

# MIC Digest

A PUBLICATION OF MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTER

Issue No 4, January 2013

*The future of Marist Africa*



## IN THIS ISSUE:

*General administration visits MIC*

*Ongoing formation*

*Graduation*

*Letter to Father Champagnat*

*IdI Amin's Speech*

# Contents

Editorial	2
Visit of the General Administration	3
On the side of Orphans	4
First years' welcome to MIC	5
An Interview with the General Councilors	6
Marist Gardens	8
Liturgy at MIC	9
Just for laughs	9
Ongoing Formation	10
The Colours of life	11
Graduation	12
My story	13
Letter to Father Champagnat	15
Marist presence in Madagascar	16
Marist Workshops	18
Idi Amin's Speech	18
What do you see?	19

MOSES UYANG, FMS

## EDITORIAL

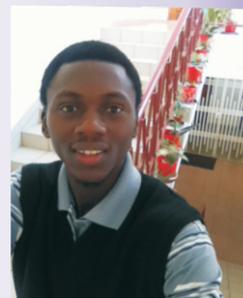
Karibu (welcome) to the fourth edition of MIC Digest. Communication is an essential aspect in fostering Community life. It is therefore our pleasure to communicate to you our experiences and talents as a multi-cultural Community of Marist Africa in MIC; so as to continue to strengthen our bond with the rest of the Marist World.

MIC Community had the honour to be visited by the General Administration, a visit that added joy to the Community.

You are invited to relish the fascinating interview with Br. Ernesto (Councilor General) and Br. Cesar (Director, Brothers Today). Not forgetting the inspiring contribution of Br. Dr Cyprian Gandebo. on the need for ongoing formation of a Marist Brother. Be thrilled by the fact that the Province of Madagascar celebrated one hundred years of Marist presence.

Beauty is the word to describe the serene vicinity of MIC that is why you should not miss the write up on the Marist Garden. It was great delight as the MIC Community welcomed the first year Brothers. Take time and relax as you enjoy the filial letter of Br. Kachoka to Fr. Champagnat.

May the birth of our dear Brother – Jesus, fill our hearts with joy flowing like a river. I wish you a prosperous New Year 2013!!!



MIC Digest Team

LR Front: (Bros) Paulin M, Augustin, Dominic N

LR Back: (Bros) Francis V, Moses U, Valentine M, John B, Hans B

# Visit of the General Administration to the Marist International Center



Br Cho Nchang

Early November 2012, the General Administration completed a two weeks canonical visit to the Marist International Center, Nairobi – Kenya. The team, made up of four Brothers was delegated by the Superior General, Br Emili Turu, to carry out this task as it is written in the Constitutions art. 130.1 which states that “The Brother Superior General must visit the Provinces and Districts at least once during his term of office, either in person or by his Vicar, his Councilors, or other delegated Brothers”. Br Emili delegated a team of Brothers to carry out this very important mission because he was then attending a meeting of the Synod of Bishops in Rome and therefore could not be here in person. The members of the team included; Joe Mckee (Vicar General and the link to MIC), Cesar (Director of the Secretariat of the Brothers today), Ramahlo and Ernesto (Link councilors for the administrative units in Africa). They arrived at MIC on the 18th and 19th of October respectively. The purpose of their visit was basically to;

- Foster the unity between Rome and MIC.
- Try to encourage the good things about MIC and give pointers as to what can be done better i.e. an evaluation of the system.
- Learn about life in the fraternities as well as that of the Brothers in initial formation.

The visit officially started on Sunday the 21st of October with a brief report of the activities of the General Administration and some information about the Brothers and their mission in the Marist World.

Then they took us through the timetable for personal and group interviews. They began the interviews on Monday the 22nd of October and successfully finished on Tuesday the 30th of October. They then presented their findings to the whole community the following day during a community meeting clearly stating the positive aspects of MIC as well as the things they felt could be done better. The meeting ended in the chapel with a closing prayer as well as some remarks by Br Joe Mckee.

Generally speaking the visit was a success. It was indeed a thing of joy to have the members of the General Administration spend two weeks with the

MIC Community which is the largest and probably the most vibrant in the Marist world (made up of 120 Brothers). I suppose it was not an easy task for these Brothers to talk to all the Brothers but they did it and it was properly done. May God bless them for all their good work.

I was particularly impressed by the closing remarks of Br Joe McKee. Apart from conveying to us greetings from Br Emili, he said two things which are still very fresh in our minds today. First of all he quoted the words Br Emili used at the closing of the General Chapter by saying “The future is in your hands”, just to remind us that our destiny lies with us. Secondly, he quoted the words of Blessed Mother Theresa when he said “God does not call us to be successful but to be faithful”.

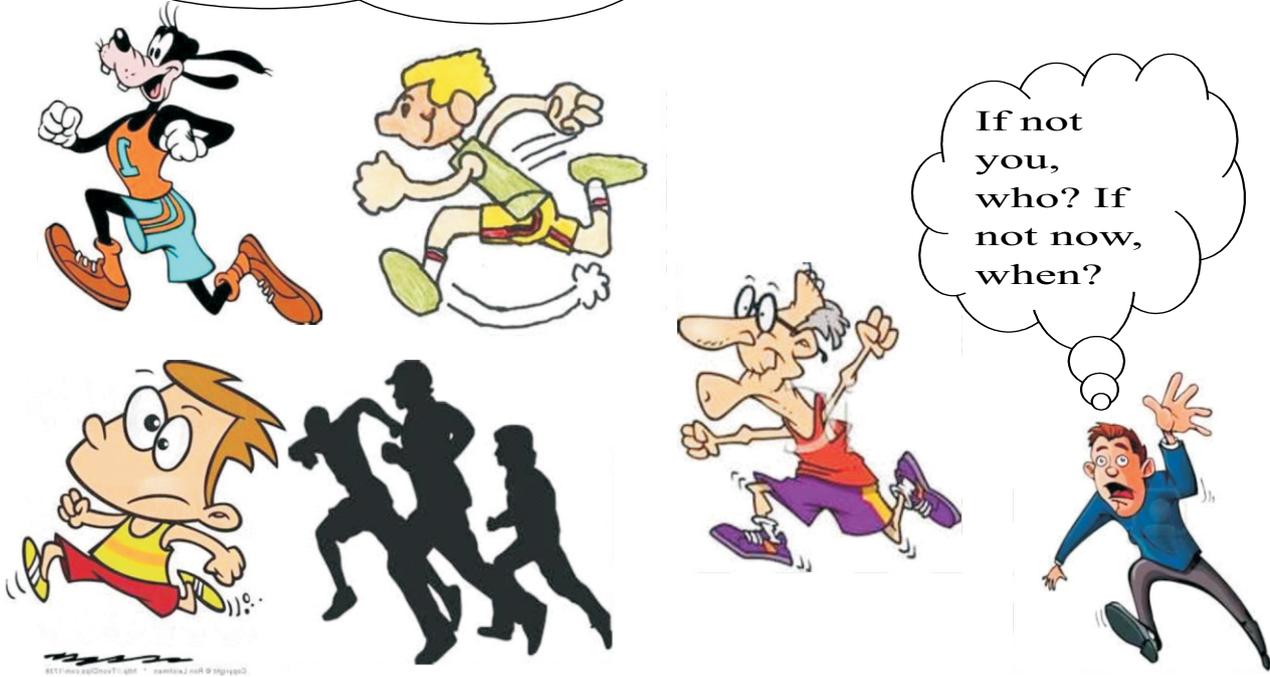
Indeed we thank God for this unique opportunity; to meet and interact freely with the members of the General Administration and to receive assurances from them as well. Personally, I look forward to this unique moment again sometimes in the near future. I pray that God may grant strength to all the Brothers who are animating our institute to carry out this onerous task He has assigned them.



...in haste to the new land



By Tyokor Emmanuel, FMS



### ON THE SIDE OF ORPHANS *NYUMBANI CHILDREN'S HOME, KAREN*



**Br Banda Dan**

The ever increasing number of Orphans is one of the most serious problems affecting our societies these days and Kenya is no exception. A whole generation of young parents, have been wiped away by the HIV/AIDS pandemic leaving behind their defenseless sons and daughters. Catholic Bishops in the country invited all the people of good will to take side with the orphans "Let us open our hearts to the plight of the orphans" It is against this background that the MIC Community decided to start apostolate at Nyumbani Children's home (Watoto wa Mungu) Karen. The Brothers go there every Sunday to share their life, time and energy with these children.

The home was founded by a Jesuit American priest about 20 years ago and they run it together with Sisters from India. It has about 120 children between 2 and 18 years. The Brothers' presence there brings hope to these children whom the society has termed unwanted because of their health status as the society deems them as liabilities and an economic burden. Most people have associated Brothers with the chalk, classroom and powerful schools. Therefore, our going to this home shows that we are not just concerned with classroom work but more importantly with the plight of the disadvantaged, socially and economically unwanted children. These orphans fit into that. They too were created in the image of God.

# FIRST YEARS' WELCOME TO MIC

Joseph Daka

The visit of the General Administration to MIC in the month of October 2012 did not only bring joy to our community but also the welcoming of our new members. As usual, the welcoming ceremony was led by the 'angels' wrapped in their special attires extending arms of welcome.

One could easily notice that this year's welcoming ceremony took a unique shape as many creativities and soft melodies coming from 'Acapela' group touched everyone present at the celebration.

All these, my dear Brothers, is to define what Marist International Centre is all about. In his opening remarks, the community superior Brother Lawrence now and again echoed out "surprise us Brothers" in encouraging the newly initiated members.

Yes! MIC is a place where all your faculties will grow. In other words welcome- welcome to MIC Brothers. You shall learn how to maneuver with the software and Ain Lavalla fraternity, just to show that you are welcome.

Furthermore, you are going to be focused and faithful to your vocation in Lwanga fraternity, this simply means that you are welcome to MIC Brothers. In Basilio, the spirit of hard work and Love for nature shall be instilled in you, just to say you are welcome my dear Brothers.

You shall learn how to prepare accounts and keep records

in Maisonette, thank God you are welcome to MIC. Smiling and to be happy with your Brothers will be taught in Chanel, Yes! you are welcome. You shall learn to be firm and tell the truth in L'Hermitage, feel free you are welcome.

In Francois, the family spirit and sense of humor shall not be a problem for you, just to let you know that you are welcome. However, Father Thomas is going to help you realize the message of Jesus every day, I am here to say that you are welcome.

You are going to learn the attitude of being simple in all you do from the college administrator, yes you are welcome. The community Bursar shall help you not to start stinking due to lack of bathing soap but you are welcome.

The deputy principal will help you to grow in your knowledge and academic activities, welcome to MIC Brothers. While the community superior shall ask you only one question, Are you happy Brother? - Just to say you are welcome.

The Principal will tell you not to allow the 'small - small devils' to disturb you in your vocation, please dear Brothers you are welcome to MIC and may God bless each one of us.



*Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy. Anne Frank*

# An Interview with Bros Ernesto Sánchez and César Augusto Rojas Carvajal

*By Hans and Dominic (Digest's Correspondents)*

The atmosphere around MIC was quite different from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of October as she experienced the visit of the General Councilors. The visit was spurred with lots of joy yet anxiety so the MIC digest commission decided to take a sneak peak into the visit...

## Did you succeed in your Mission to MIC?

I think definitely we succeeded because on one hand one of the purposes of our visit was to share the life of MIC and we practically interviewed all 116 Brothers of the community. Secondly, to give you the feedback at the end which we did.

## What is Rome putting in place so that there is greater unity in the Institute?

Fundamentally, we look at Unity in terms of belonging. We are present in 79 countries of the world which is not easy to put everybody together. We ourselves may not have information about every country of the world. We have administrative units which have a board of provincials and consequently help to foster unity within the region of Africa and also serve as a link with Rome. We also try to maintain the autonomy of the different regions and the different ways Marist life is evolving in the different regions. On the other hand, we have different links to the world. One is to call the meeting for formators all over the world to reflect about aspects of formation in the world. For instance, some time ago, we had a meeting for all the Principals and Directors of Centers like MIC. It was also a means of interaction between the different Provincials and

Superiors because they had moments within the meeting to share their lives and interact with one another. Apart from that, I cannot say we have many other means of fostering unity in the Marist World except, of course, for our website ([www.champagnat.org](http://www.champagnat.org)).

Coming up also is the International Mission assembly of both Marist Brothers and Lay Marists in 2014, and we have decided to bring it to Nairobi. One of the reasons for choosing Nairobi is to enable them to have an African experience of Marist thus interaction and fostering unity.

## What would you say about the Brothers of today?

I think I can say a lot of good things... (ha.ha.ha) firstly, we have a special vocation in the church thus the call to be Brothers and that's very important. Being a Brother means fraternity, Brotherhood, being close, working with young children, all these are important.

Another beautiful thing for the Brothers today is the support of all the different generations of Brothers who have grown in different situations. We have the older Brothers, thanks for their witness to this heritage. Also a beautiful thing for Brothers today is the new dream – maybe that new land we were invited to by the General Chapter to go with Mary, to be with the young especially the neglected as Brothers of Mary.



*Pity the home where everyone is the head – Jewish Proverb*

### How are you finding your stay so far at MIC or Africa in general?

My experience at MIC has been very positive because of the lively community you are in. I can say I feel at home especially for the welcome because I have noticed that Africans have a culture similar to my Latin American Culture – a very welcoming Culture. Visitors are very important, but not as visitors but as Brothers. We came in the name of the Superior General but your welcome has made me forget all about that (he laughs...) I am just enjoying the moment. It has been very rich for me because am living our life as much as possible which is something very special for me. Really, two key elements have struck me: first, is the spirit of Family I found in the fraternities which was enriching. I even saw it during the welcoming of the first year Brothers in the jokes and teasing of formators, (ha ha ha ha,). Secondly, we were also very impressed by the creativity in your prayer life.

### What is it that will remain close to your heart from MIC?

For me, it is the life of each one of you, knowing your names and where you come from. I have listened to over 30 Brothers during my interview and each of them has a unique story, the struggles during his vocation, listening to them is like taking a part of their life with me because I also was a young Brother at one time and thus I tried to connect to that stage. We are all human and not perfect. Also just the vocation of each one of you is special to me to recognize that God is present in each one of you. Some of you have very strong Marial devotion and support of your families even in very complicated situations. Seeing the formators in their hardships trying to do something for the Brothers is very inspiring, a challenge to offer the best to their Brothers. The conclusion I will want to draw from this experience is that the Marist life is very much alive. The environment of MIC is just simply beautiful!!!

### Is there something you wish you could have changed about MIC?

Not change per-se but improve because I think that all you are doing is correct and welcome. I see the future as a

future of hope and a future of challenge thus the hope and challenge start here at MIC. So I think it is important to continue the integral formation in different aspects. It is important that every one of you receives and deepens a holistic formation. I will also encourage the Brothers to explore the richness in the African cultures to grow in their spiritual life. I would also wish to improve upon the quality of dialogue between the formatees and the formators. It is a call to know that each Brother at each stage has got a different role to play. Sharing is basically the watch word. This issue is a very sensitive one and is better discussed in private! But in a nut shell we have to learn to be the Marial face of the church and otherwise be a sign post to others to follow.

### What is your advice to the young Brothers?

It is very simple Chagnagnat once said, “to undertake to become a Brother is to undertake the journey to become a saint”. There are difficulties and challenges. But one has to always follow their call and not another person. Always try to choose what is right for you and not another person. We are losing many Brothers in the Institute and I think this is one of the reasons. Try to be faithful to your own journey. Each one of you is unique and different (Art 51) and thus each one is called to make this journey as an individual and not as a group because at the end you are accountable to God and not to men!

### Any last words?

We just want to thank all the Brothers for their openness in sharing. It has helped us not only to know the Marist of Africa but also all the Brothers at MIC. I want to thank God Almighty. And lastly to remember that the center of our lives is Jesus Christ, he is the center of our lives and of our prayer, of our mission, of our studies and all that we do. With him we can do all things. And to thank MIC digest commission for their questions it has also helped us think a lot (hahahahahaha). I am really happy for I have learnt a lot over my ten days of stay here. I have really been challenged by the life of the Brothers here. Thank you.....

# MARIST GARDENS

By John Bwanali & Tiburtius Kewaiy



The face lifting that is happening at Marist International University College especially as you enter into the compound has been nicknamed “Marist Gardens”. The

area to the left as you enter the main gate had a vast piece of land which was originally used as the treatment place for the sewer from the compound. It was always green because there was a lot of water throughout the year.

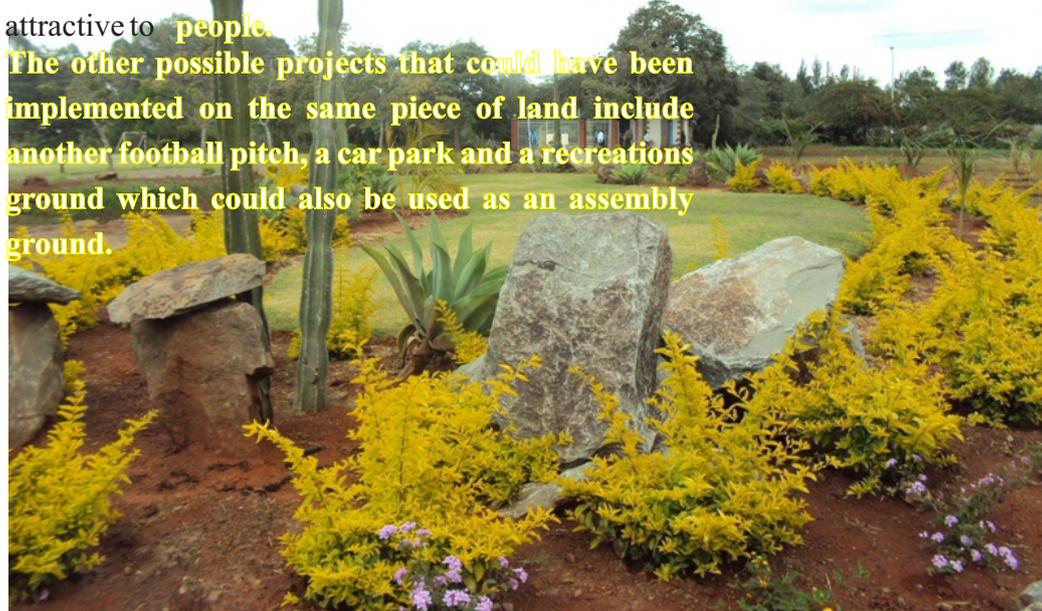
The conception of the project dates back to the time we had a special wedding on the football ground where huge tents were used and the clients suggested that the community should think of another setting which is different from the ordinary ground. We attempted to start the excavation but the area had too much water. It was only when the BioBox technology of disposal of waste was fully completed, that the area close to the gate started drying up as much of the water was being processed in the Biobox.

The formators planning meeting of 2012/2013, streamlined the possible projects that could be implemented and this one was selected. The formators decided to turn this area into a garden with lots of flowers and some decorations which will be more attractive to people.

The other possible projects that could have been implemented on the same piece of land include another football pitch, a car park and a recreations ground which could also be used as an assembly ground.

The project is being executed under the auspices of the hired services of the garden consultant services of Nairobi. The project is currently being fed with the intellectual know how of Mr. Ottawa Canada whose presence to the development of the landscaping is only surpassed by the pedagogy of presence of the Marist Brothers. Mr. Ottawa is the monitor and director of the scheme towards its master plan. He spends most of his time standing and giving instructions so that the workers do what he had conceived as an idea. He is a renowned architect in this area especially in Kenya; more specifically in Nairobi and Mombasa. Mr. Ottawa in an interview with MIC digest, expressed his satisfaction at the rate at which the project is progressing. He further said he expects the project to be over by the end of March 2013.

The project will be an income generating activity as people will be hiring at a price, especially over the weekends to have their wedding receptions, family gatherings, sports and fun days of different groups. Upon completion this scheme is expected to stand out in a crowd of many in Kenya and its beauty and morphology will be difficult to rival. The students will have the privilege of going and having their recreation on the grass, some will have group discussions and in the long run, we hope to have the academic activities, cultural day activities and graduation ceremonies conducted on this beautiful scenery that is coming up.



The fine tuning of what is on the ground has been the tireless work of Bro. John Bwanali and Bro. Francis Veye who would not spend an hour without walking down to supervise the different stages of the project.

## LITURGY AT MIC ANTHONY OKOYE.



"He who sings well, prays twice" says St Augustine. Liturgy is the public life of the faithful and as such is our life in a unique way here at the Marist International Centre.

Liturgy goes beyond singing, but it has singing as an important aspect, which cannot be over emphasized. One of the contributing factors that make MIC what it is, is the internationality she enjoys, not only because of where we come from but also the variety of gifts and talents that God has blessed the Brothers with. Indeed we have gifted and talented Brothers, who through placing them at the service of the

community, have contributed immensely in helping the Community to pray well. The faithful who worship with us especially on Sundays have testified to the uniqueness of our liturgy, in that they encounter Christ in the way we celebrate the liturgy. Elevating our chapel to the standards of a Parish will indeed be out of place, but that is what a Parish should be; a place where the faithful will always long to go and be with the Lord, for it is the Lord's dwelling place.

Every Thursday evening, the Community meets in the chapel for rehearsals and on the evening of Saturday, the Community choir gathers again for practice against Sunday's liturgy. During the other seasons of the church, like in Lent, the liturgy commission not only animates the Liturgical celebrations in the chapel, but also the commission organizes the way of the cross, helping the entire community to pray and journey with our Lord as it is done for other celebrations in the Community. Our contributions in the liturgy may not only be in terms of singing but also in other creative ways that may lead others to experience God in a more personal way.

## *Just for Laughs*

*Elvis Tansam, FMS*



Three Brothers - Fombam, Kimim, Fonlam got lost in Ngong Forest and were captured by Cannibals. The king of the cannibals told his three friends that they could live again if they pass the test he had for them.

The first step of the test was to go deep into the forest and get ten Fruits of the same kind. The three brothers then went their separate ways to gather fruits.

Formbam came back and said to the king "I brought ten apples" The king explained the procedure of the test to him. "You have to swallow the fruits without any expression on your face, else you will be killed. Formbam Managed to swallow the first apple but the second could not; he winced out in pain and was killed.

Then Kimim arrived before the king with ten berries and had the procedure explained to him He thought it was very easy. He swallowed the first, second, third, up to the ninth and then he burst out in laughter and was killed. Formbam and Kimim met in heaven, Formbam asked him "why did you laugh? You almost got away with the test". Kimim then explained. "I couldn't help it, "I saw Fonlam coming with ten watermelons".

## Ongoing Formation, a necessity for today's

### Changing Society By Bro Cyprian Gandebo, FMS

**M**arcellin Champagnat devoted himself to developing the gifts and talents of the first Brothers. Like him, Superiors are encouraged to make available to each Brother the suitable means of upgrading his formation in spiritual, doctrinal and professional fields (C. 109). This is reiterated by the formation guide which states that ongoing formation is lifelong process and covers all aspects of our life (FG 357). In the same way, the rapid educational changes experienced today require openness of mind and a constant updating of our pedagogical and managerial knowledge and skills. Moreover, obtaining a doctorate degree today is no longer a luxury but simply a necessity. It is necessary for every individual and is meant to increase the knowledge and skills of each person. Indeed, it is the form of development advocated by Fr. Champagnat himself and accentuated by the Marist Formation Guide and the Constitutions.

Hence, we describe ongoing formation or professional development as a continuous process of acquiring new knowledge, skills and information that relate to our profession and job responsibilities to enable us function adequately in the ever changing and technological educational environment. The objectives of ongoing formation are mainly to help individuals enhance their job skills, obtain job-related knowledge and information, increase productivity and efficiency and also to prepare the individual for higher level positions.

It is in this light that I was given the chance to study for a Masters degree at university of Witwatersrand in South Africa, Johannesburg. At this university the professors made me believe that I could study for the doctorate degree. Hence, I put more effort in my studies but after completing my studies my hopes of making this dream come true were somehow dashed when I was asked to serve as a formator at Kumasi Novitiate in Ghana. Nevertheless, as an obedient Brother, I consented but it did not take long, when the then Superior of the Marist

District of West Africa, Bro Sylvain Yao, asked me if I could move to the Marist International Centre, as my services were required there.

This move was met with some resistance as I had spent only ten months in the Novitiate. Nonetheless and out of obedience, and some discernment I listened to the voice of God in and through my lawful Superiors. So on 2nd August, 2008 I arrived at Marist International Centre where I perform responsibilities as formator and lecturer.

God's ways are not always our ways. For after all, my hope of obtaining a doctorate degree was not dashed. God brought me closer to achieving that dream. Hence, and due to the timely intervention of Bro Vincent Chunga and with the understanding of my Superior I enrolled for the doctoral program, in January, 2009 at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). It was hectic to combine the tasks of formation, teaching and studies. Nevertheless, God who had rather planned all things also gave me the grace to juggle through successfully. In March, 2011, I successfully defended my research proposal entitled: "A Survey of Teachers' Involvement in Decision Making in Secondary Schools

in Upper West Region, Ghana. Then on 16th July 2012, I successfully defended the dissertation before a four member

panel of examiners. To crown it all, on 5th October, 2012, I was conferred with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Planning.

I have gained a lot of experience, knowledge and skills as I went through my doctoral program and I can testify that ongoing formation or professional development is a necessity for our complex and technological society.

All should be encouraged 🖱



*...ongoing formation is lifelong process and covers all aspects of our*

and the means provided for it. This is very important because as Bro Ivo Njongai once told his students, “teachers who have stopped learning should also stop teaching”. Yes, as educators, the Marist Brothers should therefore be encouraged and the means made available for them to upgrade their skills and knowledge to adequately and appropriately function within this changing and technologically complex society. Having said so, I also wish to encourage my Brothers that we need to be respectful especially to the established structures of the Institute.

Obedience, for example, is an essential instrument and a hallmark for doing the will of God. Hence, I encourage each and every one of us to always be humble enough to ask and especially dialogue with the Superiors. These are essential trademarks for a true and authentic religious. We can do all things with the help of God and our Superiors.

  
**THE COLOURS OF LIFE**

**MANIRAKIZA Paulin**



A new heart for a new world,  
 A new man for a new land,  
 Happy to be received today,  
 In his feelings feels a welcome,  
 To continue the journey in group,

Perhaps in hoping happily,  
 It is the purity of heart,  
 The truth, the faithfulness,  
 The blessing of being single  
 The intellectual beauty.

One says, I want to surrender all,  
 To set the sleepiness aside, To shut  
 the feeble sickness, To solemnize  
 slowly the presence, In serving  
 seriously as a server.

Not being far from the family,  
 To clarify the first desire,  
 Facing the formation in front,  
 Feel at home with faith for all,  
 Find for me the colors of life,

Are they Air force blue,  
 Brown, Dark blue, blue violet,  
 Light sky blue, green yellow,  
 Light green, light sea green,  
 Dark green, forest green?

The hindrances are many,  
 In human, it may be upset,  
 It is not the end of life,  
 It is the beginning of a real life,  
 Given by the owner of life.

The sky is always, blue  
 The snow is always white,  
 The grass is always green,  
 The water doesn't have colors.  
 For the blood is always red.

The gathering of difficulties,  
 The happiness you may have,  
 The faith received from far,  
 Being called a flower of Jesus,  
 Taste the sweetness of these colors.

Brothers, we are pleased,  
 To be welcomed in MIC  
 Our gratitude, and kindness,  
 Our gentleness, and affection,  
 Is to discover the colors of life.

What is the color of life?  
 Is it the inner silence?  
 Is it the external silence?  
 Is it the silence of heart?  
 Is it the silence of Spirit

The time seems to be short,  
 Shine, reveal *SAVE*'s color,  
 Showing the true colors of life,  
 Sharing the experiences of colors,  
 Don't be surprised for the smell.

Your bosom friend from  
 Save Novitiate, Rwanda,  
 Who is enjoying your presence?  
 In God's invitation today.

# Graduation! Graduation! Graduation!

"All is well that ends well". I thought to myself after the most amazing dream I have ever had. Let me tell you about my dream. It was right after a very splendid and mouth watering day. I lay on my bed and dosed off in to the world of dreams and tales. I walked past a lot of people and events but this which I will tell you is that which stood out for me. Brace yourself and let me tell you about my dream...

I managed to have caught a glimpse of the date and it was Friday the 7th of December 2012 at MIUC. The atmosphere was pregnant with excitement and joy. Many things were going on. There was a lot of chatting and laughter going on. "Excuse me; sorry to intrude but can you put me in the know of what is going on?" I asked one of the pair I managed to get hold of. "Oh poor you!" They exclaimed, "are you the last to know?" "Know what?!" I asked rather surprised and confused. "Today the MIUC community; staff and students will commune to celebrate the graduation of 24 Brothers with Diploma in Religious Studies (DRS), will also witness the commissioning of 25 of its students to the practical field and best of all the end of year party" "Hmmm! I must prepare myself and join at once!" I considered to myself.

Everyone assembled at the MIC chapel at nine hours ante meridian to celebrate the Holy Eucharist with Father Thomas as the celebrant. The Mass was animated by the MIUC choir. It

*Br. Hans. B*

was splendid indeed! The Mass only lasted for an hour. The necessary communications were made and the second segment of the program

was due to commence at 10:30 AM. Everybody involved set in motion and I saw them running helter skelter to make sure that everything was in place for the second part of the program.

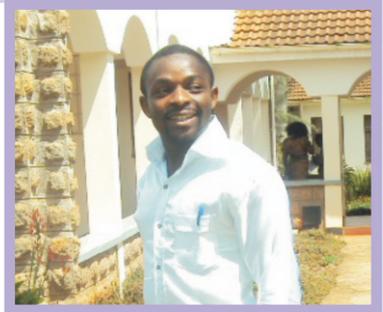
I heard a loud cheer at the beginning of the second half of the program. The new Master of Ceremony and Public Relations Officer of the MIUC community was introduced to the populace. Without more ado there were sweet sounds of music emanating from the crowd. What was it? It was the MIUC anthem, the first of its kind and the first time of it ever being sung. It was simply amazing. What was next? It was time for the head of the School Br Joseph to address the staff and students.

His speech was exciting to say the least and full of meaning, reprimands and of course encouragements. It was simply charismatic. After the speech, the deputy Principal academics then commissioned the 25 students of MIUC to the practical field. The students were

reminded that MIUC students have always stood head tall in the practical field and were also made to promise to hold that banner ever higher. The ceremony was very modest and very Marist. Wait, I saw something again.

It was the graduating the group of Brothers matching in with their robes. Wasn't that a site to catch? It was. They looked extremely handsome in their robes.

How I wish I was in that robe. They were 23 in number. One by one their names were called by the Principal Br Joseph; one absent, one with a pass, twenty with credit and two with distinction. The class courier, ☛



"Oh poor you!" They exclaimed, "are you the last to know?"

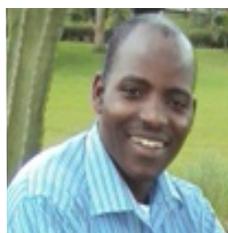
Banda then made the shortest yet the most captivating speech yet made; it read thus, "You do not throw away a jug of water with the anticipation that it is going to rain", And quoting from William Shakespeare, "Your pains are recorded where every day we would turn a leaf to read them" Isn't this fabulous!? Even more mouth watering was the next phase of the occasion. Party time! Everywhere was silent, every ear attentive and every eye fixed on the goodies placed before them. They were gifts. "What is Christmas without presents?" One would ask. Everyone waited patiently as one after the other their presents were delivered to them. Everyone was full of joy and excitement. It was not over. The very last part of the program was item eleven. Indeed at this moment everyone was exhausted and hungry. Food fell in like manner in the desert. The

drinks were in plenty. All and sundry ate and drank to their satisfaction. Steady and gradually time faded, farewells were bade and voila! I was back in my humble abode after a satisfactory and mind blowing day preparing to retire to bed and back to my world of dreams and tales.

"Wait a minute! What is happening, will I sleep in my sleep and dream in my dream?" Certainly, it was not a dream. I was not dreaming after all! It was real. It was all real. And my dream was not a dream as well. It all seemed like a fairy tale to me that the year had finally come to a close. It was so good that I thought it was a dream. I was simply too enamored that my thoughts could reverberate with no other words than "All is indeed well that ends well!"



## MY STORY



I waited until today to write to you; so that I could give you news about my vocation story and indeed of the many other establishments. Indeed, "how short this life is" that Ch a m p a g n a t a l w a y s encouraged us to live up to our

very best and remain happy. Oh! My God, how unhappy is the man who does not live as You wish; how blind is he who becomes attached to some possessions which he will leave behind and never see again.

When you read this unusual letter of mine, I know you will marvel and become proud of me and you will encourage me to write even more because letter writing is part of our life. It is as if Champagnat spent the whole of his life writing letters to the Brothers, friends and other authorities especially as he sought for the legal authorization of the institute of the Little Brothers of Mary. I have now discovered him and come to appreciate and associate better with him through his letters. Indeed, he was a Man of all Seasons endowed

**"Indeed, he was a Man of all Seasons endowed with a Heart full of Passion for God and Compassion for People."**

with a Heart full of Passion for God and Compassion for People. He was a good formator and Spiritual director who understood men deeply and believed in each of his Brothers and gave them time and chance to grow and mature both as Brothers and human beings. All the early Brothers and in particular Brothers Dominique and Sylvester would bear me witness that Marcellin was a father who was firm but kind, full of hope, love and trust in God and whose Heart knew no bounds and whose dream we still dream and live today- in the 21st Century.

I write simply to update you on my vocation story and indeed of the marvelous Marist works being carried out in over 80 countries in the whole world as it pleased him to include "all the Dioceses of the world in our plans".

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step and so is my vocation story.

It all started whilst in the high school when I joined the vocation group and I was among those many aspirants to priesthood because I never had any choice since the Brothers were and still are not yet established in my area of Nkhamenya in Malawi. The only "Brothers" I knew were those in the process of becoming priests and were considered as servants or acolytes at the altar and in many other areas as the priests occupied themselves.

with the salvation of the Soul's business. Little did I know that Brotherhood is a full vocation on its own and that it is a noble task because apart from sharing in the universal Brotherhood of Jesus through whom all things exist, a Brother also brings the little ones closer to Jesus and Mary as He himself commanded, "Let the Children come to me for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these children" (Mt 19:14). After completing my high school studies, I changed my mind from joining the Priesthood vocation despite the urge by everybody due to their status in the society and privileges since the Lord had another plan for me.

I then spent my energies working with fellow youths in a youth club called NKHAYODI from where I learnt a lot of skills and trades in life. Such skills and trades included sports and recreation, promotion of women and young people's rights and leadership skills just to mention but a few. Later, I got a job opportunity with Plan Malawi where I furthered my skills on children's rights and also later with National Statistics Office where as the supervisor of the Enumerators learnt with regret that poverty and illiteracy levels are high when I dealt at length with the Demographics of the country and little did I know that these experiences laid the strong foundation to my present vocation as an Apostle of the youth just like the Emmaus experience, "Did not our Hearts burn within us..." (Lk 24:32). Hence no wonder it is now my humble mission to "make Jesus and Mary known and loved to the young people especially those most neglected" (Const. Art. 4)

When I established contacts with the then vocation promoter - Brother Ignatius, (may his Soul rest in eternal peace), I simply felt attracted to the Marist Brothers because of special traits of family Spirit, love of children, Simplicity, in Mary's way among others and in 2009, I started my Postulancy at Mtendere in Malawi. At the Postulancy, I met with good Brothers who helped me learn more about our congregation and instilled in me the Zeal and curiosity to contribute something to this world. At the end of it all, I was given chance to proceed to the Novitiate despite personal weaknesses where I deepened and clarified my Identity and

developed will bone- to always forge ahead despite challenges, Backbone-to stand for values of love, Peace, unity, and lastly laugh bone- a sense of humour – to learn to laugh at myself and others and accept corrections and to crown it all on the 3rd December, 2011, I freely and voluntarily made profession of evangelical Counsels by the vows of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience for one year, according to the Constitutions of the Little Brothers of Mary. As of now, I have come to accept that living the religious life is not easy but Grace makes everything easy.

As I write to you, I am here at Marist International Centre, equipping myself with knowledge and skills so as to impart positive change to our technologically advanced 21st century where the echo of your words "tell your pupils that Jesus and Mary love them dearly" seem to vanish abruptly. Concerning the other establishments and Apostolate, things are going fairly well in that the African Continent, for instance, has its own autonomy and it is now a fertile land for vocations and missionary work. On the other hand, the Marist world is heavily hit by turbulent and turmoil situations especially as we make a choice for Compassion over Competition, Hierarchy over inclusion, Patriarchy over Maternal, Unity over Division, power over Obedience, Poverty over Materialism, love over Hatred, Community over Individualism and service over being served.

I am consoled knowing that there is a sense of liberation in understanding that we cannot do everything and that no statement says all that can be said, no Prayer fully expresses our faith, no confession brings perfection and that no programme accomplishes the Church's mission (Oscar Romero). I hope I will be able to tell them to you in person shortly. I leave you in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They are such good places!

***Br Dominic Nyoni***

Dear Father,

## LETTER TO FATHER CHAMPAGNAT



*It is my greatest pleasure to write you this letter as one of the grassroots, simply because of two reasons:*

*Firstly, is to remind you about the bicentenary which I want you not to miss but you have to come and celebrate with your Brothers who have been embracing and cherishing your dream for two hundred years. I know you will be very happy to see with your own eyes that all of your dreams have really reached all parts of the world. Father, before coming I ask you to learn different languages because I am afraid that some of our translators will get excited and exaggerate the message.*

*Secondly, this being my first letter to write you in person, I want to give you some updates.*

*I know Brother Charles Howard has already given you some but I am very sure you will be pleased to get some updates from the grassroots and you will spare your time to read my letter. I know you are very busy taking our petitions to God the Father but this cannot stop you from reading my letter.*

*From the time you left us, almost two hundred years ago, the Brothers have worked hard and passed on your deepest thoughts to us. They have really fought a good fight and currently many of them are aged and sick. I would have loved to mention their names but I will not because my intention is to write the shortest letter possible which you can read without taking your time of meditation. I believe for the past two hundred years you have been receiving our Brothers who left us going on a permanent transfer to stay with you eternally, and we know you welcomed them with a big party. We still remember them and we are really missing their talents.*

*Father, we have lost a very good number of Brothers. I know this will not be your first time to hear, and you will take it positively. I am not going to give you the reasons why they left us, they are the ones having the answers but I feel we lost some of them because we relied only on prayer and neglected other essentials.*

*Father I also want to prepare you psychologically so that you don't get a shock to see that we are not the way you left us. Now we are living in the computer and technological age and there are possibilities that we will enter space age very soon. Should this happen, father, we will open our schools in the space and this will reduce the distance that has been there between you and us. We are still called little Brothers of Mary but we have added something, "little Brothers of Mary of the*

*dot com. In short we are called the dot com Brothers."*

*We are indeed trying to remain little Brothers although some of our Brothers have been blessed with big bodies and height such that we happily declared them Bishops. On my part am very happy to tell you that I have successfully added two kilograms in the past three years.*

*Father, I will be happy to see you join the meeting of young Brothers which is sometimes very tough but we always reach a consensus by the end of the day. I have no idea of what happens during formators meeting but I guess wine cannot miss. Join us also during Marial prayer on Saturdays; you will only enjoy the live show if Chelsea wins their match. From there we always rush for supper and there is no time to waste because NASWA (a TV show) is part of the community time table although it has not yet been approved.*

*Father, everyday we are trying to catch up with technology, thanks everybody has at least a mobile phone, it is no longer a mortal sin. However, what others are having and how many and how they acquire some sophisticated gadgets I don't know and I don't want to know because am afraid of burning my fingers. As the dot com Brothers we often use social networks and I hope you will open a Facebook account so that you can chat with your Brothers online.*

*Father, some Brothers hardly smile and we tried to organise a workshop on smiling and two of our Brothers were ready to give a workshop but it did not materialize because we lacked funds, probably it will be organised later. Every little success of every Brother is celebrated the way you used to do at Lavalla, and we have taken an extra mile, the success of one Brother takes twenty four hours celebration although the success of twenty four Brothers is not celebrated because mathematically it can take us a month.*

*Finally Father, as you prepare to come for this bicentenary, remind all the Saints and other visitors who wish to join you to come with the following items; spoon, fork, knife and a chair because we may not have enough due to the large number of visitors. I hope by now you have already received a copy of our evaluation report from the general councilors and you will also give us your comment when you come.*

*Father, till you hear from me again.*

*Yours dearest son,  
David Kachoka.  
(Youngest Animator)*

# A Centenary of Marist presence in Madagascar

Bro. Maurice Juvence, fms



JOBILY FAHA 100 TAONANY MARISTA ETO MADAGASIKARA

## A brief history

Currently, ten Brothers are at Marist International Centre (MIC), three formators and seven scholastics. This year, we have fifteen postulants in Fianarantsoa: four in first year and eleven are in second year. In Save Novitiate (Rwanda), we have seven novices: three in second year and four in first year.

### Main Celebration

The closing celebration of the centenary was celebrated from 1st to 4th November 2012 in Antsirabe. Different activities took place throughout the four days. On the 1st of November, the celebration started with Mass, celebrating all saints at Lycee Saint Joseph. There were approximately 650 representatives from our different schools comprised of parents, teachers and students. approximately 650 representatives from our different schools. They were composed of parents, teachers and students.

Soon after Mass, there was a friendly basket ball match between teachers and Brothers. The rest of the day was reserved for different sports and cultural activities.

The second day, Mass was celebrated as a commemoration of the dead. Then, a prayer was held at the tomb of the Marist Brothers at Mahatamana. This was a chance for those who came to see the tomb where the first two Marist missionaries were laid.

The third day, as the previous days, sports and cultural activities continued. Other activities such as raffle draw and "Questions pour un champion" took place. Late in the evening, prizes were distributed to both winners and losers of the competitions. The celebration was honored by the presence of Bro. Joe McKee (Vicar General) and Bro Joe Walton (Provincial of the Southern Africa Province).

A conference in a form of debate about the life of the Marist Province in Madagascar was also part of the agenda. Most of the participants in the debate were former Marist students.

The fourth day was the day for the pontifical high Mass which was presided over by Bishop Philippe RANAIVOMANANA - Bishop of Antsirabe. Other Bishops and priests and priests con-celebrated with him.

Our role as BROTHER was outlined in the Bishop's sermon as well as the challenges we have to face as educators in today's world. He congratulated the Marist Brothers for the noble services they are rendering to the Church and to the young people in our different work places.

The celebration of the Marist centenary in Madagascar draws us back to the landing of the first Marist missionaries on the island. Bro. Andre Frederic from France and Bro. Marie Gamaliel from Syria of the Province Syria-Lebanon left Marseille (France) on 30th of November 1911. They arrived in Betafo on 17th January 1912. This long voyage for almost two months shows the missionary heart and love that God has for the island. The first missionaries settled in Betafo and later on, left and settled in Antsirabe, a city which is 22 km from Betafo. Therefore, although at the moment, no Marist Brothers at Betafo, it has a symbolic meaning in the history of the Marist mission in Madagascar.

### Apostolate

The main apostolate of the Marist province of Madagascar is education in schools. There are seven schools comprising elementary, primary and secondary education. The average number of students in each school is approximately one thousand. They are all day schools. The Brothers are responsible for running the schools; they are headmasters, deputy head teachers, bursars and also involved in teaching both secular and religious courses.

The Marist Brothers share their spirituality with the Laity. The Lay Marists collaborate with the Brothers in terms of Marist mission. They work hand in hand with the Brothers. For example, they bring their contribution whenever Marist camps are taking place. They also have some time to share and pray as a group. Most of them are teachers in our schools.

As of the moment, the Province of Madagascar is composed of fifty six Brothers, among them is a French and an Italian. The Provincial is Bro. Randrianantenaina Jean Thomas. He has six councilors.

Towards the end of the Eucharistic celebration, the Bishop accompanied by a delegation blessed the new grotto and a new school building at Saint Joseph school.

In his speech, Brother Vicar General reminded the Brothers about the three calls of the General Chapter: The renewal of our consecrated life, New relationship between Brothers and Lay, Strong and meaningful presence in the midst of children and young people.

Unlike the celebration in the province, here at MIC, the Brothers of the province organized a special prayer on Saturday 3rd November 2012 where they presented to the community the current state of the Marist mission in Madagascar.

It was followed by the animation of the Liturgy the following day. Later during the day, the invited Malagasy community in Nairobi joined the large MIC community during lunch. To crown it all, the Malagasy Brothers accompanied by Brothers from SAVE novitiate had an opera in the MIC parlour. The day was a success.

Our prayer: May God through the intercession of Mary and Champagnat grant the Province of Madagascar one hundred years more.



*Before marriage, a man yearns for a woman. After marriage, the Y is silent – Anon.*

# Marist Workshops

Jariosse Daniel, fms

Every December holidays, young brothers at MIC are often busy with workshops of different sorts. This year, workshops on Marist Patrimony, Child Rights and Retreat Facilitation and Discernment were facilitated. As a first year brother, this is my experience of the workshop on Marist Patrimony:

December 10th, 2012 was the date set for starting of the ten days event under the theme Marist Patrimony. It was led by Brothers Vincent de Paul (Ivory Coast) and Pierre Joseph (Madagascar). The first twenty if not thirty minutes of the first day were characterized by a dramatic search of cables in order to have our electronic gadgets in place for the workshop. Though we had just come from the exams we did not make the classroom a place to rest. We participated actively to the point that the facial expression of the presenters showed signs of gratitude. The presentation started with the introduction of the word Patrimony, which in the minds of many was translated into '*Champagnology*' and later on we came to a clear conclusion that Patrimony meant Heritage, Charism, Origins, Archives, Ancestors,

Customs among others as we attempted to define it.

This means that Marist Patrimony is more than the

study of Champagnat only.

Through our analysis of Champagnat's letters to different people, we discovered his true personality and we saw that teaching was not the only dream of Champagnat. Unfortunately, our days were shortened as the days for our Brothers to set off to their respective communities drew near. Surely, we have been in touch with the realities of the Institute and words of gratitude to the facilitators flew from the mouths of many of us if not all. "There are difficulties in leading a life of a good religious" says Champagnat in the Spiritual Testament, "but grace makes all things easy". It was this grace we had during the holiday period to deepen our Knowledge of our Marist Patrimony. 'Life is very short but eternity never ends'.



Happy New Year.

## Idi Amin's Speech

Br Vincent Kudzowe



After a luncheon hosted by the queen in London in his honor, the former president of Uganda, Field Marshall Alhadji Idi Amin Dada, had this to say for his vote of thanks:

"Mr. Queen Sir, horrible Ministers, Invented guests, ladies under gentle men, I thank the queen very much for what she has done to me. I tell you, I have eaten so much that I am now completely fed up with such a malicious meal.

Before I continue, I would kindly, ask you to open the windows so that the climate may get in plentifully. But before I go back I must invite Mr. Queen to my country

and I can assure you Mr. Queen Sir that I shall revenge to you. You will eat a full cow.

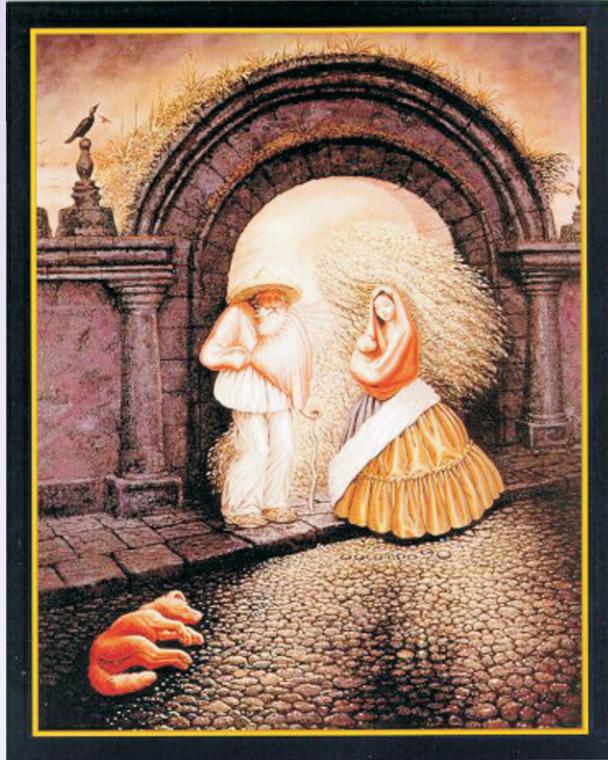
You will enjoy yourself to the top and I will work very difficult to make sure that you will go back to England with a full stomach.

For now, I am sorry to tell you that I have just made a short call on you. The next time, I will make a long one possibly for a full moon.

Thank you very much for letting me undress you in front of the disgusting and distincted people"

# What do you see?

1



2



Answer

*This is a cartoon silhouette of a cool musician with a big nose playing the saxophone, isn't it? Take another look. Perhaps it's a girl in strong lighting, her face in deep shadow on the left. Her sax is actually her nose and chin!*



**For comments and suggestions, kindly write to:**

**MIC Digest**

**Marist International Center**

**P.O.BOX 24450 – 00502, Karen – Nairobi**

**Email: [champagnatmediagroup@gmail.com](mailto:champagnatmediagroup@gmail.com)**

Designed, Printed by Elcom Agencies: 0721 405 468 - NAIROBI