

Assessing the Challenges Facing the Laity in their Participation in Evangelisation in Njoro Parish of Nakuru County Kenya

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Abstract

This study assessed the challenges facing the laity in their participation in evangelisation in Njoro Parish of Nakuru County Kenya. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The target population included the Catholic faithful and the priests. The 181 participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data was collected using group discussions, questionnaires and interviews. Different questionnaires were administered for priests (PQ), catechists (CQ) and the laity (LQ). Reliability of the tools was tested using split-half method. A reliability coefficient of 0.5 and above was accepted. Descriptive statistics was used. SPSS programme was used to analyse data and was presented using frequency tables, percentages and charts. The study found out that evangelisation by the laity needs strengthening and that collaborative ministry is necessary for Njoro parish to realise its goal of evangelisation. The results also showed that some of the Christians are passive mainly due to lack of training and reluctance of the laity and the clergy to involve them in evangelisation process. The study observed that the laity needs training in pastoral field so that they could be actively engaged in pastoral activities of the parish. The clergy also needs to sensitise the laity on their role in evangelisation so that they can be effective. The study concludes that challenges of evangelisation calls for a new vision of understanding in order to concretely impact the faith.☐

Key Terms: Evangelisation, Laity, Parish, Participation

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Introduction

The mission and theology of the laity in both the Church and society have been approached in different ways. The laity in the Church is composed of men, women and youth. Each of the categories contributes its own quota in both the Church and the world. In general, the great commission of Jesus Christ to his disciples and the Christians is contained in the following words: "... go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all the commandments" (Matthew 28:19-20). It is quite inherent in Jesus' statement that the fundamental mission of the Church is to evangelise.

Bevilacqua (1989), stresses that participation of the laity in the mission of the Church has a noble ancestry. This is particularly well exemplified in a dramatic call of Christ to the *genasene demoniac* "... go home to your people and tell them all that the Lord in His mercy has done for you" (Mark 5:18-20). The Acts of the Apostles and the history of the Early Church offer countless examples of the role played by laypersons in evangelisation and witnessing of the gospel, most effectively by the martyrdom. Down through the centuries, there were always holy men and women who cared for the sick, fed the poor, and preached the gospel, among many other activities. The Apostolic Exhortation stresses that the laity is called and enabled by Baptism and Confirmation to participate in the evangelising mission of the Church, and as such need to be formed spiritually and doctrinally in order to be effective apostles.

Bevilacqua (1989), states that the role of the Catholic faithful in both the Catholic Church and the changing society of today is crucial. Lecturers, cantors and lay ministers of the Eucharist in Catholic schools provide the perfect example to this. The mission of the laity in the Church finds consistent parallels with its mission in the world, both directed toward the actualisation of Christ's message. The Church's mission is a religious one; to put

into action the kingdom of God. The laypersons must contribute to the sanctification of the world by fulfilling their respective duties at home, in the workplace and in the public forum in virtue of their unique vocation. Members of the catholic laity find salvation in their service to the Church on Sunday and in their daily lives. The significance of an interior life is crucial, and so says Bevilacqua (1989) that the fostering of lay spirituality will be essential in the future roles of the Catholic laity. Everyone has a distinct role within the Church. For example, the Church should participate in politics via lay people, who in turn must be encouraged by bishops in undertaking this vocation.

Pope Paul VI (1975), notes that evangelisation entails the proclamation of Christ to those who do not know him through preaching, catechesis, baptism and administration of the sacraments. Active evangelisation proceeds from a life lived with faith and charity, which has a personal relationship with God at its centre. It overflows from being joyful and positive in our daily lives and allowing our faith to shine out through care and love of those around us. This is the foundation upon which every evangelising action and initiative must grow. John Paul II (1995) shares this view when he notes that evangelisation should be seen as a vocation proper to the Church, where she realises her deepest identity. He adds that evangelisation is a task given by Christ to his disciples to preach the gospel to the whole world with the aim of bringing conversion (Mark 4:23, 9:3). It is the Church's deepest identity that delivers the good news of the gospel to all who seek the life-giving message of the faith in Jesus Christ. Catechesis nourishes forms and deepens the faith one receives through the ministry of the Church. To share in the Church's mission of evangelisation and catechesis is to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pope John Paul II (1995) confirms that the lay faithful are expected to take an active part in the life and action of the

Church by participating in evangelisation. This view has been given credence by Pope Paul VI (1975), who noted that the person who has been evangelised goes on to evangelise others. According to Conciliar documents *Apostolicam Actuositatem* of Vatican II (1965), the Church cannot be without the apostolate of the laity. The laity is to be evangelised, and they can also proclaim the Good News to both themselves and the clergy. The scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful this activity was in the Church's early days, as demonstrated in (Acts 11:19-21, 18:26, Romans 16:1-16 and Philippians 4:3.). According to Barasa (2004), a number of the Christian faithful are not fully committed to the Church because they believe Christianity is something that concerns the individuals' soul and that the idea of God has been imposed on them.

Mugambi (1997), posits that the laity should take an active role in evangelisation in order to cater to the growing number of Christians. He claims that in many occasions, due to the absence of the ordained Church minister, the laity is forced to take responsibility in leading services on Sundays and sometimes presiding over funeral rites, as well as teaching catechumens. In this way, the spiritual life of the congregation is sustained by the lay leaders. ☐

Fernando (2012) states that the laity participation in the Church's mission does not mean that they are to share in the functions of the sacred ministers, although this is possible and at times useful. Moreover, the ministers themselves do not encompass the entire mission, but they also participate in it. Both share the weight and honour of the Church's whole mission; the *Tradition Evangelii*. But each carries out this mission partially according to their proper function in the Church. Fernando emphasis that what is specific to the laity's participation in the task of evangelisation was expressed by Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium*, that Christ, the great prophet, who proclaimed the kingdom of his Father in both the power of His words and the testimony of His life, and continually fulfils His

prophetic office until the complete manifestation of glory. He does this not only through the clergy who teaches in His name and authority, but also through the laity who He made His witness and to whom He gave understanding of the faith, *sensus fidei*, and a charisma in speech so that the power of the gospel might shine in their daily social and family life. From the foregoing arguments, it is sufficient to say that evangelising capacity and responsibility, the *munus propheticum*, of the lay faithful, is not delegated by hierarchy but comes directly from Jesus Christ through baptism and confirmation. This study presents how the laity in Njoro parish of CDN has responded to this critical task. ☐

Fr. John Kavanagh started the Njoro Parish in 1969. Despite the long history of its existence, it has not shown any sign of growth numerically compared to the neighbouring Parishes such as Larmudiac and St. Augustine chaplaincy. Larmudiac Parish, for instance, was broken away from Njoro Parish in 1983. It has since started another parish called Lare. The study aimed at investigating why Njoro parish is not expanding as it should like other congregations. Could it be due to lack of lay participation in missionary work, or are there other reasons behind its stagnation? This study sought to find out the reasons behind the slow growth of Njoro Parish in the CDN despite its long history of existence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Laity and Evangelisation

McElwee (2015) states that the word laity or lay comes from the Greek term *laikos*, which, in turn, is derived from the phrase *lao*, which means people. Therefore, the term lay means belonging to the people. Typical usage of the term lay is applied to all those who are outside a given profession. In the Church, the word laity/lay was gradually introduced, and it was applied to Christian. In order to understand the identity of laity or lay faithful in the Church, it is crucial to examine how the Church defines who a

layperson is. The lay faithful are seen by the Church as persons who are baptised into the Church, who have secular qualities and whose functions in the Church differ from those who are ordained. There is no explicit definition of a layperson in the 1917 code of canon law. However, the activities of the laypersons in the Church are understood in contrast to the clerical functions and roles in the Church. McElwee further notes that it is not difficult to distinguish between the clerics and the laity. He argues that the laypeople lack participation or rather, are deprived of participation in the jurisdiction, and they are subject to orders and jurisdiction. On the other hand, the clerics having received jurisdictions and orders look down on the laity as passive subjects. However, the shift in the understanding of lay people in the Church has favoured lay participation in the life and mission of the Church. The Vatican Council II, as legally expressed in the 1983 code of canon law, has opened the avenue for the lay faithful in the Church to share in the ministry of the Church. Laypersons who are suitable can now be admitted to exercise certain ecclesiastical offices and functions.☐

Evangelisation Nuntiandi (1975) Pope Paul VI identifies six agents of evangelisation as; successor of Peter (Pope), the Bishops and Priests, the Religious, the Laity, the Catholic Family and Youth. On the same note, he lists agents of evangelisation as the vital Christian Communities, popularly known as the SCC in AMECEA countries, which are; the laity, catechists, the family, the youth, consecrated men and women, seminarians, deacons, priest and bishops. The above information by Pope Paul VI provided a foundational basis for the current study.

Onaiyekan (1984), states that the work of evangelisation belongs to Jesus Christ, and therefore, those who are commissioned to do it are stewards of Christ Himself whom the Holy Spirit sanctifies (Matthew 28:19-21). These mission collaborators are the clergy, the nuns/brothers and the lay faithful. He further argues that there is a need for

these agents to establish an extensive collaboration and deep faith with the Holy Spirit, a cooperation which can be *ad intra* and *ad extra*. Only then can the work of evangelisation bear spiritual fruits, nudge them to deeper faith and respect of cultures. Thus, the whole community needs to be motivated, empowered and trained for evangelisation, each according to his or her role in the Church. The gospel can only be proclaimed by the contribution of all believers at every level of the local and universal Church. The information above is relevant to the current study since it helped in identifying the collaboration between the priest, catechists and the laity. The research established how these three groups complement each other in evangelisation.

Pope John XXIII (1961) noted that lay Apostolate participates in the saving mission of the Church. The laity's mission starts right after baptism and confirmation. Thereafter, the laity is commissioned to evangelise since they have been called in a unique way to make the Church present, so as to become the salt of the earth. The laity demonstrates their participation in evangelisation in the Church through different ways such as visiting the sick, prisoners and orphans, among others. The pope acknowledges that there are different groups performing clerical tasks that encompass the work of evangelisation. These groups are categorised into the Clergy and Laity. The first group includes the ordained ministers such as the Pope, Bishops, Priests and Deacons who serve as the official leaders of the Church. The latter includes all the baptised members of the congregation. These groups, though different, are not opposed to each other but rather complement each other's work of evangelisation.

Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (1984), states that the laity has a particular position that places them in the middle of the world and in control of the most varied temporal tasks. For this reason, they must exercise an exceptional form of evangelisation.

It is due to this that the seventh ordinary general assembly of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome on October 1987, vehemently urged and cautioned the shepherds of the people about the formation of the lay faithful and insisted that it must be placed among the priorities of the diocese. This is to aid them to avail themselves for special contacts with every individual and community in their spiritual state in which one also belongs. Today's circumstances require that the lay faithful be systematically instructed in the social teaching of the Church and faith-building. The Kinshasa assembly (1989) supports this view by suggesting that in order to avoid the situation where the laity is a spectator and not a participant in their own Church, training is essential. The above information is relevant and served as the basis for the current study.

John Paul II (1979) confirms that the laity is encouraged to assume their missionary responsibilities as agents of evangelisation. It is vital to overcome 'clericalism', that is, a monopoly of a mission by the clergy which would not integrate or promote the mission of the lay faithful. The Pope avers that in their everyday life, the laity is in constant touch with the world and sometimes knows it better. Their competence should be recognised and accepted so that they may become real witnesses to the gospel and effective agents of salutary change.

John Paul II (1995) states that the laity, by virtue of their baptism, should participate in Christ's three ministries of priesthood, prophets and kings. He emphasises that the laity is called to participate in the prophetic mission of Christ who proclaimed the Kingdom of His Father by the testimony of the life and by the power of His presence. He calls upon the faithful to testify in the same way through their daily life, strengthened by the power of his word. That the laity has the ability and responsibility to accept the gospel in faith, proclaim it in word and deed, and courageously perform that duty without hesitation to identify and denounce evil. This study benefited from John

Paul II ideas by pointing out that the laity has a vocation through their baptism to participate in proclaiming the Kingdom of the Father through their life-witness. The lay faithful involvement in the threefold mission of Christ as a priest, a prophet and a king thus finds its source at the point of baptism. This is further developed in confirmation, and its realisation and dynamic sustenance are found in the Eucharist, which derives from Church communion. The sharing of the laity in the threefold mission of Christ requires that it be realised and lived in communion and for the increase of communion itself. This is what the present study sought to establish. It tried to find out whether the laity in Njoro Parish is able to proclaim the Gospel in faith, word and deed, and if they are able to give their services promptly to their parish.☐

John Paul II further argues in his Apostolic Exhortation notes, that there is a lot of influence among the laity. He states that the faithful are able to touch the hearts of their neighbours, friends and colleagues, opening them to full communion with God and all the people. While this may be true of Christians elsewhere, the extent to which the laity participate in Njoro Parish is not clear, hence need for this study.

McGarry (2002) argues that the Church, through the Synod of Bishops on Africa, averred that the role of lay faithful is an essential element in the entire process of evangelisation. He states that the laity participates strictly in internal affairs of the Church, through the celebration of sacraments, liturgy, preaching of the word of God or biblical apostolate, Catechetical instruction of children and the youth, encouraging and nurturing vocations of ordained ministers and religious life and the lay apostolate organisation. The Synod of Bishops in Africa called the laity to participate fully in the works of evangelisation so that they could be able to nurture vocations through their faith and witness of life. However, McGarry notes that the Bishops did not stress on how the nurturing of faith and

witness could be part of evangelisation. The study sought to establish if the laity at Njoro parish understand their responsibility and duty in the Church, fostering good working relationships between the laity and the priest, need for exposure by the congregation, strengthening the various movements and associations in the parish and bringing the laity on board as agents and stakeholders in evangelisation.

Bitole (2003) reveals that many Christian communities put excessive emphasis on the clerics and on the ordained ministers, neglecting the laity's contributions, and their role in evangelisation. As a result, such communities in general, become passive and dormant and somewhat submissive, not only within themselves but also outside their jurisdiction, with regard to temporal dimensions of social pastoral and economic activities of life. Bitole avers that although the laity is heavily represented in the Church's ecclesial structures such as in the parish, diocese and pastoral councils, as well as commissions and synod, the topmost in the hierarchy of Church is the ultimate decision-maker. The above information provided a fundamental basis for this study.

Riziki (1988), reports that in a particular catholic primary school in Sudan, teachers only taught religion when it was compulsory. Nevertheless, their zealous commitments to teaching religion changed when the school was handed over to government management. Surprisingly, those who used to be committed to the teaching of religion did not want to continue teaching it any more. To them, they relaxed for they had perceived the load to have been substantial and only taught because they had been forced to do so by their former employer. The laxity had such lasting effects to the extent that some members of the staff stopped practising the faith. This attitude may have been enhanced because the laity was not entirely convinced of their faith and could not undertake any extra work. As teachers, they might not have known that their

teaching was part of evangelisation. Even though their teaching was programmed, they had more time to evangelise. The study shows that the laity needs guidance and training so that they can use every chance to evangelise. The report above served as the basis of this study.

Quinn (2000) and Provost (1983) confirm that the laity is reluctant because it lacks guidelines on what is expected of them in the area of evangelisation. This reluctance of the laity to participate is caused by lack of training in the field of evangelisation. Both scholars stress that when the laity is trained, they will have the knowledge and the skills to face the challenges of evangelisation. This will enable them to lead an authentic and genuine Christian life. The above information was beneficial for the current study. ☐

Nhiniolo (1996) conducted a study on the pastoral councils, which is the organ of the representatives of various groups of the faithful in the parish. He found out that most members of parish communities do not know the mandate of the parish pastoral councils and consequently, they do not know their roles. He also argues that members of the parish pastoral councils become aware of their responsibilities only after they have been elected and taken to attend seminars and workshops by their parishes, and this is only limited to few members. Many council members, therefore, remain ignorant even though they are expected to lead the community of Christians in participating in the activities of the parish. For this reason, the laity cannot participate fully in the activities of their Churches, especially if they are not in the pastoral council. ☐

Gidudu (2002) posits that the laity has a role in promoting Bible sharing in their parishes by spreading the word of God among themselves, in the Small Christian Communities visiting the sick at home or in hospitals. Gidudu focuses on the activities of the laity in Rumbek Diocese in Sudan. The research contribution to this study is that it challenges the

laity in this study to promote Bible sharing in the Small Christian Communities (SCC) although it is not directly addressing the study area, it shows what the laity is expected to do, in evangelisation.

Godfrey (2002) observes that the laity carries out various apostolic works like care for the sick, helping the poor, feeding the hungry, praying together, reading the Bible, reflecting and sharing the word of God together. They also do other activities such as fundraising for the parish through projects which are meant for supporting priests financially and managing the parish's other activities, such as decorations of flowers, sweeping and cleaning of the Church. They are also involved in reading the scripture in Church and teaching catechism. Women in Tinganga parish form more than 50% of the parish membership and contribute 40% of the financial income to run parish activities. The men and women participation and contribution are channelled through the various parish groups in which women participate. These groups include Pioneer, Choir group, Catholic women's association, Catholic Men, Marriage encounter group, single mothers association and Legion of Mary. But despite the importance of women's role and support in parishes, when it comes to identifying suitable leaders as representatives of the faithful at the parish pastoral council or in other leadership positions, it is the men who are chosen, and women are neglected. The above served as the basis of the current study.

Kalilombe (1976) supports the idea that the Small Christian Communities are a living witness to the work of evangelisation because they bring together people to share the word of God. They pray and celebrate together the sacraments such as Eucharist, Baptism and Marriage. He notes that all these are channels of evangelisation and are means by which Small Christian Communities bring the Church down to the daily lives of people. Through this,

members are able to recognise Christ among them and embrace the word of God in their daily interactions.

Pope Paul VI (1975) argues that Small Christian Communities are the most effective means of making the Gospel message truly relevant to African cultures and traditions. By participating in the life of the Church at this local level, Christians will foster the gradual and steady nurturing of the young Church, and through their sense of responsibility, the Church grows. Through Small Christian Communities, ordained and non-ordained Christians will discover the true meaning of African expression of the Christian faith, thus enabling them to respond to the challenges of evangelisation.

Auilar (1995) holds that the establishment of Small Christian Communities has fostered conscious and active participation of the laity in the liturgy and the celebration of the sacrament at the grass-root level. ²

METHODOLOGY

The area of the study is located in the Kenya Rift Valley, Njoro division of Nakuru County.

This study used the survey research design. The target population was the entire Njoro Parish which comprises both the suburban and rural areas of Njoro town. Simple random sampling was used to select outstations for the study. Five outstations were sampled for the study. The same was done for Small Christian Communities where 20 out of 43 Small Christian Communities were sampled. Ten catechists participated in the survey, each representing an outstation. The total number of respondents earmarked for the study was 202. Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews and observation. Both closed and open-ended questions were used. The instruments were piloted at St. Joseph Larmudiac Parish for pre-testing. Secondary data was collected from published works written by various scholars. Also, the study made use of the personal writings of Bishops and priests from Nakuru

Diocese. The collected data was analysed by use of descriptive methods. The respondents' answers in the questionnaires were coded, tilted and grouped with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate frequencies and percentages. From these, conclusions were drawn regarding the challenges which the laity faces in participating in the work of evangelisation. Descriptive analysis was used to interpret the statistical data. Frequency distribution tables and charts were used to present the different patterns that emerged from the data.

Interpretation of qualitative opinions of research and conclusion was derived from these opinions and comparisons.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Challenges Facing the Laity in Participating in Evangelisation

Evangelisation in Njoro Parish has been faced with numerous challenges, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Challenges Facing the Laity in their Participation in Evangelisation

KEY: SA- strongly agree **A-** agree **U-** undecided **SD-**strongly disagree

Item	SA	A	U	SD
Language is the barrier to my participation in evangelisation	9(12.67%)	12(16.90%)	36(50.70%)	14(19.71%)
Parish administration does not facilitate the participation of the laity in evangelisation.	9(14.75%)	19(31.15%)	13(21.31%)	20(32.79%)
Mixed/inter-religious affects the participation of the laity.	40(66.67%)	15(25.00%)	5(8.33%)	10(16.67%)
The parish does not consider the laity in decision making.	36(51.43%)	10(14.29%)	16(22.86%)	8(11.43%)
Gender as a barrier	50(51.02%)	20(20.41%)	10(10.20%)	18(18.37%)
Education as a barrier	20(25.51%)	40(43.01%)	18(19.35%)	15(16.13%)
Total	164	116	98	91

Source: Field data

The respondents informed the study that language of evangelisation is unfamiliar to some Catholics. It does not sound catholic, and we wonder if, at the end of all this effort to become a genuinely evangelical Church, we will be leaving behind the Catholic Church we know and love, and we are at home with, the language of evangelisation has a protestant or fundamentalist ring. Talking of going out to the world on the mission has a ring of triumphalism about it, even of denial. Who are we, who have been exposed to so much scandal, to tell others the way to live their lives when it can be pointed out that we have not lived up to those same standards ourselves? We live in a world that is

irreversible from the old days of the catholic mission. People are more sophisticated, and society has agreed that religion is a private matter of personal choice that has to be respected and left alone.

The table 1 above shows that 12.67% of the respondents agreed that language is a barrier to participation in evangelisation, 12.75% strongly agreed that language is a barrier to participation in evangelisation, 19.71% strongly disagreed that language is a barrier to participation in evangelisation. Some Christians in the Small Christian Communities did not understand the language used by most people and therefore could not express themselves.

This can be explained by the fact that the Catholic Church language has heavily borrowed from Latin and Greek languages. These are the languages in which the original catholic teachings were written. However, 12.67% of respondents maintained strongly that language was not a barrier to evangelisation. Those who did not see language as a barrier were those who had a good education background, and they could understand both English and Kiswahili languages. The study established that in rural areas, members of Small Christian Communities read the bible in Kiswahili but share the understanding of the reading using mother tongue. Some respondents noted that in Small Christian Communities, sometimes it is difficult to explain a point when sharing the word of God in a language that is not understood by the majority. This frustrates those who need to express their inspirations and yet have no language. 43.01% of respondents agreed that education is a barrier which consequently contributes to language problem and those with the language barrier are not elected as officials at SCC.

Mixed religious beliefs were cited as another challenge to evangelisation. While 66.67% of the respondents strongly agreed that mixed religious beliefs affected the participation of the laity in the work of evangelisation, 16.67% strongly disagreed with the views. It was noted that it was difficult to pray together with people of a different faith. For example, in mixed or inter-religious marriages, it would be challenging to prepare children to receive Church sacraments when one of the parents does not share the same faith with the other. However, besides all the odds, the laity should be able to find out about their partner's religion. Christian marriages founded on consensus are also endowed with its own effects such as the goods and duties of the spouses. At the same time, marriages are not immune from the effects of sin, which can cause deep wounds and even abuses to the dignity of the sacrament. What pastoral care has the clergy provided in supporting couples in formation and couples in the crisis situation? The

study discovered that no seminars had been organised by Parish Priest for couples on mix marriage in order to respect each other's religion. The parish would have to prepare and instruct such couples in order to recognize each other's denomination for a unified focus in faith.

Another challenge was on the issue of consultation in decision making. Those who strongly agreed that the Parish Priest consults with the laity and catechists before making decisions concerning them were 51.43% respondents. The data showed that the priest consults with the congregation in some issues before making decisions, although not in everything. The study reveals that the priests hardly consult all members of the parish council on financial matters, thus creating a gap within the council. The study established that the priest does not involve the laity fully, and if they did, then it is limited. For the laity to participate more, they should be included in decision making processes about the projects and plans of the parish. By involving the laity in decision making the laity will own the project, and there will be continuity. This could be done through the allocation of duties.

The study established that the introduction of Charismatic Association between the years 1996 and 2005 caused a great crisis in the Church which ended up with a considerable number of laity lapsing and others defecting to other denomination after its disbandment. The Catholic Charismatic Association (CCA) is a spiritual movement that incorporates aspects of both catholic and Pentecostal Churches with an emphasis on the gift of the Holy Spirit but remains a part of a mainstream Church. Parishes that practice charismatic worship usually hold prayer meetings outside mass and facet such as gifts of prophecy, faith healing and glossolalia are experienced. The deepest identity of the CCA and its essential mission are specified in five of its objectives: to foster mature and continuous personal conversion to Jesus Christ; to cultivate a decisive personal receptivity to the personal presence and the

power of the Holy Spirit; to encourage the reception and use of spiritual gifts (charismata) not only in the CCA but also in the broader Church; to foster the work of evangelisation in the power of the holy spirit, including the evangelisation of the unchurched, the re-evangelisation of nominal Christians, the evangelisation of culture and social structure; and to foster the on-going growth in holiness through the proper integration of these charismatic emphases with the full life of the Church.

The study found out that the reason that led to the disbandment of the charismatic movement was due to lack of respect to the priest by its members. The interviewed priests noted that the CCA members are ignorant of the teaching of the Catholic Church. The CCA members proudly claim that they are holier than ordained ministers and this is expressed in their testimonies and their refusal to attend mass celebrated by certain priests while on the other hand attend mass in full number when a charismatic priest presides over it. The priests informed the study that in some outstations, the CCA members segregate themselves from ordinary Christians. They have their own way of greeting their fellow member "be filled with the holy spirit" and failure to respond to this, and one is taken as a separated brother or sister. They have more extended testimonies criticising other people as sinners (ordinary Christians) who merit eternal damnation unless they repent.^[2]

Some CCA members clash with each other over leadership positions, and when they become leaders, they misuse charismatic movement funds. The association is against practices of the Catholic Church such as the use of the rosary, going for confessions, and the sign of the cross before prayers. The study affirmed that the CCA members were underrating other laity, was resistant and developed a negative attitude towards the priests who were not supporting the Charismatic Movement. The study observed that the charismatic association misconceives the concept

of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The members of the association behave like the Protestants of Pentecostal Churches, in singing, praying and form splinter groups within SCCs.

The study established that those who lapsed after the charismatic movement was disbanded joined the Full Gospel Church, but the group later started the Worldwide Church of Kenya. The study, however, confirmed that the defectors were willing to come back to the Catholic Church, but were opposed to undergoing the whole catechism process again. The study further established that western culture throws up a number of obstacles to faith. The dramatic cultural changes in modern society, such as a change in technology and lifestyle have accorded humanity undeniable benefits but have also led to a general weakening of faith in Christian communities. There has been a loss of the sense of sacredness with the rise of secular humanism which has no room for a transcendent reality. Materialism and consumerism have distracted people's minds and heart. The Catholic Church has a clearly defined system of liturgical activities, while modernity has brought new ways of music and dance, use of advanced music instruments, dressing codes and virtual technologies. All these have undermined faith in a provident and loving God who meets our human and spiritual needs.

The study found out that implantation method of propagating Christianity contributes significantly to ineffective evangelisation to the urban and the rural youth in St. Lwanga parish Njoro despite the Roman Catholic Church having well-trained agents of evangelisation, comprehensive doctrines, and theologians' reflection towards evangelisation. The findings and analysis of the study further noted that the youth challenges are not uniform in nature and that they vary according to their individual circumstances, thus in great need of specific, rather than *en masse* evangelisation.

The catechists, lay leaders and the clergy seemingly agree that the youth know more than they themselves do in some contemporary aspects. Again this portrays the giving up of those charged with the responsibility of forming and moulding youth to be responsible adults in future, living their fulfilled lives with satisfaction as outlined in the scripture and ecclesial teachings. The respondents confirmed that the youth had been left alone to chart their way forward, be it right or wrong. Churches are perceived as places where money is demanded in terms of tithes and offerings. On the other hand, outlawed groups win the youth with promises of payment for work done and done well whatever it is and comradeship is enhanced. The youth consider the Church a place where youth feel ignored and unattended to. These youth consider the Church as a place where they can only attend the mass on Sunday, sing, dance and then start the week doing the normal things that they do every other day, hustling for a living with little or no appreciation and support as individuals, and getting poor enumerations in return. It was researcher that some youth have concluded that the Church to them is a place to hang out since it does not adequately address the issues that they go through to improve their self-esteem and economic status. From the research, the study established that a sizeable number of youth at St. Lwanga Catholic Church are students in upper primary school, high schools, colleges and universities within Njoro. Those attending colleges and universities come from different parts of Kenya and ethnic communities. This means that the participation of the youth in church activities is not consistent since they are only present when schools are in session.

Unemployment was cited by the various youth at St. Lwanga Church as one of the main hindrances to evangelisation. They are expected to support Church activities financially, but due to unemployment they are pushed into outlawed groups as well as being lured into other vices in order to meet this responsibility. According

to them, illegal groups they join have their hierarchy and chain of command. It is hard to know who the leaders are, but they are expected to obey and carry out orders communicated to them strictly. The study was informed that such outlawed groups call for total loyalty even to the point of death. The study discovered that though some are normally Church youth members, they are in reality deeply alienated by allegiance to the illegal groups and peer friends, thus, by living a lie.

Provision of security during Church functions, especially Sunday Masses assures faithful of their safety while they concentrate and follow the Church programme. A quick walk around the St. Lwanga Church offices and the Church Primary school by the researcher revealed that though there is a security man posted at the school gate. However, the researcher was able to walk through the gate, look around the school and get out through the same gate without anybody questioning his intentions. This is as much, a security issue even to all outstations during the Sunday Mass.

A visit to the Church (Parish) where the researcher spent a considerable amount of time, revealed the surrounding area as a busy business centre. The Church is located along a busy road with an active vehicle terminus. Christians coming for Mass or even those visiting the Church go through a hell trying to cross over to get to the Church because of the threat of being knocked down by the menacing and fast-moving vehicles. Noise pollution is a big challenge. Though the public address system in the Church helps during the Eucharistic celebrations, noise from the surrounding precincts remain a terrible nuisance to the people in general.

Another challenge seen by the youth was exploitation in the SCCs. The study established that many youths do not attend the SCCs weekly meetings because they consider them as forums for old people and as such irrelevant to

them. The characteristic of monetary exploitation in the SCCs which the youth witness openly repel them too. The youth term the SCC meetings as an unnecessary burden. Their financial inability is ignored when it comes to contributions that are made by the Church through the SCCs. The study found out that during the SCCs meetings, plans are made for the next Sunday mass where every SCCs is allocated time at the given mass to participate in activities like doing the readings, singing, *matega* (special offerings) and even making announcements. Finances needed by the Church towards particular projects or functions are communicated through the SCCs who bear the responsibility of raising that money through their members. The youths interviewed argued that the Church should lessen the tight/strict rules that one must be a member of SCC to access the priest or other Church led services.

Furthermore, the study noted that some SCCs are very big in terms of geographical distribution. The division of the groups has to be revisited so that the arrangement can genuinely be of real SCCs in order to yield the objective of SCCs. This means that members cannot effectively benefit from Church services like attending the SCC Meetings. The SCCs in the parish have a challenge of leaders who lack motivation, commitment and training. Lack of leadership formation and training makes the members of SCCs fail to carry out their responsibilities. The leaders only visit their members when they are collecting contributions required by the parish. A respondent informed the researcher that the only time the leaders of SCCs are active is during the feast of the SCCs and the month of October for the joint praying of the rosary.

Another challenge was that of politicking. Most of the members of SCCs are manipulated by politicians that make the community simple cell for accomplishing their political ambitions. In most cases, this results in division among the members and in the long run, it tears the communities

apart. Lack of commitment is the fourth observation that has made the SCCs communities remain inactive because everyone claims to be busy. The priest should encourage their parishioners and inform them about the importance of belonging to certain SCC. Most of the activities are done according to the SCC, and this is one of the things that make the SCCs active.

Furthermore, the gap between the poor and the rich poses a challenge to evangelisation. The SCCs meetings are mostly attended by those who are poor while the rich people only come in when contributions are required. Sometimes they prefer sending their contribution to the group than attending the meetings and so defeat the whole purpose of the SCC. Age difference, the study has revealed, is another obstacle for the SCCs. Based on the cultural traditions, when the elders are speaking, you are not supposed to intervene. Many youths fail to join SCCs simply because when the elders see them, every message will be directed to them. How do you expect them to contribute when they have been silenced? The youths argued that it is better for the SCCs to be arranged according to age groups in order to attract different generations.

Marital status was raised as a challenge to evangelisation. These days single mothers are increasing in number, and some communities are not willing to welcome them. Some SCC leaders also become a hindrance when they go on judging and selecting those to attend the SCC meetings. Many single mothers have been sidelined. I think it is the role of the priest to direct and guide the SCCs. Otherwise, if they are not directed; the SCCs will die a natural death. Dominance by the presence of ex-priests/seminarians/nuns/brothers, charismatic members, learned people, etc. was indicated as a challenge in the SCC especially in cases where who would turn SCC activities into a spiritual and intellectual debate. This makes some members feel uncomfortable, especially those who may

lack the required mental ability to participate in the discussion.☐

Hospitality is a virtue, but sometimes it can be an obstacle, and that becomes the ninth challenge observed in SCCs in Njoro since SCCs meetings are rotated from house to house. The study observed that if you go to a well- to- do family where you are fed well, this can turn to be a competition among those who have and have not. Those who have not may fail to reach the standards that have been raised high, thus making the poor to run away from these communities. Insecurity is another challenge that was cited. Some people fear to welcome the members of the SCCs to their homes due to the fact that not all who go to Church/SCCs go to pray but have different motives. Through their personal experience, some members in Njoro shared with the researcher how some people who claimed to be part of their SCCs were found to be informers to some gangs who turned around and stole their property. Monthly contributions which are to be paid by every member have become a stumbling block to many people, especially those who are financially challenged. Members have run away from Church because they find it demanding a lot, and they cannot pay the required dues.☐

CONCLUSION

The study's objective was to establish challenges facing the laity from active participation in evangelisation. The study has shown that the laity participates in different activities but could do more if they were well informed on their roles in the Church. If the clergy deems the important laity participants in the work of evangelisation, this way, they should have no reason not to participate actively in Church activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the study was to asses challenges facing the laity in evangelisation. The study revealed that the laity could do more if the challenges facing them are addressed.

The study wishes to recommend that the Parish Priest establishes committees to attend to special concerns such as; passive participation in evangelisation, mixed religious beliefs in families and distribution of Church activities among the laity. This shall enhance a harmonious relationship with other religions, and there will be less conflict and a general understanding of other religious too. This mutual understanding shall bring unity and appreciation of other family member's beliefs and practices. The parish with the help of experts on ecumenism could organise forums for the Christians to discuss the problems which they encounter from other denominations. These forums can be organised to bring representatives from different outstations with the purpose of empowering the laity to participate in different activities in the Parish. Such interventions in the laity's special concerns will help the laity to evangelise with courage and commitment. The welfare of the catechists is paramount especially for those who have young families and therefore should be taken care of, besides the many demands of the Parish. This will help them to live a decent life. In the collaborative ministry, the parish council should be concerned about the welfare of the catechists. When the laity is guided, they can give generously for the needs of the catechists as a matter of justice. The catechist should receive assistance from the community they serve. The Parish Council should establish income-generating projects which will take care of parish needs, for example, catechist salaries.

The priest, who is a shepherd of the flock and evangelisation, is a central part of his ministry and vocation, should organise ways to enhance spiritual growth, through the available means like retreats and recollection days in the Parish. This could be done with the assistance of the religious men and women working in the Parish. Topics may be drawn to help the group give teachings that are relevant to the needs of the people. Through the spiritual retreats and recollections in their

devotional groups, evangelisation shall be more effective and fruitful. The Parish Council should facilitate the training of the catechist. This will narrow the knowledge gap between the catechists, catechumen and the priests and empower them with the requisite knowledge in dealing

with the rest of the laity at whatever level. This may be done through sponsoring them for the two years at the catechetical school or organising for them in-house training in the relevant doctrinal issues.□

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