



DIOCESE OF JINJA

YOUTH APOSTOLATE OFFICE

Rubaga Student's Centre, Plot 53 Kiira Road

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Background

Most of the priests took the initiative to do youth apostolate in their parishes and schools; however in 1966 a centre was created for the youths. In March 1974 it was decided that this centre opens up to older youths. Rev. Fr. Picavet, from Holland started conducting weekend seminars for students within and around Jinja at this social centre. In 1977 Rev. Fr. Wynand Huys (a Mill Hill Missionary from Holland) was appointed as youth chaplain.

When the social centre was transformed into Uganda Martyrs Minor Seminary, it was deemed necessary to shift the social centre to kiira Road Plot 53 where it is now, known as **RUBAGA STUDENTS' CENTRE**. Fr. Picavet continued to work with the youths while Fr. Wynand was the youth chaplain. Rev. Fr. Kees Groenewoud (RIP) (a Mill Hill Missionary) was appointed Diocesan youth chaplain in 1983 and took up residence at **Rubaga students' centre**. Fr. Kees (RIP) started working with and among the rural youthss mobilizing, organizing and giving them seminars and trainings on leadership, agriculture and development courses across the Diocese, but also continued with the weekend seminars for the youths in schools, something we are still carrying out as an office/ centre. To date we have a forty year old student's centre with a large number of active youth. And I want say that for over forty years now the centre has received material, spiritual and financial support from M&O Working group from Netherlands.

The centre now is under the leadership of Fr Ben Wakabi who is serving as the director of the centre and the Diocesan youth chaplain, with the help of a manager of the centre Emmanuel Kawanguzi who also serves as the Diocesan Youth Coordinator. We also have other people who help at the centre in one way or the other.

Objectives

- To net work and coordinate the youth apostolate.
- To promote economic awareness among the youths on how to use the available resources efficiently.
- To create awareness and strengthen the capacity of the youths in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- To promote Christian and cultural values among the youths.
- To promote gender-equality awareness and participation in the youth apostolate.
- To create and promote awareness in the prevention of drug and substance Abuse among the youths.
- To organise the youth in order to actively participate in church related activities.
- To mobilize resources to sustain the youth apostolate.
- To empower the youths to exploit their potential.

Among the programmes we have been able to realize so far in the centre and around the Diocese of Jinja are the following;

- We have conducted weekend seminars/ workshops.
- We carried development courses on income generating activities.
- We have held Diocesan Youth Day celebrations.
- We had a successful Students' Day celebration.
- Youth conferences
- Holiday programmes for the students
- Monitoring and touring of youth project.
- Games and sports.

Youth Ministry in the lockdown.

On the 18th March, 2020, the government of Uganda announced a total lockdown of the country due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This left the churches and schools closed till now. This paralyzed the daily running of the centre and our youth activities in the centre and around the diocese. As a result, I started on the new program of evangelization so as to reach out to the young people.

The country has continued to register more cases of corona virus and deaths. There is a lot of uncertainty and fear.

As a result of the lockdown, many things and activities have come to a standstill. It's now six months since the lockdown started. The closure of the churches has greatly affected us as the centre as to have to meet the running costs like water, electricity among many other essential things for our daily running of the centre.

Currently much of our ministry is done online through the radio presentations and on other social media platforms.

Summary of activities from 1st January to 31st July 2020.

Date	Activity	purpose	venue
3rdJan,2020	Deanery youth leaders animation workshop		Buswale
6th Jan	Youth Recollection		Masaka
9th Jan	Youth meeting		Budini
9th Jan	Vocation recollection	Promotion of vocations	Kagoma
12th Jan	Youth deanery meeting	planning for the annual activities.	Kamuli
15th Jan	Seminarian's home visit		Wesunire
19th Jan	Uganda Martyrs youth choir general meeting	Drafting and strengthening the choir	RSC
25th Jan	Youth sports day	Promotion of talents	Walukuba
3rd Feb	Beginning of school term		schools

9th Feb	Jinja town schools opening Mass	Blessing prayers	RSC
11th Feb	School apostolate/ conflict management	How to combat strikes and demonstrations in schools	Mother Kevin
15th-16th Feb	Diocesan Pastoral youth council	Planning, strategizing, drawing the year planner for the youth activities in the centre and around the Diocese.	RSC
22nd Feb	Staff recollection	Spiritual and moral formation to teaching staff	Namilyango College
24th Feb	Parish youth chaplains meeting	Evaluation of the previous year activities and drafting way forward for the new year.	RSC
29th Feb	Diocesan Ordinations		Iganga
7th March	Youth Mass	Parish youth celebrations	Nakivumbi
13t March	School Mass		St Kigulu primary
14th March	Radio Maria Uganda Overnight prayers		Kampala
18th March	Lockdown started		
28th March	Spiritual recollection		Nsambya

Some of the achievements.

we started on the outside toilet after the recommendation from the municipal health inspector due to the new gardens we have set up.

We have done quite a number of renovations in and around the centre.

Due to the outbreak of Convid 19, we had to come up with new ways of reaching out to the young people. So we have programs running on the radio station every Sunday for one hour and a half.

I also started on spiritual recorded audio messages which i send out to young people on social media platforms.

I also conducted live streaming Masses on Face book especially during the Holy Week and Easter season.

We have given out practical life skills to the young people like making of bags, masks, table mats, shoe making and tailoring.

More indoor games have been supported like chess, Luddo, and table tennis.

I offer Counseling to the youths every Tuesday from 9:00am to 6:00pm and so far it has been a success.

Youth groups training seminars and workshops have been carried out.

The RSC Grotto and chapel have attracted more people who come for private prayers especially from the time the lockdown was announced by the government.

The new garden of the centre is looking extremely beautiful.

We have mobilized more youths for sacraments.

Pending activities

Early this year we started on the outside toilet but because of the situation we are going through it is still incomplete as we need about five million to finish it so that it is ready for use.

The behind Fr Kees memorial guest wing structure has not yet commenced.

Paving of the compound has not started. But we bought a machine for making the pavers courtesy of the friends in California.

We still have to get new bed sheets and blankets for the centre.

Due to the increasing power tariffs in the country, we still have plans of installing solar system to cut down on the cost of power.

Vote of gratitude.

We are greatly indebted to M&O Working group for the continued care, love, support and for standing with us during this trying moment of pandemic. Life would have been different without your generosity. I am very grateful to Peter Simons for the coordination and for the guidance to us.

We are equally thankful to the youth leaders and chaplains, school animators.

We thank the friends of the centre who have also stood with us especially during this time.

Yours Faithfully,



Fr Benedict Wakabi
Diocesan Youth Chaplain