

## SPEECH OF RECTOR ON ADOPTION DAY – SATURDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> 03 2023

**Our Chief Guest – the Rt. Rev. Dominic Eibu, the Bishop Ordinary of Kotido Diocese;**  
**Our guests of honor, the foster children;**  
**The Formation and Teaching; the Technical and Support Staff of Alokolum Seminary;**  
**The Seasoned and Fresh Foster Parents of Alokolum Seminary**  
**Dear Students’ Council and your entire Students Fraternity of Alokolum Seminary;**  
**All Those Whom I should have acknowledged in this Protocol, Praise be our Lord Jesus Christ!**

**The man of massive good will.** For our general information, Bp. Dominic was ordained and installed the 3rd bishop of Kotido Diocese on 14th January 2023. It was in the morning of that day that I ambushed the then Bishop elect, Dominic with the request for our St. Joseph’s Day 2023. Admittedly, up to that moment, he had the following options in response to my request:

- That it was too early to involve him in other affairs, try next time when I am rather settled pliz. Kindly go to my other brother bishops-seasoned in the field.
- That we would cross the bridge when we get there. Why are you spoiling my mood before I have taken canonical possession of Kotido Diocese? We shall talk about this matter later on father etc...

Interestingly, besides all these alternative options to decline our invitation, the then bishop elect, the Rt. Rev. Dominic Eibu gave me his yes that he has faithfully kept. Thus on behalf of our bigger Alokolum fraternity, I extend our sentiment of gratitude to you my Lord Bishop for your massive good will even at that critical moment, to give us your determined yes. We do welcome you on this occasion amidst us not just for a pontifical pastoral visit alone, but also for your first time integration in to the belief system and practices of Alokolum Seminary that “Works for the Common Good”.

**The Uniqueness of Adoption Day 2023:** Dear friends, last year’s adoption day was unique because, it was presided over by the founding father of the FPA. The adoption day of this year March 2023 is unique because it is being presided over by the youngest bishop by ordination, of the UEC. God’s ways is not our ways. Congratulations my Lord bishop Dominic, upon your election and consecration as shepherd of Kotido Catholic Diocese.

**Why the Annual Adoption Day at Alokolum Seminary?** When the Holy Spirit inspired the then rector Msgr. John Baptist Odama in 1993 to initiate the Foster Parents’ Association, he based his inspiration on five pillars:

- i. **Trust**-that by their participation in the formation process of their foster children to the ministerial priesthood, it would build trust among all the dioceses, the biological parents and the Foster Parents as well as the students. One needs to figure out the level of distrust/mistrust etc. during the decades of civil war to appreciate this point.
- ii. **Faith**-that by their interactions/dialogues, they may not only build trust but promote faith that is based on nothing but our communion in CHRIST. “There is one Lord, one faith baptism, and one God and one father, over all, through all and within all. Amen”<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 4:5-6

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- iii. **Unity**-that by their activities, unity is strongly built among dioceses, the seminarians, the foster and biological parents as they advocate for one brotherhood, one sisterhood, one people in Christ from within and without Uganda.
- iv. **Charity**-that by their activities, the Foster Parents should operate by supporting one another, the seminary and the seminarians. Christ's life is based on Charity, and so by their charity, the contribution of the Foster Parents' of Gulu Archdiocese to the Universal Church is materialized.
- v. **Witnessing to the Life of the Church**-by their activities, the Foster Parents visibly manifest their living the life of the Church through the apostles. ".....since the Church in Christ, is the nature of the sacrament – as a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men....."Without new priests coming up, the Church cannot grow. For this matter, the association by their activities is witnessing to the life of the Church, to promote vocations.

Our mother Church encourages the understanding that the **priestly vocation** is best discovered and accepted within a **community**. It is formed in the Seminary, in the context of an educating **community**, comprised of various members of the People of God. This community leads the seminarian, through ordination, to become part of the 'family' of the presbyterate, at the service of a particular community. Thus with respect to the stake holders of formation (priest formators, the parents, seminarians, etc...) we must consider themselves to be a true formative community. That should act accordingly, sharing a common responsibility, with due regard to the duties and the office entrusted to each member.

The fundamental idea is that Seminaries like Alokolum should form missionary disciples who are 'in love' with the Master, shepherds 'with the smell of the sheep', who live in their midst to bring the mercy of God to them. Hence every priest should always feel that he is a disciple on a journey, constantly needing an integrated formation, understood as a continuous configuration to Christ.<sup>2</sup>

We gather today dear friends, in our usual way to witness our cherished life of Christianity, where "each day, with one heart, we regularly go to Church, meet in our homes/houses for the breaking of bread; sharing our food gladly and generously"<sup>3</sup>.

By the intercession of St. Joseph, the patron of Divine Providence, the patron of the FPA; may Alokolum Seminary continue to produce shepherds indeed with the smell of the flock, who live in the midst of the flock to bring them God's Mercy. Happy Feast Day of St. Joseph to you all.

In Christ, Mother Mary, St. Joseph

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Fr. Charles Olweny  
Rector  
Alokolum National Major Seminary-Gulu.

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<sup>2</sup> The Gift of the Priestly Vocation 2016, CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY or **The Gift of the Priestly Vocation**, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, VATICAN CITY, 8 DECEMBER 2016

<sup>3</sup> Acts 2:46