaries of important texts in the domain of ecclesiastical laws, in the chapel from his inspiring homilies, online from his spiritual reflections, in academic and non academic meetings through his powerful and insightful contributions, in social events through a great sense of humor(the students will remember that whenever we had a game he was always there), through spiritual directions, recollections and retreats, and also through the great love of environment and walks along Ngong-Road.

Briefly, Dr. James is a Jesuit with the spirit of the magis. With great consideration for his ministry within the church and his duties within the College, he has helped students grow. If I may be personal, working with him in the office of liturgy, James Campbell taught me a valuable lesson: the principles of subsidiarity and cooperation. As a lawyer, he taught the student the sensitivity and gravity of each word regarding the Law. Therefore, he encouraged us to be concise and straightforward. I am sure that each student of Hekima has a particular element that can be said about Father James Campbell, and I know I cannot exhaust everything.

We thank Father Dr. James Campbell for being who he has been for Hekima University College and for each of us. Now that he is returning to his province, we wish him a very successful mission. God willing, we hope to see him back at Hekima or in other places. Long life to him, and may God make his mission fruitful.

Felix Baraka Harerimana, SAC.

Tribute to Rev. Dr. James Campbell, SJ



There is a quiet grace in the act of saying goodbye. It reminds us that every journey, however long or noble, comes with moments of pause – moments to honor what has been, before stepping into what is yet to come. I recall standing with Fr. James Campbell at the close of an academic year mass. As the last hymn faded, he turned to me and said, “Goodbyes when done in gratitude are just another form of blessing.” That simple line has stayed with me. It captures what we now feel as we bid farewell to a man who has deeply blessed our community.

Fr. Campbell’s presence among us has been a rare and profound gift. His commitment to intellectual rigor, a hallmark of the Jesuit tradition, has inspired generations of students and faculty alike. Whether dissecting the most intricate points of Canon Law with clarity and passion or navigating the moral and ecclesial complexities of our times, he taught not only from books but also from conviction and lived wisdom.

His role as Chief Librarian was never just about catalogues and collections. Under his stewardship, the library became a place of encounter between texts and minds, traditions

and new ideas. It became a sacred space for learning, reflection, and the pursuit of truth.

As a Chaplain of Hekima, Fr. Campbell brought more than sacraments – he brought solace. His homilies, always concise yet profoundly written, became weekly anchors for many of us. His reflections, often as short as a paragraph, could carry the weight of a lifetime of prayer and theological insight. They were, in many ways, spiritual haikus—brief but unforgettable.

Beyond our walls, he carried the name and spirit of Hekima to international fora, representing us with dignity, intelligence, and a deep sense of mission. In his travels and dialogues, he demonstrated that being a Jesuit Scholar is not about isolation in ivory towers, but about engagement with the world—deeply, courageously, and always with compassion.

And yet, what may be most remembered about Fr. Campbell is not any one title or achievement, but his daily witness—his quiet laughter in the corridors, his eagerness to engage in meaningful conversation, and his fidelity to the mission, even when the spotlight was far away.

There is a story often told in Jesuit circles of a brother, well into old age, speaking in the hallway of a school late one evening. When asked why he was still working at that hour, he simply replied, “Because the mission never ends.”

Fr. James, you have embodied that spirit so well. Although you are now moving on from Hekima, we know that the mission continues with you wherever you go and in whatever you do.

Thank you, Fr. Campbell, for showing us what it truly means to be always on the mission.

Fr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ
Principal HUC

In Gratitude

Fathers Dominic Tomuseni, SJ, Benedict Ebogu, SJ,
and Angelo Albertine, SJ



Dear Fr. Dominic,

We are incredibly grateful for your significant contributions to HUC. Over the six years you've been at Hekima, as a faculty member, you've diligently shared knowledge with our students, who will always remember you from the Fundamental Theology, Ecclesiology, Mariology, Trinity, African Philosophy, Elective, and Ignatian Spirituality and Music classes. Thank you for your dedication, availability, and support of our Hekima students. We also appreciate your service in various roles, such as Dean of JST and, most recently, Dean of Students. We deeply appreciate your service and commitment to Hekima.

As you embark on a well-deserved sabbatical, we hope it will provide you with sufficient rest and renew your strength and zeal. We pray that God continues to sustain and bless you abundantly.



Dear Fr. Benedict,

We cannot thank you enough for your immense contributions to our HUC Faculty. You have indeed made a lasting impact in the lives of your students, whom you encountered in your Pauline Literature classes, Homiletics classes, Electives, and Seminar classes, as well as when you coordinated the Retreat Direction Program this year. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

As you proceed to your next mission, we wish you success. HUC will surely miss your meticulous work, carried out diligently and with great dedication.



Dear Fr. Angelo,

Hekima University College is immensely grateful to you for the wonderful collaboration. Although you were not directly mandated to the college, your support and dedication to the welfare of the Jesuit students and the formators who are part of HUC, making them feel comfortable with their studies and work, respectively, is a major contribution to us.

Moreover, you were always available whenever we called upon you seeking services or advice on various issues. Thank you, Fr. Angelo, for your kindness, availability, and willingness to go above and beyond your call of duty to help Hekima University College move forward and upward.

As you proceed to your next mission, we at Hekima will surely miss your presence. We wish you God's abundant blessings and prayers.

Message from the Outgoing HUCSA President 2025



It is with a heart full of gratitude that I stand before you today as I come to the end of my mandate as president of Hekima University College Students' Association (HUCSA). It's the end. I want to thank HUC Principal Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ, for his unwavering support and guidance throughout this journey. His leadership, wisdom, and encouragement have been a source of strength not only to me but also to the entire student association council.

Whenever we need something and come to you, we have never been disappointed or turned down! You are not just a Principal, but also a role model to us. Thank you for what you have done for us.

To the members of the administration, I would like to extend my gratitude to Christine, the college secretary, and Pamela, the coordinator of the Communications and International Office. Thank you for your

collaboration and for always being there for us. I also appreciate the ICT team, Abel, and Beata for the collaboration. You have been available to accompany us whenever we needed your assistance; thank you.

I am deeply grateful to my godparents here at Hekima; one may ask, who are they? These are none other than Ms. Betty Too and Brother Filex Nimanya. They were in the former council, and when we took over from them, they never abandoned us but have been a great source of encouragement and wise counsel. You have accompanied us throughout with valuable advice whenever we sought your opinion. Thank you, Betty, thank you, Filex Nimanya, for your support.

To all our collaborators and the members of the committees with whom we have worked, thank you for your dedication, creativity, and teamwork. Together, we were able to make our goal not just a dream, but also a realization. We realize whatever we have planned.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Dean of Students, "the Church!" Thank you, Father Dominic Tomuseni, SJ, for your presence, your accompaniment, and the collaboration. All HUCSA members, thank you for trusting us, for engaging with us, and for standing by us in all our activities.

To all students, thank you for your presence and active participation in all the events we organized. Your collaboration was key to achieving our three main goals, which were based on my campaign slogan of Unity, creativity, and service. Together, we realized what we had planned.

As I hand over the leadership, I want to wish the newly elected council all the very best. One of the key advice I took seriously is to always stay focused. I urge the newly elected HUCSA Council members to be focused and lead with passion and purpose as you strive to bring Hekima from good to great. I have no doubt that the future is bright in your hands, because I know all of you. May God bless you, and may God bless Hekima College. Thank you.

Romaric Ablouka Lefiba Be-ndja, AA
Outgoing HUCSA President

Message from the Outgoing Minister and Administrator of the Hekima Jesuit Community



Serving as an administrator and minister of a Jesuit community of this college has been one of the most meaningful chapters of my life. This journey has been marked by challenging growth and countless moments of shared success.

I sincerely thank the Principal, Fr. Marcel Uwineza and his team, the faculty members and non-teaching staff, the Jesuit community led by Father Foro, and HUC students for your involvement, trust, and commitment to excellence. You have inspired me daily with your dedication and passion.

To my fellow formators, colleagues, Hekima Jesuit Community housekeeping staff, and cooks, thank you for working alongside me with wisdom, integrity, and dedication. Your energy, dreams, and resilience have been my greatest motivation, especially among the students.

Although my mission in this role comes to an end, my connection to this community remains strong. I live with deep respect, lasting memories, and a heart full of hope for the future of Hekima College. Thank you so much.

Fr. Angelo Albertine, SJ

Frederick Buechner & Other Awards 2025

Hekima University College encourages hard work, excellence, and dedication among its students and staff members. To this end, it has continued to award those who demonstrate these values. In addition to the Buechner Awards, which are celebrating their seventh year this year, HUC introduced Staff Awards in 2024 and the Council Award, equivalent to a valedictorian, in 2025.

This year, Dr. Gaspar Sunhwa, SJ, Dr. Mary Wambua, and Rev. Fr. Francis Aziza were among the faculty members recognized. The administrative staff recognized included Ms. Pity Wairimu, Sr. Gladys Ndege, and Mr. Joseph Bii. The college also recognized some students for their exceptional service in support of Hekima University College's mission. They included Sr. Ines Okanabeng Atangana, Romaric Ablouka Lefiba, the outgoing president of the students' association HUCSA, Kingsley Amalanathan, and finally, Yvonne Akundo.

The Buechner Awards, presented to the best writers, recognize five students who have demonstrated exceptional writing skills or made significant contributions to various publications, including Hekima Review and others outside Hekima. The 2025 Frederick Buechner Awards for the best writers were therefore awarded to Nimanya Filex, Baraka Harerimana Felix, and Balthazar Ntege Kyakanwa, third-year JST Students; Jean Avis Makena Mburia, and Vincencia Omondi HIPSIR Students.

The Buechner Award for the Best Preachers is typically given to five students who have effectively evangelized others through their words, actions, or both. The 2025 awardees for this category included Deacon Jaison Joseph, SJ, Sr. Alice Nyaga, Fr. Habumuremyi Herbert, Ms. Olympe Aimerance, and Fr. Afeku Anthero Pon. In addition, all final-year students, both from JST and HIPSIR, received a book from the Frederick Buechner Foundation.

The last category of the awards, according to HUC Registrar Rev. Dr. George Macharia, was unique because it was the first time Hekima had offered it. The HUC Council Award, Dr. Macharia said, will be the most coveted as it will recognize an exceptional student who stands above the average, whose exceptional attitude, support, and service advance the mission of HUC.

During the last HUC Council meeting, the Principal, Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, presented a motion for the Council members to award a special prize to one or two outstanding students from our schools. The HUC Council Award is equivalent to a Valedictorian, and it was anticipated that the first prize would be given at the end of the 2024-2025 Academic year.

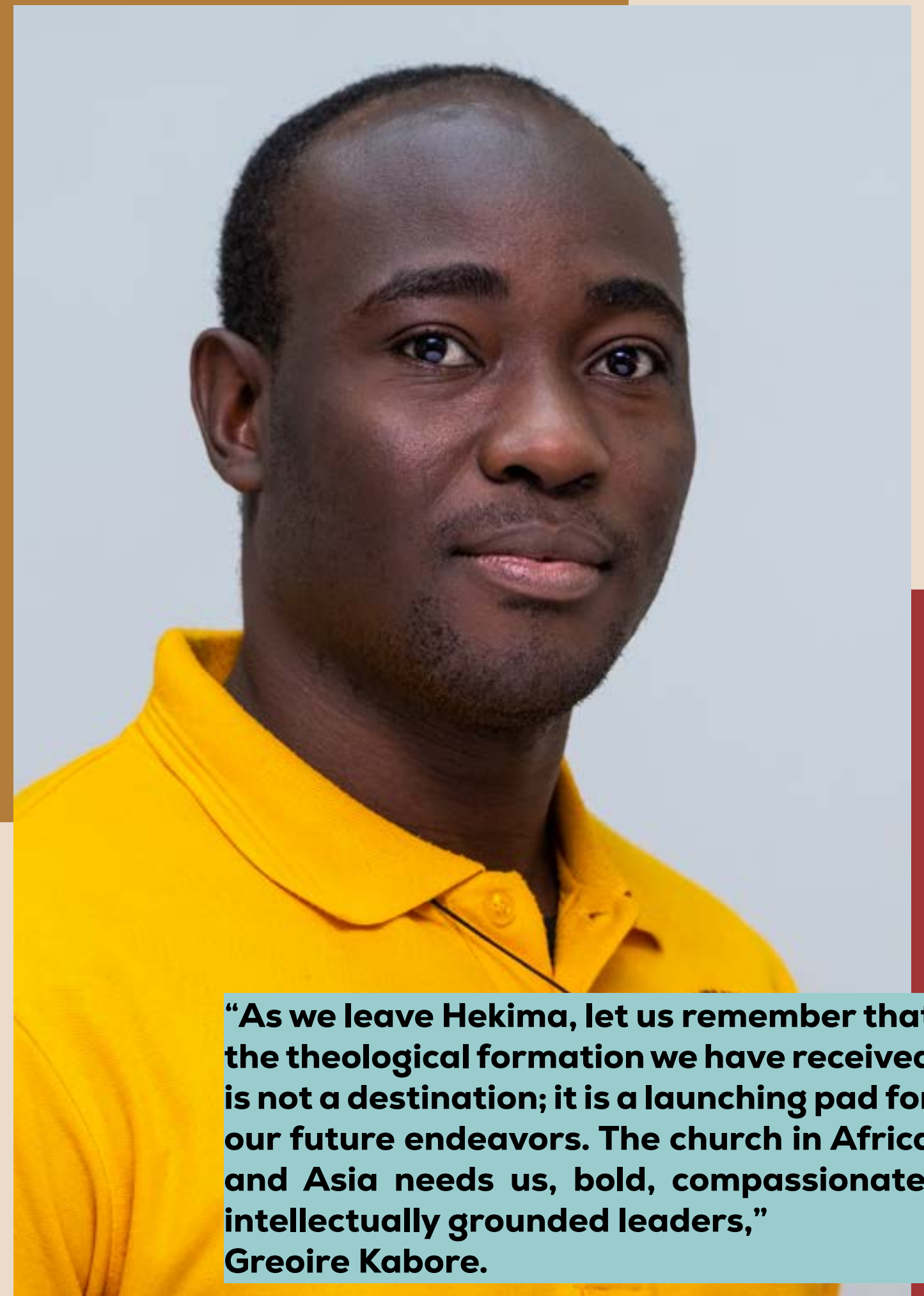
The criteria for the Award are set by the deputy principal academics, who liaise with the deans of each school to submit potential names to the principal. The principal then chooses three names and selects the first. This is the same procedure that is followed for individuals receiving the Buechner Awards. The first awardee of this prize, the Valedictorian 2025, was Deacon Kabore Larba Gregoire Bienvenu, SJ, a third-year JST student from Burkina Faso.

By Pamela Adinda, HUC Communications Coordinator

Awardees 2025



Congratulations



**“As we leave Hekima, let us remember that the theological formation we have received is not a destination; it is a launching pad for our future endeavors. The church in Africa and Asia needs us, bold, compassionate, intellectually grounded leaders,”
Greoire Kabore.**

HUC Council Award Recipient (Valedictorian) Speech 2025

What a profound honor it is to stand before you today at the end of this academic year as the awardees of this remarkable institution. As we gather to celebrate the culmination of our academic journey, I am filled not only with gratitude but also with a deep sense of purpose and hope for what lies ahead. I still vividly remember our first week at Hekima. Many of us entered these halls with mixed emotions, hope and fatigue, expectation and uncertainty. Personally, I was coming from two intense years of philosophy studies and two years of demanding regency. I can say that I was exhausted physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

I arrived thinking I would merely get through this program, do the minimum, and move on. I was wrong. That very first week, we met the dean with characteristic wisdom and candor. He handed us pens and paper and asked us to write why we had come to study theology at Hekima. Then he pleaded almost prophetically, Please don't write that you are here only because of the stole!

That would be a waste of time, money, and energy. In that moment, something shifted. He reminded us that we are not called here to passively complete a requirement. We were summoned here to be transformed. He challenged us to respond to Africa's urgent needs, its suffering, injustices, and spiritual hunger.

With a theology rooted in liberation, in context, and in hope. That challenge awakened something in me and perhaps in many of you, a renewed sense of mission. From that day forward, we walked through this path together, not as isolated individuals, but as a true community of learners. I have never encountered a class like this. A class where students shared notes, past papers, books, and resources.

Study groups became circles of generosity. Classroom debates became a forum for critical thoughts. Even jokes shared among us reminded us that we learn better when we learn with joy. To all my classmates, thank you. Your friendship, brilliance, and perseverance helped me become more than I thought I could. And to our professors who dared us to aim not for mediocrity, but for the Magis, the more. Thank you. You were not only instructors, but co-pilgrims and mentors. As we leave Hekima, let us remember that the theological formation we have received is not a destination; it is a launching pad for our future endeavors. The church in Africa and Asia needs us, bold, compassionate, intellectually grounded leaders.

We are not here for ourselves alone. We are here because the world is aching for

“We were summoned hereto be transformed in order to respond to Africa’s urgent needs, its suffering, injustices, and spiritual hunger.”

voices that proclaim justice, healing, truth, and mercy. So let us resist the temptation to merely do the minimum and move on. If we are open to God's grace and avail ourselves for continuous learning, we will become vessels of hope. Pastors, peace builders, and prophets that the world needs.

Let us take pride in our university, our institution, Hekima, and let us be its ambassadors. When others mention Innsbruck, Boston, Berkeley, Rome, or Louvain, let us also mention Hekima and take pride in it. I dream that the next generation will do more than we did. Let no student ever believe that we cannot grow. As long as there is a will, there is a way.

In God, we can rise to heights beyond our imagination. Let me end with a story. A true story that speaks to the power of transformation. There was once a young man who came to Hekima weary, dissolute, and unsure. On his first day, he quietly told himself he would endure the years and leave.

But something happened. A question was asked in a lecture hall, and a friend refused to let him fail. A professor who saw his potential before he could. Slowly, the young man began to believe again. Believe in his calling, in his voice, and in the God who had not brought him this far to abandon him.

That young man stands before you today, and he is grateful to all of you. I am deeply thankful to God, and I firmly believe that God can do even more for all of us. Let the sky not be our limits, but our beginning! May God bless Hekima University College, and may God bless each one of us. Thank you.

Kabore Larba Gregoire Bienvenu, SJ



HUC Welcomes Participants for the Language Immersion Program 2025

It has been five years since Hekima University College began offering the English Language Immersion Program to non-English speaking students who wish to pursue their studies abroad, where the primary language is English. The program is usually held during the long break between May and August.



This year, the program attracted ten philosophy students from Arrupe Jesuit University, who arrived in Nairobi on May 29 for the program. The Director of the HUC Communications Department, Rev. Dr. Anthony Egan, SJ, while welcoming the group, emphasized the need to sharpen one's language, especially when pursuing a course in the said language.

"Communication is key, and as you look forward to future studies in an English-speaking institution, you must sharpen your language skills. Take this opportunity, therefore, seriously and learn as much as you can," Dr. Egan told the participants, urging them to exercise their English language



skills through informal interactions and informal encounters with different people both inside and outside Hekima.

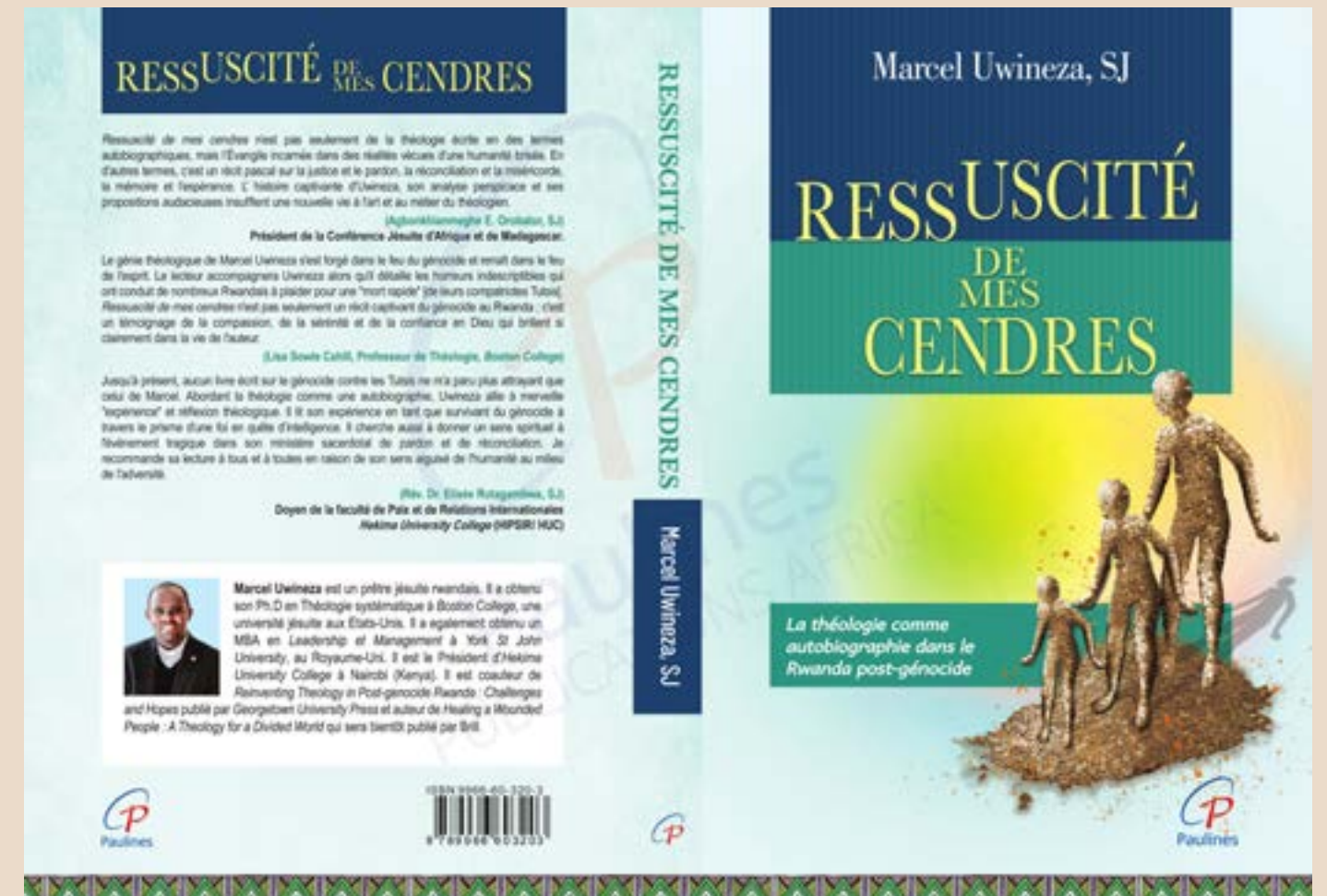
During the welcoming session, the participants shared their expectations from the program, which include improving their English skills, both spoken and written. Coming from a rigorous academic first year at Arrupe Jesuit University, where they have been studying for their bachelor's degree in philosophy, the participants expressed a desire for a flexible immersion program that would also allow them to rest while awaiting the resumption of classes at Arrupe in August.

HUC Principal Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ, who, in his welcome speech to the participants, reminded them that it is essential to take the immersion program seriously, as poor language can be a hindrance to pursuing one's academic dream at prestigious universities abroad.

"Here at Hekima, we don't settle for mediocrity. I always tell our theology students that the society out there will not be impressed by how golden your chasuble is, but by the quality of wisdom, knowledge, and values that you have. It is therefore important to take each moment we get to learn as much as we can to build our knowledge," Dr. Uwineza said.



French Translated version of the Book Risen From Ashes by Marcel Uwineza, SJ



2025 Events



Ordination of 16 Jesuit Deacons, five CMI Deacons, Two SME Deacons, one Yarumal Deacon and two Yarumal priests. The ordination was held on 1st March 2025 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Nairobi. The ordaining Minister was Bishop Rodrigo Mejia Saldariaga, SJ



2025 Events



Ordination of four deacons and two priests from the Augustinian of Assumption Missionaries. The ordination was held at St. Monica Parish in Njiru on 11th June 2025. The ordaining Minister was Bishop George Muthaka, OFM Cap



Why do they need to lie down when the Litany of the Saints is chanted?



The Litany of the Saints is a prayer of invocation. Invocation of the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of the intercession of the saints. In other words, the invocation of the power of the heavenly court upon those to be ordained. According to Rev. Father Sebastine Adigwe, SJ, a liturgy lecturer at Hekima University College, the invocation not only occurs at ordination but also at the final vows of religious men and women, as well as during baptism.

“No one gets baptized in the Catholic Church without invocation of the power of the heavenly hosts, and thus the Litany of Saints is first done at Baptism, which is the first of the initiation sacraments of the Catholic Church. While at ordination and final vows for the religious life, the candidates lie down, at baptism, the infants cannot lie down, but in case of adults or teenagers, they kneel.” Fr. Adigwe explained, adding that the act of lying down signifies total submission. “You cannot do anything else when lying prostrate,” he said.

The significance of this invocation is that, as human beings, we do not have the power of our own. We rely on the powers from heaven; it is through the power of God that we can accomplish anything. Therefore, at that moment when ordination candidates lie down while the Litany of the Saints is being chanted, it is a moment of submission; self-submission, self-entrusting to the power of the heavenly beings over them. And so as they get up, the bishop imposes his hands over them.

According to Jonathan Englert’s book, *The Collar: Inside a Catholic Seminary*, published in 2006, ordination is believed to bring about an ontological change—a change in being—in the men being ordained. The rituals and practices during an ordination

ceremony include readings from the Old and New Testaments, the calling of candidates, their presentation before the congregation, their election by the bishop, and the congregation’s consent.

“We rely on the help of the Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ,” the bishop announces, “and we choose these men, our brothers, for the diaconate/priesthood in the presbyteral order.” Then comes the homily, the examination of the candidates, and their profession of obedience. The men then lie down, prostrating themselves before the bishop, and the congregation and the bishop sing a repetitive chant of the Litany of the Saints. The bishop then silently lays his hands on the candidates, and, in priestly ordination, other priests present at the ceremony do the same. The bishop then speaks the prayer of consecration. Next, the investiture of the candidates takes place.

At the moment when they lie down and the litany is being chanted, what happens to the candidates? Fr. Adigwe explains that the candidates are expected to recite a prayer and possibly chant along with the litany of

saints. Still, even if you don’t chant along, it’s the activity of the church over them, not their own activity. It’s a prayer of the church over them, not their prayer.

“But I mean, many of us in our pious act are saying our private prayers at that moment, invoking the prayers, the powers that have been invoked upon us in our way. At that moment, it is not our prayer. It’s not a prayer of the one being ordained. It is a prayer of the whole church. Triumphant, suffering, and militant Church: the three-dimensional aspect of the church is being evoked over these men who are going to be agents of Christ.”

So what goes on in the minds of the candidates at that particular moment when they are lying down prostrate and the litany is being chanted? For Deacon Martin Kyalo Kiswili, CMI, one of the Hekima Jesuit School Theology students who was recently ordained a deacon on March 1, 2025, it was a moment of mixed feelings: joyful and humbled, with a sense of a special responsibility being laid upon him.





"When we were lying down there, it was a moment of good experience whereby I joined together with the faithful in the reciting of the litany of the saints. As I lay down there, I had a bit of mixed feelings. I felt tears well up in my eyes when I thought about the fact that the Holy Spirit was being invoked upon me. All the saints whose names were mentioned during the litany were specifically being asked to pray for us, which made me too emotional," Deacon Martin explained.

Fr. Adigwe pointed out that the responses from the candidates regarding how they felt when lying prostrate as the Litany of the Saints was being read differ from one candidate to another because the experience is individual, not collective. Some candidates would chant along, while others would lie quietly and say private prayers, and yet others might experience a deep sense of peace that would even cause them to fall asleep.

"That is why, if you noticed during the recent ordination ceremony, I had to be present to make sure that once the Litany of the Saints gets to the end, I had to make a very loud amen so that everyone would hear."

All in all, the ordination ceremony is a special

experience for each individual who has the opportunity to be ordained. What happens during and after is a testimony that only those who have been ordained can feel and know. For Deacon Martin, it is time to change from his old self to a new person who is ready to fully embrace the call by taking the responsibility and its needs more seriously. It is now not just about himself but also about those who look up to him.

"From my ordination experience, I can say that something has indeed changed, as evidenced by the way I conducted myself before ordination, when I did not feel as much responsibility on my shoulders. Being a deacon means that I am the same person, but with greater responsibilities; I am now not only accountable for myself, but also for the people who look up to me. I know that, being ordained a deacon, I am entrusted with a greater responsibility that demands a lot of accountability, journeying with others, giving consolation, and preaching the Word of God, which at the same time requires that I live and practice what I preach," The deacon expressed.

By Pamela Adinda, HUC Communications Coordinator

Different Theological Contexts

The benefits of experiencing different theological formation contexts: Deacon Josky Okumu highlights the advantages of studying at Latin American University and Hekima University College.

Having studied at both the Pontifical University of Bolivia and Hekima University College, Deacon Josky Okumu, a Xaverian Missionary of Yarumal, views the experience more as complementary rather than comparative. His theological formation in the African context (at Hekima) and the Latin American context (in Bolivia) has broadened his perspective, making it richer than if the entire course of theological formation had been completed in either of the two contexts.

"I would not look at my experience and judge the two institutions by saying which one offered me the best; rather, I acknowledge with great appreciation that each country played a very important role in my theological formation. For example, in Latin America, liberation theology is being practiced, which differs from the theology being offered here at Hekima, which is centered in the African context. And when you examine liberation theology, which originates from Latin America, the context is different because they live in distinct realities from Africa," Josky explained.

The deacon further explained that the two countries where he studied face different challenges and cultural realities; therefore, it is essential to conduct theology within the context of their realities, thus ensuring that theology is not practiced in a vacuum. This approach provides the study of theology with a solid foundation, which is very important.

"I feel very fortunate to have experienced both



Latin American and African cultures. As a result, I genuinely feel wealthy. By combining these two theological approaches, my perspective is broadened, and my horizon is even wider," Deacon Josky offered.

The deacon expressed immense gratitude to Hekima University College and all the lecturers, whom he said have given them the best by being available to them, very receptive and supportive of their ideas, arguments, and contributions in their classes, and also for spending tireless hours preparing them towards becoming better deacons, better priests, and even better Christians in the society.

Deacon Josky, along with his classmates at Hekima, who are in the third year of their Bachelor of Theology program, will take their comprehensive exams in May, marking the end of their journey at Hekima. His priestly ordination will take place in July, after which he may be sent to work in another country, possibly in Asia, Latin America, North America, or even Europe, depending on where his superior deems it necessary to assign him.

By Pamela Adinda

HUC Principal & Former Rector of the Hekima Jesuit Community Elevated to HUC Senior Lecturer position



Fr. Deogratias Rwezaura, SJ

Following a rigorous review process, aligned with the Criteria for Appointment and Promotion of Academic Staff set by the Commission for University Education in Kenya, the Hekima University College Academic Committee convened and evaluated the promotion applications from the HUC Lecturers, both from the Jesuit School of Theology and the Peace Studies and International Relations Program and promoted Rev. Dr. Deogratias Rwezaura, SJ, and Rev. Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ as deserving.

Rev. Dr. Uwineza, who shared the news of their elevation, commented that the achievement is not just an individual milestone but a collective step forward for HUC. "Academic excellence and leadership are journeys of continuous growth, where each success paves the way for others to follow. As a community, we are dedicated to cultivating a culture that uplifts, inspires, and empowers individuals to reach their full potential. Together, we rise," he expressed.

He encouraged those who are yet to be promoted to continue with their hard work and dedication, assuring them of support. He reiterated that their commitment to academic excellence is invaluable to Hekima and is the reason that Hekima's name continues to soar.

"Growth takes time, and we believe



Fr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ

that with persistence and passion, future success is only delayed. A heartfelt thank you to the Academic Committee of HUC, which includes esteemed full professors from various universities. Your professionalism, guidance, and dedication to advancing our faculty are truly commendable," Dr. Uwineza commented.

According to Hekima University College Criteria for the Appointment and Promotion of Academic Staff (2022), the following are considered for the senior lecturer position: he/she must have earned a PhD or equivalent degree qualification (a Master's degree qualification in special cases) in the relevant field from an accredited and recognized university; the individual must have had at least three (3) years of teaching experience at university level as a lecturer or six years research/industry experience; He/she must have a minimum of thirty-two (32) publication points as a Lecturer or equivalent, of which at least twenty four (24) should be from refereed scholarly journals; the individual must have supervised at least three (3) postgraduate students to completion as a Lecturer or equivalent; the individual must be registered with the relevant professional body (where applicable).

A Memorable Midterm Break getaway

Midterm break signifies rest. Therefore, the Hekima University College Students' Association (HUCSA) organized an excursion to Paradise Lost for all students on Tuesday, March 4, 2024. The trip was eagerly anticipated, with over fifty students signing up. The two buses were full.

Departing from the Undergraduate Campus, the students arrived at the site around noon. The program included a visit to the waterfall, games, and the nyamachoma (bar-

becue). As soon as they arrived at the site, the students rushed to the waterfall. A compulsory photo session for everyone was inevitable, as everyone wanted a memory of the day. HUC able student photographer Kingsley Amalanathan, SJ, was kept quite busy by everyone's requests. After almost an hour at the waterfall, the students made their way to the lunch site. Sharing, music, and laughter were the order of the day. Everyone took advantage of this moment of relaxation in their own way. There were the cooks at the stove for nyamachoma. A group of students went onto the dance floor. And others around a table fighting not to get a plus five on the Uno Flip.

After lunch, the students took a break while waiting for the nyamachoma; it was time for the games. The students were divided into 6 groups beforehand. Two games were played. The first was to move forward blindfolded, guided by a teammate to avoid bottles—a real adrenaline





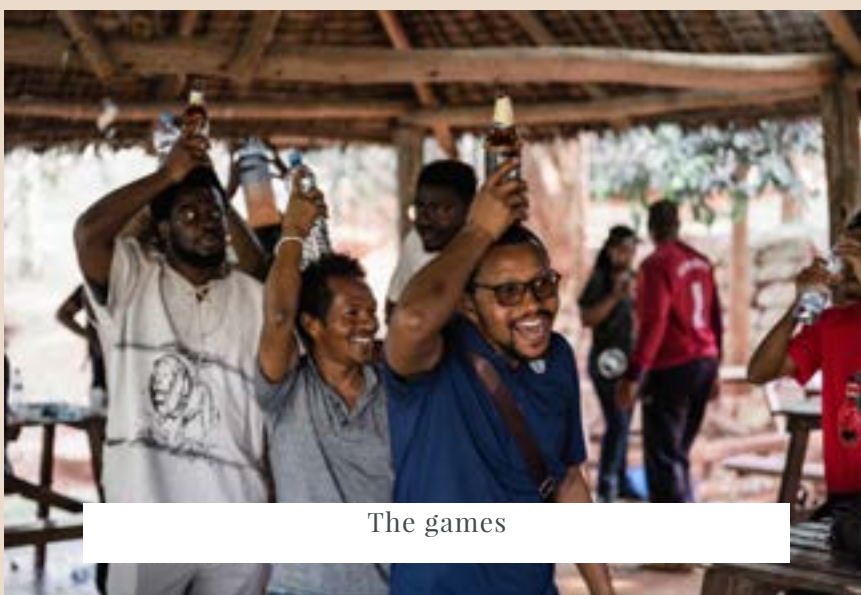
Students enjoying lunch during the excursion

rush. The only group to manage more than two steps was group 5. Truly remarkable teamwork. Then came the second game, the bag race. Group 6 had won the race hands down.

A third set was planned, but the announcement that nyamachoma was ready officially ended the games. Nyamachoma and music took over. The students enjoyed themselves on the dance floor while savoring the meat. Of course, the dance to the song that makes you dance while wearing something on your head was a real marvel.

The group photo signified the end of the day, and the students returned home in the same mood as before, with music still playing on the bus. A day that concludes well, without a hitch. As assignments and endless writings that characterize the Hekima Education tradition awaited us, we thank God for a much-deserved getaway.

Olympe Aimerance



The games

Hekima University College Hosts A Debate on Women's Empowerment in Africa

Women's Empowerment the Key Driver of Social, Political, and Theological Change in Africa?" This event was organized by the Hekima University College Student Association (HUCSA). It was held at the undergraduate auditorium, located along Joseph Kangethe Road, off Ngong Road, Nairobi, Kenya.

The reason for this theme was to critically examine whether the increasing participation of women in public life and theology could be attributed to women's empowerment. It also sought to assess presuppositions that underline gender advocacy initiatives in Africa. Moderated by Bernardo Jimo, SJ, the debate featured Jean Avis Mburia and Sr. Inès Atangana, FMA, as the key debaters. This brought together both in-person and online participants.

Jean Avis Mburia, advocating for the motion, argued that women's empowerment has significantly influenced policies addressing systemic injustices against women, thereby fostering justice. She cited prominent African female leaders such as Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia, 2006–2018), Joyce Banda (Malawi, 2012–2014), and Samia Suluhu Hassan (Tanzania, since





Bernardo Jimo, SJ



Sr. Ines Atangana and Ms. Jean Avis Mburia

2021), highlighting their contributions to the socio-political landscape. "It was only when these women came into power that peace-building initiatives, protective policies against gender-based violence and injustice, and gender equality measures were enacted and implemented," she asserted.

On theological change, Mburia emphasized that women's empowerment has led to a more inclusive interpretation of religious texts and leadership within religions, fostering a holistic faith. She asserted that women's empowerment is the key driving force behind Africa's social, political, and theological transformation.

In contrast, Sr. Inès Atangana, FMA, opposed the motion. She argued that women's empowerment is not the primary driver of social, political, and theological change in Africa. Instead, she viewed contemporary notions of women's empowerment as misguided, as they disrupted traditional African society and undermined family structures and social harmony. "Women's vocation is to give and nurture life holistically. Past societies thrived when women fully embraced their womanhood. True empowerment lies in rediscovering women's God-given role in sustaining and enriching society," she stated.

While participating in the debate, the audience recognized the need for Africa to rethink women's empowerment through a dialogical approach that critically examines its benefits and challenges. Empowering women should be integral, emphasizing justice and faith while fostering an environment that allows both men and women to thrive. The debate underscored the importance of ongoing discussion on this topic.

By Chancy Mterera, SMM



Chancy Mterera, SMM



Rev. Dr. Dominic Tomuseni, SJ

The Shepherd from the South



Pope Francis and the Quiet Revolution of the Gospel

After a joyous Easter celebration, no one could have imagined the news that would flood the world and the media on Easter Monday morning. It did not come with the ringing of bells or shrill screams but with silence. The kind of silence that spreads gently across a campus courtyard when history pauses. Word had reached Hekima College that Pope Francis had passed on. A man who had taught us to walk with the wounded, listen before speaking, and touch the margins was now himself entrusted to God's great mercy.

As students of ecclesiology, we found ourselves mourning a pontiff and revisiting a teacher whose lessons were not only about doctrine but about life: life shared, life listened to, life broken and redeemed by Christ. Francis was the first pope many of us had truly grown with. For some, he was the face of the Church when they first felt called to religious or priestly vocation. For others, he was the man who made it possible to hope that the Church could be otherwise – more open, more human, poorer. For all of us, he was the Pope at the start of our theology journey, a meaningful presence in our world, a presence – witnessing, encouraging, challenging, sometimes discomforting, but deeply inspiring.

"From the ends of the earth"

When Pope Francis stepped onto the world stage in 2013, few anticipated the quiet renewal that would follow. Chosen "from the ends of the earth," as he introduced himself on that first evening, Jorge Mario Bergoglio came from Argentina and also from the margins – from a Church and a people deeply familiar with political unrest, economic fragility, and social exclusion.

However, what Francis brought with him was not novelty for novelty's sake. Instead, it was a return, a retrieval of the Gospel message. The late Pontiff proposed a socio-spiritual

transformation for the Church and the modern world. He re-positioned the role of Christianity in contemporary societies. A deep yearning for the continual familiarity with Christ's call heard through socio-economic upheavals, political instabilities, and economic fragmentations, his vision for the Body of Christ was founded on the transformative power of peace, human well-being, and dignity.

As the first Pope from the contemporary global South, Francis, reinvigorated the Church with the Second Vatican Council's vision, redefining its pastoral orientation by emphasising the place of God's mercy, discernment, and synodality in the Roman Catholic Church's self-understanding. His visit to Lampedusa embodied these values, reflecting of a Church that tirelessly seeks out its most vulnerable and marginalised members.

Lampedusa: The Beginning of a Path.

His first pastoral journey, on July 8, 2013, to the Italian island of Lampedusa – a gateway into Europe for thousands of migrants, mainly from Africa and the Middle East, fleeing war, poverty, and persecution – was a moment of clarity for

the papacy to come. The visit inspired global awareness of the migrant crisis, which had been largely ignored, and made a credible witness to the Christian values of solidarity and compassion. In the silence of the sea and in the faces of those lost and left behind, Francis named what the world too often refused to see: "the globalization of indifference."

"Immigrants dying at sea, in boats which were vehicles of hope and became vehicles of death," a tragedy that "has constantly come back to me like a painful thorn in my heart," he lamented in his homily.

The Church, Francis insisted, could not remain neutral. During the visit to Kenya in 2015, Francis condemned the great disease of corruption that afflicts the many poor in the Global South. He described it as "sweet as sugar but kills like cancer". It is a disease that requires treatment. She should be a "Church for the poor" rooted in God's mercy and encounter that demands a global culture of fraternity and solidarity. As the Body of Christ, her mission must be felt most palpably at the frontiers: geographical, social, and existential. Thus, **Continued on Page 57**



Pope Francis at Lampedusa
Image Courtesy

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throughout his pontificate, Francis prioritised visiting countries overlooked on the global stage and often marked by depravity and suffering. His presence in Kenya (2015), South Sudan (2023), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2023), the Central African Republic (2015), Myanmar (2017), the Philippines (2015), Bangladesh (2017) and Sri Lanka (2015), countries marked with socio-political upheavals, conflicts and wars reflected his desire to become the voice of the voiceless. From Lampedusa to Bangui, Kinshasa, Juba, and Baghdad, Francis carried the wounds of the world close to his heart, a concern that is powerfully reflected in his 2020 social encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*.

A Preferential Gaze: From and Towards the Peripheries.

Francis was a Pope of the peripheries. Born in Buenos Aires amidst social turmoil, political instability, and economic inequality, Francis never forgot the plight of the poor. His insistence on a Church of and for the poor was not a political slogan, but a spiritual necessity. He carried the voice of the Global South and, more importantly, the Gospel imperative of a preferential option for the poor. In a 2013 interview with the magazine *America*, "A Big Heart Opened to God," Francis describes the Church as a "field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else," he emphasised.

This image captures the pastoral and theological vision he tirelessly proposed: a Church not obsessed with regulation but with healing; not standing above the world in judgment, but kneeling beside it, before the Lord, in love. Francis often echoed Pope John XXXIII's desire that the Church be not a fortress but a "home of mercy." The Church, as the People of God, he showed, embodies a mandate to listen to the marginalized, the excluded, and the suffering, quite similar to the community of the unexpected that gathered around Jesus and the apostolic Church, which centered on the Eucharist and the sharing of Jesus' message of salvation.

For the late Pontiff a Church in the peripheries is also an inclusive Church. It ought to bring to the centre those forgotten and neglected in modern societies. Francis had always sought to include women in the life of the Church by appointing women to key Vatican roles, opening the ministries of lector and acolyte to women, and involving them in the synodal process.

A Man of Dialogue.

EVANGELII GAUDIUM



THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL POPE FRANCIS

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ON THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE GOSPEL IN TODAY'S WORLD

LAUDATO SI'

ON CARE FOR
OUR COMMON HOME



POPE FRANCIS

ENCYCLICAL LETTER



A deep drive towards dialogue marked Francis's pontificate. In conformity with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, Francis envisioned a Church that is not closed in on itself but open to the world, engaged in dialogue, and attentive to the signs of the times. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (§27), his programmatic text, Francis invited the whole Church into a "missionary option," a radical availability to go forth, to meet the world and others where they are, and to transform "customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures" so that they may serve her evangelizing mission rather than only maintain the institution.

The encyclical *Laudato Si* showed his commitment to engaging with science and the contemporary world. Francis' vision of ecological conversion combines theology, science, anthropology, sociology, and indigenous wisdom to create a better world for humanity. He often recognised the need to engage in dialogue with other world religions, such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and various traditional African religions.

Rooted in promoting peace and mutual understanding, Peter's late successor prioritized encounter over confrontation. In many Asian countries where Christianity remains a minority, Francis encouraged the Church to become a "leaven" in society, enabling transformation and human well-being. It was a call to live the Gospel through humility, service, and solidarity rather than political power and cultural dominance.

Reform by Conversion.

Although labelled as a reformer, Francis has not attempted to redefine doctrine. The effort had been to re-position the Church's gaze from legalism to God's mercy, from exclusion to embrace, from inward defensiveness to outward witness. Francis reminds the Church that reform often does not start with Church structures and doctrinal articulation but with a change of heart, an authentic conversion to the mission of Jesus Christ. This is sustained not through authority or control but with discernment, not with power, but with service. Francis continually saw the Church on a mission, characterised by her ability to listen to the world, wounded, in fear, and yet animated by Christ's hope.

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He was a reformer with the heart of a Shepherd who envisioned a Church devoid of various malaises that affect the contemporary world. The warning against the "15 diseases of the Vatican Curia" in 2015 was Francis' way of noting the Church's need for humility, transparency, and accountability. It was more than an institutional diagnosis; it was a spiritual examination of

baptism we have received." Under Francis' pontificate, the Church made enormous strides in responding and being accountable for the abuse crisis and financial irregularities within the Church.

The reformation that Francis brought to the fore was a commitment to synodality. During his homily at the opening mass of the Synod on Synodality on 9 October 2021 he noted: "Celebrating a Synod means walking on the

From the Synod of the Family that gave the beautiful exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* to the Synod on the Amazon and the Synod on Synodality, Francis promoted open conversation in the Spirit, a culture of listening, and a more profound theological reflection grounded on the daily realities of the People of God.

Ignatian at the Core

Francis' spirituality was deeply Ignatian. Rooted in the spiritual discipline of



Pope Francis in Kenya during his visit in 2015
Image Courtesy

conscience for the Church's leadership. The real battle, he suggested, is not out there but within: clericalism, careerism, and spiritual worldliness must give way to humility, transparency, and co-responsibility. In his letter to the priests of the Diocese of Rome on 4 August 2019, he condemned clericalism and called it a "disease that causes us to lose the memory of the

same road, together. Let us look at Jesus. He encounters the rich man on the road; he listens to his questions, and helps him discern what he must do to inherit eternal life. This is what the Lord does with each of us: he listens to us and helps us to recognize what is good and what must be changed in our lives. Today too, Jesus calls the Church to listen, to heal, and to walk forward together."

discernment, he allowed his heart to be attentive to "finding God in all things." Threats, control, and denunciations did not mark his pontificate, but it was about listening. It was to discern in common, as a People of God, in the contextual realities of today's world. Hence, Francis' decisions emerged from a unique mix of prayer, dialogue, and an

acute sensitivity to the signs of our times. The deep devotion to Mary, the humble servant whose “yes” opened the world to salvation, another Ignatian characteristic, inspired his attitude of care, presence, and humble service. At the height of COVID-19, Francis dared to visit Iraq in 2021. Despite physical limitations, it was an act of daring solidarity and an attempt to promote world peace. Francis fashioned a pastoral and courageous leadership style that recognised the need to meet people in their suffering, an Ignatian vision to engage with the world as it is.

Pope Francis and Africa

What can the African Church learn from Pope Francis’s papacy? While Pope John Paul II offered the image of the Church as a family, particularly in *Ecclesia in Africa*, where he emphasized communion, solidarity, and mutual care, Pope Francis has expanded and deepened this vision. His teachings build upon the legacy of *Africae Munus* (2011), which focused on the Church’s role in fostering peace, justice, and reconciliation across the continent.

Pope Francis continues to develop the model of the Church as a family, rooted in encounter, mutual recognition, and a deep commitment to human dignity. During his visit to Bangui, Central African Republic, in 2015, he proclaimed, “true peace is possible only through a culture of encounter and reconciliation.” This message



Pope Francis kissing the feet of South Sudan Leaders at the Vatican (Image Courtesy)

resonates particularly in the African understanding of the extended family, where grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and children interact with one another daily. These frequent encounters are fertile ground for reconciliation and peacebuilding. This vision aligns with the African philosophy of Ubuntu, as described by Michael Battle in *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (2009), where he writes, “a person with Ubuntu is open and available

to others, affirming of others.” Pope Francis’s emphasis on fraternity and interconnectedness reflects this deeply communal ethos.

In *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), he calls for universal fraternity and social friendship, insisting: “No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us.” This mirrors Ubuntu’s ethic of mutual responsibility and shared identity. His concern for the

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poor, the excluded, and the vulnerable also echoes the African value of honouring the dignity of every person as part of the wider community. In *Laudato Si’* (2015), his call for ecological conversion and care for our common home resonates with Africa’s traditional reverence for the earth and its interconnectedness with all life. His appeal for intercultural and interreligious dialogue also parallels the African emphasis on reconciliation and unity through understanding.

All of these elements – fraternity, ecological awareness, care for the poor, and the pursuit of peace – are held together in Pope Francis’s broader vision of a synodal Church. Synodality expands the image of the Church as a family by calling it to be more fully a community of listening, co-responsibility,

and inclusivity, with mercy and love at its centre. It challenges the Church to walk together, recognizing the voice and contribution of each member, especially the most vulnerable. In this way, Pope Francis offers not just a model of leadership but a vision of the Church that deeply resonates with African communal life and spiritual values.

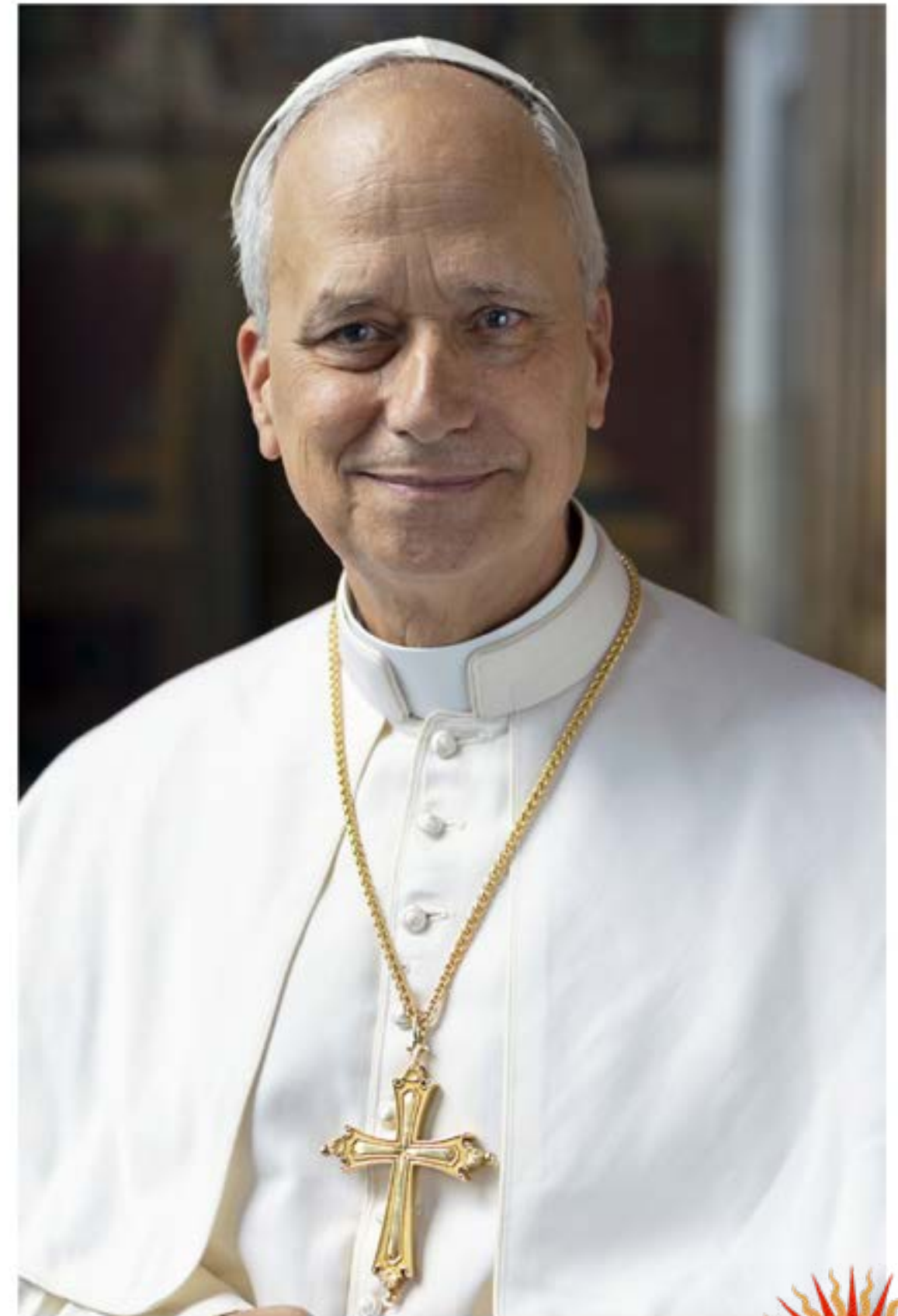
Conclusion

Pope Francis has left the Church not with a rigid roadmap, but with a compass, one that points toward mercy, encounter, humility, and shared journeying. His papacy has not only reawakened the global Church to the Gospel’s radical demands but has also empowered local churches, like those in Africa, Asia and Latin America, to rediscover their prophetic voice within the universal Body of Christ. Francis offered a vision rooted in deep communion:

a Church that listens before it speaks, accompanies rather than commands, and embraces the wounded as Christ himself.

By calling the Church to be synodal, to walk together, to listen deeply, and to discern in the Spirit, Pope Francis has planted seeds that will bear fruit long beyond his pontificate. His legacy invites the Church to lead in modelling what a synodal, inclusive, and merciful community can look like. As students, ministers, and members of the Church, we are called to carry forward this vision, not merely in theory, but in our lived witness among the people we serve. May we continue walking with the Shepherd from the South, letting his quiet revolution of the Gospel echo through our lives and ministries.

The 2025 Ecclesiology Class at Hekima University College



Leo P.P. XIV

