

# Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus (AFAJ)



*"There is no better way to say 'I care'  
than the powerful gift of prayer."*

*Fr. John Mary Mooka, A.J. and Fr. John Mzee Kalungi, A.J.  
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## **PREAMBLE**

### **ASSOCIATE FRIENDS OF THE APOSTLES OF JESUS (AFAJ)**

The Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus (AFAJ) is an association of people who want to know, to love and to live the evangelical virtues, the charism, and spirituality of the Apostles of Jesus Religious Order, in accordance with their condition of life whether in consecrated life, vowed life, ministerial priesthood or as lay people.<sup>1</sup>

#### **1. AFAJ MINISTRIES**

Three ministries define the scope and limits of the AFAJ mission:

- 1) **Friends of Jesus Ministry**
- 2) **The Children Ministry;** and
- 3) **Come and See Ministry.**

##### *A) Friends of Jesus Ministry*

The Friends of Jesus Ministry is the ministry proper to the Associate Friends of the Apostles Jesus. It is the main purpose the association is formed to pray with, teach, heal and help the Apostles of Jesus Religious missionaries to build God's reign of love, peace and justice. Every AFAJ member commits to the aims, the purpose, and the mission of the Friends of Jesus Ministry: "Apostles, called to be with him (friends of Jesus) and to be sent out to preach to the nations (MK. 3:14; Eph. 3:8)."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ----- "Association of the Friends of the Apostles of Jesus (AFAJ)," AMICIS November-December, 2006: 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> A.J Constitutions, 2<sup>nd</sup> (2008) Art 1, & 12

### ***B) The Children Ministry- Good Deeds for Children***

The Children ministry is an optional ministry available to the Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus for the purpose of promoting the well being of people, particularly disadvantaged children in Africa. Titled **Good Deeds for Children**, the Children Ministry promotes, through a children sponsorship program, the education and support of the economically disadvantaged African children to enhance their wellbeing and fostering God's love.

Unlike the Friends of Jesus Ministry in which the professed Apostles of Jesus have limited leadership role, leadership in the Children Ministry is mainly the responsibility of the Apostles of Jesus General Council and the Apostles of Jesus Regional Council.

### ***C) Come and See Ministry***

Apostolic Journeys is a Pauline way of spreading the gospel. *“For I long to visit you so I can share a spiritual blessing with you that will help you to grow in the Lord” (Romans 1: 11).*

One way of participating in the Mission work of the Apostles of Jesus is to visit the Apostles of Jesus missions in Africa to share your spiritual blessing with the believers in Africa and to be encouraged in your faith (Romans 8: 12). One may visit the Apostles of Jesus in Africa for a spiritual renewal, a tour, or voluntary (charitable) work.

## STATEMENT AND BRIEF HISTORY OF THE APOSTLES OF JESUS RELIGIOUS ORDER

### History

The Apostles of Jesus Religious Order was founded by two Italian missionaries Rt. Rev. Sixtus Mazzoldi and Rev. John Marenconi, in Uganda-East Africa on 22 August, 1968. Reflecting on their personal experiences and the socio-political changes in Central Africa and East Africa, both co-founders, each in his own way, had come to the conclusion that for its development, and for its very survival in Africa, the Catholic Church needs both the diocesan clergy and missionaries for the Evangelization of Africa and the world.<sup>3</sup> The Order rapidly spread to Kenya, Tanzania, and Sudan where the co-founders first conceived the idea of founding the Religious Order. Currently the Apostles of Jesus are present in Africa, Europe, Australia, and America.

The order was the first of its kind to be founded in Africa for the express purpose of training and forming Religious Missionaries as priests and Brothers for the evangelizing mission of the Church. The primary end of the Apostles of Jesus is the pursuit of perfect charity, living the evangelical vows of chastity, poverty and obedience in community; following Christ more closely and committing ourselves totally to the service of the universal Church, and all people of God.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of the Apostles of Jesus Missionaries in United States begun in June 1996 with a meeting of the Apostles of Jesus students in United States convened at the Maryknoll's in Ossining, New York, by the then Superior General Rev. Silvester A.

<sup>3</sup> AJ Constitutions, 2<sup>nd</sup> (2007) , p.xiii.

<sup>4</sup> AJ Constitutions, 2<sup>nd</sup> (2007) Art 3

Rwomukubwe. The Apostles of Jesus missionaries working in United States were elevated to a Region, by the General Council, in 2004.<sup>5</sup>

### **Charism and Spirit**

Our specific charism consists in following Christ the Good Shepherd, imitating the compassionate, active and joyful zeal of His Heart for the lost sheep (Jn. 10: 1-21). We stress the unity of the flock of Christ, by living a fervent community life and work, for intimate communion among ourselves and the people entrusted to us.<sup>6</sup> Our spirit is dictated by our Lord Jesus Christ, who for love of His Father “loved us and gave Himself up in our place” (Eph. 5.2). We live this spirit by cultivating a greater devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.<sup>7</sup>

### **Aim**

Our proper aim is missionary activities, that is, making all efforts: to announce the Gospel message; to plant the Church among peoples and groups which do not yet believe in Christ; and to bring it to a full development where it is already established. To reach our aim we consider our duties:

- a) to meditate upon the infinite love of God, manifested in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, present in the Holy Eucharist; so that we may feel obliged to make all our life a daily holocaust of

<sup>5</sup> AJ., USA Regional Council, USA Region: Address Book 2008, Northampton, PA: Apostles of Jesus, 2008, p.6

<sup>6</sup> AJ Constitutions, 2<sup>nd</sup> (2008) Art 10

<sup>7</sup> AJ Constitutions, 2<sup>nd</sup> (2008) Art 9

- love;
- b) to preach to all the Good News of the mystery of the love of God;
- c) to manifest this love with works of charity.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of our mission is:

- a) evangelization;
- b) developing new Church communities where they are non-existent and helping them grow and become self-supporting;
- c) running retreat centers and aggiornamental courses for religious, priests and laity;
- d) promotion of priestly, religious and missionary vocations;
- e) educate and advance catechists and lay apostolate;
- f) promote ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue;
- g) promotion of devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to St Joseph;
- h) Cooperate in developing the wellbeing of all people in solving their social problems.

### **Mission**

Our Mission is to continue Christ's holistic ministry. Through evangelization, we bring to all peoples and nations of the world, the gospel of life in all its fullness (Jn. 10:10). Thus, we build a new civilization of love, life, justice, true freedom, and peace. By its very nature, this mission engages the Apostles of Jesus in the concrete daily reality of the people they serve. Particularly, in evangelizing the poor, we pay special attention to their living conditions. Hence, the Apostles of Jesus dedicate themselves completely to the service of the Spiritual, Pastoral and Social welfare of all people, with preference to the poor, in the spirit of

Christ who came to serve and not to be served.<sup>8</sup>

## **FRIENDS OF JESUS MINISTRY**

*“...We are called ‘Apostles of Jesus’... We have been entrusted with their same mission and grace, namely: to become friends of Jesus and servants of the gospel...” (AJ Constitutions Art. 12; cf. Eph 3:8)*

### **LAY APOSTLES OF JESUS ASSOCIATE’S VISION STATEMENT**

We the Apostles of Jesus Religious and the Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus (AFAJ) draw our charism and spirituality from the mission and the life of the Twelve Apostles of the Lord. Like the Apostles we have been entrusted with the mission and grace:

- To become friends of Jesus and servants of the Gospel in order to proclaim to others the infinite treasure of Jesus Christ (Eph. 3: 8); we envision a community dedicated to the gospel and pursuit of perfect charity in service to others. This is a community whose individual members are committed to prayers, Eucharistic celebration, sacraments, spiritual recollections, spiritual retreats, sharing the spiritual gifts, devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate heart of Mary as well as to the Apostles of Jesus and St. Joseph, and the zealous pursuit of perfect charity in service to the most poor and the vulnerable in society. We pray for and with the Apos-

<sup>8</sup> AJ., USA Regional Council, USA Region: Address Book 2008, Northampton, PA: Apostles of Jesus, 2008, p.5; Cf. AJ Const. Art 10

bles of Jesus Religious, and offer them our help in their evangelization mission.

- To complete in ourselves what still remains of His sufferings for the building up of His body, the Church (Col. 1: 24); we envision a life of perseverance in prayers, consistence in our spiritual and charitable undertakings, strong in trials, and joyful in sufferings. Together in openness, kindness, and gentle like Christ the Good Shepherd we shall aim at building and promoting God's reign of love, peace and justice.<sup>9</sup>

## **2. FORMATION AND EXPRESSION OF SPIRITUALITY**

### **A] SPIRITUALITY**

Be convinced that a spiritual life is the way to seek God who took the initiative in loving us (1 Jn. 4: 10). Aim at developing a life hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3), in every circumstance and event (*AJ Constitution Art. 67, 68 & 69*). Let it be a life permeated by the spirit of beatitudes.

*We have to imbue all our exercise of piety with the practices of faith, hope and charity, to acquire the spirit of prayer (cf. OT.8) and to exclude from our piety any exterior formalism (AJ Constitution Art. 69.1).*

### **Some sources of developing spiritual life (AJ Constitutions Art. 9, 10, 11 & 13):**

- \* Commitment to daily prayers, sacraments, adoration of the

<sup>9</sup> AJ Constitutions, 2<sup>nd</sup> (2008) Art 12

Blessed Sacrament, spiritual retreats, charitable activities, devotions, endurance in suffering and self denial.

- \* Individual reading of Holy Scripture and reflection; and sharing the word of God in community.
- \* Commitment and openness to spiritual direction with persons dedicated to imitating the compassionate, active and joyful zeal of the Heart of Christ the Good Shepherd.
- \* As to the exercise of piety, be convinced of the importance of: daily Holy Mass, meditation, examination of conscience, spiritual reading, rosary, frequent confession, recollections and annual retreats, and celebration of the first Friday and Saturday of the month with holy hour / adoration and benediction.
- \* Commitment to the service of others in imitation of Christ the Good Shepherd who came to serve not to be served.

The Apostles of Jesus prayer book, Guide to Prayer (2000), which contains the norms, directives and prayers proper for the use of the Apostles of Jesus Religious Order, offers appropriate resource for use by the Lay Associated Friends of the Apostles of Jesus.

Another resource is the book, Unbounded Spirituality of The Friends of Jesus (Mk 3:14) by Rev. Paul O. Gaggawala, A.J

## **B] PIETY AND CHARITY**

Our Love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active (Jn. 3:18).

*If one of the brothers... is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to him: 'I wish you well, keep yourself warm and eat plenty, without giving him these necessities of life; then what good is that?' (Jas. 2:15).*

- ◆ Be a promoter of justice and a messenger of peace by actively involving yourself in causes that advance the wellbeing of the

marginalized and the poor.

- ◆ Promote religious consecrated vocations, especially to the Religious Order of the Apostles of Jesus by praying and making financial contributions to sustain seminaries, and the material needs of seminarians.
- ◆ Share material things with those in need locally and globally.
- ◆ Support the Apostles of Jesus priests working in challenging environments with mass stipends and any other material or financial contributions.

### **3. DUTY AND OBLIGATION OF THE LAY ASSOCIATE**

A member is expected to be faithful and committed to the Lay Associates Community gatherings and to the resolutions taken to advance the cause of the Apostles of Jesus mission. The gathering shall involve:

- Attending the Apostles of Jesus spiritual renewal prayer meetings, retreats, recollections, and devotions, as convenient.
- Study and reflection on the history, spirituality, and apostolate of the Religious Order of the Apostles of Jesus.
- Dialogue on new trends in implementing the Apostles of Jesus charism as provided in the most recent Acts of the Chapter, as guided by the General Council.
- Visiting, meeting, sharing and reflecting with other Associates locally and globally.

There should be presence of a designated Apostles of Jesus priest member for each Lay Apostles of Jesus Associates' Community. The appointment of the priest shall be done by the General Council of the Apostles of Jesus but by mutual agreement between the Lay Apostles of Jesus Community and the Apostles of Jesus Regional Council.

The priest's role will be a friend, counselor and guide. He will be responsible for providing sacramental ministry when required by the Community. He will abstain from assuming leadership position in the group but he will be expected by his very presence to safeguard the Apostles of Jesus Integrity of the group.

#### **4. IDENTITY OF THE LAY ASSOCIATE FRIENDS OF THE APOSTLES OF JESUS<sup>10</sup>**

- ◇ Membership in the Lay Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus is open to all Catholics (over age 21) who have completed a prescribed one year probation period.
- ◇ The candidate makes a formal written application to the Apostles of Jesus Regional Superior who makes an inquiry to determine the suitability of the candidate to the AFAJ membership.
- ◇ The acceptance of the candidate requires a written proposal by a Consecrated Member of the Apostles of Jesus or two Lay Associate members seconding the candidate.
- ◇ The Regional Superior issues an acceptance letter after consultation with his Regional Council and approval by the Apostles of Jesus General Council.
- ◇ The initial commitment is for a period of three years, renewable.
- ◇ Permanent commitment to the Lay Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus can be requested after a period of six years. The same application procedure applies for all com-

<sup>10</sup> Some of the ideas in this section are inspired from the Common Guidelines for Spiritan Associates/Lay Spiritans, 1999, published by Spiritans: Provinces of TransCanada, USA West, and USA East.

mitments.

- ◇ The Lay Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus work on specified development committees of the Apostles of Jesus Religious Order.
- ◇ Groups of the Lay Associate Friends of the Apostles are expected to submit annual reports to the Regional Superior.
- ◇ The Lay Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus are not expected to be a financial burden to the Order of the Apostles of Jesus. They should provide for their own financial security.

**5. We the AFAJ believe in the purpose and aim of the Apostles of Jesus Religious Order<sup>11</sup>:**

- ◆ Evangelization
  - Prayer, commitment to sacraments, Christ-centered community life, apostolic work, and nurturing family life.
- ◆ Planting of new Churches where they are non-existent and helping them grow and become self-supporting.
- ◆ Help individuals and communities become self-sustaining by providing resources for both today and tomorrow.
  - Advocacy for the poor and marginalized.
- ◆ Running retreat centers and aggiornamento programs for people of all walks of life.
- ◆ Promotion of priestly and religious life
  - Study of the history of the Apostles of Jesus Religious Order and
- ◆ Educate and advance catechists and lay apostles in specialized

<sup>11</sup> AJ Constitutions, 2<sup>nd</sup> (2008) Art 5,6, 7 & 8

areas so they too, can carry on the mission.

- Mutuality with the consecrated and the professed Apostles of Jesus members.
  - AFAJ Outreach teams.
  - Engaging in new collaborative ministries.
  - Visiting and exchange programs with other AFAJ communities.
- ◆ Promoting inter-religious dialogue (Ecumenism).
  - ◆ Promote devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to St. Joseph.
  - ◆ Cooperate in developing the well being of people and work with them to resolve socioeconomic problems.
    - Participate in Justice and Peace initiatives
    - Create opportunities for voluntary work in varied areas locally and globally.

## 6. COMMITMENTS

### ***The Lay Associate Friend of the Apostles of Jesus – Commitment Prayer***

Grateful to the Call of God, and with his grace responding to the Lord's Spirit who has drawn me to the charism of the Apostles of Jesus Missionaries; I gladly embrace the membership to the Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus (AFAJ) for a period of --- years. I commit myself to live faithful the evangelical consuls within the context of my state of life, witnessing to the Kingdom of God, and for the good of the Missions. I also promise to foster a spirit of ready collaboration with all and of active belonging to the community of the Associate Friends of the Apostles of Jesus. I invoke the Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph to intercede for

me as I promise to live a life characterized by ongoing conversion in accordance with the Gospel, seeking first the reign of God, and work for the salvation of all people guided by the charism, and vision of the Apostles of Jesus; Missionaries for Africa and the world.

Apostles of Jesus and all Missionary Saints pray for me that the Holy Spirit may bring to fruition the seed of Mission in me. I choose to do this on my own free will, with full knowledge of my act, for the greater glory of God and for the new evangelization of Africa and the world. May Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd mold me, fill me, and use me for the building of God's Kingdom both locally and universally, Amen.

***PRAYER RESPONSE BY THE APOSTLES OF JESUS FOLLOWING THE COMMITMENT***

We the Apostles of Jesus rejoice with you, for you have committed yourselves with us to God in mission with Jesus to all people of the world; that they may have life to the fullest (*Jn. 10:1*).

In response to your gift of self; we offer our love, our support, and our commitment to share our life, so that as members of one new community of faith, we may grow together in faithfulness to God, to mission, and to each other. May the Lord, who started this marvelous work in all of us, bring it to its completion! Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our mother intercede for us now and always, Amen.

***DAILY PRAYER OF THE APOSTLES OF JESUS AND AFAJ***

**Offering of the Day**

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary we offer you our prayers, works and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of the Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for your sins, for the inten-

tions of the Holy Father, of the intentions of our Superiors (Apostles of Jesus), of our benefactors; and of the general and missionary intentions recommended this month, that... (*read the intentions proposed by the Holy Father and add your own intentions. A brief moment of silent reflection follows, then...*).

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, your Kingdom come.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for my salvation.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

(*Guide to Prayer, 2002*)

### **DEVOTIONS**

Prayer cards suitable to the devotional need of each AFAJ community will be developed. The prayers and devotional practices are selected from *Guide to Prayer* (Apostles of Jesus Prayer book).

Some examples of devotional practices to be selected are: holy rosary, spiritual readings, first Friday devotion to the Sacred Heart, first Saturday devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, triduum of the Immaculate Conception, Christmas novena, octave for the unity of the Church, novena of Pentecost, triduum of St. Joseph the worker, devotion to Our Lady in the month of May, novena of the Sacred Heart, triduum of the martyrs of Uganda, triduum of Sts. Peter and Paul, triduum of the Assumption, triduum for Mission Sunday (vocations), and spiritual retreats.

### **CHARITABLE WORKS**

In coordination with the Apostles of Jesus facilitator, each AFAJ community will choose charitable works suitable in the circumstances. Examples of charitable works are peace and justice causes, assisting the poor, works for children, voluntary work, sponsoring seminarians, supporting the development activities of the Apostles of Jesus Order.



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