# “Here I am, send me”. Seven new Brothers for the District of Lwanga



Last Saturday, 28 June dawned cloudy and a bit cool in Nairobi (Kenya), which is usual for this time of year. Timidly the sun began to appear to brighten up the great day. Everything was ready externally but even more internally: their hearts were on fire to express with the formula of vows and a resounding “Here I am, Lord” their first profession as Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The newly professed Brothers, Ambrósio Amisse Fastudo, Benedito Mateus Gabriel, Delfino Baptista Alfredo, Florêncio Natalio Amisse, Neto João Ângelo, Pascoal Evaristo (from Mozambique), Richard Mbaamemga Koonoo (from Nigeria) had officially began their novitiate on 17 February 2024 and concluded it on 28 June 2025, after intense months of personal, spiritual, community and missionary growth, which they completed with the preparatory retreat for their first profession, animated by Br. Chris Patiño, General Councillor.

The profession ceremony took place in the Novitiate chapel at 89 Marula Lane, Karen, Nairobi from 10 am. Father Jonathan Acuña, Consolata Missionary, who is serving in the Loinyangalani mission in Northern Kenya and made a great effort to join us. Brother Betre Fisseha, Visitor, on behalf of the Superior General, received the vows of the newly professed Brothers.

The chapel had been decked out for the special occasion; the house well decorated to welcome the various *pilgrims of hope* who, from various corners of Kenya joined us in this meaningful moment of hope for our District. Several religious communities, Don Orione Sisters, Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Missionary Sisters of Evangelisation, Missionary of Charity Brothers (the newly professed Brothers had lived a rich experience *in the peripheries*, in

their House in Kibera); *Mama Mwangi,* our humble neighbour who is the embodiment of the generous widow of the gospel who gave more than she had; a representation from La Salle School Nairobi; Lasallian communities from Nairobi Scholasticate, Rongai, Homa Bay, Mwangaza Nakuru, Karemeno, many friends…

The ceremony was lively, participative and meaningful. At the moment of thanksgiving, the newly professed Brothers sang the hymn "Here I am Lord", composed by newly professed Brother Richard Koonoo, who among other gifts is a talented musician. The refrain of the hymn reads: "Here I am, send me, Lord. I know you love me and your plans for me are great. I give you everything, Lord, take me as I am, here I am, Lord".

At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, the novice Jude Dutse Ahon, representative of the junior novices, gave a beautiful farewell address to the newly professed. In his message, he expressed, "Brothers, we have walked this sacred path of formation together. We have shared prayers, meals, recreations, reflections, and even moments of challenges and growth. In the silence of our chapel, in the simplicity of our routines, in the laughter echoing through our corridors, and in the deep conversations of fraternity, we have come to know each other not only as fellow novices but as true brothers in Christ.

Your commitment today is not only an inspiration to us but also a powerful reminder of the beauty and cost of discipleship. You have chosen to embrace the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience not as burdens, but as liberating paths to serve God and humanity, especially the young and the poor".

Then, the president of the novices, the now newly professed Brother Pascoal Evaristo, on behalf of his group, delivered a message full of gratitude, noting that "today ends the first stage of our formation, the stage that is the heart of the Institute (Novitiate) and also marks the beginning of a new stage of our BEING in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools".

Brother Agustín Ranchal, Master of Novices, then shared his positive experience of fraternity in the Novitiate, and thanked all present for their support and the many visible and invisible hands that contributed to the preparation of this day. He highlighted that we have really witnessed the gift of fraternity.

Brother Betre Fisseha, Visitor of the Lwang District, addressed the newly professed Brothers emphasising ideas such as: "Your first profession is not simply

a ceremony. It is a radical act of faith, a personal covenant with God, and a public witness of your love for him and for his people, especially the young and the poor. As the Rule of the Brothers says: 'By their consecration, the Brothers commit themselves to the mission of human and Christian education as a following of Christ'. You are now part of that mission.

After the photo session and the cake-cutting, all the participants joined the community for a lovely lunch and time of fraternity.

Brother Benedito Mateus Gabriel, newly professed, shares his reflection on his Novitiate experience: "I compare the Novitiate to the time Jesus spent in the desert. It is the time dedicated to the preparation for public mission. The moment of consecration to God, the event itself represents the moment of being ready to leave, as a new man, ready to spread the Gospel through the educational, evangelising ministry. I am grateful for the experience lived and learned. My heart has been touched, and now it is ready to touch the hearts of others".

May St. John Baptist de La Salle encourage and accompany our newly professed Brothers, true pilgrims of hope for the District of Lwanga and for the whole Institute.



** Article written in collaboration with Brother Agustín Ranchal.*