

JamboKenTan News

10 YEARS MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE

Fr. Lawrence Muthee, SVD 10 Years Journey

Doing Something



On 11 June 2026, I celebrated the tenth anniversary of my Priestly Ordination. While ten years may not yet qualify as a jubilee, it is certainly enough time to look back with gratitude and recognize the wonderful ways in which God works through

His people. These years have been filled with countless experiences of grace, challenges, growth, and blessings that have continually revealed God's faithfulness and providence in my priestly ministry.

Simanjiro Mission

I first came to Simanjiro Mission in 2008 as a Philosophy student for a one-month pastoral experience. At that time, the mission was the center of life for the people in the village. The roads were extremely poor and became impassable during the rainy season. Although Arusha City is only about 100 kilometers away, the journey took four to five hours. People relied on the parish for almost every essential service: spiritual care, healthcare, water supply, groceries, transportation, mobile phone charging, and much more. Although my stay was brief, it became a significant turning point in my missionary vocation and zeal.

Seven years later, I returned to Simanjiro Mission as a deacon.

During this period, I had the opportunity to visit all the outstations, as I was tasked with conducting seminars for parents whose children under the age of five were preparing for mass baptisms. It was during this time that I came to understand how certain cultural practices can keep people trapped in conditions that resemble servitude.

Despite more than fifty years of evangelization, the lives of many people had changed very little. The majority of men, including some Church leaders, remained polygamous. Child marriage and discrimination against women and children were still widespread. Many families lived in abject poverty despite owning large herds of livestock. These realities deeply challenged me and convinced me that something more needed to be done. I eventually left Simanjiro in May 2016, carrying with me a profound concern for the people and their future.

In September 2019, I returned to Simanjiro, this time as the Parish Priest. From the very beginning, I had a clear sense of what needed to be done. The first priority was to begin telling the people the truth about Christianity and its values. For many years, people had been led to believe that they were somehow exceptional and therefore exempt from following the same standards and procedures expected of other Christians—not only in matters of faith but also in many aspects of daily life. They had been told that they could embrace Christianity while remaining in polygamous marriages, continue the practice of child marriage, and maintain certain traditional rites and customs that were contrary to Gospel values. As a result, Christian faith often remained little more than an outward profession, with very limited impact on personal conduct and everyday life. There was a visible gap between what people professed to believe and how they actually lived. Genuine conversion and transformation, which lie at the heart of the Gospel message, had not taken deep root in many areas of community life.



I therefore decided to conduct a study on the history and culture of the people in order to gain a deeper understanding and identify more effective approaches to mission work. This research eventually culminated in a master's thesis focused on exploring ways to address and mitigate challenges facing some groups in the community.

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Thesis Colloquium

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M.A. Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Exploiting Mobile Technology and Renewable Energy to Promote Maternal and Child Health among the Maasai Community in Simanjiro, Tanzania.

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Online Apostolate

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in early 2020, I initiated an online apostolate that involved sharing best mission practices and reflections on Sunday readings through publications on our Province's website and various social media platforms. This ministry later became significant in fostering missionary collaboration.

Through the sharing of our pastoral and missionary activities, many people became engaged and joined as mission partners.

Using this platform, we have been able to mobilize resources to support missionary interventions and improve the lives of the people. These initiatives include not only faith-based projects but also social development efforts in areas such as education, health, water, renewable energy, and sports.

Today, I consider myself a fulfilled missionary because the efforts I began at the outset have begun to bear fruit during my time of service.

Across all 24 outstations of the parish, the faithful are now actively involved in various development initiatives. We no longer rely primarily on external donations to build churches.

Many people now receive proper catechetical instruction and participate in the sacraments each year. We also witness significant transformation in both the spiritual and social life of the community.

The mission is not yet fully self-reliant, but the current trajectory indicates that it is moving steadily toward self-sufficiency in the near future.

Special Apostolate

During my Master's studies, I came to realize that ordinary parish apostolate alone was not sufficient to address decades of social segregation that had hindered sustainable transformation and development. This insight gave rise to the idea of a **Center for Specialized Apostolate**.

The vision was to establish a center where, as a missionary congregation, we could carry out specialized ministries such as guidance and counseling, skills training for youth and women for job creation, mental health care, family accompaniment, adult education, and related pastoral and social services.

Through the support of various organizations and friends, this vision is gradually becoming a reality. The first step was the construction of a mission house to accommodate missionaries. By God's grace, the house was inaugurated on 18 June 2026. The next step is the development of infrastructure for the various specialized apostolates.

As I celebrate ten years of priestly ministry and conclude my term of service at Simanjiro Mission, I give thanks to God for the privilege and grace of serving in this mission.

