

## **The Joy and anxiety of profession;**

Profession of our novices was getting close but the fears of getting out after being locked down for about eight months was still there. It was unclear and uncertain whether to go to Nairobi or not! Those swabs put in the nose and mouth I see on TV looked nasty and uncomfortable. It was safer for me not to go other than risking my life. After some struggle and challenges, I was determined and ready to travel to Nairobi.

I searched the internet and I had all the details of travelling. I booked for 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2020. I inquired from the doctor at Mbarara referral Hospital who told me to go for the test on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct, which I did. On Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> It was a Sunday after mass as I was preparing what to take to Nairobi, I twisted my foot and quickly, I was rushed to the hospital and an X ray was done. Fortunately, it was a sprain I had no fracture.

Results of covid19 were out after one day but got them 3 days' later and were expired! Results are considered valid within 72 hours after collecting the sample! 5th Oct. I went for another test here in Mbarara for which I got the results when I was already at the airport not knowing what would follow next! It was so frustrating but finally I jumped when the guy who did the test sent them on my phone. With a hurting foot I boarded Kenya airways and I was in Nairobi. I was given special treatment because of my foot which was bandaged! Embarking I was helped and I was the first to board. Disembarking, a wheel chair was there for me! I first felt embarrassed seeing myself in that situation again I told myself who knows me here! I was driven past all queues! I showed the men my baggage and we went outside where I saw my sisters waiting for me. I wanted to jump out of the wheel chair! I felt ashamed!

We reached them and I told them to calm down because I was fine!! I stood up to prove it! Then we went to the Novitiate house.

The House was warm and lovely! One could feel the atmosphere of celebration! It was my first time to visit the novitiate in Nairobi! The novices were waiting for us and at the entrance it was all decorated with "welcome Sr. Grace" written in flowers!". We had good laughter and fun while I enjoyed my lovely meal.

## Evening Prayer in the Novitiate chapel on the eve of profession



Friday morning everybody was busy. I had to be where others were although I didn't do much! The day went on well. We had special evening prayer thanking the Lord for the gift of vocation followed by dinner.

**Left Novices Janvière, Lucy and Philomena**



Saturday morning the 10<sup>th</sup> of October was the day of profession. We had a beautiful choir! Though few, they sang like angels! We had seven priests and a deacon. The main celebrant was a Spiritan Father who happens to be the Parish Priest. He was not lengthy as many of African priests do. After the homily the novices made their vows and mass continued.

**Above Mass going on. Novice Keren addressing the congregation. She was the MC of the day.**



After mass we had dinner which was followed by traditional dances and songs prepared by the novices. They had prepared a variety of them from different cultures. I got to my heels and danced away like my foot was healed! We had about 60 plus guests mainly religious men and women. We were well supported by our neighbours. The next day The Passionist Fathers' community invited us for supper

where we had another big feast! Some friends were coming in after the profession to congratulate the newly professed sisters and the community. I felt happy to see how Sr. Bea and the community were supported by neighbours! Well done Bea!!



**Above from left, novice Keren from Ghana, Sr. Lucy from Uganda (newly professed), Sr. Janvière from Burundi (newly professed), Sr. Philomena from Uganda (newly professed), novice Louise, Behind, Sr. Faustine from Burundi**

**Above right, standing, Srs. Grace, Philomena, Janvière. Front row, Novices Louise from Rwanda, Keren from Ghana and Sr. Lucy.**

I had to go for another covid19 test before I returned home. Thank you Bea for taking me through all the processes till I reached the airport. This time no special care was given!!

I greatly thank Sr. Helen who encouraged me to go. I thank Srs. Bea, Faustine, Paskalia and the novitiate community for the warm welcome I received.

May God continue to bless our formation house with more vocations.

Sr. Grace Asiimirwe,

Regional Leader Africa