

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Circular 465

In Memoriam
Br. Yemanu Jehar
Kiar



General Council
Rome, Italy

Circular 465

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Brother Yemanu Jehar Kiar, FSC



1944 – 2012

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

General Council

Rome, Italy

Brothers of the Christian Schools
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Brother Yemanu Jehar was a man in whom various cultures, languages and traditions were beautifully integrated and blended to form a unique character, where strength and determination, knowledge and compassion came together. His broad vision and open mind were partly inherited from his family, his ethnic group and his religious background, and they were developed and nurtured in the Institute of De la Salle Christian Brothers.

Yemanu was born on the 7th of June 1944 in Keren, Eritrea, the son of Mr. Jehar Kiar, a Muslim, and his second wife Mrs. Hiwet Mndal, a Christian. Yemanu was baptized into the Catholic Church and nurtured in Christian values by his mother and her relatives, especially an aunt who, after his mother's early death, became his second mother and to whom he remained strongly attached for the rest of his life. He would explain that his name Yemanu meant "right hand", a name given to him by his father who hoped Yemanu would help him later in life. His father could obviously not guess that Yemanu would serve thousands of other people.

In times of religious extremism like today, the Eritreans are a model of religious tolerance, and this is particularly true of the Bilen tribe, one of the nine ethnic groups of Eritrea. Brother Yemanu, like most of our Eritrean Brothers, was a Bilen. The **Bilen**, also known as the **Bogo** or **North Agaw**, entered Eritrea from Ethiopia around the 11th century. The legend says that in order to survive during a protracted period of draught, the Agaw decided that half of the population would leave the ancestral land and look for a new place to

settle in. This group migrated North for more than 500 Km and established themselves along the Barka river, and Keren became their main centre. The Bilen speak Blin as a mother tongue, a language which belongs to the Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family, but younger Bilen often employ Tigre, Tigrinya and Arabic. No wonder then that Yemanu was so versatile in languages. Besides his mother tongue, Blin, he spoke Tigrinya from early childhood and Tigre. After that he fully mastered Italian, English, French and he had a fairly good knowledge of Spanish.

Another very important characteristic of the Bilen is their religious tolerance and respect. They are almost evenly divided between Christians and Muslims. They have always lived side by side and mixed marriages are not infrequent. Yemanu grew up in this environment and within his own family there were brothers and sisters of both religions, but that was never a reason for division or misunderstanding. All his life he kept a strong connection with his siblings and the family at large.

Yemanu attended public school from grade 1 to grade 4. His teacher in the fourth grade, Ghebreyesus Cheway, describes Yemanu as thin and short physically, but extremely sharp, gifted and diligent as a student. He then joined the Keren Juniorate program attending grade 5 at our St. Joseph's School. The De la Salle Brothers had arrived in Keren only a few years before, in 1949, when Brother Adriano Celentano opened the elementary school and immediately started recruiting young candidates to the Brothers' life and opened the Juniorate. Eritrea was then part of the District of Rome and the young Eritrean candidates were sent to Italy for their novitiate and scholasticate. Yemanu was a special case in this

respect also. Because of his intelligence and linguistic ability, he was sent to Italy at the age of 10, after only one year of Juniorate and having just completed the 5th grade. He spent his first year in Rome at Colle La Salle, attending the 5th grade in Italian, the following year he joined the Minor Juniorate programme in Albano Laziale from 1957 to 1959 when he completed grade 8. From 1959 to 1960 he continued his studies at Colle La Salle, up to grade 10.

On the 2nd of September 1961, Yemanu under the name Agustinos, began his Novitiate at Torre Del Greco, Napoli, and he made his first profession on the 2nd of October 1962.

Brother Yemanu returned to Colle La Salle as a scholastic and in 1964 he became a qualified teacher, passing the Italian National exam with very high marks.

The Religious Educator and the Administrator

St. Joseph's School, Keren

Br. Yemanu returned to Eritrea in 1964 and he was assigned to St. Joseph's School Keren as a teacher of Maths and Science. In his teaching, he was well prepared, articulate and organized. His classes were never boring but full of humor and examples from real life. His communication skills were amazing. One of his former students says:

“He was one of the most brilliant teachers I ever had. He would come into the classroom, and fill the whole blackboard without having any paper in his hand, and he would explain the subject (science) clearly. What he explained to you remained in your mind.”

A few years later he became headmaster of St. Joseph's, which by then had opened the junior high school section, grades 7-8. He continued to keep some teaching periods while acting as principal, and he really loved direct contact with the students. He was highly regarded for his human qualities, as an administrator and as an excellent teacher. He loved and was loved and respected by his students and staff. St. Joseph's School became a renowned center of education and frequently held first place in Eritrea in the national examination results.

Besides leading the school to academic excellence, he was known as a very sociable person, being among people and with them. He produced active and well organized extra-curricular programmes and activities that involved himself personally, either as one of the players or as a referee. He used

to go on educational picnics with students and staff up in the mountains. Some remember him as an excellent cook.

He organized and/or established different associations for renewal and spiritual growth. One of these associations that he loved was the Legion of Mary, to which he gave his heart and dedicated his time. He is still remembered there with affection and reverence by the young people. Mary was for him the model and the spiritual mother of young people, both men and women. They used to get together for prayer and spiritual formation once a week. During Yemanu's time, this association reached its highest point. The members of the association, who today are in various positions of life, remember Yemanu with great admiration and affection for the spiritual support and guidance he gave them. His connection with them remained till the time of his death.

One member of this association when learned about Yemanu's death made the following comment:

“What sad news. Brother Yemanu was part and parcel of our childhood and our upbringing. As many of you know, we lived next door to the Brothers in Keren. Sometimes, for no good reason we used to go to the Brothers' school/home, 'inda fratello', to play or just wander around and bother the Brothers. Basically, they were not different from our immediate family members. How sad! What a loss! Once more, one great mind of Eritrea is gone ...a great person, a great teacher, a great preacher. This past summer, I spent many days visiting him and the other wonderful Brothers at their home in Keren and Hagaz, as in the many good old days. He may have suffered from all kind of illness and diseases, however, he always remained as charming and as charismatic as I remember him when I was a young girl.”

Yemanu was also known for the love he had for sports, especially reaching out to young people through sport. While he was headmaster at St. Joseph's Keren, he was also responsible for the La Salle Football Club, one of the best teams in town.

Yemanu left his country in 1954 and went back ten years later. Officially in 1961 the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) had started its armed struggle against the Ethiopian Empire that had abolished the federative status. At the beginning there was some confusion among the people, because the emperor, Haile Sellassie, fought the guerilla movement with a special army corps of commandos trained by Israel and made up exclusively of Eritreans. The lowlands beyond Keren toward the Sudan boarder and the Sahel Mountains, East of Keren, were the areas that initially felt the harshness of the war. Keren became the main stronghold of the Ethiopian army in the North and it was one of the first to experience the curfew in the first half of the sixties. This was just the beginning of the long 30 years war of liberation. Brother Pedro Arrambide arrived in Keren in 1968 and he shared five years with Brother Yemanu in the Community and in the school. The following are some of his recollections of that time:

"I lived with Brother Yemanu in Keren, Eritrea between 1968 and 1973. For the first two years we were both teachers in our St. Joseph's School. Then, in 1971 he was appointed Principal of the school. At that time, Eritrea was a province of Ethiopia, and the education system of Ethiopia involved Primary Schools, grades 1 to 5, and Junior High Schools, grades 5 to 8. Every year the ministry of

Education would publish a list of the best schools in the Empire. For four consecutive years our school obtained the best results in the country.

They were difficult times, as the guerrilla movement was fighting for independence. There was a curfew in Keren from 6 pm to 6 am. I remember how every evening, after supper the Brothers would sit on the steps of the school to listen to international radio stations.

Then, when the whole town of Keren fell into a deadly silence and the streets were being patrolled by the imperial army, far away we would hear the voice of the local drunkard, Ghebreyesus, singing the Tantum Ergo Sacramentum in Latin. When he reached the school he would stop and in Italian he would shout "Fratelli, siete là"! (Brothers, are you there?) ... and he continued singing his never ending hymn, lost in the narrow and meandering passages of Keren Lalai

With the passage of time, we began to suffer from claustrophobia. We could travel to Asmara, but one had to travel escorted by the Ethiopian army.

One weekend someone in the community suggested we could have a community outing. It was decided to go towards the plain of Afabet. We saw some Thomson's gazelles. We were using a second hand community car. Yemanu was driving while I was shooting with no success.

All of a sudden, just in front of us, I saw a small village. While we were driving head on towards the village, I noticed a group of men carrying a heavy machine gun. I was shouting to Yemanu to stop but he would not hear, I hit the top of the car, and he stopped.

We were approaching a group of guerrillas who were positioning themselves to kill us! We identified ourselves and they told us that they thought we were the Ethiopian army.

Yemanu was an outgoing personality with great qualities of leadership and he was also a very good community member". (Hno. Pedro Arrambide)

In 1974 a military coup that called itself "Derg", overthrew the Emperor. It was just in the middle of the Cold War and Africa was one of the battle grounds between the two super-powers and the new, young African nations frequently changed sides. During the first year of the revolution, the military aligned with no one, but just a few months before the coup, the Americans transferred the biggest military base in Africa that controlled the air space of the Indian Ocean from Asmara to Diego Garcia Island in the middle of the Indian Ocean. It was a year of indecision and Ethiopia lost the control of most of its territories. In the south, the Somalis got to 200 km from Addis Ababa. In Eritrea the two liberation fronts (ELF and PLF) controlled all the territory and on February/March 1975 they attacked Asmara. The Derg opted for a communist system and Russia intervened heavily with armaments and qualified military staff, while Cuba sent its fighting forces. Eritrea was plunged from guerrilla warfare into an all-out war. The revolution became bloody, and the "red terror" caused thousands of deaths. The economic system in Eritrea was destroyed in less than 20 days, never to recover.

At the beginning of the new school year in the fall of 1975, Brother Yemanu was transferred to Collegio La Salle in Asmara to teach in the Italian and Ethiopian departments. His enthusiasm and cheerfulness were a real big plus in the com-

munity. A few months before that, all but two of the Italian Brothers had left. Yemanu organised extra curricula activities and sports for the students and for adults.

The presence of the Brothers in Eritrea and Ethiopia had followed different paths. In Eritrea the mission in Asmara and Keren was started by the Italian Brothers. The French Brothers opened schools in Ethiopia, first Diredawa and then Addis Ababa, but due to the fact that English had become the second official language, the American Brothers came to help them. In the second half of the 1970's, due to difficulties of communication, the state of war and the political conditions, Eritrea became a Sub-District of the Rome District and Ethiopia a sub District of the New York and Line Districts. The numbers of foreign Brothers were diminishing, and the need was felt for a strong co-operation between the two sectors. It was agreed to have some exchanges of Brothers. Brother Yemanu was the first to volunteer. For an Eritrean, going to Ethiopia right in the middle of a liberation war, required an openness of mind and most of all a deep sense of religious commitment that would support Yemanu's determination to work in and for a "foreign" country at war with his own people. In the coming years, more Eritrean Brothers moved into Ethiopia assuming the role of principals or taking up teaching positions. However, their most important contribution was to restart the recruitment and formation of Ethiopian Brothers. The Brothers of the Ethiopian Sector today are the product of this effort.

Bisrate Gabriel, Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

From 1976 to 1978, Brother Yemanu served at Bisrate Gabriel School in Dire Dawa, as a teacher and Director of the

school. Soon after his arrival in Dire Dawa, the town and most of Southern Ethiopia were invaded by the Somalis. Yemanu lived through the foreign occupation and the Ethiopian counterattack which, with the support of the Russians and the Cuban troops, pushed back the Somali invasion one year later. For him, war was not something new, and he was able to keep the school open most of the time.

The present Principal of the school, Brother Getachew says:

“Our school had once the honor and privilege to have been led by such a giant leader, Brother Yemanu Jehar, as its Principal. Though he was here for only a few years, he is well remembered by many long serving Lasallian teachers and former students. His humorous nature, enthusiastic style of leadership and his great personality will always be ingrained in the minds and hearts of the Brothers and of the many who have been touched by his life in Dire Dawa and more so in Ethiopia. To the present time, many Brothers in the Sector of Ethiopia, regard Yemanu as a great leader and mentor. I myself had a chance to meet him in the good old days in the Scholasticate in Nairobi, Kenya. I cannot help but recall the remarkable talk and profound sharing I had with him during one of our social gatherings. His warm presence and wealth of experiences simply filled me with a bright hope. Although I knew I was sitting, on that very evening, with one of the big shots within our Institute, his modest nature helped me to learn how to be simple in life”.

Brother Yemanu’s strong sense of service and attention to the needs of the community always came before his personal needs. He worked for years with the qualifications ob-

tained in Italy and never looked for further personal studies. In the fall of 1978, at the age of 34, he was offered the opportunity to complete his studies. He was granted a two year scholarship and enrolled at Salve Regina University, Rhode Island, in the USA. He made full use of this opportunity and in only two years he got his BA in Education and his Masters in Educational Psychology. The University recognized his outstanding intellectual capacities and brilliant results and granted him a PhD Honoris Causa.

In 1979 Brother Yemanu attended the CIL¹ program in Rome on Vocations. Being a good friend of the Missionaries of Charity he would take some of the participants to their convent in Rome where they joined the Sisters in prayer. As he knew Mother Teresa personally, he was instrumental in having her come to the CIL program and address the Brothers on the 7th of March 1979.

The in 1981, before returning to Eritrea, he attended the renewal programme at Sangre de Cristo, USA.

The situation in his country had been worsening and the liberation war had reached its highest point, while the enforcement of a strong communist regime was putting enormous pressure on the people and especially on the Church.

The cooperation between the two Sub-Districts of Eritrea and Ethiopia had been progressing and by then most of the schools in Ethiopia were led by Eritrean Brothers. The centre of the Institute felt that the time was ripe to make the next step and unify the two units. On June 2nd 1981, after a series of opinion surveys among the Brothers, Brothers

¹ CIL= Centre International Lasallien.

David Detje, John Amedy, William Spellman, Vincent Pelletier and Amilcare Boccuccia met in Addis and agreed to the proposal made by the Superior General, Hno. Pablo Basterrechea, to form the Delegation of Eritrea/Ethiopia. The General Council in Rome officially approved the formation of the new Delegation on June 5th. The deliberation of the General Council reads:

“Proposal to establish the Eritrea/Ethiopia Delegation.

... To be established as from 15 August 1981. Brother David Detje to be the Delegate and Yemanu the President. Brother Yemanu accepted the position while at Sangre de Cristo. Decision was made to hold a Chapter, if necessary in two stages, date to be agreed, to draw up the statutes... It was felt that the Delegate and the President should be appointed without consultation for the first time. Later appointments would be made after consultation”.

Brother Yemanu as a new leader had to centralize the administration and run the two units as one Delegation. He managed to give good guidance and quality leadership under challenging circumstances.

As soon as he was in office, he had to face a huge challenge. At the end of August 1981 the Ethiopian Government nationalized all the Catholic educational institutions in Asmara, from schools to the Asmara University. One of them was Collegio La Salle, today called Denden. The religious communities found themselves out of their homes with only what they could carry in their personal bags. The Eparch of Asmara formed a committee and Brother Yemanu played a determining role in the negotiations with the Government. The Committee was able to put a roof over each community.

Everybody recognized Yemanu's courage and ability in the negotiations.

The war and drought brought about the tragic and well known Ethiopian famine of 1984/85. In Eritrea, the country was in the middle of the Red Star military campaign of the Ethiopian army against the liberation movement. The country was divided into two areas with no possibility of communication. The famine pushed hundreds of thousands hungry and destitute families to move towards the cities in North Ethiopia and Eritrea, Soon there were refugee camps holding thousands of people. International aid began to arrive, but the government was not so interested, because the Eritrea and Tigray regions were considered to be rebellious, and a famine could only serve their strategic purpose. International pressure limited this criminal plan. The Catholic Church immediately became one of the main agents for alleviating the disaster. The problem was that the Church could not develop the needed infrastructures, because of the political restrictions. In Eritrea Brother Yemanu was called to be the first Secretary General of the Eritrean Catholic Secretariat (Er.C.S.), generally known as "Caritas". Once more he was up to the challenge and he erected from scratch solid structures and a transparent system that attracted even more donors. Hno. Pedro, who by then was the Director of SECOLI, supported this giant operation and visited Eritrea. He writes:

"During the notorious famine of 1984, Yemanu was responsible for the Eritrean Catholic Secretariat (Caritas). He showed himself to be a very dynamic organiser. I remember when a big DC 10 of the Italian Air Force landed at Asmara Airport, and while he was checking the "gift" he

saw three containers of fancy leather gloves! He was furious and ordered them to be taken back to Italy.

On the same day we drove to Nefasit, to the Alla valley, where hundreds of nomads from the coast had settled down to die in peace. Yemanu had a hard task. He had to explain to the emaciated nomads how to cook powdered milk and potatoes and then persuade them to do it. He succeeded”.

When his first term as President was over, the Brothers elected Brother Ghebretensae to replace him. This was a new challenge for him. Not being chosen by the Brothers for a second term was not an easy thing to swallow. He felt that the Brothers were the only ones who did not recognize his value, while all around everybody had a very high opinion of his outstanding capacities and qualities. Probably he paid the price of being too overstretched by the double role of President and Secretary General of Er.C.S. Probably the Brothers felt that they needed more attention and some of them partly resented his authoritative approach. Despite this disappointment he remained the usual solid Brother and accepted with enthusiasm the next challenge to become the first local Brother to lead the prestigious St. Joseph’s School of Addis Ababa.

St. Joseph’s School, Addis Ababa

From 1987 to 1992 he served as Principal of St. Joseph’s School in Addis Ababa. It was not an easy task to step into the shoes of very highly qualified and esteemed foreign principals; firstly because he was an Eritrean, and secondly because he was just a “local” Brother. Yemanu brought his large

experience and human qualities to the task, and many people remember him today as a very competent and talented administrator. His leadership was one of encouragement and support. Many students remember his ability to understand people, his compassion and how his encouragement changed their lives. He was very caring. He found ways to support a good number of students who could not afford to pay the fees, and thanks to his intervention they were able to complete their studies. His leadership was at same time firm and gentle. The people around him knew that he always had an attentive ear and a compassionate heart, but at the same time, behind his jovial and smiling face, there was determination and a strong will. He was an eloquent speaker, a very good negotiator and at the same time able to make difficult decisions. He was a man of courage, and once a decision was made he would carry it to the end.

St. Joseph's School, Nazaret, Ethiopia

Having broken the ground and opened the way, Brother Yemanu, always open and attentive to the needs of the Delegation, handed over with enthusiasm the leadership of St. Joseph Addis to Brother Paulos, a younger Eritrean Brother. He accepted the leadership of St. Joseph's School, Nazareth, where he stayed from 1992 to 1995. Once again, he was the first local Brother to assume this responsibility. He brought a new vision and a new approach. It was time that this school should move beyond pure survival. It was time to expand and grow. He introduced modern educational technologies in the form of computers and built extra classrooms in order to ease the crowded classes.

In the community he brought warmth. With his hospitable nature, the Brothers always felt his presence, his ability to create a healthy, social atmosphere, where people felt at home and comfortable. His ability to create good relations with people within and outside the community was amazing. As one of the Ethiopian Brothers says:

“Two Moslem former students of Brother Yemanu in Nazareth remember him as very friendly, simple and approachable person, easy to talk to and inspiring”.

Formation and Leadership positions

Brother Yemanu was a committed religious and proud to be a De la Salle Brother. He served the Institute and the Church in various capacities and leadership positions. He did not limit his services just to schools, but also made himself available for any commitment where the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools or the Church needed his presence. At the end of 1997 he opened a new chapter of his life: he became a formator.

The General Chapter of 1993 launched the programme “*One hundred plus*”. The appeal was directed to possible missionary candidates among the Brothers and lay partners. The aim was to offer an opportunity to the young or very aging sectors of the Institute to move towards a more self-sufficient status. No one would have expected that Brothers from underdeveloped sectors, especially from Africa would accept this invitation, having so many needs themselves. Yemanu surprised everybody on this occasion also. He volunteered and was assigned to South Africa, where he became the Director of the postulancy program.

One of the Brothers of South Africa said:

“Brother Yemanu not only contributed greatly to stabilizing and creating a good formation program and a healthy community spirit, but he was also helpful to other formation programs and he was frequently asked to give spiritual and formative presentations”.

He was very much looked up to. He was involved in the parish also. After one year, he was asked in 1998 to take

over the Directorship of the International Novitiate in Nairobi Kenya. While he was Novice master in the Nairobi Novitiate, he was elected as the Delegate for the Lwanga District of Africa to the General Chapter 2000. There, he was elected as the one of the General Councilors of Brother Superior General.

General Councilor (2000-2007)

Having been chosen by the Brothers of his District to participate in the General Chapter of May-June 2000, Brother Yemanu took an active part in the Chapter, telling people about the situation in his District and contributing judiciously to the Commissions. He was elected as General Councilor, responsible for supporting Africa which he knew so well.

Yemanu set about his new mission with courage and enthusiasm. He was happy to be back in Italy, where he had done all his formation as a Brother and which was for him a second home. He was back among the Brothers of Rome, with many friends and many former fellow students of his, who were not slow to come and visit him and invite him to meet their families. He approached his mission with the great advantage of being a master of several languages, both African and European, as is pointed out elsewhere in these pages. He knew many Brothers from Africa, from the United States and the English-speaking world in which he was much at ease. In the meetings of the General Council, in informal conversations and in the more formal presentations which he gave at conferences during these years, we got to know Brother Yemanu just as the Brothers of his District knew him: a man of firm convictions clearly expressed and a Brother who was proud of his vocation.

During his first years as Councilor, in a role that was new to him, Brother Yemanu spent a lot of time and energy visiting the Districts of Africa, encouraging the Brothers Visitors and animating the Conferences of Visitors of RELAF by drawing up action plans and projects with them. He did not spare his

efforts in frequent journeys between Rome and Africa in order to visit communities, schools and houses of formation. When back in Rome he was highly appreciated as a *confrère*, faithful to chapel prayers, brotherly in his conversation, full of good humour especially during community meals. Having a special talent for communication and friendship, he had close relationships with the co-workers in the Generalate, since he was able to communicate with them in their own language. Carla Trombetta, secretary to the General Council, puts it this way:

“When I met him my first impression was of a person with a very strong character, with a penetrating and hard look, as if he would read inside you, and most of all diffident. I was totally wrong! Yes, he was very demanding, but at same time he was very affable and always ready to help. He had always a cordial and good word for everybody and a gentle smile on his lips. Through his words I have discovered the beauties of his country and the sorrows of Africa so much that it has generated in me the desire to go and see those places so dear to him. Thank you Yemanu, I am sure that one day we will meet where you now are”.

His final two years in Rome were rather difficult. Like many other people whose role it is to animate others, Brother Yemanu realized that he also needed to be patient. Some projects did not get started as quickly as he would have liked and problems he thought he had solved turned out not to be completely resolved. A certain weariness and discouragement set in, accompanied by other signs indicating a declining health, a failing memory and a visible physical fatigue. Still, Brother Yemanu carried out his mission as Councilor until the end of his term of office, trying as best he could to

inspire the Brothers of his Region and to encourage the Brothers Visitors.

After the General Chapter of 2007, he remained in Rome for a few weeks sorting out some urgent health matters. He then set out for Africa once more, ready to serve again.

His Last years

After staying almost thirteen years out of Eritrea, Brother Yemanu felt that it was time to go back to his home country. Therefore, after the General Chapter 2007 and finishing his seven years' term of office in Rome, he returned to Eritrea and was assigned to Hagaz Agro Technical School where he was charged with the area of Development. However, very soon, Yemanu started showing some signs of fatigue and loss of commitment, which was strange for someone who knew him. Many people were confused by what they were observing. It was impossible for him to carry out his new responsibilities.

The Superior General, Brother Alvaro, was alarmed by his condition of health and asked the District of Italy to invite him for a medical checkup. He spent around three months in Italy and underwent a minor operation, but he started showing signs of consistent loss of memory. He was strongly urged to take a six month sabbatical leave and to remain in Italy to have more time to attend to his health. He put up a strong resistance, because he felt that he should not give the Brothers in Eritrea the wrong impression that he was not happy to be back in his own country. He was really worried that he would give a bad example to the younger Brothers. Finally, after a strong insistence he seemed to agree, but then, without any notice, two days later he went back to Eritrea. Was it the result of a memory lapse or to due to the fact that at the end his conscience obliged him to go back so as not to offer a "bad example" to the younger Brothers? We will never know.

His health was deteriorating, and he suffered from high blood pressure, memory lapses and glaucoma. It was impossible for him to carry out his responsibilities. He was transferred to the community of Keren in order to be nearer to a doctor and to the hospital services.

During these difficult circumstances, Yemanu realized the seriousness of his ailment. His calmness and being at peace with himself, his humility and obedience even to the youngest Brother of the community and following their directions with no resistance or argument were amazing. His intelligence that led him throughout his life did not abandon him during this difficult time and he knew that it was time to leave everything in God's hands and to trust the Brothers who were fully committed to him.

Nothing was left untried, Brother Yemanu was sent to Nairobi for comprehensive medical checkups and treatment. He was diagnosed as having memory lapses, high blood pressure and glaucoma. In spite of all the effort and medical attention his condition did not improve. With all the attention given to him in Keren, he survived two minor strokes. When the need for constant attention became evident, a nurse was assigned to him on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, Brother Yemanu suffered a third stroke that left him very weak and partially unconscious. He needed twenty four hours attention, and he was hospitalized at the Italian Community Geriatric Center in Asmara for better attention and further diagnosis.

He was initially responding well, but this did not last long. His condition was deteriorating every day. He seemed to have lost his courage and fighting spirit. It was painful to see

him losing his deep, powerful and commanding voice. It became evident that Brother Yemanu was joining St. Paul in saying ***“I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith ...”*** 2Tim4:7. He died on the 26th of March 2012 at 4:00 a.m. and his body was moved to Orota Hospital Mortuary, Asmara.

On the 28th of March 2012, at 4:00 p.m., the body of Brother Yemanu was moved from Orota Morgue to the Holy Savior parish at Villagio. Many members of religious congregations, many Brothers, former students and relatives were gathered for a special memorial ceremony and prayer service. His Grace, the Most Reverend Abune Mengsteab Tesfamariam, Bishop of Asmara, presided over the ceremony.

The body remained in the church for viewing and many Sisters and Brothers kept vigil at the Holy Savior church.

On the 29th of March, at 5:00 a.m. the body was taken from Villagio to Keren for burial. Keren is the town where Yemanu was born, grew up, met the Brothers and served for the first time as a Brother. Again many religious and friends accompanied the body during the journey to Keren which took three hours.

At Keren, all the Brothers of the Sector, the students and staff of St. Joseph’s school, the St. Ann’s Sisters school with their representatives and many other residents of Keren lined up to welcome the body. The line covered two kilometers on both sides of the main road. A calm mood with reflective prayer and a slow pace characterized the procession from the center of the town to St. Joseph’s School chapel.

His Grace, the Most Reverend Abune Kidanemariam Yebiyo, Bishop of Keren, led the burial ceremony at Keren. The Bish-

op is an alumnus of St. Joseph's School and Brother Yemanu's former student.

He was buried at Megarih Cemetery, 2 km away from St. Joseph school. The body was lowered to the grave at 11:00 a.m.

Reverend Father Okbagabir, the Head of the Keren Eparchy secretariat and a former student of the De La Salle Brothers, gave the final reflection. He described Brother Yemanu as a committed, organized and intelligent person who tirelessly served the people, especially the young, through the mission of education. He invited the young students to learn the value of education, sacrifice and loyalty from the late Brother Yemanu Jehar.

The eulogy was read by Brother Tinsiew Tesfasilasie, FSC. He described Brother Yemanu as a responsible, exceptionally intelligent, sociable, generous and joyful person. He also said that Yemanu had always been successful in any kind of tasks.

As a Brother, Yemanu was known as obedient, committed and determined to fulfill his promises. He loved his vocation as a Lasallian Brother. He was able to fit in with and work with all age groups. He was able to fit into almost every situation and he did all these things with full competence.