

10. Online Small Christian Communities

Mwanajumuiya Alphonse Omolo asked, “Who pulled the trigger, that is, who started our St. Isidore of Seville International Online SCC? Following further discussion I found the answer in our free, online Ebook:

Here is the original message sent as an email message and posted on our SCCs Facebook Page to start the first Skype Online SCC that was directly set up through our SCCs Website:

“We are starting a new Online SCC that uses Group Video Calling through Skype. It is free. Members need to agree on a specific day and time each week to do joint *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* on the Gospel of the following Sunday. If you are interested please contact Alphonse Omolo at: alphonseomolo@gmail.com. Please spread this message to others.”

“Using Skype Video Conferencing we started on Wednesday, 17 October, 2012 with one person from Kenya, one person from Germany and 13 people from the Maryknoll Lay Missioners Orientation Program at Bethany, New York, USA and four others.”

I am copying Brenda to share the Maryknoll Lay Missioners connection.

Fascinating history. After further research I found that Maryknoll Seminarian John Siyumbu (then studying Philosophy at the Apostles of Jesus, Langata) and I started four Online SCCs through the Facebook Group Chat Feature on 30 October, 2010. We tested both public and private groups. We thought six members was the maximum for one Online SCC.

1. St. Martin de Porres Online Small Christian Community (private group)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/134661419922238>

SCC was created on November 27, 2010

Based on the outline of the SCCs Global Collaborative Website.

Group Type: General

2. St. Monica Online Small Christian Community (private group)

https://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_102666013137594&ap=1

3. St. Bakhita Online Small Christian Community (not available)

4. St. Michael the Archangel Online Small Christian Community (public group)

https://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_166304546752337m

We would share our reflections on the Gospel of the following Sunday by sending text messages on Facebook. Regular members in those days were Father Max Stetter, a diocesan priest in Germany and Alex Temple from Uganda. After several years these SCCs faded out as members went to other social media like Skype and WhatsApp.

A key to understanding the 50,000 SCCs in Kenya is that they are not a program or project in the parish or in the university/secondary school, but “a way of life.” SCC members’

use of the WhatsApp Platform on social media on the internet has expanded and transformed their communications and networking. Now thousands of SCCs are daily posts to share information, spiritual formation and plans as part of the daily life of the SCC. Some examples (alphabetically):

- Anniversaries.
- Announcements.
- Celebrations.
- Collections for deceased people (especially through MPESA).
- Daily mass readings and reflections especially the Sunday Gospel.
- Devotional sayings.
- Highlights of *Jumuiya* Masses.
- Holiday greetings.
- Photographs of SCC events.
- Practical action and service outreach projects.
- Public health information.
- Music/religious songs.
- Responsibility for coordinating a Sunday mass in the local parish.
- Rotating homes of SCC members for the daily evening prayers and the rosary.
- Social chit chat.
- Stories.
- Weekly online gatherings.

Many examples are documented on the [Small Christian Communities \(SCCs\) Facebook Page](#).

The popular saying -- *When God closes a door, somewhere He opens a window* – provides a good metaphor for reading the signs of the times today. In Kenya in March, 2020 during the terrible Covid-19 pandemic crisis a door closed, namely the Kenyan Government wisely ordered that our Catholic Churches be closed and that our weekly Small Christian Communities (SCCs) physical meetings be suspended. But then a window opened, namely Online Small Christian Communities that are also called Virtual SCCs and Digital SCCs. SCC members in Kenya are using (alphabetically) Facebook, Facebook Live, Facetime, Google Hangouts, Google Meet, Gumzo, Kinet, Microsoft Team, Skype, Vimeo, WhatsApp, Webex, Zoom and other media platforms on the internet. SCC members send text messages, audio clips and video clips to their weekly online meetings. Our motto: *Go digital or die*.

Starting in April, 2020 a variety of Online Small Christian Communities gatherings emerged in Kenya such as:

Parish-based SCCs:

St. Kizito Online SCC, St. Austin Parish, Lavington, Nairobi, Kenya on Sunday afternoon on the WhatsApp media platform.

St. Joseph Online SCC, St. Jude Parish, Donholm, Nairobi, Kenya on Sunday morning on the Google Meet and WhatsApp media platforms.

Holy Rosary Online SCC, St. Dominic Outstation, St. Christopher Parish, Kimbo, Nairobi, Kenya on Thursday evening on the Zoom and WhatsApp media platforms.

School-based SCCs:

St. Patrick Family Online SCC, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya on Monday evening on the WhatsApp media platform.

St. Francis Online SCC and St. Dominic Online SCC, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya on Wednesday evening on the WhatsApp media platform.

St. Augustine Graduate Fellowship Virtual SCC (graduate students and alumni), Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya on Sunday afternoon on the Zoom and WhatsApp media platforms.

Specialized SCCs:

St. Isidore of Seville International Online SCC on Tuesday afternoon on the Skype media platform.

John Paul II Evangelizing Teams Formation Program Online SCC on last Sunday of the month on the Zoom and WhatsApp media platforms.

Malawian Catholics Living in Kenya Online SCC on Sunday afternoon on the Zoom media platform.

South Sudanese Refugees Living in Nairobi Online SCC on Wednesday afternoon on the Zoom media platform.

All these SCCs are Scripture based -- reading and reflecting on the Sunday Gospel. Some of these Online SCCs post the Daily Mass Readings of the Catholic Church's Lectionary Cycle and different spiritual reflections on their WhatsApp media platforms.

For 10 years we have been struggling with the "After College What" syndrome. What happens to university students (who have had a good SCC experience on campuses like KU, University of Nairobi and CUEA) after they graduate? St. Augustine SCC (graduate students and alumni living near KU in Nairobi) have been meeting physically on Sunday after the last mass at the Christ the Teacher Parish, Chaplaincy Centre at Kenyatta University, Nairobi for years. Graduates of the University of Nairobi meet after mass in a Graduates SCC at St. Paul's Chapel, Nairobi.

Obstacles to forming additional Alumni SCCs have been:

1. Location (alumni are scattered around Nairobi; it is hard to find a central place to meet).
2. Age difference (different generations have different interests and expectations).
3. The Kenyatta University Catholic Alumni Association has the reputation of being mainly interested in fund raising.

But now with Online SCCs like the St. Augustine Graduate Fellowship Virtual SCC, a new normal has emerged that includes diaspora SCC alumni members. Alumni living in distant parts of the Nairobi Metropolitan, Kisumu or Mombasa can participate in this Online SCCs. Alumni living and studying in Italy, Germany and USA can participate in this Online SCCs.

With Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) (high school level), the situation is different. Kenya does not allow high school students in boarding schools to have smartphones. So they cannot join their parish --based Online YSCCs while in school.

After a great deal of research and consultation we have determined that the five essential characteristics or criteria of a physical, neighborhood SCC in the SCC Model of Church in Eastern Africa are:

1. Size: 15-20 members participate in the weekly physical gatherings. The total number of members may be much larger.
2. Weekly lectionary-based faith-sharing that connects the Gospel to daily life.
3. Structurally connected to the parish as a “community of communities” pastoral, ecclesial model of church.
4. Regular practical action and outreach.
5. Ongoing formation and training of SCC leaders and members.

All these essential characteristics are in the context that in Eastern Africa SCCs are a way of life, not just a program or project in the parish.

For Online SCCs we adjusted these five essential characteristics or criteria as follows:

1. Size: up to 50 members participate in the weekly online gatherings. The total number of members may be much larger.
2. Weekly lectionary-based faith-sharing that connects the Gospel to daily life. Remains the same.
3. Structurally connected to the parish as a “community of communities” pastoral, ecclesial model of church. Some of the Specialized Online SCCs and the free floating Online SCCs may not be connected to a parish.
4. Regular practical action and outreach. Carried out by individual members with less likelihood of small groups doing it *kijumuiya* (Swahili for “in community”).
5. Ongoing formation and training of SCC leaders and members. More opportunities for online formation and training through webinars, online workshops and seminars, etc.

CASE STUDY OF ST. KIZITO ONLINE SCC

There is a popular saying in Spanish -- *We create the path by walking* – that encourages the growth of SCCs in their local context from the grassroots up. In light of today’s signs of the times a new path has developed in Kenya and in other countries: Weekly “Online Small Christian Communities.” St. Kizito Small Christian Community (SCC) is one of the 12 SCCs in St. Austin Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese. It is located in Waruku, an informal settlement area near Kangemi. This SCC has been having weekly physical gatherings in the members’ homes in their neighborhood since 2003.

But then everything changed with the coronavirus lockdown in Kenya in 2020. Our first St. Kizito Online SCC gathering was on Sunday, 5 April, 2020. We used the Gospel of the following Easter Sunday (*John 20:1-9*): The Gospel Sharing/Reflection Animator Mwanajumuiya Agnes Wanjala downloaded the audio version and sent the text version of

this gospel to our St. Kizito SCC WhatsApp Platform the night before. At exactly 2 p.m. on Sunday we began the *Bible Service*. After the Opening Prayer we shared online through text messages in Swahili the verses that struck us the most. Then SCC members shared their reflections on the Gospel and how this passage applies to our daily lives here in Kenya. Many reflections referred to the challenge of the Covid-19 crisis in the world today. The reoccurring message was to depend on Jesus Christ. Then we had the “Prayer of the Faithful” and the final prayer and blessing. We ended with an audio clip of a rousing song provided by Mwanajumuiya Nicholas Mulei.

Our Moderator Mwanajumuiya Ben Wanjala counted 21 members who participated in this first weekly St. Kizito Online SCC gathering through text messages and two audio clips on our WhatsApp Platform. We overcame the problems of the lack of electricity and the lack of internet connectivity. Our Prayer Leader Mwanajumuiya Gabriel Mwatela did a great job.

To summarize: In the universal context the whole world is in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the local Nairobi, Kenya context we are presently in a situation of partial lockdown, quarantine, night curfew and restricted travel. Ben Wanjala and Agnes Wanjala are now stuck in Kitale, Kenya and cannot travel. Our SCC Treasury is way down. SCC members struggle to find money for their internet bundles. But we meet faithfully online every Sunday afternoon. Our St. Kizito SCC members are active online on WhatsApp every day.

On Sunday afternoons in November, 2020 St. Kizito SCC members began meeting again physically in their homes in the Waruku neighborhood, but following strict Covid-19 pandemic guidelines including wearing masks and physical distancing.

In the 70th Round (November – December, 2020) of our SCCs Poll on “The best part of my Small Christian Community is:..” (<https://smallchristiancommunities.org>), two choices were:

- * Adapts to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.
- * Responds creatively to the New Normal.

St. Kizito SCC members are challenged during these very difficult times of the coronavirus. They are trying to respond with prayer and creative action.



Members of St. Kizito SCC, Waruku, Nairobi pose for a photo on Sunday, 21 February 2021 while presenting a small token to Sister Yasinta of the Sacramentine Sisters who was one of us during her time when she was serving in Kenya.

CASE STUDY OF ST. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE INTERNATIONAL ONLINE SCC

Both Skype and Zoom social media platforms provide special online prayer and reflection visual (video) experiences. St. Isidore of Seville International Online SCC has been meeting at 5 p.m. Kenya time on Tuesday afternoons since 2012. Dr. Alphonse Omolo who is the moderator explains that what is distinctive is that members of our Online SCC meet virtually (that is, via Skype) while the traditional SCCs meetings are face-to-face or physical. We carry out works of charity on the individual level. He states: “Online SCCs present an important opportunity for the members to attend the meetings even if they are traveling or when they have relocated. Online SCCs are certainly a sure way to keep SCCs alive for Catholic Christians and to give one another social and spiritual support especially during unprecedented times such as living during the Covid-19 pandemic.”

On Tuesday, 17 November 2020 eight members of St. Isidore of Seville SCC met online on Skype to read and reflect on the Gospel of St. *Matthew* 25:31-46 (for the following Sunday -- 22 November, Feast of Christ the King).

Ghana: one layman.

Kenya: one laywoman, two laymen.

Tanzania: one laywoman and one religious sister.

USA: one laywoman and one priest.

We reflected on the Gospel of the Last Judgment. We closed the Catholic Church's Liturgical Year and looked ahead to prepare for the Advent Season together as a St. Isidore of Seville family. We continued to pray for God's protection especially with the second spike of Covid-19 cases and the many deaths that we are currently experiencing in our communities.

In our digital world we create the path by walking. SCC members are always in need of renewal and updating. After our weekly gathering of our St. Online Isidore of Seville Online SCC on Tuesday, 27 January 2021, we had a short 40-minute webinar on Step 3 – “Brief Introduction of the Liturgical Theme” -- of the "13 Steps in the Weekly Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection/Bible—Daily Life Connections Service of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa." We discussed how the Liturgical Animator/Leader should prepare this step ahead of time through prayer, reading the Gospel, the other Scripture readings and liturgical commentaries, silence and reflection.

This step is very important in helping SCC members to understand the plan of the liturgical year and how to be Lectionary Catholics or Lectionary-based Catholics. Presently we are in Ordinary Time of Year B and week by week we are going through Chapter 1 of St. Mark's Gospel on Jesus Christ's Public Ministry.

We are leaders in the “train the trainers” model of SCC. We pass on our knowledge and experience to others. Otherwise SCC members can join the present/current meeting only focused on the Gospel of following Sunday – not aware of, and even oblivious of, previous Sundays and future Sundays in the Catholic Church's liturgical plan.

Some weekly Online SCCs in Kenya use Zoom that allows members to see each other on their laptop, tablet or smartphone. Members share their reflections on the Gospel of the following Sunday through an interactive process. Webinars and larger gatherings use the Small Breakout Communities feature of Zoom. Zoom Video conferencing (audio and video) and Zoom Teleconferencing (audio) are popular.

During this Covid-19 pandemic we have finished the months of April to October, 2020 with weekly Online SCCs using various social media platforms that focus on reading and reflecting on the Gospel of the following Sunday. Now our Online SCCs are reaching out to the hungry and the needy in our local neighborhoods.

The Catholic Church has many opportunities to use online learning. Right now our Catholic institutions are using Moodle, Blackboard, Google Classroom, Zoom, Canvas, and other platforms for online classes. Writing, editing and research websites abound. Interactive electronic libraries and databases are growing. There is a rich content of spiritual, prayer, biblical, catechetical, pastoral and evangelization resources and websites.

The School of Theology at the Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya has a core theology course_PTC 418 on “Small Christian Communities as a New Model Of Church in Africa Today.” Normally the students join weekly physical SCCs in the Third Period using the Gospel of the following Sunday. If the course is taken online, these physical SCCs become Online SCCs using platforms such as Moodle and Zoom.

18 students participated in the Online SCC Course on “The Inner Life of Small Christian Communities” sponsored by the Loyola Institute for Ministry (LIM) at the University of Loyola, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA from June to August, 2020. Every Saturday the students participated in virtual SCC Bible Sharing meetings using the Gospel of the following Sunday using the ZOOM platform.

Digital platforms are filling a need, but they are also revealing how important our human interactions are and make us long for their return. Let us also reflect on the incarnational nature of Christianity. We experience God in and through human persons especially Jesus Christ. It is the human closeness that enables us to understand a “distant” or transcendent God.

The Digital Church or the Online Church or the Virtual Church is a new way of becoming Catholic Church. We have a new vocabulary (alphabetically): Digital Catholicism. DIY (Do It Yourself) materials. Inexpensive mobile phones/cell phones especially in rural areas. Interactive shared homilies. Live-stream mass. Mirror Server. The New Normal. Online editing and correcting of articles. Online E-Resources. Smartphone fast. Spiritual communion. Spirituality in a time of quarantine. Synodal Church. Virtual Community. Virtual reality (VR) headsets. Watch Party. Zoombombing.

We have a new kairos. We have a new online praxis. Let our Online SCCs in Eastern Africa seize this digital moment (*carpe diem*) to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people.

There are Virtual/Online/Digital SCCs in other parts of the Maryknoll world.

1. Sao Paulo, Brazil: **FIX**

Joanne Blaney, “Celebrating Holy Week 2020 in an Online Base Community in São Paulo, Brazil: A 2020 Holy Week Celebration With People Who Live or Lived on the Street Moves to Zoom This Year.”

Maryknoll Lay Missioners Website, retrieved on 14 October, 2020, <https://mklm.org/holy-week-in-sao-paulo-base-community>

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website retrieved on 26 April, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/celebrating-holy-week-2020-in-an-online-base-community-in-sao-paulo-brazil>

2. Maryknoll Kenyan Affiliates Chapter – a type of Online SCC. This is an unique chapter that is interfaith and ecumenical and includes members from Kenya, Germany and the USA. There are Muslims, Catholics and Pentecostals. It meets on Zoom every few months. It is a hybrid SCC. Marita Grudzen.

1. Maryknoll Affiliates Chapter in Guatemala -- a type of Online SCC. Due to the Covid-19, a physical chapter in Guatemala began meeting online. It is a hybrid SCC.
2. Maryknoll Young Adult Empowerment Communities. Five SCCs located in five cities (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles (Spanish), San Francisco and Seattle).

These young adults meet once a month on a Zoom Call and weekly on What's App. It is a hybrid SCC. Brenda Noriega.

3. DMM Virtual Communities. Brenda Noriega.

One of the choices in our SCC Poll is: "Hybrid Small Christian Community."
<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/> This means a combination of a physical SCC and an Online SCC. Please give other examples of the meaning of hybrid."

1. An animal hybrid is a mule. The animal is produced by a cross between a horse and a donkey.

2. A plant resulting from a cross between genetically unlike individuals species.

3. A person whose background is a blend of two diverse cultures or traditions.

4. An automobile that uses petrol and electricity.

RENEW International (<https://www.renewintl.org>) based in Plainfield, New Jersey, USA continues to creatively and dynamically put into action two of the choices in our current SCCs Poll:

"Adapts to the Covid-19 pandemic situation."

"Responds creatively to the New Normal."

Vote at: <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/>

The latest RENEW program is "Small Groups Matter" that focuses on establishing virtual or online SCCs in parishes.

11. Promoting the Missionary Outreach of SCCs in the AMECEA Region

We are reminded that “the pilgrim church is missionary by her very nature (or in another translation “the Church on earth is by its very nature missionary”) for it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree [plan] of God the Father” (No. 2 in *Ad Gentes*, the *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church* promulgated by the Second Vatican Council in 1965).⁹⁷³ There is a well-known saying that “the church does not have a mission. The mission of God has a church.” Fundamentally Christianity is not church-centered but Trinity centered.

Our primary mission is the mission of the trinity. Moved by love, God the Father sends the Son – and the Holy Spirit – into the world. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (*John* 3:16). Recall Jesus Christ’s words to the Apostles after his resurrection: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me (*John* 20:21).⁹⁷⁴ Jesus continues to send SCC members today in the continuation of the trinitarian mission. He sends all of us to “go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation” (*Mark* 16:15) and says: “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (*Acts* 1:8). SCC members follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ the first missionary who said, “I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because for this purpose I was/have been sent” (*Luke* 4:43).⁹⁷⁵

Mission is part of the Christian’s deepest identity. “Thus it is plain that missionary activity wells up from the Church’s inner nature and spreads abroad her saving Faith. It perfects her Catholic unity by this expansion. It is sustained by her apostolicity” (No. 6 in *Ad Gentes*, the *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*). Mission is the foundation of the Catholic Church. It is **not** one of the church’s ministries or tasks.

Through Baptism all Christians are called to be missionaries and evangelizers. This is described very well by Pope Francis in the section “We are All Missionary Disciples,” No. 120 in *The Joy of the Gospel*:

In virtue of their Baptism all members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced

⁹⁷³ December, 2015 is the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of this decree and a wonderful opportunity to promote the missionary outreach of SCCs.

⁹⁷⁴ This was the theme of 2011 World Mission Sunday on 23 October, 2011 in which SCC members actively participated in Africa.

⁹⁷⁵ This is the scriptural theme of the DVD *Walking with the Eastern African Church in Mission*. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2004.

God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples."

One theologian has even said, "Baptism is the main ordination." This cannot be emphasized too much.

I enjoy shocking African audiences, especially lay people, when I ask them. "When St. John Paul II was asked, "What was the most important day of your life," what do you think he answered? Many thought he would answer, "When I was elected pope" or "The day I became a bishop." But he quickly answered, "The day I was baptized." He recognized that the day he was baptized he fully became a child of God and began participating in the life of the Trinity. Through his baptism into the Christian community the saint became responsible to be a missionary and to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to others. This is echoed in the mission of the Catholic Church to invite all people to travel on the "firm and free road to full participation in the mystery of Christ" (No. 5 in the *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*).

In a broader context Vatican II's programmatic articulation of mission is found in No. 1 of the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (commonly known by the Latin title *Gaudium et Spes*): "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men [people] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."⁹⁷⁶ Henriot points out: "This statement formulates a permanent challenge to the church's self-understanding as a community in mission."⁹⁷⁷ One of the charisms of SCCs is their community response to mission. This is rooted in the *New Testament* model of Jesus sending out the disciples and other followers "two by two."

So we continually ask: How can we promote the missionary outreach of SCCs? How can our SCCs in Eastern Africa be more missionary-minded?

The 1979 AMECEA Study Conference referred to earlier planted an important seed in the implementation of the AMECEA SCCs Key Pastoral Priority in the pastoral resolution that stated: "SCCs are an effective way of developing the mission dimension of the church at the most local level, and of making people feel that they are really part of the church's evangelizing work."

Now after 20 years of solid experience the new praxis reveals a double action. First, SCCs are essentially missionary⁹⁷⁸ and integrally involved in different forms of

⁹⁷⁶ These famous words are based on French Dominican theologian Father Marie-Dominique Chenu, OP's phrase: "The joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties of all humanity are those of the church."

⁹⁷⁷ Peter Henriot in Orobator, *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*, p. 239.

⁹⁷⁸ Marins identifies five features or components central to the Basic Christian Community (or CEBs) dynamic in Latin America: Prayer; Reflection on Reality; Discernment and Decision;

evangelization. Second, many missionary and evangelization activities pass through SCCs and are carried out by SCC members.⁹⁷⁹

No. 7 in the [Checklist of 16 Common Activities in Small Christian Communities \(SCCs\) in Africa Today](#) states: “Practical action/service and social, pastoral and mission outreach. Includes justice and peace actions, different types of evangelization (first or primary evangelization, new evangelization, and deeper evangelization) and the mission focus of a SCC.”

Among the [28 Criteria to Evaluate a Typical Small Christian Community SCC in Eastern Africa](#) are:

No. 13: The SCC has some kind of planned practical action/service/ pastoral, social and mission outreach. Ideally this is a communal response where the SCC members carry out the practical action as a group. Ideally it is connected to/flows from the Gospel text of the weekly *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* and is closely related to the pastoral priorities and activities of the parish. This service and outreach responds to local challenges and problems such as lax Catholics in the neighborhood, bereavement, sick people, needy and poor people, people with HIV AND AIDS, street children, internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees, and people with dependency on alcohol, drugs, etc., local tensions over tribalism/negative ethnicity, concern about ecology and the environment and so on.

No. 19: “The SCC analyzes justice and peace issues with concrete follow-up on the SCC, parish, deanery and diocesan levels.”

No. 28: “The SCC has a missionary spirit with a specific evangelization (first or primary evangelization, new evangelization and deeper evangelization) and a mission focus.”

Regarding SCC members’ service and outreach to people with HIV AND AIDS read carefully the story “We Need to Run Out and Meet Lucia” that is Story No. 3 in Appendix No. 13 on “Stories of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa.”

A powerful example of social outreach is the Visitation Committees of John Paul I SCC in St. Ignatius Parish in Lusaka Archdiocese, Zambia. Recognizing the need to serve the community at large, SCC members set up visitation committees so that they can reach as many vulnerable groups as possible. All members participate in at least one of these sub-committees:

Action [Mission]; and Celebration. See José Marins, *Basic Ecclesial Community: Church from the Roots* (Quito: Colegio Tecnico Don Bosco, 1979), p. 18.

In his research Marins has the insight that you cannot compare and contrast the CEBs in Latin America country by country. The diversity is too great. You have to evaluate diocese by diocese, for example, Mexico.

⁹⁷⁹ The DVD *Small Christian Communities* (Swahili is *Njia Mpya ya Kuishi na Kueneza Injili or A New Way of Living and Proclaiming the Church*), Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1985 presents 12 Cases Studies of SCCs in East Africa. One is “The Missionary SCC” about a SCC in Iramba Parish in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania that regularly visits Christians that have drifted away from the Catholic Church and encourages the starting of new SCCs.

- University Teaching Hospital (UTH) Children's Ward;
- UTH – E Wards;
- UTH – Maternity wards;
- UTH - G Wards;
- Our Lady's Hospice - Kalingalinga;
- Prisons (Chimbokaila - Men);
- Prisons (Chimbokaila - Women).

“It is up to the members to agree when to make the visitations, but reports are expected at least once a month at the SCC meeting. It is important to emphasize that the sick and the needy are assisted immediately their needs are known. JP1 has in the past given loans to members requiring startup capital for their businesses or cash to sick members to access medicines.”⁹⁸⁰

Here is a Case Study from Tanzania:

The 13 SCCs in Iramba Parish Center in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania decided to celebrate their annual "Small Christian Community Day" on World Mission Sunday to emphasize the missionary responsibility of the SCCs. Some special features of this annual celebration included:

1. A special display of posters, pictures, booklets and a world map highlights World Mission Sunday, the main themes of the pope's annual message and the annual celebration of the SCCs. This includes information on Iramba's sister parish, Christ the King Parish in Ansbach, Germany.

2. Each Christian is encouraged to invite one member of the African Religion or another religion to the church and the social gathering afterwards. One year about 50 "guests" came -- both children and adults.

3. Members of the SCCs sit together in the parish church. So the Sunday Eucharist becomes a communion of 13 SCCs. Special missionary and community songs are sung such as *All You Nations, Announce Love in the Community, Bind Us Together, Go into the Whole World*,⁹⁸¹ *Here I Am, Lord (Whom Shall I Send), Let Us All Go Forth and Proclaim the Greatness of the Name of the Lord*. Sometimes the Youth Group performs a short play such as *Jesus Sends out the Twelve Disciples*.

4. The homily highlights missionary themes by using stories and proverbs such as the African sayings: *In times of trouble a member of an African Religion seems to know God more than his or her ancestral spirits. We are children of the same God. We are branches of the one God*. Concrete examples are given of how the local Christians can be missionaries in their own situations and places.

⁹⁸⁰ Kelvin Lubinda Yeta, *The Involvement/Participation of Women*, pp. 65-66.

⁹⁸¹ This missionary song is based on *Mark 16:15*. The Swahili version is *Nendeni Duniani Kote* and is very popular in masses in East Africa. One creative SCC member in Nairobi, Kenya has the Swahili version as his "signature song" that you immediately hear when you dial his cellphone number.

5. The special collection for World Mission Sunday reminds the local people of being mission-minded and mission-sending. It is sent to help wider church concerns. One year part of the collection was sent to South Sudan.⁹⁸²

The Mission Awareness Committee -- MAC (the Swahili name is *Kamati ya Kuhamasisha Roho ya Umisionari*) of the Religious Superiors' Association of Tanzania (RSAT) emphasizes various activities and projects to help promote a missionary spirit, a mission consciousness and missionary activity in the Local Church in Tanzania. MAC works closely with the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS). Many of MAC's activities pass through the SCCs.

MAC produces a weekly 45-minute Swahili radio program on Radio Tumaini, the Catholic FM station in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, called "Sisi Sote Ni Wamisionari" ("We Are All Missionaries"). It is a live "talk" program allowing listeners to phone in or text message their questions and comments. This is part of a series of mission radio programs within the general theme "On-going Christian Formation." Each year a number of these radio programs focus on how SCC members can be missionaries and evangelizers. There is also a weekly 25-minute Swahili television program on TV Tumaini also called "Sisi Sote Ni Wamisionari." MAC sponsors workshops and seminars on "The Mission of SCCs" ("Umisionari wa JNNK") in parishes and formation houses. MAC encourages SCCs to be involved in the activities of October as "Missionary Month" and in particular the annual World Mission Sunday on the next to last Sunday in October. MAC members encourage SCCs to be involved in the process of the Adult Catechumenate (steps of the RCIA). This is an enriching experience to renew and deepen their faith for all Catholics. Sometimes the newly baptized on Holy Saturday are sponsored by their SCCs. They are sent out to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ with the Swahili saying that is translated *to be called is to be sent*. We are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ and we are sent as apostles/missionaries/evangelists of Jesus Christ.

MAC encourages SCCs members to be missionaries and evangelizers on the local level in their families, small communities, neighborhoods, outstations, parishes and dioceses. SCC Members participate in local branches of MAC in parishes such as in Mwanza Archdiocese and Bukoba Diocese, Tanzania. Cardinal Polycarp Pengo of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania calls SCCs in Swahili *chombo mahususi cha uinjilishaji* that can be translated as "a special or privileged instrument of evangelization."⁹⁸³

Another Case Study is the Catholic Church in Kenya's annual promotion of October as "Missionary Month." SCC members participate in the "October Missionary Month Activity Calendar." For 2013 this included the following:

WEEK OF PRAYER	WEEK OF SUFFERING	WEEK OF SOLIDARITY	WEEK OF THANKSGIVING
-----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------

⁹⁸² Healey, *Towards an African*, p. 371.

⁹⁸³ These activities on the grassroots are described in Chapter 5 "Ushiriki wa MAC katika Kamati ya Uratibu Mwaka Wajumuiya Ndogondogo za Kikristo Jimbo Kuu la Dar es Salaam 2006 – 2007" in the book *Jubilei ya MAC Miaka 25: 12. 5. 1987 – 12. 5. 2012*, Dar es Salaam: Unpublished manuscript, 2012.

1 st – 6 th October	7 th - 13 th October	14 th – 20 th October	21 st - 27 th October
---	--	---	---

The highlight was World Mission Sunday on 20 October 2013 with the theme: “Go and make disciples of all nations: (*Matthew* 28:18 –20). Mission materials are available on Pontifical Missionary Societies (PMS) – Kenya Website (<http://www.pmskenya.org> such as Pope Francis’ “Message for 2013 World Mission Sunday” SCC members share their experiences and reflections on the [SCCs Facebook Page](#).

Another contemporary example is the increasing involvement of SCCs in the evangelizing outreach of the St. John Paul II Parish Evangelizing Teams in Kenya and parts of Tanzania. Laymen and laywomen are particularly active in these teams and respond to Venerable Pope Paul VI’s call and challenge to the African Church in Kampala, Uganda in 1969 to “be missionaries to yourselves.” These teams add a new element to the ministries of SCCs: formation of agents of evangelization in the public proclamation of the Word of God. American Maryknoll Father Richard Quinn, MM who is the Spiritual Director emphasizes: “We must train and form our people on how to evangelize in our Small Christian Communities.”⁹⁸⁴ Kenyan layman Peter Kiarie who is the Director states: “The emergence of Lay Catholic Evangelizers rooted in the Small Christian Communities will be the Game Changer in the next phase of evangelization.”⁹⁸⁵

SCC members participate in monthly formation meetings. Topics include: “What are the different human problems in Kenya that we should reflect on in our SCC meetings in the light of the Gospel?” “Using the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Method of “See,” “Judge” and “Act” to Reflect on Key Pastoral Problems Related to Family and Marriage in Kenya Today.” “The Missionary Outreach of SCCs” “How We Make our SCCs Evangelistic.” Qualifications to participate in the Annual National Workshops includes: “Must be active in your SCC” and “Must be willing to implement the Molo teachings in your SCCs.”

At the 2012 Annual National Workshop “the topic SCCs was mentioned time and time again in the reports, testimonies and examples. Some called them our domestic communities of faith. Tanzanian diocesan priest Father Eustaki Tarimo, the Parish Priest of Holy Family Parish in Arusha, said they have 60 SCCs and without them the parish would be dead. Mwalimu Simon Rurinjah gave an excellent paper on how to make our SCCs more evangelistic. This evoked much discussion on the floor.”⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁸⁴ Richard Quinn, “KENYA: Catholic Laity Challenged on Evangelization,” Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) *Email News Bulletin*. Issue No. 67, Friday, August 31, 2012. Available online: <http://a4a0g.s18.it/f/rnl.aspx/?fgc=wwsrx.fdh=n5dd0=sx25a1cc=008&x=pv&7:8j&x=cc&0f:33idNCLM>

⁹⁸⁵ Peter Kiarie, **ADD**

⁹⁸⁶ “Report for the 12th Annual National Workshop for the St. John Paul II Parish Evangelizing Teams” in Molo, Kenya from 16-19 August, 2012, Nairobi: Privately Printed, p. 1.

A new resource is the 34 minute DVD documentary *Sowing the Seed: New Evangelization. St. John Paul II Parish Evangelizing Teams*, Nairobi: Creativecamera Ltd, 2011. It contains several sections emphasizing the importance of SCCs in evangelizing.

SCC members are agents of mission and evangelization. In reporting on his Mission Experience Program (MEP) in Malindi Diocese, Kenya, Cameroon priest Ndichia Anthony Nding, MHM reports: “The Five Year Strategic Plan for Malindi Diocese (2008-2013) emphasizes the need of SCCs in the ministry of evangelization. SCCs are not a question of choice in the diocese. They are a “must be” group in the church. They are true witnesses of Jesus’ mission.”⁹⁸⁷

Machakos Diocese, Kenya reports on “Building Up a Committed Laity:”

The Small Christian Communities have been very instrumental in the evangelization of our diocese. This has helped our Christians live their vocation by living the Gospel values. It is on this narrower [smaller] level (SCCs) that in the last ten years the majority of our Christians have lived and worked. Special thanks to our priests, deacons and seminarians who have helped our Christians to be grouped on this [local] level by teaching the Word of God to our Christians.⁹⁸⁸

A key is to develop a mission awareness and a mission consciousness. One way is to celebrate the great missionary feasts in our SCCs:

1. Feast of the Epiphany on 6 January. We begin the year by celebrating that “all nations shall come to God’s light.” This can be the annual celebration of Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC) Day.⁹⁸⁹
2. World Vocation Sunday (Good Shepherd Sunday) in May.
3. Pentecost Sunday, the Birthday of the Church, in June.
4. Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on 29 June.
5. Feast of St. Thérèse of Lisieux (St. Theresa of the Child Jesus or St. Theresa the Little Flower), the Patroness of Mission, on 1 October.⁹⁹⁰
6. World Mission Sunday on the next to last Sunday in October.
7. Feast of St. Francis Xavier, the Patron of Mission, on 3 December.
8. Feast of the Holy Innocents on 28 December. This can be the annual celebration of the Pontifical Missionary Childhood Day.

⁹⁸⁷ Ndichia, “The Role of SCCs in Mission,” p. 55.

⁹⁸⁸ *Journey of 10 Years*, p. 10.

⁹⁸⁹ One of the challenges is to make PMC better known. Even though many PMC groups are active in all the Kenyan dioceses, an article in the July-August, 2014 issue of *New People* entitled “Missionary Groups in Our Parishes” referred to “making the young ones aware of the missionary vocation and its importance” without mentioning PMC.

⁹⁹⁰ The many SCCs in Eastern Africa named after St. Theresa emphasize the importance of prayer and contemplation, women saints and young Catholic Saints (she was 24 years old when she died).

In Kenya we started SCCs of the Pontifical Missionary Childhood. Small groups of children meet on Saturdays or Sundays in their parishes to pray and to reflect on the *Bible*. In Kitale Diocese 15 PMC children belong to St. Francisca SCC in Holy Trinity Parish and 30 PMC children belong to St. Ann SCC in St. Peter Claver Parish. Similar SCCs of PMC children are in Chaani Parish in Mombasa Archdiocese. The PMC SCCs use the Lumko Seven Steps Method of *Bible Sharing/Gospel Sharing*.

Ugandan theologian Father Callisto Locheng, AJ describes SCCs at the end of his book *Missiology: Introduction to the Roots of the Great Commission* in the chapter on “Small Christian Communities (SCCs): Practical Living of African Ecclesiology.” SCCs reflect Trinitarian Community. The community always has a mission or purpose. SCCs are a pastoral necessity today in Africa because they make the church relevant to the African people. Through the SCC every member of the People of God assumes his or her mission in the church.

In offering some theological reflections on “The Future of Mission in Africa” Magesa has a section on “New Ecclesiological Opportunities in Small Christian Communities.” His original text states:

Another shift in mission in our time is increasingly towards Small Christian Communities of faith. This involves a change in emphasis from large entities, such as parishes, as the basic organizational and pastoral units of the Church, to SCCs. Practically, SCCs provide more personal involvement and interaction by all the members of a given community of faith, and are thus closer and more faithful to the image of “Church as Family.” Therefore, for the future of Christian mission, specifically in Africa, we can say without hesitation that the development of Small Faith Communities is an indispensable requirement.⁹⁹¹

In the section on “Rethinking the Ministerial Structures of the Church in Mission” Magesa emphasizes:

The rise of SCCs as a new way of being church has brought most powerfully to the fore the truth of the principle that the *church's needs should determine ministries and not ministries its [the church's] needs*. John Baur explains that this model of Church as “People of God” – or in the image of the First African Synod as “Family of God – was what guided the early church. It requires that “all the faithful fulfil their vocation and mission in the church...implying a change from a priest-based apostolate to a people-based apostolate that demands that the priest assume the role of the “community-minded inspirational minister.”⁹⁹²

⁹⁹¹ See Laurenti Magesa, “Theological Reflections on the Future of Mission in Africa,” Maryknoll 100th Anniversary Symposium 2011, Nairobi, Kenya: Unpublished Paper, 12 pages.

⁹⁹² John Baur, *2000 Years*, Second Edition, pp. 319-320.

The shortage of priests has definitely been a concern in the church for some time now, and all indications are that the numbers of priests will continue to drop in many parts of the world. Yet that is not the primary reason why new forms and styles of ministry should be encouraged and developed. Rather, the fundamental reason is that this development is as much an intrinsic part of the nature of the church as it is an appropriate response to the signs of the times.⁹⁹³

Magesa expands on the inculturation or contextualization of ministries in SCCs in Eastern Africa:

The varieties of ministries particular to each SCC are a consequence of prayer. It is obvious, on account of this, that ministries in SCCs should, therefore, not be predetermined or streamlined to fit preconceived needs. It cannot be emphasized enough that felt spiritual and pastoral needs must be allowed to determine needed ministries in SCCs, and these will vary from one community to another. It is a variety that constitutes the vivacity of the church, as we have noted Pope Francis argues. Do we need ministers to the sick, the homebound, the non-Catholics among us, the young, the poor? Are there among us who can teach the *Bible* or keep accounts? Can they offer these services to other communities or the parish at large? Is it possible or feasible to establish a financial outreach ministry to less privileged communities around than ours? Scripture, the church's tradition contextualized in our experience, and prayer, will unearth endless possibilities of self-emptying service associated with human sinful but graced nature.⁹⁹⁴

I have been at several conferences and meetings where the importance and challenge of this statement -- the *church's needs should determine ministries and not ministries its [the church's] needs* – have been forcefully pointed out.

There are two important issues here. First, the shortage of priests is not the determining factor in promoting the growth of lay ministries. By Baptism lay people participate in pastoral ministry in their own right. SCCs ministries evolve out of our fundamental and universal Baptismal call. Second, the implementation of the key pastoral priority of SCCs in Eastern Africa calls for priests to participate in a new way in this new model of church – not as boss, but as animator or facilitator, or in Baur's words above, “community-minded inspirational minister.”

It is important to bring an African missionary consciousness into SCC activities, for example, liturgical activities. A useful book is *A Maryknoll Liturgical Year: Reflections for the Readings of Year C* (Orbis Books, 2012) edited by Judy Coode and Kathy McNeely. Weekly reflections by Maryknoll Missionaries relate the Sunday Scripture readings to the world of the poor and marginated. There are reflections from Kenya, Namibia, South

⁹⁹³ Laurenti Magesa in Laurenti Magesa and Michael Kirwen (eds.), *Exploring the Future of Mission in Africa: In Celebration of Maryknoll's 100 Years in Mission*, Nairobi: MIAS Books, 2012, p. 130.

⁹⁹⁴ Laurenti Magesa, “The Joy of Community,” p. 26.

Sudan,⁹⁹⁵ Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The examples, stories and applications can be used in the weekly *Bible Services* of the SCC, SCC Masses, para-liturgical services and other prayer services.

SCC Masses should have a missionary spirit. Examples are given in other parts of this Ebook including Appendix No. 20 -- "Sample of an African Inculturated Small Christian Community Mass -- *Jumuiya* Mass (Nairobi, Kenya)." Sometimes the ending of mass can be dull and uninspiring with a simple and very low key "The Mass is ended." "Go in peace." Some SCC Masses adapt an idea from the start of the annual Indianapolis Speedway 500-mile car race in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA when the announcer calls out, "Drivers, start your engines" and the cars race away. So at the end of mass the congregation is told, "Christians, start your engines." The people respond with a lively "Thanks Be to God" and go out with energy, enthusiasm and on fire to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.⁹⁹⁶ Then the people process out clapping and singing missionary songs like *Go into the Whole World; Go, Tell It on a Mountain*; and *Alleluia, Alleluia Raise the Gospel Over the Earth*.

A concrete example of missionary solidarity and outreach is SCC Twinning that is described as follows:

International or global Small Christian Community (SCC) twinning (also called Sister SCCs, Sister Communities, and Partner SCCs) is a recent development in the worldwide Small Christian Communities experience and an important form of international networking. Twinning, the setting up of "Sister Dioceses" (Diocesan Twinning) and "Sister Parishes" (Parish Twinning) on a higher level and "Sister Small Christian Communities" on a lower, grassroots level, is a practical, proven and enriching experience of missionary involvement in the global church.

SCC twinning has developed in the last 15 years. It is a concrete expression of how SCCs are a new way of being church. The heart of SCC twinning is sharing mutual pastoral and missionary experiences between Local Churches on the very grassroots level. It is a group pen-pal friendship rather than an individual pen-pal friendship. The twinning relationship is joint and reciprocal. It is a two-way, mutual relationship. This is a partnership of Local Churches on all six continents expressed on the local level. This partnership is a special way for laypersons to participate and to say, "We are the church" and to reveal a unique face of sharing and collaboration. Twinning is an important means for SCCs to develop a broader viewpoint, a wider vision and a missionary spirit.⁹⁹⁷

Many SCC Twinning relationships have been set up between SCCs (both neighborhood, parish-based SCCs and specialized SCCs) in Eastern Africa and SCCs in other

⁹⁹⁵ A powerful example is the Third Sunday of Advent (13 December 2009) prepared by American Marj Humphrey, a former Maryknoll lay missionary based on her experiences in South Sudan. <http://archive.maryknollogc.org/about/Scripture-reflection-archive/12-13-09-Third-Sunday-Advent.pdf>

⁹⁹⁶ This rousing ending was successfully used in my 50th Jubilee Eucharistic Celebration of Maryknoll Missionary Priesthood in the USA in June and July, 2016.

⁹⁹⁷ Rita Ishengoma and Joseph Healey, "Re-energizing International SCC Twinning" in Healey and Hinton, *Small Christian Community Today*, pp. 157-158.

continents especially North America and Europe. Specific examples can be found on the [Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website](#). SCC Twinning offers an approach to the globalization of solidarity, a globalization from below as it were. The purpose of the twinning is *not* that the wealthier North American and European SCCs help the poorer Global South SCCs. The SCC Twinning is mainly spiritual, social and pastoral, not economic.

SCC Twinning can also take place on the local level, for example:

4. Twinning between SCCs in two dioceses in the same state or region.
5. Twinning between SCCs in two neighboring dioceses.
6. Twinning between a SCC in an urban area and a SCC in a rural area of a diocese.

A new development in twinning takes place simultaneously on three levels:

- Two dioceses in different countries twin.
- Parishes in these two dioceses twin.
- SCCs in these specific parishes twin.

St. Cloud Diocese in Minnesota, USA and Homa Bay Diocese in Western Kenya are experimenting with this plan.

Another model is found in this Case Study on “Creating a Youth SCC within the Main SCC” as described by Democratic Republic of the Congo Augustinian Deacon Jules Nugu Konza, OSA:

If the SCC is called for instance St Joseph SCC, there should be within that same SCC in the parish, a youthful SCC called St Joseph Youth SCC composed of young people only. This is much better in order to keep with the nature of SCC that is the church in the neighborhood (a specific geographical area). The youth will agree on the appropriate time (on Sunday afternoon for instance) to have their gathering. If this suggestion is adopted, the priest or the pastoral agent should make sure that the activities are shared between the two branches and they are equally represented at the parish level. More so, there should be collaboration among the steering committee members from these two branches so that they walk parallel to one another while engaging in the life of their SCC. Since both branches belong to the same truck, there should be collaboration or “twinning” when it comes to taking responsibilities in church for readings, dusting and cleaning the church, bringing offerings and formulating the Prayer of the Faithful.⁹⁹⁸

Closely related to SCC Twinning are the various programs of mutual mission solidarity and sharing. A Case Study is the Maryknoll Deacon Mission Partners 2104 East Africa Immersion Trip. During their visit to Nairobi the 11 American participants including one retired bishop, one priest, six deacons and three of their wives heard a presentation on SCCs in Eastern Africa and later visited St. Kizito SCC. One participant said: “The group

⁹⁹⁸ Jules Nugu Konza, “Creating a Youth SCC within the Main SCC,” **ADD**

was most impressed with the ministry with the SCCs and really enjoyed the visit to St. Kizito SCC.⁹⁹⁹

SCCs are continually challenged to be missionary in responding to new signs of the times in Africa. In the “Preface” to the *Pastoral Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Nairobi 2013* Cardinal John Njue states:

It would be desirable if every Small Christian Community, whatever difficulties lie ahead of it, would develop a sense of mission among her faithful so as to continue doing something good for God. Such an endeavor must arise from the dialog and cooperation of all our Archdiocesan components.¹⁰⁰⁰

During the 2012-2013 Year of Faith SCCs in Eastern Africa found new means to reach out in creative ways. First, evangelize lukewarm and lax Catholics. This included home visitations to Christians in the local neighborhoods. Second, helping SCC members to regularize their marriages (“get married in church”) is a top priority. If the Best Man and Maid of Honor come from the same SCC they can spiritually and pastorally help the newly married couple even more. Kyalo points out:

The best man and the best lady should also play a great role in helping the newly married couples cope with marriage life by teaching and sharing with them some of the key success virtues in a Christian wedding. This plus their involvement and participation in SCC activities can help the newly married couples build a strong foundation in their family.¹⁰⁰¹

This is connected to ceremonies of the renewal of marriage vows and celebrating wedding anniversaries.¹⁰⁰² Kenyan Bishop Peter Kihara, IMC, Bishop of Marsabit and Chairperson of the Commission for Missions of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), emphasizes catechesis preparation for these events. In his pastoral and missionary experience one year of preparation is necessary for these celebrations to be effective and deeply rooted.¹⁰⁰³

⁹⁹⁹ Matt Dulka in an email message to the author dated 8 March, 2014. Further information can be found on the 2104 East Africa Immersion Trip Post Trip Resources and Information Website, retrieved on 9 March, 2014, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UFVFyvw3O9xiekvu7KjqBnjJW404b6_jGU9LERzXHI/edit?pli=1

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Pastoral Guidelines*, page vi.

¹⁰⁰¹ Peter Kyalo, Small Christian Communities Facebook Page, retrieved on 5 April, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Small-Christian-Communities/279921983315>

¹⁰⁰² See Simon Rurinjah, “Case Study of a 60 Year Wedding Anniversary in St. Irene Small Christian Community in Limuru, Kenya,” Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 2013, 1 page.

¹⁰⁰³ Summary of Peter Kihara, IMC’s comments during the National Missionary Council, Nairobi, Kenya. 19 February, 2013.

Third, encourage practicing Catholics to receive the sacraments more especially the Eucharist. This can also be connected to celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation in SCC Masses. Fourth, promoting the adult catechumenate (RCIA) and accompanying SCC members who are preparing for Baptism (the lay ecclesial ministry of Adult Catechumenate Pastoral Companion). Fifth, encourage such religious practices as the World Mission Rosary where each decade has colored beads that represent the continents of the world: White for Europe, Yellow for Asia, Blue for Oceania, Red for the Americas and Green for Africa.¹⁰⁰⁴ Sixth, more involvement in justice and peace ministries. In introducing the 2013 Kenyan Lenten Campaign (described in another part of this book). Archbishop Okoth emphasized that Catholics should “prove their faith in action.”

As Njue states above, SCC members can expect difficulties ahead of them. But Jesus Christ says “In the world you will have trouble, but take courage. I have conquered the world” (*John 16:33*). Pope Francis says: “You cannot know Jesus without having problems. And I dare say: If you want to have a problem, go towards the path to know Jesus. Not one [problem], you will have many. But it is the path to know Jesus! You cannot know Jesus in first class! Jesus is known through the daily paths walked every day. You cannot know Jesus in tranquility, not even in the library.”¹⁰⁰⁵ So African SCC members meet Jesus in the problems and paths of everyday life. And Jesus promises us: “I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you this so that you may have peace in me. Behold I am with you always until the end of the world” (*Matthew 28:20*).

In light of the Year of Faith and the New Evangelization, research has been carried out on a typical Catholic Parish. A religious sociological profile is as follows.

Community of the “Gathered” (Catholic families who participate in Mass on Sunday)

Community of the “Others” (Catholic families who still belong to the parish and “could” include:

- Alienated/Angry Catholics
- Cafeteria Catholics
- Catholics comfortable with their minimal status and activity in the church
- Catholics who are involved in a small group/SCC during the week, but don’t go to Mass on Sunday
- Catholics who feel that the Catholic Church is irrelevant to their lives
- Catholics who go to another Catholic Church on Sunday
- Catholics who go to a Protestant Church on Sunday
- Christmas/Easter Catholics

¹⁰⁰⁴ As part of a Twinning Project the children of the Fifth Grade in St Patrick’s School in Chatham, New Jersey, USA make and give these special rosaries to the children in the *Amani na Wema* (Swahili for “Peace and Goodness”) Children’s Home (AIDS orphans) located in the geographical area of St. Kizito SCC in St. Austin’s Parish in Nairobi and to Kenyan Children in the Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC).

¹⁰⁰⁵ Pope Francis’ homily at the morning mass in Domus Sanctae Marthae on 26 September, 2013. Zenit Website, retrieved on 19 October, 2013 <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-francis-jesus-cannot-be-known-in-first-class>

Community of the “Lost “Catholics -- two meanings:

1. These Catholics themselves feel that they are lost.
2. Strict Catholics who feel these others are lost (not saved or mixed up).

Fallen-away Catholics

Inactive Catholics

Indifferent Catholics

Lapsed Catholics

Lax Catholics

Lukewarm Catholics

Nominal Catholics

Non-practicing Catholics/Catholics who do not practice their faith¹⁰⁰⁶

Occasional Catholics

Searching Catholics (Seekers)

The challenge is how SCC members can reach out to those families in the “others” group. This is a significant part of the practical action of all mature, fully developed SCCs. Pope Francis’ challenge to all Catholics to “evangelize the peripheries and the margined” is a special call to SCCs members. He explains: “Jesus renewed his call to each one of us to become his missionary disciples. May we perceive this call as the most important thing in our lives and share this gift with others, those near and far, even to the distant geographical and existential peripheries¹⁰⁰⁷ of our world.”¹⁰⁰⁸ No. 20 of *The Joy of the Gospel* states: “All of us are asked to obey the Lord’s call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel.” This is part of the shift in mission being situational as well as geographical/territorial. No. 120 states: “In virtue of their Baptism all members of the People of God have become missionary disciples.”

In many speeches and in his writings Pope Francis emphasizes the need for Catholics, lay and religious, to shake up the status quo, get out of their stuffy sacristies and reach the faithful on the margins¹⁰⁰⁹ of society. “We cannot keep ourselves shut up in parishes, in our communities when so many people are waiting for the Gospel! It’s not enough simply to open

¹⁰⁰⁶ While “non-practicing Catholic” is a popular term, the use of a negative is questionable as explained on page 72. A better distinction is between active and inactive Catholics.

Many people wrongly use “going to Mass on Sunday” as the litmus test of whether a person is a practicing Catholic/ an active Catholic. American Notre Dame de Namur Sister Mary Evelyn Jegan, SND tells the story of her nephew who drifted away from the Catholic faith and stopped going to mass on Sunday. But every Thursday he visited an old man in a nursery home and shaved his beard. Jegan said, “My nephew goes to mass on Thursdays.”

¹⁰⁰⁷ These existential peripheries and margins are people and situations in pain and suffering.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Pope Francis, “Message of Pope Francis for the Twenty-Ninth World Youth Day” (Palm Sunday, 13 April 2014), *Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) Email News Bulletin*. Issue No. 30, 11 April, 2013. Available in email message dated 11 April, 2011 and on the CISA Website, **CHANGE** <http://cisanewsafrika.com/kenya-scc-the-only-way-to-improve-faith-says-bishop-dsouza>

¹⁰⁰⁹ Orbis Books is publishing various books on Pope Francis in 2014 and 2015.

the door in welcome, but we must go out through that door to seek and meet the people."¹⁰¹⁰ SCC members have a special opportunity to do this on the local level, in and through their neighborhood communities.

In its meetings the National Missionary Council of the KCCB has reflected on SCCs. Some conclusion. Priests have an important role in animating SCCs. In promoting the Role of SCCs in World Mission Sunday members emphasize the importance “to mobilize SCCs in remain in a state of mission.”¹⁰¹¹

A recent initiative is the mission outreach of Mangalore Diocese in South India to Same Diocese in Tanzania. In leading a delegation in a mission towards reviving the Catholic faith in Same, Indian Bishop Aloysius Paul D’Souza of Mangalore Diocese said that having active Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the church is one of the solutions towards stopping Catholics from leaving the church:

People are leaving the church because there is no one to listen to their problems as they are being listened to in other sects. I know we cannot listen to each person’s problems, but through the Small Christians Communities individual problems can be solved much easily.

The bishop further urged the church to begin projects that would take care of the less advantaged in the society such as building houses for the homeless. “Through these houses the people who are homeless feel appreciated and you will see them getting back to the church,” he said.¹⁰¹²

Eastern African SCCs can learn from other Christian Churches especially from lay evangelists Christians in their home cells. Malawian Pentecostal missionary Pastor Harvey Kwiyani states:

[As part of African Christianity] it is the lay Christians who do the work of evangelism, visitation and praying for the sick, among other ministry duties. In their small groups – or “home cells,” as they are usually called -- lay Christians engage in neighborhood evangelism on a constant basis. These home cells organize their own prayer vigils, community get-togethers and ministry schools.¹⁰¹³

¹⁰¹⁰ “Pope Francis in Brazil Draws Millions for Vigil,” *Huff Post Religion*, retrieved on 28 July, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/27/pope-francis-in-brazil-dr_n_3664952.html

¹⁰¹¹ Minutes 04/02/2013 of the National Missionary Council of the KCCB on 19 February, 2013.

¹⁰¹² Aloysius Paul D’Souza, “SCC the Only Way to Improve Faith, says Bishop D’Souza,” *Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) Email News Bulletin*. Issue No. 63, 16 July, 2013. Available in email message dated 16 July, 2013 and on the CISA Website, <http://cisanewsafrika.com/kenya-scc-the-only-way-to-improve-faith-says-bishop-dsouza>

¹⁰¹³ Harvey Kwiyani, *Sent Forth*, p. 59.

SCCs continue to use the internet to promote mission. The SCCs Website has a Poll that asks: “The best part of my Small Christian Community is...” Some answers:

- Agents of evangelization
- Basic means of evangelization
- Call to respond to the suffering Christ
- Center of communion and outreach
- Center of constant missionary outreach
- Channel of evangelization
- Community of missionary disciples
- Community of proclaiming the Word of God
- Concern for others
- Evangelization means practical action and reaching out to others.
- Evangelizers in our neighborhood
- Evangelizing families rooted in SCCs
- Frontier of evangelization in the AMECEA Region for the laity
- Instrument of evangelization
- Living center of evangelization
- Living the mission *ad gentes*
- Main cell of evangelization
- Missional small groups
- Mission-minded
- Missionary outreach
- Missionary spirit
- Neighborhood evangelism
- New way of doing evangelization
- New way of evangelization
- Outreaching church
- Outreach to others
- Place of evangelization
- Powerful means of evangelization
- Practical action and service
- Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ
- Promotes the New Evangelization
- Reaching out to others
- SCCs evangelization
- Sharing ideas and ways to evangelize
- Small community of missionary disciples
- Small mission community
- Social outreach activities
- Special structure of evangelization
- Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ
- Sure way of evangelization
- Tool of evangelization
- Tool to serve evangelization
- Vital icon for New Evangelization
- Without borders or boundaries

The frequent use of the words “mission” (eight times) and “evangelization” (22 times) are significant.

One of the most important internet platforms to promote mission is the Pontifical Mission Societies’ MissioApp that is a free app that features the latest news and video from around the world about the Catholic Church. It is mobile app for iPhone, iPad Android, etc. The MissioApp offers news and information in English, Spanish, Italian, German, French, Portuguese, Chinese and Arabic from Fides, the Vatican's missionary news agency, and news.va. The news appears in the default language set on the mobile device. The app also includes videos from news.va and Catholic News Service.

The use of Apps and the social media/new media is a reminder and challenge for the future as a 2013 Mission Conference stated: “If mission is going to continue past our lifetimes, we must reach young people, and young people live in the culture of social media.”¹⁰¹⁴ A proposal for the Maryknoll Society’s 2014 Thirteenth General Chapter on “Social Media, the Language of Mission” stated: “That the voice of mission be extended and made more effective through social media and the use of modern developments in information technologies.”¹⁰¹⁵

Pope Francis’ “Message for 2014 World Mission Day” (19 October, 2014) has four sections that can be applied to the ministry of African SCCs:

- “The Evangelist tells us that the Lord sent the seventy-two disciples two by two into cities and villages to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was near, and to prepare people to meet Jesus” (No. 1). This highlights the community, unity, teamwork and collaboration of SCC members.
- “The joy of communicating Jesus Christ is expressed in a concern to proclaim him in the most distant places, as well as in a constant outreach to the peripheries of their own territory, where great numbers of the poor are waiting for this message” (No. 4). This highlights Pope Francis’ call and challenge in *The Joy of the Gospel* to evangelize the excluded, the marginated and those on the peripheries: “All of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel” (No. 20).
- “I encourage parish communities, associations and groups to live an intense fraternal life, grounded in love for Jesus and concern for the needs of the most disadvantaged” (No. 4). SCCs are an important part of these parish communities.
- “On this World Mission Day my thoughts turn to all the Local Churches. Let us not be robbed of the joy of evangelization! I invite you to immerse yourself in the joy of the Gospel and nurture a love that can light up your vocation and your mission” (No. 5). This is a call and challenge to SCCs members in African Local Churches.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ken Eppes, “Social Media – a New Mission Language,” *Not So Far Afield*, Volume 23, No. 2 (March-April, 2014), Not So Far Afield Website retrieved on 10 April, 2014, Notsofarafield.org

¹⁰¹⁵ Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Intranet, retrieved on 24 June, 2014, <http://www.maryknoll.net/Missioners/Pubs/Members/Thirteenth%20General%20Chapter/Social%20Media,%20the%20Language%20of%20Mission.pdf>

We continue to get reports on how the annual World Mission Sunday is celebrated in SCCs in Eastern Africa. Our SCCs Facebook Page asks: How your SCC is celebrating/honoring/remembering this day? Some responses:

- “St. Kizito SCC is located in Waruku, an informal settlement area (lower class housing) in Nairobi, Kenya. It is one of the 12 neighborhood, parish-based SCCs in St. Austin’s Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese. During its meeting on Sunday, 22 October members identified and discussed the symbols in the 2017 World Mission Sunday Poster prepared by the Kenya PMS Office: Cross. Bible. Globe featuring the map of Africa. Rosary. Sweep of bright white light radiating outward that could represent the Holy Spirit or a dove of peace. Text from *Matthew* 28:19-20: ‘Go to the whole world and make disciples of all nations.’”
- At Mass today we used the Swahili saying *kuitwa ni kutumwa* ("to be called is to be sent") to emphasize that all Catholics are called to be missionary disciples. The "Message of Pope Francis for World Mission Sunday" (22 October, 2017) stresses "young people, the hope of mission" and states: "The next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to be held in 2018 on the theme "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment," represents a providential opportunity to involve young people in the shared missionary responsibility that needs their rich imagination and creativity."
- During today's meeting of our St. Isidore of Seville International Online SCC Mwanajumuiya Alphonse Omolo and I came up with this idea. To celebrate World Mission Sunday (22 October, 2017) we should invite one person who is not a Catholic to our SCC Meeting this week.
- We are remembering this Sunday 22 October as a Missionary Sunday when we are called and sent We should accept the call. Again we realized the need to involve the young people in the missionary participation and need their voices to be heard. Wwe hear this call to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Burundi.
- Warm Greetings to you and the entire Eastern Africa Training Team of Small Christian Communities. As we celebrated yesterday Missionary Sunday we hear this call to be called and sent. Our contributions as budgeted are very little. We request you, as Bishop Antonie Kambanda suggested when you talked to him, to help us with US \$3,500 to carry our this missionary outreach in Burundi SCCs. We have also involved 10 youth -- together a total number of 20 including lay people, catechists and SCC Chairpersons. We have in our treasury US\$ 600. We have gone through the Ebook with the 25 online resource materials. We thank you so much and have a good day. I voted for "prayer, reflection and Faith-sharing grounds me." My secretary Grace Nyamukama voted for "empowerment of women."
Chairman -- Joseph Serugendo
St. Kizito SCC
- MISSIONERS.
M -- Men who were not welcomed when their journeys first began have changed the world!
I -- In my years working here, I have seen many of them go back to the “Knoll.”
S -- Seeing the look of yearning to return to their simpler lives and the place they now call home.

S -- Seeing too the years of hardships they have endured etched on their faces.
 I -- I have watched them come and go throughout my years, grateful to be part of it.
 O -- Over time these men have become treasured friends to those they serve.
 N -- New hope has been brought to many nations because they went to “Fields Afar.”
 E -- Everywhere they roam they still spread His word and offer peace to those who listen.
 R -- Remembering the men who have come and gone has flooded my mind with memories.
 S -- So now these men who go “Afar” are welcomed where they weren’t before!

The missionary news agency *Fides* reports:

As it does every year, the missionary news agency *Fides* on Friday, 20 October, 2017 released a statistical overview of the world’s Catholic population in the run-up to today’s World Mission Sunday, which this year shows there are now almost 1.3 billion Catholics around the globe, representing almost 18 percent of the total human population and growing.

Drilling down, the data offer the latest confirmation of the emergence of the Global South (preferred to the term “developing world”) as the new center of gravity for Catholicism. According to Vatican population numbers released in April, the following are now the largest Catholic countries in the world, with their combined totals accounting for more than half of all Catholics on the planet:

1. Brazil (172.2 million)
2. Mexico (110.9)
3. Philippines (83.6)
4. United States (72.3)
5. Italy (58.0)
6. France (48.3)
7. Colombia (45.3)
8. Spain (43.3)
9. Democratic Republic of Congo (43.2)
10. Argentina (40.8)¹⁰¹⁶

Another report:

Pope Francis announces that an “Extraordinary Missionary Month” will take place in October, 2019 in order to “nourish the ardor of the evangelizing activity of the Church “ad gentes,” or “to the nations.” In an October 22, 2017 letter marking the centenary anniversary of the publication of Pope Benedict XV’s 1919 apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* on Catholic missions after the first world war, Francis said the main aim for the missionary month is to foster “an increased awareness of the ‘missio ad gentes’ and to take up again with renewed fervor the missionary transformation of the Catholic Church’s life and pastoral activity...May it likewise advance the preaching of the

Gospel, biblical and theological reflection on the Catholic Church's mission, works of Christian charity, and practical works of cooperation and solidarity between churches, so that missionary zeal may revive and never be wanting among us."¹⁰¹⁷

12. SCCs' Involvement in the New Evangelization in Eastern Africa

As we read and respond to the contemporary signs of the times in Africa and around the world, the “New Evangelization” emerges as a new and top priority. First, it is important to clarify the many meanings and uses of New Evangelization. The “Preface” to the *Lineamenta* that was published in 2011 for the October, 2012 Synod of Bishops on *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith* states that “the new evangelization is primarily addressed to those who have drifted from the Church in traditionally Christian countries.” Later Vatican documents and speeches of Pope Benedict XVI extended the importance of New Evangelization to the whole world including the Global South that covers Africa.

I often get the questions: What is “new” about the New Evangelization? Why is it important for Africa? In the expression “New Evangelization” “new” refers mainly to the context of transmitting the Christian faith rather than the message. Four great challenges are the growing secularism/secularization, relativism, pluralism and globalization in our postmodern¹⁰¹⁸ world. The context of Europe and North America is reaching Christians who have drifted away from the Christian faith due to the influence of secularism and worldly values. This influence has been described as a secular religion. The context of Africa is reaching Christians who have been disconnected from their faith and distracted by other priorities.

A writer for the *Tablet* points out:

As the people with the best story, we should have the best means of communicating it...The New Evangelization is really the old evangelization but with new methods, expressions and approaches. In other words, it is the same Good News of Jesus Christ – but with attempts to find new means to communicate it and new mediums through which to express the same Gospel Jesus shared with the disciples.¹⁰¹⁹

SCCs are not specifically mentioned in the *Lineamenta* (this is consistent with other documents for the universal church), but are included under “parish communities.” Also SCCs are included under “ecclesial communities,” one of the common expressions in Vatican documents. The answers to the questions of the *Lineamenta* from the AMECEA countries

¹⁰¹⁸ Postmodernity is a name that has been attached to our cultural milieu. Among its features are a sense of historical consciousness, a recognition of the social construction of knowledge, an appreciation for pluralism and a suspicion of grand narratives. It is a cultural worldview that is naturally suspicious of Christian mission. Meanwhile, traditional Catholics are equally suspicious of postmodernism, associating it with relativism, secularism and syncretism.

¹⁰¹⁹ Brenden Thompson, “Evangelization 2.0,” *Tablet*, Vol. 269, No. 9101 (23 May, 2015), p. 18. The *Tablet* Website, retrieved on 25 July, 2015, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/downloadpdf/230515issue.pdf>

This article stresses the importance of the myParish app that allows the parish and parishoners to stay connected. See the my Parish Website (the App for Catholic Life Every Day): www.myparishapp.com

include references to SCCs. Following the pattern of past synods, SCCs are mentioned in the *Instrumentum Laboris* that was published in June, 2012. This shows that the writers in the Synod of Bishops Office in Rome responded to the answers to the *Lineamenta* from episcopal conferences around the world.

As a Case Study let us take some examples from the official responses of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB):¹⁰²⁰

Introduction, Question No. 4: What specific pastoral activity has benefited by undertaking the "new evangelization"? Give an account of any changes in these pastoral programs or any significant renewal of activity? **Answer:** "Introduction of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as a pastoral and missionary tool. This is one of the most successful pastoral approaches in terms of the laity's involvement in evangelization:¹⁰²¹ The laity evangelizing the laity and sharing their lives in the spirit of charity with the Word of God at the center of their activity."

Chapter I, Question No. 2: How does the Church fulfill her missionary role of taking part in people's everyday lives, "in the midst of the homes for her sons and daughters"? **Answer:** "The Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are very instrumental in bringing the Gospel down to the lives of the people. The AMECEA (Eastern Africa) Bishops said: 'SCCs are an effective way of developing the mission dimension of the church at the most local level, and of making people feel that they are really part of the church's evangelizing work.'"

Chapter I, Question No. 11: How have Christian communities been affected by the changes in the religious sector? What is the principal work? What new opportunities are present? **Answer:** "Revitalization of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) is one of the greatest opportunities in this process."

Chapter I, Question No. 12: Describe the ways the new evangelization has been enacted in the Local Churches? **Answer:** "Through the establishment of Small Christians Communities in the parish communities. Powerful preaching and *Bible* sharing in Small Christian Communities and in families."

Chapter I, Question No. 16: How has the celebration of the continental or regional synodal assemblies' assisted Christian communities to devise a project for a new evangelization? **Answer:** "The greatest achievement of Association of the Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) is the introduction and promotion of the Small Christian Communities (SCCs)" There are presently 180,000 SCCs in the nine AMECEA countries. They are pastorally oriented and mainly parish-based.

¹⁰²⁰ Contributed by Kenyan diocesan priest Father Charles Odera, the National Executive Secretary of the Pastoral Department of the Kenya Catholic Secretariat from the report that the KCCB sent to the Synod of Bishops Office in Rome.

¹⁰²¹ See Pope Francis' "Address to Bishops of Rwanda:" "The laity has a primordial role in the task of evangelization and reconstruction to be accomplished. And I would like here first of all to warmly thank all the catechists for their generous and perseverant engagement. Lay faithful are intensely involved in the life of the grassroots Ecclesial Communities," "ZENIT: The World Seen from Rome," email message dated 3 April, 2014.

Chapter II. **Answers** to four questions emphasise the importance of Bible sharing and Bible reflection in the Small Christian Communities.

Chapter III, Question No. 3: Generally speaking, how are individual Christian communities meeting the demands of devising new forms of raising the question of God in society and in the communities themselves? What meaningful experiences deserve to be shared with other Particular Churches (Local Churches)? **Answer:** “Through our 50,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Kenya that are mainly parish-based. We are strengthening our Small Christian Communities where the Word of God is shared, prayers offered, and charitable activities to the poor encouraged.

Chapter III, Question No. 11: How are Christian communities supporting parents in their increasingly difficult task of transmitting the faith? **Answer:** Small Christian Communities animated by catechists carry on our catechesis all the time.

In the section on “Parish Transformation and the New Evangelization” in the *Instrumentum Laboris* (“Working Document”) No. 80 states:

Many responses describe a Church strongly engaged in the work of transformation by being present among people and within society. The younger Churches are working to enliven parishes¹⁰²² which are oftentimes extensive, animating them internally through a program, depending on geographic and ecclesial contexts, called “Basic Christian Communities” or “Small Christian Communities”. Their stated purpose is to foster a Christian life which is better capable of sustaining the faith of their members and illuminating, through their witness, various areas of society, particularly in large, sprawling cities. The older, more established Churches are reviewing their parish programs which are being administered with increased difficulty as a result of a decrease in the number of the clergy and a decline in Christian practice. They are seeking to avoid the danger that their work become merely bureaucratic and administrative and lead to undesired effects, namely that Particular Churches (Local Churches), already too busy with operational problems, might, in the end, become exclusively concerned with themselves. In this regard, many responses refer to the idea of a “pastoral unity” as a means of combining a parish renewal program with a cooperative endeavor among other parishes, so as to create a more community-minded Particular Church (Local Church).

In Eastern Africa SCCs are much more than “a program” – the word used above. As a key pastoral priority of the Catholic Church in the AMECEA Region SCCs are a very important component of pastoral ministry and evangelization and even a way of life. Davies

¹⁰²² Eastern Africa can learn from Asia. A creative example is the dynamic BCCs in the Philippines. A nine-year journey for the New Evangelization that climaxes with the Jubilee Year 2021 includes the theme “Parish as a Communion of Communities” in 2017. *See Live Christ, Share Christ*, Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)’s Pastoral Letter on the Era of New Evangelization, 9 July, 2012.

emphasizes: “SCCs should make Christianity a way of life, really touching their lives and supporting them in their problems. A SCC is ideally a communion of families.”¹⁰²³

This is seen in how some SCCs members greet each other. One SCC member calls out: “*Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo*” (“Small Christian Community”). The other responds: “*Roho mmjoa, moyo mmoja katika Kristo*” (“One spirit, one heart in Christ”). Rutechura states that “Small Christian Communities are not a mere pastoral strategy but a communion of communities, a way of being Church Family of God.”¹⁰²⁴

SCCs’ involvement in the New Evangelization can be viewed in the context of the AMECEA Region and the World Church. First, in the AMECEA Region. The 2011 AMECEA Study Session Resolution No. 1 states: “Developing a Comprehensive Ten Year Pastoral Plan comprised of recommendations on the various issues and concerns. The plan must include a theological framework of addressing key issues and challenges of ‘New Evangelization in Solidarity in the AMECEA countries.’” SCCs can play a big role in implementing these AMECEA recommendations on the local, grassroots level.

A contemporary Case Study is the Evangelizers of the Word Ministry in Christ the Teacher Parish (Catholic Chaplaincy Center) at Kenyatta University in Nairobi that is described as follows:

This is a group of university students dedicated to preaching the Word of God in and out of Kenyatta University. The members are students leading a mature sacramental life. They undergo formation in the monthly Formation Sessions of the St. John Paul II Parish Evangelizing Teams that meet at the Maryknoll Society House in Nairobi.

The members’ main activity is sharing the Word of God in SCCs. Members are sent to the different Small Christian Communities to help interpret the readings of the day. The group is also involved in the animation of the mass in the university parish. The members organize community outreach programs to children’s homes whereby they gather food and other forms of assistance to the homes, help in cleaning, cooking, playing with the children and sharing the Word of God with them. The members meet weekly on Sundays at 4 p.m.¹⁰²⁵

Through their SCCs and other apostolic programs these university students have a missionary spirit and practice. The “Reach In, Reach Out Program” means that you have to be evangelized first before you can evangelize others. The “Capture, Recapture Outreach Program” is a New Evangelization program to visit students in their residence halls/dorms at Kenyatta University who have stopped going to church and are not involved in SCCs.

¹⁰²³ Colon Davies, *From Pilot to Pastoral Bishop*, p. 114.

¹⁰²⁴ Pius Rutechura, “The Pastoral Vision of Basic Christian Communities.” p. 1.

¹⁰²⁵ Christ the Teacher Parish, Kenyatta University Website, retrieved on 11 October, 2011, <http://www.kucatholic.or.ke>

The *Lineamenta* uses the image of the “new ‘Courtyards of the Gentiles’ that are areas in society created by the social media/new media and which are increasingly engaging more people. The new evangelization means to devise ways to proclaim the Gospel, even in these technologically advanced areas.”¹⁰²⁶

To put this into practice the “Evangelizers of the Word” Ministry created a Facebook Page to reach out to youth
http://www.Facebook.com/group.php?v=app_2373072738&gid=328247078038#!/group.php?v=wall&gid=328247078038

The Profile Picture of this page is an imaginary painting of Jesus Christ sitting in a garden and using a computer with the word “Facebook” on the cover. The description of the page reads: *I Corinthians* 9:16: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel." The African young men and women who are fans (members) of this page do online Faith-sharing, exchange spiritual reflections and learn on how to evangelize through the media.

These technological advances are already changing the lifestyles and ministries of SCC members in Eastern Africa. Fiber optic cables provide fast internet access. Smart phones and iPads provide instant access to Catholic Church news. A speech of the pope or a Vatican document that a person ordinarily waited for to be printed in his or her Catholic newspaper in Eastern Africa is now posted on different websites. It can be read on one’s laptop computer, tablet or cellphone. Then this information can be instantaneously shared with friends.

A key feature of the New Evangelization is to get youth more involved in the Catholic Church through the social media/new media and social networking. We are finding an increasing number of people, especially young people, are joining Online SCCs (described in Chapter 9) for a variety of reasons: their complicated work schedules; they are unable to participate in the ordinary weekly SCCs in their parishes; they travel a great deal; they would like a more variety in the membership of their community; and they would like to focus more on a specific part of a SCC like reflecting on the Gospel in depth. Kenyan Peter Kyalo, a young Catholic layman in Nairobi, writes:

It has been difficult for most Catholics especially those working until Saturday to participate actively in their SCCs. For instance I am a member of an SCC that meets on Wednesday afternoon and it has been difficult to participate very actively unless I have permission from my employer to be away from work. I think that the introduction of Online SCCs especially on Facebook is the best thing that technology has facilitated and supported.¹⁰²⁷

So an Online SCC fits these African youth’s needs. Youth want to express themselves and like the web for its User Generated Content (UGC). There has to be a balance between the empowerment offered through the freedom of the internet and the accountability in contributing material consistent with the Catholic Church’s message.

¹⁰²⁶ *Lineamenta* for the Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly. *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2011, No. 5, Footnote 18.

¹⁰²⁷ Peter Kyalo in an email message to the author dated 26 November, 2010.

Pope Benedict XVI had his own personal official Twitter Page to demonstrate the Vatican's commitment to embrace new technology. This SCCs website is setting up its own Twitter Page.

Another technologically advanced area mentioned by Pope Benedict XVI is YouTube. How can SCCs use YouTube to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ? Youth in Eastern Africa love music and drama. Youth Choirs are popular everywhere. Through YouTube audio and video clips of choir music like Christian music videos especially with *Bible* and mission-minded themes can be posted on SCC Websites and available through Smart Phones. Information and awareness-building videos on ecology/environment and justice and peace themes are popular too. Various SCCs DVDs, video clips and training materials are posted on [YouTube](#) and available through many social networking sites and web applications.¹⁰²⁸

Youth Groups perform Bible Plays and Gospel Plays on many occasions especially during Christmas and Holy Week. Some parishes have a Gospel Play as part of the homily during every Sunday of Lent. Research in Eastern Africa shows that many Catholic forget the Gospel when it is only read at the Sunday Mass, but they will always remember when the story is acted out. Video clips of dramas and short plays on evangelization themes can be posted on SCC websites.

The potential is enormous. We are challenged to use our creativity and imagination to enter into the world of the social media/new media. We are challenged to think outside the box. *To see beyond your nose* as the expression goes of Kenya youth today. The goal is to use the social media/new media not superficially as casual online social networking, but genuinely at the service of the Word of God and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our mantra can be: "The Social Media/New Media: New Mode of Youth Evangelization."

Another way of responding to Pope Benedict XVI's call to enter "these technologically advanced areas" is to keep up with the ever-changing trends and patterns of the internet and social networking. In a talk to seminarians in Rome in February, 2011 he said:

The internet is a valuable tool for seminarians, not only in their studies, but also in their pastoral ministries. Because of its capacity to surmount distances and put people in mutual contact, the internet presents great possibilities also for the Church and her mission. With the necessary discernment for its intelligent and prudent use, it is an instrument that can serve not only for studies, but also for the pastoral action of future priests in different ecclesial fields, such as evangelization, missionary action, catechesis, educational projects, the management of institutes."

We receive weekly information on the use of our SCCs Facebook pages. Then we receive the monthly Google Analytic Report on our SCCs website. From these reports we analyze the trends and patterns of what our visitors like and need especially the online

¹⁰²⁸ Every weekend on local TV in metro Manila, Philippines Cardinal Chito Tagle, the Archbishop of Manila, hosts *The Word Exposed*, a half-hour TV commentary covering each of the Sunday readings in anticipation of the weekend's liturgy. It is also available online on Facebook (where he has over 100,000 fans) and YouTube.

content and the presentation. Based on these trends and patterns we change and update the pages and websites. Some trends and patterns:

1. A link to the SCC Website is on the top left side of the Home (Front) Page of the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website. Many fans and visitors use this referral.
2. Overall the number of people who vote in the SCCs Poll on “The best part of my Small Christian Community is...” is small – about three people a day.
3. There are relatively few posts on the SCCs Facebook Page. Fans (presently 1,462 fans), and visitors have not gotten used to sharing regularly their practical SCCs experiences, stories and examples.
4. Visitors like interesting short video clips such as YouTube to accompany the content. This attracts and even captivates people. These videos can be shared freely without restriction. Videos and images are among the major driving forces behind social media.
5. More photographs and graphics can increase the attractiveness of both the website and Facebook Pages.
6. To attract more visitors we have added the “BBC RSS Feeds for African News” on the top right hand side of the “Africa Page” of the SCCs Website.
7. A major challenge is to find interested people to volunteer to moderate the various parts of the SCCs Website (SCCs Stories Database, Facebook Page, Twitter Page).

In the section on “The New Frontier of the Communications’ Sector” in the *Instrumentum Laboris* No. 61 states:

The Church is engaged in these areas created by the media and has, from the very beginning, utilized these means as a useful way to proclaim the Gospel. Today, in addition to the more traditional means of communication, especially the printed word and radio, which, according to the responses, have moderately increased in recent years, new *media* are increasingly becoming a major factor in the Church's ministry of evangelization, making interaction possible at various levels: local, national, continental and global. The potential for using both old and new media is clear, as is the need to take advantage of this newly created social space and introduce the vocabulary and forms of the Christian Tradition. An attentive and shared discernment process is needed not only to better assess the possibilities of their use in proclaiming the Gospel, but also to understand properly the risks and dangers involved.

“Faith” is a theme that links SCCs to other pastoral activities in the New Evangelization. The “Preface” to the *Instrumentum Laboris* states:

The importance given to the faith is further emphasized by the decision of the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI to celebrate a Year of Faith, beginning on 11 October 2012, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the twentieth anniversary of the publication of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The Door of Faith, the *Motu Proprio* by Pope Benedict XVI includes Pastoral Recommendations for the Year of Faith by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. No. 4 in the Section on “At the Level of the Parish/Community/Association/Movement” states:

Catechists should hold more firmly to the doctrinal richness of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and, under the direction of their pastors, offer guidance in reading this precious document to groups of faithful, working toward a deeper common understanding thereof, with the goal of creating small communities of faith,¹⁰²⁹ and of giving witness to the Lord Jesus.

The missionary activity of Eastern Africa of SCCs respond to the challenge in No. 81 of the *Instrumentum Laboris*: “The new evangelization is a call to the Church to rediscover her missionary origins... Parishes have the responsibility to become real centers for propagating and bearing witness to the Christian experience.”

All these examples can help our SCCs to think about "New Evangelization" in a way that would really be “mission” and not just getting people back into the church. We need to be creative and *think outside the box* especially in reaching out to young people today.

The World Synod of Bishops on “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith”¹⁰³⁰ took place in Rome, Italy from 7-28 October, 2012. All the documentation is on the Vatican Website in the *Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin*. The bulletin is published by the Holy See Press Office in six language editions (plurilingual, Italian, English, French, Spanish and German). The key documentation is also available on the [AMECEA Pastoral Department Blog](#) on the AMECEA Website including the 13 interventions by the archbishops and bishops who were delegates at the Synod from the AMECEA countries.

In the intervention on the Continent of Africa Cardinal Polycarp Pengo, the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam and President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM – SECAM) said: “A very fundamental establishment for New Evangelization in Africa is that of Small Christian Communities. These have become living centers of evangelization of the present day Continent.”¹⁰³¹

The *Message to the People of God from the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops* contains two references to SCCs:

Number 8 under “The Ecclesial Community and the Many Agents of Evangelization” states:

¹⁰²⁹ Small Faith Communities (SFCs) is a common name for SCCs in the USA. See Susan DeGuede and Steven Valenzuela, “Development of SFCs in the Diocese of San Bernardino, California in Healey and Hinton (eds.), *Small Christian Communities Today*, pp. 41-48.

¹⁰³⁰ See “Small Christian Communities as an Agent of New Evangelization,” by Joachim Omolo Ouko, AJ, *Voices of Justice for Peace Regional News*, email dated 16 October, 2012.

¹⁰³¹ Cardinal Polycarp Pengo, “Reports on the Continents,” Second General Congregation (Monday, 8 October, 2012), *Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin* on the Vatican Website retrieved 11 October, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02_inglese/b05_02.html

No one person or group in the Church has exclusive right to the work of evangelization. It is the work of ecclesial communities as such, where one has access to all the means for encountering Jesus: the Word, the sacraments, fraternal communion, charitable service, mission.

The role of the parish emerges above all as the presence of the Church where men and women live, “the village fountain”, as St. John XXIII loved to call it, from which all can drink, finding in it the freshness of the Gospel. It cannot be abandoned, even though changes can require of it either to be made up of Small Christian Communities or to forge bonds of collaboration within larger pastoral contexts.

Number 13 under “To the Churches in the Various Regions of the World” states:

We look to you Christians, men and women, who live in the countries of Africa and we express our gratitude for your witness to the Gospel often in difficult circumstances. We exhort you to revive the evangelization that you received in recent times, to build the Church as the family of God, to strengthen the identity of the family, to sustain the commitment of priests and catechists especially in the Small Christian Communities.

The *Final List of Propositions* contains three references to SCCs:

Proposition 11 on “New Evangelization and the Prayerful Reading of Sacred Scripture” under “The Nature of the New Evangelization” states:

In consideration of the necessity of familiarity with the Word of God for the New Evangelization and for the spiritual growth of the faithful, the Synod encourages dioceses, parishes, Small Christian Communities to continue serious study of the Bible and *Lectio Divina*, the prayerful reading of the Scriptures (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 21-22).

Proposition 26 on “Parishes and Other Ecclesial Realities” under “Pastoral Responses to the Circumstances of Our Day” states:

The parish continues to be the primary presence of the Church in neighborhoods, the place and instrument of Christian life, which is able to offer opportunities for dialog among men, for listening to and announcing the Word of God, for organic catechesis, for training in charity, for prayer, adoration and joyous Eucharistic Celebrations... In order to bring to all people the Good News of Jesus, as required by a New Evangelization, all the parishes and their small communities should be living cells, places to promote the personal and communitarian encounter with Christ, experience the richness of liturgy, to give initial and permanent Christian formation, and to educate all the faithful in fraternity and charity especially towards the poor.

Proposition 42 on “Integrated Pastoral Activity” under “Agents/Participants of the New Evangelization” states:

Each particular [local] Church is the primary community of the Church’s mission. It must animate and lead a renewed pastoral activity able to integrate

the variety of charisms, ministries, states of life and resources. All these realities must be coordinated within an organic missionary project, capable of communicating the fullness of Christian life to everyone, especially to those who feel themselves far from the Church's care. Such an endeavor must arise from the dialog and cooperation of all diocesan components, including: parishes, Small Christian Communities, educational communities, communities of consecrated life, associations, movements and individual faithful.

Other noteworthy interventions¹⁰³² and interviews on SCCs and the New Evangelization include:

1. Cardinal Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel, CM, Archbishop of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia:

Small Christian Communities, established as the most local presence of the Catholic and Universal Church, share this same mission. Small Christian Communities provide an ideal pastoral context to establish and develop lay ministries. One of the most significant differences between Traditional Catholic Associations/Movements and Small Christian Communities resides in the apostolic orientation of the latter.

Small Christian Communities are not built on the personal holiness of their members but in their humble availability for and faithfulness to their apostolic mission; personal holiness is a requirement and a consequence of the mission, not its final purpose. Small Christian Communities have an essential apostolic spirituality oriented to mission. Without mission, the Small Christian Community, as well as the universal Church, would be unfaithful to its very fundamental vocation of being a witness to the Gospel. This mission becomes a concrete reality with the establishment of lay ministries to be exercised in the restricted area of the community.

Lay Ministries, therefore, are not to be conceived as accessory or optional activities of the Small Christian Community in order to relieve the work of the priest. They are part and parcel of its life and growth and when ministries decline it is the whole life of the community that declines. Experience has shown enough what religious associations who are centered only in prayer and devotion can become: a sort of exclusive spiritual club for holy members only, more faithful to the *minutiae* prescribed by the handbook written by their founder than to the demands of Jesus in the Gospel.

The field is vast and open to pastoral creativity. However, in

¹⁰³² Although there were many positive interventions on SCCs, it is common that their strength, weight and priority don't get into the final documents such as the *Apostolic Exhortation The Joy the Gospel*. A discerning observer Bishop Rodrigo Mejia points out: "May I express some skepticism about these declarations on SCCs? It is years that they are declaring nice things but in the end, in the final *Apostolic Exhortation* the SCCs are mentioned in just one or two places, 'en passant,' among 'other movements'...." Email message dated 3 November, 2012.

establishing new lay ministries, care must be taken that the dialog, consultation and communion with the local bishop is observed and that a periodical evaluation is performed lest a disparate variety of lay ministries conducted without a common vision and pastoral guidelines may result in creating disconcert and confusion among the People of God.

Such is the main challenge of the New Evangelization. Though a relevant reeducation of our Christian people is necessary in the field of lay ministries, it is not certainly from the side of our Christians that objections and resistance to them will come. Christians are eager to participate in a more active way in the life and growth of the Church.

1. Bishop Bonaventure Nahimana, Bishop of Rutana, Burundi:

The Small Living Christian Communities need a new breath to play a more prominent role in new evangelization. After the war and the conflicts our country has undergone with all the consequences that follow, we saw the need for a deep evangelization and to involve our Living Christian Communities to deepen the faith and to take care of the life of the Church.

The size of these communities allows the members to know each other and help each other, to reinforce their cohesion and their communion in a climate of fraternity and solidarity.

They are the place where Christians can live the experience of reconciliation which is first of all achieved in the sacrament of penance so the Church may answer her vocation in being at the service of peace, justice and reconciliation. The Holy Father said that the new evangelization “demands that we be reconciled with our neighbors and that we overcome every kind of barrier, including those arising from language, culture and race” (*Africa’s Commitment, No. 169*).

Because of the dynamism of their faith and their commitment, these communities are the favorable place for the blooming of priestly and consecrated vocations. Because they favor a climate of prayer for vocations and help parents become conscious of their responsibility as teachers of the faith. These communities are called to associate together for their development to battle against hunger, misery, all kinds of injustices, to better their condition and to find solutions to their problems.

2. Archbishop Filipe Neri António Sebastião Do Rosário Ferrão, Archdiocese of Goa and Damão, India:

The parish is the place where the faithful gather to grow in faith, live the mystery of ecclesial communion and take part in the Church’s mission (cf. *The Church in Africa, No. 25*). The Church in India has embraced “A New Way of Being Church” through “Small Christian Communities.” The faithful of a neighborhood reflect collectively on the Word of God, pray together and act in solidarity for the integral development and authentic liberation of the human person. Experiencing conversion, growing in the personal encounter of Jesus and recognizing him in one another, the faithful place the various gifts

and charisms of the Spirit at the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church and enter into a dialog of life and action in their own places with people of other faiths.

3. Archbishop Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij, of Bangkok, Thailand:

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand is of the opinion that it is necessary that all the Bishops, priests, men and women religious and the laity be concretely revived in faith and Christian life aiming at "Discipleship and sharing the Good News" with regards to the teaching of the Church, liturgy, life of prayers and continuous formation, using the means of "BEC" (Basic Ecclesial Communities) through coordination of the various Catholic entities and the CBCT commissions especially the Episcopal Commission for Pastoral Care of the Christians. The parochial community will enable the BEC to be the sign of active life of a parish which will be a new community, "communion of communities", based on the culture of love and will become a good approach for the pastoral care and evangelization *Ad Gentes*.

4. Bishop José Dolores Grullón Estrella of San Juan de la Maguana in the Dominican Republic:

Among the subjects privileged to carry out the new evangelization ... are the small communities, formed by a small group of people who gather like the primordial cells of an ecclesial structure to live the faith, train themselves, evangelize and undertake community actions. These small communities are the fruit of a real pastoral conversion.

5. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin, Ireland:

The culture of individualism can be counteracted by the creation of a variety of new ecclesial communities, not just those of the ecclesial movements, but around our parishes, which will be the building blocks of the Eucharistic communities of the future.

6. Summary of the French-speaking Small Group:

The New Evangelization passes through the parish with a "new face", capable of accompanying people in faith and the personal and affective world, the thing that is most missing in our society of today. Parishes should be a network of ecclesial communities which, in their concrete settings, sustain faith in Jesus Christ and his followers and, for the same reason, the growth in the overall human dimension. These are the "ecclesial bodies" (the parishes and their communities) to be called to show the Risen Lord who gives life and meaning to existence. Perhaps the most pressing problem of the New Evangelization is the formation and the accompanying of these little ecclesial communities.

7. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, Austria's interview with John

Allen.¹⁰³³

The key idea, which has been extremely present in this synod, is the Small Christian Community. Many, many bishops from around the world have spoken about the Small Christian Communities. We see the need, and we have the desire, not to lose communities but to increase their number. We're forced to reduce the number of parish structures, with all their administration and expenses, but we want to favor a growing number of Small Christian Communities led by laity – laity who aren't full-time, who aren't bureaucrats, but volunteers. These are people living in the field, who do what laity in many parishes and other communities already do, which is to take responsibility for a large part of the life of the church, the vibrant aspects of community life. We want to implement more explicitly the great theme of Vatican II: the common priesthood of all the baptized, with the ministerial priesthood at its service, promoting the holiness of the People of God. Laity today – or, I would rather say, the baptized today – are fully capable of being true witnesses to faith in Christ in their daily lives, and therefore in the lives of Small Christian Communities...[In the future] five small parishes in the countryside will form one greater parish. Their facilities, however, could be used to animate some of these Small Christian Communities.”

COMMENTARY

The process and results of the synod clarified several important aspects of the praxis and theology of SCCs throughout the world. First, the Synod delegates emphasized the importance of the parish and its rich variety of ecclesial communities in the New Evangelization. One commentary said that the key to New Evangelization is parishes coming to life and offering new forms of spiritual nourishment, sustenance, formation and community. This includes parish-based evangelization, engaging the laity in the task of evangelization (through Baptism all Christians are called to be missionaries and evangelizers) and the spirit and practice of the missionary parish.

Second, the synod statements clearly affirm and encourage the importance of SCCs in the parish structure and ministry. Pastoral, parish-based SCCs are part of the “new face” of the parish and form the core of this SCCs Model of Church. The parish is a communion or network of SCCs within the “communion of communities” Ecclesiology. The patterns vary from dioceses in the countries in the Global South where the numbers of parishes are growing and the pastoral, parish-based SCCs are central in the pastoral structure and ministry (examples are Eastern Africa, Philippines and Korea) to dioceses in the West where parishes are clustering together in pastoral units with SCCs participating in the pastoral structure and ministry (an example is Austria). It is hoped that this priority on parishes will focus on the strengthening and growth of parishes that are founded and structured on SCCs from the grassroots.

¹⁰³³ John L. Allen Jr., “Interview with Cardinal Christoph Schönborn,” National Catholic Reporter [(NCR)] (25 October 2012) on the National Catholic Reporter Website retrieved on 28 October 2012 <http://ncronline.org/node/37906>

In this model of a cluster of parishes/a “greater parish”/a network of pastoral units spread over the geographical area of a number of present parishes,¹⁰³⁴ it is very important that:

- The local Catholics on the grassroots take ownership of this plan.
- Key lay people (elected lay leaders, catechists, lay ministers, SCCs leaders, etc.) participate in the leadership and decision-making along with the priests and religious.
- A “communion of communities” model is the operating force.

Synod commentaries trace the historical shifts in the growing widespread acceptance of SCCs. At one stage the “base communities” were controversial because of their association with the Liberation Theology movement in Latin America. Interventions and reports at the present synod suggested that the church has recovered from this hang-up. Now the base communities have become a widely accepted pastoral model (as distinguished from a social action model) in many parts of the continent of Latin America. SCCs have also become accepted as a key pastoral model in Africa, Asia and even Europe. In the official summaries of synod speeches released by the Vatican Press Office some version of “small,” “base,” or “basic communities” was used many times.¹⁰³⁵ Liberation Theology in Latin America is evolving. Its new expressions and spinoffs are now included in the broader term Contextual Theologies.

Again this authoritative voice of the pope and the universal church confirms the direction that the AMECEA countries are taking in building SCCs that are solidly rooted in the parish and in the Bible and that continue to be a key pastoral priority in Eastern Africa.

In commenting on the strategies for the New Evangelization American Paulist Father Frank DeSiano, CSP writes:

Many bishops from developing nations insisted that Small Christian Communities (also called “base communities”) have become essential in the growth and maintenance of faith. They spoke of the way Catholics help reinforce the faith of others, become part of a larger support system and bring the experience of conversion into their relationships with neighbors. Parishes in developed countries might well ponder the gain that can accrue from such communities of faith.

¹⁰³⁴ This is echoed by Cardinal Walter Kasper in his book *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*. A reviewer summarizes: Kasper “proposes that dioceses be restructured so as to have but a few central parishes providing basic sacramental and educational services around which would orbit a wide variety of smaller, more intentional communities.” Richard R. Gaillardetz, “Between Nostalgia and Utopia: The Catholic Church is Facing Challenges, but the Pope’s Theologian is Capable if Cautious Guide on the Road Ahead,” *Tablet*, Volume 269, No. 9094 (3 April, 2015), p. 33.

¹⁰³⁵ Summary of many articles, reports and blogs by John Allen in the *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)* in October, 2012 – both in the print editions and the online editions. See especially “Synod Notebook: Islam, Africa, and where are the deacons?” 16 October, 2012 and “Synod: Challenges in Muslim Nations,” 26 October –November 8, 2012, p. 6.

In terms of organizing a congregation, small groups can accomplish what parishes, with their sometimes large and anonymous styles, often cannot—putting a personal face on the experience of Catholic life. Further, they can be the first points of outreach beyond the faithful, calling the ever-growing numbers of uninvolved people into some kind of faith relationship. If it is difficult for someone to make it to a parish church, it certainly is much easier for them to make it to a neighbor’s house or apartment.

These small groups [SCCs], breaking open the word of God in more consistent and extended ways every time they meet, help believers experience the power of the word through reflection, discussion, personal sharing and common prayer. Making *Lectio Divina* a part of small group sharing can be a way to link Catholics to experiences of contemplation and adoration, as the Word leads them to fuller awareness and acceptance of God’s action in their lives.¹⁰³⁶

Other synod commentaries were disappointed with the concrete results as Robert Mickens states: “These [synod] documents offer few concrete proposals as to how evangelization can be “new in its ardor (fervor),¹⁰³⁷ in its methods and in its expressions” (to quote the words Pope John Paul II used in 1983 when he first launched the “New Evangelization”¹⁰³⁸).¹⁰³⁹

SCCs in Eastern Africa and throughout the world are challenged to come up with this “new ardor (fervor),” these “new methods” and these “new expressions.” Once again the

¹⁰³⁶ Frank DeSiano, “This Little Light: Strategies for the New Evangelization from the Synod of Bishops,” *America*, 11 February, 2013 and on the *America* Magazine Website retrieved on 2 February, 2013 <http://americamagazine.org/issue/little-light>

¹⁰³⁷ Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, recalls a story from the Middle Ages. “A poet passed by some work being conducted and saw three workers busy at their work; they were stone cutters. He turned to the first and said: ‘What are you doing, my friend?’ This man, quite indifferently, replied: ‘I am cutting a stone.’ He went a little further, saw the second and posed to him the same question, and this man replied, surprised: ‘I am involved in the building of a column.’ A bit further ahead, the pilgrim saw the third and to this man also he put the same question; the response, full of enthusiasm, was: ‘I am building a cathedral.’ The old meaning is not changed by the new work [of evangelization] we are called to construct. There are various workers called into the vineyard of the Lord to bring about the new evangelization; all of them will have some reason to offer to explain their commitment. What I wish for and what I would like to hear is that, in response to the question, ‘What are you doing, my friend?’ Each one would be able to reply: ‘I am building a cathedral.’”

¹⁰³⁸ John Paul II, Address to CELAM (Opening Address of the Nineteenth General Assembly of CELAM, 9 March, 1983, Port-au-Prince, Haiti), *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition 16/780 (18 April 1983), No. 9.

¹⁰³⁹ Robert Mickens, “Old Ways for the New World,” *Tablet*, 3 November, 2012, p. 6.

mantra: *Think outside the box*.¹⁰⁴⁰ A key is the positive and creative attitude one brings to the spirit and activities of the New Evangelization. In his talk to the cardinals after his election in March 2013 Pope Francis emphasized that Holy Spirit was the “supreme protagonist of every initiative and manifestation of faith” and would help the church find “new methods” of spreading the Gospel.

Pope Francis promulgated *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)* in Rome on 26 November, 2013 to close the Year of Faith. This is the Apostolic Exhortation on the meeting of the Synod of Bishops on *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith* in October, 2012. Pope Francis explains this challenge of the New Evangelization very well in No. 33 of *The Joy of the Gospel*:

Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way.”¹⁰⁴¹ I invite everyone to be bold¹⁰⁴² and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory. I encourage everyone to apply the guidelines found in this document generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear. The important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, and especially under the leadership of the bishops, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment.¹⁰⁴³

¹⁰⁴⁰ During his *Ad Limina* visit to Rome in 2012 Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville Archdiocese, USA explained the value of structured small groups (Small Faith-sharing Communities) that form the core of the *Why Catholic?* parish-centered process of spiritual renewal and evangelization developed by RENEW International to Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella and officials in the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization. This opens up new connections between small communities and the New Evangelization. *Think outside the box*.

¹⁰⁴¹ Two examples in Eastern Africa. A major seminary in Malawi has a very good plan of eight active SCCs. But they have names like Team One, Team Two, etc. When I suggested having saints’ name to give the SCCs a religious identity and focus the rector said, “But we have always done it this way.” He promised to consult others and rethink the plan. A seminary in Zambia has five SCCs with the same saints’ names used year after year. When I suggested letting each new group of seminarians chose the saint’s name of their particular SCCs to give them more “ownership, participation and involvement, a priest staff member said, “But we have always done it this way.” He saw the value of my suggestion and said he would follow up with the other staff members.

¹⁰⁴² In explaining his reform efforts Francis urges Catholic Church leaders to speak with *parrhesía* – the evangelical “boldness” he repeatedly cites as a key to healthy collegiality in governance.

¹⁰⁴³ Magesa insightfully commented:

John Paul II’s papacy and the nearly eight years of his successor Benedict XVI (2005-2013) saw some practical retrenchment from the theological vision of Vatican II, something which,

Let us search for bold and creative ways that SCC members can carry out our pastoral ministry in a missionary key. There is a tendency especially for SCC members in rural areas to say, “But we have always done it this way.” A simple example is the arrangement of chairs in a SCC gathering. Our Eastern Africa SCCs Training Team have visited SCCs where the chairs are set up in a classroom or meeting style – a head table for the leaders and then rows of chairs for the members. Sometimes all the men are sitting together and all the women sitting together. We have to break away from this old thinking and old mentality. SCC members should sit in a circle where the men and women are mixed and everyone is equal. This is why it is a new way of being church.

The ongoing challenge: How can rethink the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in our respective SCCs? Each aspect/element has been evaluated and updated/improved at all levels.

In No. 27 on “Ecclesial Renewal” Pope Francis says:

I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with him. As John Paul II once said to the Bishops of Oceania: “All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion.”

How can SCC members in Eastern Africa participate in this missionary option, this missionary impulse, this missionary activity?

Paulino Mondo, the former pastor of a busy urban parish in Nairobi, says:

Truly the Small Christian Communities are the “Answer” to the many questions on the New Evangelization. We have seen it in [busy urban] Kariobangi Parish in Nairobi. Through our 74 SCCs we are able to help 73,000 Catholics who are very active and well organized... Small Christian Community was the success story for the methodology of St. Paul and we have to revive it again all over the world if we want to remain a vibrant and witnessing Church today.¹⁰⁴⁴

after Benedict’s surprise resignation on 28 February, 2014, Pope Francis his successor, has been trying to undo since his election on 13 March.

Laurenti Magesa, “Endless Quest,” p. 9.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Paulino Mondo, in an email message to the author dated 12 December, 2012.

No. 28 of *The Joy of the Gospel* states:

The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if it proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be the church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters (from Proposition 26). This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed cluster made up of a chosen few.

The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialog, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. (from Proposition 26). In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers (from Proposition 44). It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.

COMMENTARY

Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of the parish that is in line with the pastoral thinking and experience of the Catholic Bishops in the AMECEA Region. SCCs offer one of the best ways that pastors and other pastoral agents can get to know the lives of people on the local level – from the inside, as it happens. See the comments of Bishop Method Kilaini on page 81. This is where we can get the “smell of the sheep,” one of the pope's favorite expressions.

No. 29 states:

Other Church institutions, basic communities and small communities, movements, and forms of association are a source of enrichment for the Church, raised up by the Spirit for evangelizing different areas and sectors. Frequently they bring a new evangelizing fervor and a new capacity for dialog with the world whereby the Church is renewed. But it will prove beneficial for them not to lose contact with the rich reality of the local parish and to participate readily in the overall pastoral activity of the Particular Church (from Proposition 26) This kind of integration will prevent them from concentrating only on part of the Gospel or the Church, or becoming nomads without roots.

COMMENTARY

It is significant that “basic communities” (that often are not linked to the parish) are differentiated from “small communities” (the Eastern African model of SCCs is clearly linked to, and even integrated into, the parish). These pastoral, parish

based SCCs have a distinct ecclesial identity and pastoral focus. This is explained at length in the section “Leadership Structures” on pages 246-251.

SCCs participated in various pastoral events and outreach programs in Eastern Africa during the 2012-2013 Year of Faith. These include catechetical and religious education programs (involvement of SCCs in the ministry of catechizing specific groups – children, youth and adults); more *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection*; focus on the family as the Domestic Church; increased celebration of the sacraments ¹⁰⁴⁵ such as Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation¹⁰⁴⁶ and Matrimony; and promoting the use of the social media/new media and social networking in the New Evangelization.

Some SCCs systematically go through sections of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* in their weekly meetings. Other SCCs study more deeply the life and charism of their Patron/Patroness Saints.

Other SCCs use a palaver style of conversation, dialog, discussion and visitations to reach out to Catholics who have drifted away from the faith.

Humer reported about the activities in Kayanga Diocese, Tanzania:

The Year of Faith started also in our diocese Kayanga Diocese, Tanzania on 11 October, 2012 with a special mass and feast. A cross was St. that is doing a pilgrimage through the whole diocese during the next year: It started in our cathedral parish in Kayanga. The cross went to in all our outstations. In Kayanga Outstation the cross visited all six Small Christian Communities (SCCs). We used the opportunity to give lectures, religious talks and the possibility to receive various sacraments: confession, Baptism, weddings. The faithful were excited about it, accepted this good chance, and thus tried to deepen their faith.¹⁰⁴⁷

¹⁰⁴⁵ As an example St. Austin’s Parish Church in Nairobi Archdiocese that celebrated its Centenary on Pentecost Sunday, 19 May, 2013. The nine SCCs in the parish and other Small Apostolic Groups celebrated this huge sacramental event with many couples getting married, 200 couples renewing their marriage vows, Catholic in marriages with spouses of other religious faiths returning to the Eucharist and many newly baptized adults getting confirmed.

Another example is the Formation Meeting on “Evangelizing in Cyberspace” of the Blessed John Paul II Parish Evangelizing Teams that took place in the Maryknoll Assembly Hall, Nairobi, Kenya on 17 February, 2013.

¹⁰⁴⁶ One creative example of inculturation in Africa is to emphasize the sacrament of Confirmation as a Christian “Rite of Passage” for African teenagers (13 to 16 years old) comparable to the traditional initiation rites in various ethnic groups. SCC members can accompany and support the candidates in their SCCs. In addition various “Coming of Age” events can commemorate these important teenage and early 20s years with their significant transitions.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Hans Humer, “News-Nov-Dec-12” in email to the author dated 2 January, 2013.

In his 2012 Christmas Pastoral Letter entitled *We Hold a Treasure that is Jesus Christ Our Lord* Cardinal John Njue, the Archbishop of Nairobi, urged that every baptized Catholic in Nairobi Archdiocese be an active member of a Small Christian Community in his or her neighborhood and be an agent of evangelization. In the section on “Make the Parish the Cradle of Faith” he says:

I call upon parishes to make visible the communion of Small Christian Communities and outstations that are united around the Eucharist. In order to bring to all people the good News of Jesus, as required, all our parishes and their Small Christian Communities should be living cells.¹⁰⁴⁸

In the section on “The Way Forward” he recommends the following points to be on our parish pastoral agenda as we continue the celebration of the Year of Faith and the era of New Evangelization:

- Formation of agents of evangelization on deepening the Catholic faith by studying and discussing together in small groups the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the documents of Vatican Council II. This includes developing a culture of sharing on matters of faith and assimilating the Scriptures.
- Strategy to make the Family Biblical Apostolate a reality to strengthen Small Christian Communities.
- Strengthen and support the Catholic media apostolate and educate the youth to get involved in media evangelization.
- Make sure that all the children from Catholic homes are members of the Pontifical Missionary Children (PMC).¹⁰⁴⁹
- Encourage missionary vocations so that capable holy men and women take their faith beyond their lands of origin.¹⁰⁵⁰

The “Prayer for the Year of Faith” says:

¹⁰⁴⁸ John Njue, *We Hold a Treasure that is Jesus Christ Our Lord: Pastoral Letter on the Occasion of the Nativity of Our Lord 2012*, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Privately Printed, 2012, page 6.

¹⁰⁴⁹ At the risk of patting ourselves on the back we can confidently say that PMC is as alive and vibrant in Eastern Africa as anywhere else in the world and can teach Europe and North America a great deal about mission. Where else can you find 40,000 children gather for the annual outdoor PMC Mass such as in Nairobi Archdiocese every February. In joking with Cardinal Pengo in Dar es Salaam and Cardinal Njue in Nairobi I enjoy saying, “One thing for sure. Our East African Cardinals’ favorite activity is PMC.” One reason is that PMC is a deliberate pastoral focus.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Summarized from *Ibid.*, pages 14-15 and “KENYA: Be Agents of Evangelization, advises Cardinal,” *CISA*, 14 December, 2012.

Almighty Father ever living God, we thank you for the gift of faith and the gift of one another. We pray that we Christians within the Archdiocese of Nairobi may come to know and love you in a more personal way, grow in as disciples of your son our Lord Jesus Christ, become actively engaged in the full life of the church and utilize our gifts for building up the Kingdom of God and the salvation of souls.

The Guidelines for celebrating the Year of Faith in Nairobi Archdiocese on the theme “One Faith, One Family, One Church” state:

At the parish level, we are to organize how we can renew our faith especially during our parish days, organize seminars in our SCCs, and have different activities of catechesis, even in our ecclesial groups. It is recommended that at the parish level the creed should be recited throughout the year of faith. All SCCs are encouraged to make use of the *Bible* in their prayer meetings.

Pope Benedict XVI chose “Social Networks: Portals of Truth and Faith: New Spaces for Evangelization” as the theme for the 2013 World Communications Day in the context of the 2012-2013 Year of Faith. One of the most important challenges facing the task of evangelization today is that which is emerging from the digital environment. The communique that announced the theme stated:

During a time in which technology has emerged as part of the fabric of connectivity of human experiences, such as relationships and knowledge, we need to ask: can it help men and women meet Christ in faith? It is not enough to find an adequate language, but rather, it is necessary to learn how to present the Gospel as the answer to that basic human yearning for meaning and faith, which has already found expression online. Such an approach, which will serve to create a more dynamic and humane digital world, requires a new way of thinking. It is not simply a question of how to use the internet as a means of evangelization, but instead of how to evangelize in a context where the lives of people find expression also in the digital arena. In particular, we need to be attentive to the emergence and enormous popularity of social networks, which privilege dialogical and interactive forms of communication and relationships.¹⁰⁵¹

Part of celebrating the 2012-2013 Year of Faith and promoting the New Evangelization in Africa was to study and reflect on the documents of the Second Vatican Council and apply them to our contemporary African world in a new and fresh way. Rahner’s challenge of inculturation and contextualization rings true today:

The church must be inculturated throughout the world if it is to be a World Church...This, then, is the issue: either the church sees and recognizes these essential differences of other cultures for which she should become a World Church and with a Pauline boldness draws the necessary consequences

¹⁰⁵¹ “Social Networks: Portals Of Truth and Faith: New Spaces for Evangelization,” *Vatican Information Service* in email dated 22:175 (1 October, 2012).

from this recognition, or she remains a Western Church and so in the final analysis betrays the meaning of Vatican II.¹⁰⁵²

The Year of Faith can continue in new and creative ways. Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish in Monze Diocese, Zambia has 11 SCCs. They meet every Sunday afternoon. Once a month the SCC members meet all together for a "School of Faith." Various pastoral and spiritual topics are presented and discussed.

47 people participated in a Mwanza Metropolitan Workshop on the theme "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Embrace the Word of God" at the St. Dominic Pastoral Centre in Mwanza, Tanzania from 19 to 22 May, 2014.¹⁰⁵³ Participants included representatives from the eight dioceses of the Lake Victoria Zone in northwestern Tanzania (Mwanza Archdiocese and the dioceses of Bukoba, Bunda, Geita, Kayanga, Musoma, Rulenge Ngara and Shinyanga): one archbishop, one bishop, 11 priests, 5 religious sisters, 21 laymen and 8 laywomen.

In his remarks Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Ruwa'ichi, the Archbishop of Mwanza Archdiocese, emphasized that four priorities in the Catholic Church in Tanzania today come together for "their opportune time" (*wakati mwafaka* in Swahili) that is like a *kairos* moment: The Word of God (*Bible*); the New Evangelization; Small Christian Communities; and the family.

After this SCCs Workshop Febian Pikiti wrote: "Let us encourage one another in this ministry of continuing to build the Church, Family of God around the Small Christian Community that is a communion of families in the neighborhood."¹⁰⁵⁴

Rita Ishengoma reported:

In Bukoba Diocese, Tanzania on 14 August, 2014 we conducted our SCCs Seminar with all diocesan parish priests and lay apostolate group leaders. The main point was to make the SCCs really small for betterment. This was a follow up and implementation of our 2014 Mwanza Metropolitan Workshop and meeting.¹⁰⁵⁵

Rurinjah reported about the activities in Shinyanga Diocese, Tanzania:

The SCCs helped to celebrate the Feast of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ at St. Joseph Cathedral, Ngokolo, Shinyanga, Tanzania on Sunday, 22 June, 2014. Traditionally

¹⁰⁵² Karl Rahner, "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies*, 40, 4 (December, 1979), pp. 718, 724.

¹⁰⁵³ Reports on this workshop can be found on the AMECEA Website (www.amecea.org) as a report in the 23 May, 2014 AMECEA Online Newsletter: [TANZANIA: Catholics are Called to Reflect on the Importance of Various Ministries of the Church](#) and on the SCCs Website under "Tanzania."

¹⁰⁵⁴ Febian Pikiti's email message to the author dated 3 July, 2014.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Rita Ishengoma's email message to the author dated 18 August, 2014.

this is one of the biggest feasts of the year for the Sukuma Ethnic Group and is called *Bulabo* that means “flowers” in the Sukuma language. After the 8 a.m. Mass there was a five hour procession from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. of six kilometers. The theme was “To Take Jesus to the Villages.” The Blessed Sacrament was carried through the town as two thousand people sang and praised God with joyful hearts. Muslims and those who are not Christians also joined the procession. The six SCCs each prepared a Prayer Station where the procession stopped for special prayers and songs.¹⁰⁵⁶

¹⁰⁵⁶ Simon Rurinjah in a conversation with the author in Nairobi on 4 July, 2014. Five photographs of this celebration are posted on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 7 June, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/photo-gallery-2/>

13. SCCs Promote Family and Marriage Ministry in Eastern Africa

1. **Introduction: Two World Synods of Bishops on Family and Marriage (2014-2015)**

The nine AMECEA Countries participated in the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization," in Rome from 5-19 October, 2014. This synod "defined" the "*status quaestionis*" (Latin for "the state of the question") of the topics of family and marriage.¹⁰⁵⁷ Then the AMECEA delegates participated in the second synod – officially called the Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary¹⁰⁵⁸ World" that took place in Rome from 4-25 October, 2015 and sought "working guidelines in the pastoral care of the person and the family."

The total number of participants in the October, 2014 Extraordinary General Assembly was 253 made up of representatives from the five continents divided as follows: 114 presidents of Episcopal Conferences (including seven from the AMECEA Region), 13 heads of the *sui iuris* Eastern Catholic Churches, 25 heads of the dicasteries of the Roman, 9 members of the Ordinary Council of the Secretariat, the secretary general, the under-secretary, 3 nominees from the Union of Superior Generals, and 26 pontifical nominees. Other participants included 8 fraternal delegates, 38 auditors, including 13 married couples, and 16 experts. There were 25 women. The participants included one married couple from the AMECEA Region: Dr. Jean Dieudonné Gatsinga and Emerthe Gatsinga Tumuhayimpundu who are responsible for young families in the Focolare Movement for Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Uganda and who live in Rwanda. The married couple from South Africa were Stephen and Sandra Conway, regional heads for Africa of Retrouvaille.¹⁰⁵⁹

¹⁰⁵⁷ Appendix 22 lists 215 proverbs on this theme of "family and marriage." Six of these proverbs are used in the July to September, 2014 Poll on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website (<http://www.afriprov.org>): "My favorite proverb of the month on "family and marriage" is..." The top voter getters are: *The hoes of two people cultivating together in a field sometimes clash (hit) against each other.* Sukuma (Tanzania) Proverb. *Like ants, eat little and carry the rest back to your home.* Bembe (DRC, Tanzania) Proverb. The *2016 African Proverbs Calendar* has the theme "Family, Marriage and Relationships."

¹⁰⁵⁸ The English word "contemporary" has a more up-to-date, "here and now" meaning than the word "modern." In Swahili see the difference between *kileo* and *kisasa*.

¹⁰⁵⁹ A program to help couples to heal and renew their marriages. Thousands of couples who are heading for cold, unloving relationships or divorce have successfully overcome their marriage problems by attending the program. The Retrouvaille Program consists of a weekend experience combined with a series of 6-12 post-weekend sessions over three months. It provides the tools to help put one's marriage in order again and to rediscover a loving marriage relationship. The main emphasis of the program is on communication in marriage between husband and wife. It gives couples the opportunity to rediscover each other and examine their lives together in a new and positive way.

Eight themes served as guidelines for the discussions at the Extraordinary Synod taken from the *Preparatory Document (Lineamenta)*. A bishop opened each session with an explanation of the theme (topic) of the day. Then a married couple gave their witness on the theme being discussed. The final synthesis called the *Final Report of the Synod (Relatio Synodi)* was used as the *Lineamenta (Guidelines)* for the Ordinary Synod in October, 2015. These two meetings were closely connected to the Eighth World Meeting of Families on the theme “Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive” that took place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA from 22-27 September, 2015.

This important meeting will involve all the People of God – bishops, priests, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful of the Particular Churches of the entire world – all of whom are actively participating in preparations for the meeting through practical suggestions and the crucial support of prayer. Such support [and input] on your part, dear families, is especially significant and more necessary than ever ... May we all, then, pray together so that through these events the Church will undertake a true journey of discernment and adopt the necessary pastoral means to help families face their present challenges with the light and strength that comes from the Gospel.¹⁰⁶⁰

The Vatican asked national bishops' conferences around the world to conduct a wide-ranging survey of Catholics asking for their opinions on church teachings on family,¹⁰⁶¹ marriage, annulments, single-parent families, adoptions, birth control, artificial contraception, abortion, surrogate motherhood (wombs for hire), premarital cohabitation, the culture of non-commitment and the presumption that the marriage bond can be temporary, conditional marriages, common law marriage, mixed or inter-religious marriage, same-sex marriage/unions and divorce.

¹⁰⁶⁰ “Pope Francis Writes to Families Asking for Their Prayers Ahead of October Synod,” 26 February 2014, *Tablet Website*, retrieved on 1 March, 2014, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/texts-speeches-homilies/4/296/pope-francis-writes-to-families-asking-for-their-prayers-ahead-of-october-synod>

The importance of prayer is seen in the joint statement from the Episcopal Conference of Benin and of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM/SCEAM), that concluded by inviting “all Christians, in the joy of the Gospel, to pray, to reflect and to act with the Church on the challenges of today's family,” *International Fides News Service*, 18 June, 2014, Email message dated 18 June, 2014.

¹⁰⁶¹ A request on our African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Facebook Page states: “Please contribute an African Proverb or Saying on ‘family’ and ‘marriage’ for our meeting on Saturday, 23 November, 2013. If possible mention the country and language.” There were 78 responses as of 24 June, 2014. A selection of these examples and others are listed in Appendix No. 22 in Joseph Healey, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*, that is available as a free Ebook on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 16 July, 2014, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/Build_new.pdf
Some of these proverbs are classified into the three categories mentioned later in this chapter.

This survey included the Africa-related challenges especially connected to these 75 African family and marriages issues¹⁰⁶² (listed alphabetically):

abandoned babies,
 abortion,
 abusive and violent husbands due to strong temperament, alcohol and drugs,
 AIDs orphans,
 alcohol and dependency,
 alcoholic family,
 artificial methods of family planning,
 child abuse,
 child-headed families,
 cohabitation (*Come we stay* or *Come we try* common law unions. Also called trial marriages, domestic partnerships and consensual unions),
 communicating the faith to the next generation,
 couples living together before marriage to test female fertility,
 customary marriage,¹⁰⁶³
 displacement of people,
 divorce (including on the grounds of a woman being unable to have children and couples who subsequently remarry),
 domestic violence/violence in the family,
 dowry or bridewealth – sometimes understood as the purchase price of the woman,¹⁰⁶⁴
 drug abuse,
 dysfunctional family,
 early, child and forced marriage (including child mothers),
 Ebola orphans,
 economic injustice,
 economic migration (internal and external),
 economic pressures/financial pressures occasioned by work and certain cultural traditions,
 emotional abuse

¹⁰⁶² While many of these issues are universal, the African context and situation makes them African issues. There is some repetition because these issues are known by different names. The importance of these 73 issues was confirmed by the grassroots reports of the delegates from Eastern Africa at the “AMECEA Pastoral Department Workshop for National Commissions for Marriage and Family Life Apostolate in the AMECEA Region” that took place in Nairobi from 23-27 June, 2014 and other meetings.

¹⁰⁶³ In the African context this is sometimes called traditional marriage. This is a cultural marriage following the customs and traditions of the local African ethnic groups. “Traditional” has many meanings. Worldwide it can refer to the marriage union between a man and a woman.

¹⁰⁶⁴ At the AMECEA Workshop in Nairobi in June, 2014 (see above) the many different traditions and practices of dowry or bridewealth among the nine Eastern African countries were compared and contrasted as well as the many different traditions and practices of dowry or bridewealth among the ethnic groups within a particular country. See examples in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

enslavement and frequent abandonment of women,
 ethnic animosity and tribal discrimination,
 domination of one marriage partner over the other,
 families with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender members,
 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM),¹⁰⁶⁵
 gender-based violence,
 gender inequality,
 generation gap (inter-generational conflicts between parents and children),
 globalization,
 hectic, fast and exhausting pace of work,
 HIV/AIDS including discordant couples,
 homosexual unions and gay marriage,
 human trafficking,
 ignorance,
 impact of poverty on family life,
 inequality between genders,
 infertility,
 infidelity of couples/sexual promiscuity,
 insecurity,
 interfaith marriage issues,
 lack of mutual trust and intimacy,
 levirate marriage (widow inheritance),
 material poverty,
 migration,
 misconception of human rights linked to reproductive health,
 mixed marriages (including inter-faith or interreligious marriages)
 need to travel greater distances to work,
 negative mass media and social media portrait of marriage,
 no boy/son,
 non-commitment of spouses,
 patriarchy in African society,
 philosophy of relativism,
 polygamy,¹⁰⁶⁶
 poverty,
 property grabbing after death of spouse,

¹⁰⁶⁵ Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as “female genital cutting” and “female circumcision,” is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.” Laurenti Magesa feels the word “mutilation” is unfortunate and emphasized by Western specialists from the outside. He comments that an African mother would never consider this cultural ceremony as a “mutilation” of her daughter. Conversation with the author in Nairobi, 19 June, 2014.

¹⁰⁶⁶ During the AMECEA Workshop in June, 2014 (see above) Ethiopian layman Aman Desalegn posed this pastoral question: In Ethiopia there is a new Prefecture called Robe. More than 80% of the population are Muslim. Some Muslim men want to join the Catholic Church with their three or four wives. In the light of present Catholic teaching on marriage, what is the pastoral solution to accommodate these Muslim families?

reformulation of the very concept of family,
 refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs),
 rituals after death,
 same sex unions/homosexual unions and gay marriage,
 sexual abuse
 sexual dysfunctions,
 single parents (single mothers and single fathers),¹⁰⁶⁷
 street children and street youth,
 Sugar Daddies/Sugar Mommies,
 tensions with Muslims (related to interreligious dialog),
 terrorism,
 urbanization,
 use of contraceptives,
 violence,
 war,
 witchcraft and superstition,
 youth unemployment.

This survey was part of the 39 questions in the eight-page *Preparatory Document* (*Lineamenta*) to the synod that is also available online. It has been translated into Amharic, Bemba, Chewa, Ganda, Swahili, Tumbuka and other languages in Eastern Africa.

Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, secretary general of the Vatican's Synod of Bishops, asked the conferences to distribute the poll "immediately as widely as possible to deaneries and parishes so that input from local sources can be received."¹⁰⁶⁸ This represents a significant shift in thinking in the Vatican. Bishop Marcello Semeraro of Albano Diocese, Italy and secretary of the Council of Cardinals, "dismissed criticism of the decision to circulate a public questionnaire ahead of October's Synod of Bishops on the family. 'The beauty of this moment is that the church feels encouraged to ask questions,' he said. 'The church doesn't just have answers; it also needs to ask questions.'"¹⁰⁶⁹

Another shift of thinking is in the process or method of the synod. Pope Francis has indicated that the synods will be more collegial and more participatory. This will promote affective and effective communion that is a constitutive part of the collegial government of Synod of Bishops. This means practicing "effective collegiality" by granting bishops participation in the central government of the church. Hungarian Jesuit Canon Lawyer Father

¹⁰⁶⁷ While we often refer to the reality of single mothers in Africa, the number of single fathers is increasing.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Lorenzo Baldisseri in Joshua McElwee, "Vatican Asks for Parish-level Input on Synod Document," National Catholic Reporter (NCR), 31 October, 2013, National Catholic Reporter Website, retrieved 4 November, 2013, <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/vatican-asks-parish-level-input-synod-document>

¹⁰⁶⁹ Marcello Semeraro quoted in John Allan, "'Francis Revolution' Rolls On in Both Symbols and Substance," National Catholic Reporter Website, retrieved on 30 January, 2014, <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-revolution-rolls-both-symbols-and-substance>

Ladislav Orsy, SJ stated: “It is reasonable to anticipate that soon, in October this year, we shall be watching a synod operating on a new pattern.”¹⁰⁷⁰

Part of this new pattern is for bishops, priests, brothers, and sisters to become more of a “Listening Church.” Traditionally bishops are officially part of the “Teaching Church.” But regarding the topics of family and marriage they need to become part of the “Listening Church.” – to listen to the lived experience of lay people, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, even youth and children. Nigerian theologian Father Elochukwu Uzukwu’s describes

¹⁰⁷⁰ Orsy writes further: “From our historical vantage point, we know that John Paul II and Benedict XVI chose (without saying it explicitly) to govern monarchically. Their policy consisted of calling on the bishops for advice, in the spirit of “affective collegiality”, but they never invited them to practice “effective collegiality” by granting them participation in the central government of the Church. Enter Francis. In his 1 April, 2014 letter, which is really an internal communication made public, he described bishops as his collaborators exercising effective collegiality with the Pope. As a foundational principle, he declared that he sees in the episcopal synod a manifestation of collegiality: “The synodal activity in virtue of episcopal order mirrors [represents] that affective and effective communion which constitutes the Synod of Bishops’ primary purpose... Then Francis clarifies that he wants to promote affective and effective communion in obedience to Vatican II: ‘I wish to give full value [*desidero valorizzare*] to this precious heritage of the council.’” Ladislav Orsy, “Francis’ New Order,” *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)*, 19 June, 2014, and *Tablet*, 19 June, 2014, *Tablet Website*, retrieved 21 June, 2014, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/2624/francis-new-order>

Pope Francis’ celebration of the 50 years of the Synod of Bishops.

The last level is that of the universal Church. Here the Synod of Bishops, representing the Catholic episcopate, becomes an expression of episcopal collegiality within a fully synodal church. Two different words: “episcopal collegiality” and “fully synodal Church”. It manifests *collegialitas affectiva*, which can in some circumstances become “effective,” linking the bishops to each other and to the pope in care for the People of God.

<http://brisbanecatholic.org.au/articles/on-the-road-listening-more-than-hearing/>

In an interview with the author at Georgetown University on 9 October, 2014, Orsy confirmed that “affective collegiality” involves a consultative process by the world bishops while “effective collegiality” involves a deliberative process (decision-making that includes voting to reach a consensus). Francis wants national bishops’ conferences to be more involved in the collegial process and ideally present a consensus view on a particular pastoral topic from the grassroots level. The Holy Spirit works through the consensus of these local bishops.

Orsy said that SCCs are operating as a canonical, juridical units. SCCs include both the territorial model (church in the neighborhood) and the specialized model (members with like interests such as Georgetown alumni in the Washington, DC area forming SCCs). They have both canonical and spiritual dimensions. We agreed that the Catholic Church needs an African Avery Dulles to develop the Church as Family of God Model of Church and the Small Christian Communities Model of Church.

insightfully how church leaders need to become more of a “Listening Church.”¹⁰⁷¹ It can be rightly asked: How much do Catholic Church leaders in Africa know about (alphabetically): families that have sexual abusers, families with abusers of alcohol, forced marriages of young girls to older men, homosexuals (gays, lesbians); marriages with domestic abuse; marriages with sexual abuse; and economically poor single mothers?

In AMECEASmall Christian Communities (SCCs) were part of this consultation process especially through their parishes and national bishops’ conferences. SCC members in Eastern Africa contributed answers to the survey questions whose results were coordinated by the Pastoral Departments of the national bishops’ conferences in the AMECEA Region.¹⁰⁷² For example, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) answered the 39 questions in a 25-page document. SCCs are mentioned seven times including these statements: “Strengthen Small Christian Community discussions on the family as a Domestic Church.” “The Catholic Church has provided ministers, support groups and Small Christian Communities to support and journey with couples in crisis situations.” “Small Christian Communities should participate fully in family issues.”

SCC members also sent their answers and comments directly to the Synod of Bishops Office in Rome¹⁰⁷³ and through other groups and organizations (like the Focolare Movement). Overall, however, this grassroots consultation was not widespread in Eastern Africa.

This process has been an opportunity to talk about the pastoral needs of people in real situations in Africa. It was hoped that the two synods will provide a realistic assessment of family life today and propose concrete pastoral approaches to meeting these challenges. A 19 November, 2013 “Editorial” in the *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)* states: “There is the danger that the media-rich West could dominate the discussion. Care will have to be taken to hear the voices of families in the Global South.” Voices of lay people “on the ground” in Africa can make an important contribution to the future of the family based on and in the light of the Gospel and African cultural values. Delegates from the AMECEA Countries can emphasize key “African” priorities and points in their “Interventions” at the World Synods of Bishops in Rome in October, 2014 and October, 2015. The voice and practical pastoral experience of the African Church is very important at these universal meetings.

¹⁰⁷¹ See *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*, Orbis Books, 1996, Wif & Stock Publishers, 2006.

¹⁰⁷² The AMECEA Pastoral Department synthesized the answers from the nine AMECEA countries for joint discussion and further planning at the AMECEA Plenary Assembly in Lilongwe, Malawi in July, 2014. One topic was “New evangelization as an opportunity to work towards true conversion and witnessing to Christian faith, with emphasis on the role of Family Life and Small Christian Communities.”

¹⁰⁷³ It is gratifying that our report “Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Promote Family Ministry/Family Life Apostolate in Eastern Africa” was received by the Synod of Bishops Office in the Vatican with this answer: “Thank you for your e-mail and the attached file which we have printed out and delivered to those who are analyzing and summarizing the responses and observations to the questions in the Preparatory Document. Please convey our appreciation for the work, effort and concern involved!”

Yet an example of how these Vatican documents are often written from a too Western perspective is pointed out by Laurenti Magesa:

The *Lineamenta* tries to list some of the striking features of the present situation, including – to mention only those most immediately urgent in the African churches – premarital cohabitation, single-parent families, polygamy,¹⁰⁷⁴ and dowry or bridewealth. To say, as the *Lineamenta* does, that these are situations that “were unheard of until a few years ago” does not reflect the African reality. Polygamy and bridewealth as social institutions in Africa predate by far Christian evangelization, and all indications show that they are not about to disappear.¹⁰⁷⁵

He adds:

Implied here, it seems, is the recognition that ‘family’ is experienced differently in different places, to which experiences the Gospel should be applied. Hence the need for Local Churches around the world to bring concrete ”proposals” from their own situations to this dialogical table of the universal church, confident that – as She has always consistently done – the Holy Spirit will show us the way through whatever human muddle we may be in at the moment...

Without popular involvement [of the African Churches] in the process, the “pastoral policies” arising out of it will remain simply another in the long list of those impractical Catholic curiosities as far as the life of the people is concerned.¹⁰⁷⁶

To use the words of Pope Francis may the African delegates at the two synods be “bold and creative.”

2. Analyzing the Reality of Family and Marriage in Eastern Africa Today

¹⁰⁷⁴ Laurenti Magesa presents some interesting and challenging pastoral questions and solutions on polygamy in “Reflections on Marriage in Africa,” Nairobi: Unpublished paper 2014.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Laurenti Magesa, “The Synod on the Family and Africa,” Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church (CTEWC) Website, retrieved on 6 June, 2014, <http://www.catholicethics.com/forum-submissions/the-synod-on-the-family-and-africa>

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Before answering the questions it is helpful to use Step One “See” of the Pastoral Spiral to analyze the local reality of family and marriage in Eastern Africa today.¹⁰⁷⁷ “Family and Faith” was the theme of Week Two in the Kenyan Lenten Campaign 2014 booklet *How Can We Be One?...for the Sanctification and Salvation of All People*. In the “Preface” to the booklet Archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth, Chairman of Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, states:

This year Pope Francis has called a special synod on the family. He wants the synod to examine the pastoral challenges experienced by families. The topic for Week 2 is “Family and Faith.” The institution of the family is continuously being challenged. In Kenya we have seen proposed laws touching on family and marriages presented in parliament that do not take into account both the African and Christian values. In our discussions we must look for ways we can fight this monster that has come to destroy the family. We need to have a unity of purpose for us to address this challenge.”¹⁰⁷⁸

Using the “See,” “Judge”¹⁰⁷⁹ and “Act” method/process, the Situational Analysis Section identifies 10 challenges to the family in Kenya today:

The family today is faced with many challenges that threaten to tear it apart. They include an anti-Christian culture, divorce, busyness, absent parent figure, indiscipline, financial pressures,¹⁰⁸⁰ lack of communication, negative media influences, balance of work and family and materialism.¹⁰⁸¹

¹⁰⁷⁷ The Editorial in the 20 September, 2014 *Tablet* states: “Accepting marriage as it is means accepting people as they are, warts and all – and their relationships as they are, stressed, broken, or harmonious and calm.” “Frowns Do Not Defend Marriage,” *The Tablet* Website, retrieved on 19 September, 2014 <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/downloadpdf/200914issue.pdf> The phrase “warts and all” means “The whole including all the blemishes, faults and and shortcomings -- not concealing the less attractive parts.” This phrase is said to derive from Oliver Cromwell (Lord Protector of England in the 17th Century)’s instructions to the painter Sir. Peter Lely, when commissioning his portrait.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Zacchaeus Okoth, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *How Can We Be One?...for the Sanctification and Salvation of All People*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2014, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2014, p. 7.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Calling the second step “discerning” or “interpreting” or “analysing” or “evaluating” is preferred by some because the English word “judge” is associated with the negative, critical meaning of the words “judgement” and “judgemental.” There is a positive side as in “making wise and honest judgements or decisions.”

¹⁰⁸⁰ One concrete example is the seemingly endless challenge and nagging concern of paying school fees especially in primary and secondary school. This affects many African families across the board.

¹⁰⁸¹ Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *How Can We Be One?* p. 19.

The AMECEA Pastoral Department based in Nairobi, Kenya in November, 2013 also identified 10 challenges or problems under the heading: “Reality of the Problem Being Addressed:

Many families in the AMECEA Region, and indeed around the world face a lot of challenges such as: separation, divorce, cohabitation, polygamy, poor parenting, economic problems, impact of education systems, the distortion of the meaning of marriage, gender violence and other abuses that negatively affect the family.¹⁰⁸²

This research is part of its *Strategic Plan for 2013-2016* that focuses on “The Christian Family Life Campaign for the Protection of the Dignity and Value of Marriage and Family Life.”

Cieslikiewicz assesses the Tanzanian situation this way:

Above all the big question emerges: how are we to promote a powerfully supportive Christian community-culture of God’s family against family dissolution and despite the pressures of the media and of a hedonistic society? Not only are family values attacked, but also the phenomenon of single mothers, divorces and free unions threaten the institution of the family. In this way life in communion and its expressions are threatened more and more by individualism and materialism.¹⁰⁸³

All this local reality is within the context of (alphabetically) growing consumerism, globalization, materialism, relativism, secularism/secularization and urbanization throughout Africa.

Pope Francis challenges us to look at and respond to the present family reality. In Africa countries where most people “can identify at once with Jesus who was poor and marginalized,” the pope said, Catholics provide loving service to “God’s most vulnerable sons and daughters: widows, single mothers, the divorced, children at risk and especially the several million AIDS orphans, many of whom head households in rural areas.”¹⁰⁸⁴

A recent 2013 study in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Karen, Nairobi, Kenya identified the following 12 factors that contribute to the lack of marital commitment: sexual dissatisfaction; violence to children and spouse; absence of love; conflict in roles; family interference; childlessness in marriage; infidelity in marriage; failure to cooperate with each

¹⁰⁸² See AMECEA Pastoral Department, “Training and Capacity Building for the Coordinators of National Commissions for Marriage and Family Life in the AMECEA Countries.” Nairobi: Privately Published, 2013.

¹⁰⁸³ Christopher Cieslikiewicz, “Urban Small Christian Communities,” p. 92.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Francis, “Violence against Women Harms Society, Pope Tells African Bishops, *Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) Email News Bulletin*. Issue No. 35, Tuesday, 29 September, 2014. and on the CISA Website, <http://cisanewsafrika.com/vatican-violence-against-women-harms-society-pope-tells-african-bishops>

other; personality conflict; problem of mixed marriage; couples from different cultural backgrounds; and challenges of the extended family.¹⁰⁸⁵

Mrs. Rose Musimba, Kenyan lay woman, the former Chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council of Holy Trinity Parish, Buruburu I, Nairobi and a member of our Eastern Africa SCCs Training Team, affirms many of these challenges and factors in the following comments on the changes in Kenya society:

There is a lack of commitment to a permanent marriage. If a couple feel their marriage is not working, they just split up. There is more emphasis on conditional marriages. If certain conditions don't work out, the two people separate and go their own way. Even with plenty of marriage counseling, many couples don't focus on the basis issues and easily give up in their marriages. If we remove God from marriage we are done. Without Christian values we are finished.¹⁰⁸⁶

Simon Rurinjah, Kenyan layman, evangelist and a member of our Eastern Africa SCCs Training Team (who died in 2015) pointed out:

Some of the challenges in Kenya threaten to tear up our Catholic families such as divorce caused by financial pressures. If a married woman is earning more than her husband there is often no compromise and the marriage is often in danger and it is hard to maintain peace and unity. The wife is often the first to go to the court and file for a divorce. There is little chance to educate the children. Couples stop praying to God who joined them together. Where there is no justice and peace how can we expect this family to be a Domestic Church Family of God.¹⁰⁸⁷

Tanzanian Sister Rita Ishengoma, STH, a member of our Eastern Africa SCCs Training Team based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, says that one of the challenges of SCCs in Tanzania is involving men in the SCC Meetings:

A family without a father is "wounded." So is a SCC without the presence of men. Men are not against SCCs, but they need to be approached. They will be interested to come when our meetings are timely and serious. Men are like that everywhere.¹⁰⁸⁸

¹⁰⁸⁵ Solomon Gbaki, *The Pastoral Challenge of Marital Commitment: A Case Study of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Karen, Nairobi*, Nairobi: Unpublished Long Essay at Don Bosco Utume Salesian Theological College, 2014.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Rose Musimba, cellphone interview with the author, 29 January, 2014.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Simon Rurinjah, conversation with the author, 29 January, 2014.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Rita Ishengoma, "Three Challenges of SCCs in Tanzania," Bukoba: Unpublished Report, 1 page.

Premarital cohabitation with no intentions of legally binding obligations is increasing worldwide. In Kenya it is described as a *Come we stay* (a popular Kenyan saying) or *Come we try* (a more recent version) arrangement when a man and a woman begin living together. It is especially an urban phenomenon. During a mass wedding of 34 couples at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Kiambu, Nairobi, Kenya in December, 2013 the *National Mirror* reports that “Cardinal John Njue reached out to couples who have not solemnized their unions and are living in *Come we stay* arrangements, urging them to take the bold step and embrace the sacrament of marriage.”¹⁰⁸⁹ He challenged parents saying that the dowry should not be a stumbling block for financial reasons, but ought to cement the bonds of love and family. Njue said that dowry cannot be greater than God.

In a related example Cardinal Njue visited Christ the King Church, Kangemi, Nairobi on 30 March, 2014. He said that this is the “Year of the Family and Marriage” and challenged Catholic parents of demanding too much dowry. There are parents who are willing to arrange the marriage of their children but are unable because the father of the groom does not enough dowry for his son. Other parents deny the wedding in the church unless the full customary dowry is paid.

Njue gave an example of a father who arranged for a man to marry his daughter in the Catholic Church. The customary dowry was paid in the Kikuyu tradition. The wedding was announced and the groom asked Cardinal Njue to join them during their wedding and the cardinal agreed. With one week remaining before the wedding in the church the parents of the bride requested 200,000 Kenyan shillings (approximately \$2,225) more from the groom. He failed to raise the money and so the church wedding had to stop. The cardinal sent for the father of the bride to discuss this new demand. But the father of the bride said to the parish priest to allow the wedding to continue since he didn’t want to have to face the cardinal. Cardinal Njue informed the parents that marriage is a sacrament and not something for parents to get rich.¹⁰⁹⁰

There is a similar situation to *Come we stay* in Uganda. *Kasefuliya* is the Ganda word for “small cooking pot.” It is used to symbolize the domestic arrangement of a couple living together before they get married in the Catholic Church. The Ganda noun for the state of marriage is *bufumbo* from the verb *kufumba* that means “to cook.”

Openness to the possibility of communion for divorced and remarried Catholics is a complex issue. In preparation for the October, 2014 World Synod of Bishops this was the most talked about topic in Europe especially in Germany. It is less discussed in Africa. Univision (February, 2014) conducted a scientific poll of more than 12,000 Catholics in 12 countries representing Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America. The results represent an interesting snapshot of current opinion within the body of the Catholic Church. There was a question: Do you agree or disagree with Catholic Church policy on divorce that says “An individual who has divorced and remarried outside of the Catholic Church, is living in sin which prevents them from receiving Communion”? The results were as follows:

¹⁰⁸⁹ Kamau Gitau, “A Long Walk Down the Aisle,” *National Mirror*, 01:14 (January/February, 2014), p. 18.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Reported by Simon Rurinjah.

Europe (France, Italy, Poland and Spain)

Agree: 19%

Disagree: 75%

No answer: 6%

Africa (Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC and Uganda)

Agree: 75%

Disagree: 19%

No answer: 6%¹⁰⁹¹

On the results of the poll Italian Cardinal Carlo Caffarra, the Archbishop of Bologna, Italy, observes:

75% of most countries in Africa are against allowing the divorced and remarried to receive communion. And so I ask again: which expectations are we talking about? Those of Africa or Europe? Does the Western world have the monopoly on what the Church should preach? Are we still stuck in that paradigm or have we started to listen, even just a little bit, to the poor? I am left perplexed when it is said we must go in a certain direction or there is no point in having the synod. Which direction? The direction desired by middle Europe? Well, why not the direction desired by the African community?¹⁰⁹²

During a SCCs Workshop in Lusaka, Zambia in December, 2013 Mulenga said that he is very compassionate and empathetic with couples he knows in Zambia who had a bad first marriage, got remarried and have been living together in a happy, stable marriage for 20 years or so – and are faithful Catholics who regularly participate in Sunday Mass. He said the Zambian Bishops are open to finding ways to help these people to be able to receive communion.¹⁰⁹³

In talking informally with various pastoral agents in Eastern Africa I hear suggestions that the Catholic Church should not be rigid, but flexible in dealing with these pastoral problems. Marriage cases should must be looked at on a one-by-one basis. Some comments: Young African Catholic girls can be forced into even sacrament marriages due to family, cultural and dowry pressures – often marrying men much older than them. An example was given of a couple in a valid sacramental marriage who had four children. The husband left his wife and children. The wife remained a practicing Catholic and raised faithfully raised her children in the Catholic Church. She wanted a father for her children so remarried “outside” of the Catholic Church and now has a long time, stable marriage. How can she be helped to receive the sacraments again?

Financial/economic pressures are a challenge that is constantly discussed and prayed about in our SCCs in Eastern Africa. A particular problem is “school fees.”

¹⁰⁹¹Univision Global Survey of Roman Catholics, Bendixen and Amadi International Website, retrieved on 9 March, 2014, <http://bendixenandamadi.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

¹⁰⁹² “Cardinal Caffarra Expresses Serious Concerns about Family Synod Debates,” “ZENIT: The World Seen from Rome,” email message dated 24 March, 2014.

¹⁰⁹³ Clement Mulenga in a conversation with the author in Lusaka, Zambia on 4 December, 2013.

SCCs members, especially in poorer areas, are constantly looking for money to pay the fees and needs of their children in primary schools and high schools. Another issue is the effect of two working (and salaried) parents on the quality of family life. With fulltime jobs they are spending less and less time at home. The education of their children suffers.

A situational analysis in Eastern Africa identified various abuses in the family as an important concern. The AMECEA Report at the Continental SCCs Workshop in Karen in September, 2012 under the theme “Ways to Implement Reconciliation, Justice and Peace” stated that we need to look at the concrete situations of life in the light of the Gospel (e.g. good governance, democratic space, child abuse and child protection). SCC members have opportunities to participate in awareness building and training workshops. The Spec Training and Consultancy Centre (STCC) in Nairobi is conducting workshops on Child Protection Policies in Nairobi in 2014.

To summarize this overall analysis, here is part of the Chairman of AMECEA Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel’s intervention at the synod on “The Pastoral Challenges of the Family, External Pressures on the Family” (*Instrumentum Laboris* Nos. 70 – 75) at the October, 2014 World Synod of Bishops itself: The pastoral challenges that face the Catholic families in Africa are (author’s **bold**):

1. **Poverty**: material poverty forces husbands or wives to migrate within countries or go to neighboring countries or abroad, especially in the Arab world. This creates cracks in the marriage bond.
2. **Migration** is also linked to trafficking and also dispersion of children, who most of the time spill over to become street children and prone to be trafficked and abused.
3. **HIV and AIDS**:¹⁰⁹⁴ a disease which creates division in the family and

¹⁰⁹⁴ This very important challenge/problem for Africa has a surprising history. Given its very serious effect on marriage, family and relationships in general, it has received very little attention. It is significant that HIV and AIDS was not specifically mentioned in the 39 questions of the original questionnaire. Some African countries such as Kenya did not mention HIV and AIDS in its answer to the last question: “What other challenges or proposals do you consider urgent of useful to treat?” The coordinator of the compilation of answers in Kenya said that this was an oversight due to the pressure of limited time. Author’s interview with Kenyan laywoman Theresa Abuya, Nairobi, Kenya, 25 June 2014.

HIV and AIDS was not mentioned in the *Final Report of the Synod*, another indication of the Western influence on the synod discussions and documentation. Cameroonian African theologian Father Jacquineau Azetsop, SJ says “HIV was totally absent. The synod was totally dominated by issues from the first world. It is unfortunate that African bishops forgot about it also.” Email to the author dated 1 December, 2014. Commentators in North America and Europe are merely saying that the HIV and AIDS problem is being handled by medicine (that is, the “cocktail” of anti-retroviral drugs). This is fueled by news reports in the West such as:

frequently divorce. Usually, both parents are affected and, sometimes both die, leaving children under the care of grandparents.¹⁰⁹⁵ **NOTE:** “71% of the 35 million people living with HIV and AIDS in the world live in sub-Saharan Africa. The call by (UNAIDS) to close the gap around access to HIV services will not be met unless the delivery of antiretroviral treatment (ARV) is radically reshaped into community-led approaches that adapt to the realities of those living with HIV.”¹⁰⁹⁶

It is very important to understand that these three challenges are interconnected and interrelated and part of Africa’s overall social, cultural, economic and political context and reality.

Souraphiel balances these problem areas by saying (author’s **bold**):

In order to strengthen Catholic families in the region, the positive elements of **traditional African family values** (e.g. respect for life, love of children, respect of mothers, right influence of the extended family, respect for elders, etc.) need to be taught in schools, in parishes, and in institutions... In spite of the many challenges and difficulties of married life, there is also **joy and happiness in Catholic families**. There are saints in family life: grandparents, parents, children, and even unborn children.¹⁰⁹⁷

HIV is evolving to become less deadly and less infectious, according to a major scientific study. The team at the University of Oxford shows the virus is being "watered down" as it adapts to our immune systems. It said it was taking longer for HIV infection to cause AIDS and that the changes in the virus may help efforts to contain the pandemic. Some virologists suggest the virus may eventually become "almost harmless" as it continues to evolve.

James Gallagher, “HIV evolving ‘into milder form,’” BBC News Website, 1 December 2014, retrieved on 2 December, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/health-30254697>

¹⁰⁹⁵ Chairman of AMECEA Cardinal Berhaneyesus D. Souraphie’s intervention began: “I speak on behalf of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) whose chairman I have been elected by my brother bishops in our Plenary in Malawi in July, 2014. AMECEA is a regional association which is comprised of eleven countries in Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa, together with Djibouti and Somalia as affiliated members...” The full text of his presentation is published in *AMECEA Online Newsletter* , No. 70 (14 November, 2014), AMECEA Website, retrieved 14 November, 2014, http://amecea.blogspot.com/2014/11/ethiopia-extract-of-chairman-of-amecea.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=5720a96ca8-AMECEA+Online+Newsletter+6+5+2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-5720a96ca8-6746297

¹⁰⁹⁶ “Flexibility in Health Systems and Community Approach that Adapts to the Daily Realities of HIV-positive People,” *Fides News*, 29 November, 2014

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

3. **Answers to the First Four Questions in the Questionnaire/Survey of the *Lineamenta* of the 2014 Synod of Bishops**

The first four questions in the questionnaire/survey treated the teaching of the Catholic Church's post-conciliar magisterium on the family and marriage under the title "The Diffusion of the Teachings on the Family in Sacred Scripture and the Church's Magisterium." This is a deductive approach, from the top down. An inductive approach, starting with the reality of family and marriage in the world today, would have been more creative and helpful. The word "diffusion" is one of those Latin-English words that is hard for the ordinary Catholic to understand similar to "dissemination" or "propagation." Better expressions would be "communication" or "transmission."

Concerning the Catholic Church's teaching, in his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis offers pastors of the Catholic Church guidance on how to interpret traditional teaching concerning marriage and family life. One principle is that "the Church has rules or precepts which may have been quite effective in their time, but no longer have the same usefulness for directing and shaping people's lives" (No. 43). Another was that "the Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak" (No. 47). These words are particularly relevant to two of the most contentious issues raised in present consultation on marriage and family life: contraception and the admission of divorced and remarried Catholics to Holy Communion.

The Local Churches in African can make a special contribution to these questions. AMECEA emphasizes developing SCCs as a concrete expression and realization of the Church as Family Model of Church that reflects the Ecclesiology of communion of Vatican II. The 1994 First African Synod developed the specific ecclesial identity of the Church as Family of God in Africa while the 2009 Second African Synod focused more on the pastoral and mission activities of this Church as Family of God in Africa, namely to work toward reconciliation, justice and peace.

St. John Paul II's 1995 Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Africa* Number 63, under "The Church as God's Family" states: "It is earnestly to be hoped that theologians in Africa will work out the theology of the Church as Family with all the riches contained in this concept, showing its complementarity with other images of the Church." In this Church as Family of God Model of Church, along with parish-based SCCs and lectionary-based SCCs, we can talk of family-based SCCs. In Eastern Africa a SCC is a communion of families. SCCs made up of families are Africa's strength. SCCs are part of the "Communion of Communities Model of Church."

As African theologians explore more deeply the "Church as Family of God Model of Church," we see the growing importance of the "Small Christian Community Model of Church" that is closely related to the "Communion of Communities Model of Church" and the "Communitarian Model of Church." The Communitarian/Participatory/Collaborative/Circular/Inductive/Bottom-up Model can be compared and contrasted to the Hierarchical/Institutional/Pyramid/Deductive/Top-down Model.¹⁰⁹⁸

¹⁰⁹⁸ See the section "Small Christian Communities: Ecclesiologies and Models of Church" in Kieran Flynn, *Communities for the Kingdom: A Handbook for Small Christian*

How is the recent praxis of SCCs in Africa contributing to the development of the theology of the Church as Family of God? African cultural relationships and communal life are the foundations that provides a developing model of a church based on the African family. Small Christian Communities are affirmed as the fundamental building blocks of the Church as Family of God in Africa. Stated another way, SCCs are the ideal foundational units of building the Church as Family of God.

In the *Final Message of the Bishops of Africa to the People of God* of the First African Synod, Section 28 on "The Church as Family and Small Christian Communities" the bishops state: "The Church, the Family of God, implies the creation of small communities at the human level, living or basic ecclesial communities... These individual Churches as Families have the task of working to transform society." Democratic Republic of the Congo theologian Father Bénézet Bujo emphasizes that "the bishops of the African Synod declared that the Church in Africa should make the family model their own and Small Christian Communities have stressed this concept of family."¹⁰⁹⁹ Irish missionary and theologian Father Kieran Flynn, SPS asserts: "It is in being transforming communities [of themselves and others] that SCCs realize their ecclesial identity in the Church as Family Model."¹¹⁰⁰

We continue to explore in depth how the praxis and theology of SCCs are an integral part of a relevant and credible African Ecclesiology based on the Church as Family of God. This is within the context of the AMECEA priority of developing a theological framework of addressing key issues and challenges of "New Evangelization in Solidarity in the AMECEA Countries."

4. SCCs' Involvement in Family and Marriage Ministry and Evangelization

First it is important to understand the African context for marriage, family and raising children. Traditionally marriage in Africa is not just between a man and a woman, but between two families and even two clans. The children belong to the community and not just to the biological parents. Bujo asserts:

For African marriage is not a private affair but embraces the extended families¹¹⁰¹ of both husband and wife, the living dead and the yet unborn. The

Community Leaders, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* Nos. 181-182, 2007, pp. 67-81.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Bujo, Bénézet, *Plea for Change of Models of Marriage*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009, p. 14.

¹¹⁰⁰ Flynn, *Communities*, p. 99.

¹¹⁰¹ Tanzanian theologian Father Laurenti Magesa and other African theologians and scholars emphasize that "extended family" originates from a Western sociological conception of family structures. For Africans this wide network of aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc. is simply "family" or on a wider scale "clan." Many have pointed out that this wide family network is the Africans' worst enemy as well as best friend. This family solidarity system

Western model of marriage that distinguishes between the civil and the religious has little meaning. Marriage is always religious... There is no marriage without both God and the ancestors.¹¹⁰²

Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins help in raising the children. Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel states: “As Pope Francis is pointing out to the world, if it listens, to defend the family, especially the Christian Family based on fathers and mothers including the grandparents.” We have some interesting Case Studies of the specific importance of the grandparents in passing on the Catholic Faith to their grandchildren. The SCCs and the *Mahber* can be important support groups in which this takes place. This is so well expressed in the picturesque Sukuma, Tanzania proverb *One knee does not bring up a child*.

This important role of the wider community is seen in the many “African Proverbs and Sayings Related to Small Christian Communities (SCCs)” listed in Appendix 22 on pages 555-558 of the Ebook *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa* by Joseph Healey. The African value of community is expressed in the conviction of the fundamental African proverb *I am because we are; we are because I am*.¹¹⁰³ This has important implications for SCC Members. They accompany the betrothed couple on each stage of their whole marriage journey. Among the Sukuma people in Tanzania sometimes the priest blesses the handing over of the cows (the dowry) from the father of the bridegroom to the father of the bride in a religious ceremony followed by a festive meal. SCC members participate and give support.

Yet some of these values are changing in contemporary Africa especially through urbanization and secularism/secularization.

The Fourth Arua, Uganda Diocesan Synod 2005 described the close link between families and SCCs:

We will be empowering the Christians and Christian Communities. This means that all stakeholders intensify their activities right from the families, Small Christian Communities, Chapels, Parish, Diocesan departments and institutions. Much has to be done to the families and SCCs so that they became a center for the spiritual and material development of the Christians. Therefore the role of parents and SCCs should be reinforced in order to change the negative attitudes of the people.

(called “the economy of affection”) can help needy members, but the more financially successful members can be constantly preyed upon by their “poor cousins.”

¹¹⁰² Bujo, Bénézet, *Plea for Change of Models of Marriage*, p. 17.

¹¹⁰³ See Chapter III on “Marriage and Family Life” in *African Cultural Domains Book 2: Cycle of Family and Interpersonal Relationships*, edited by Michael Kirwen, Nairobi: MIAS Books, 2010.

SCCs are involved in family ministry/family life apostolate/family evangelization¹¹⁰⁴ that includes marriage ministry,¹¹⁰⁵ youth ministry, and a variety of other pastoral ministries and spiritual ministries. Research on the 180,000 SCCs in Eastern Africa reveals two approaches that work together. Family ministry is carried out in the SCCs that have an ecclesial identity in themselves. Parish-based SCCs elect lay ministers/animators/coordinators for:

1. Specific groups: Couples (married and engaged), Youth and Children.
2. Specific pastoral ministries: Catechesis, Justice and Peace, Religious Education, Sacraments and Spiritual/Religious Formation.

SCC members also actively participate in family ministry and marriage ministry on the outstation, subparish and parish levels.

The series of six questions in the questionnaire on “The Pastoral Care of the Family in Evangelization” is particularly relevant to SCCs in Eastern Africa. One question asks: “What pastoral care has the Church provided in supporting couples in formation and couples in crisis situations?”

A beautiful Case Study of pastoral care and inculturation is “Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage at the Small Christian Community (SCC) Level in Malawi” by Malawian Montfort priest Samuel Satiele, SMM. He vividly describes a wedding mass that took place at the home of the bride (matrilineal society) in a SCC in Namitembo Parish, Zomba Diocese, Malawi with this evaluation:

This practice restores the communitarian aspect of the African family which is vital. By registering the marriage at that SCC, involving counselors of that SCC, announcing marriage bands at that SCC and celebrating the sacrament itself at that SCC, the local community is involved. There is greater participation of relatives and this makes them feel part and parcel of the process.¹¹⁰⁶

By celebrating marriages in the homes of SCC members many more people in the neighborhood participate. This includes friends and neighbors who are not Catholics and Muslims. SCCs have a special way of being inclusive that could not happen at the parish church.

SCCs in Eastern Africa choose one of its lay members (usually a married person) to be responsible for marriage ministry. This leader both advises young people to

¹¹⁰⁴ These three expressions are used interchangeably.

¹¹⁰⁵ Marriage ministry is inclusive of marriage counseling that can be very “problem-centered” (couples having marital difficulties) and encouraging/advising/helping young couples to get married in a sacramental marriage.

¹¹⁰⁶ The full Case Study is available on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/malawi/55-malawi.html>

sacramentalize their marriages in church and counsels couples who are having marital difficulties. Musimba points out:

The SCC members more easily notice problems among couples. One or two women in the SCC should take the wife apart privately. One or two men in the SCC should take the husband apart privately. Then the SCC members should talk with the couple together to encourage dialog among them. Prayer is important throughout.¹¹⁰⁷

Segment Two of the video *The Church in the Neighborhood: Small Christian Communities* portrays “Services (Ministries) in the SCC” with a focus on the SCCs in St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese. One very important and necessary service/ministry is “Marriage Animator/Marriage Counselor.” The video points out that “more than half of our Catholic married people have never received the sacrament of marriage” and thus cannot receive the sacrament of the Eucharist. Solutions are discussed in the SCC regarding problems such as high dowry payments, drunkenness, financial irresponsibility and opposition to mixed marriages.¹¹⁰⁸

Statistics in Nairobi Archdiocese show as many as 60% of Catholic couples have not sacramentalized their marriages (had their marriages blessed in church). Thus they cannot receive communion.¹¹⁰⁹ “The traditional reasons of the high dowry payment and high cost of the wedding itself (including the reception) remain, but other new reasons have strongly emerged. First, young Catholics are reluctant to make permanent, lifetime commitments.¹¹¹⁰ They prefer living together for a period of time to “test” their relationship. This is related to the *Come we stay* arrangement when a man and a woman begin living together before formalizing their marriage. Second, as Kenyan diocesan priest Father Deogratias Kibirango points out having so many broken marriages makes young people fear this institution.¹¹¹¹ Third, married women increasingly leave their husbands if he loses his job or cannot provide financial security to the family. One Kenyan Sister told me that we need nothing less than “an aggressive campaign to help couples to sacramentalize their marriages.”¹¹¹²

¹¹⁰⁷ Musimba, *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁸ Taken from *The Church in the Neighborhood: Small Christian Communities* (with Swahili and Arabic versions). Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1995. Segment I: “Life and Activities of SCCs.” Segment II: “Services (Ministries) in the SCC.”

¹¹⁰⁹ I personally experienced this reality. In Nairobi on 19 April, 2015 I celebrated a Sunday Mass for 101 people. 43 received communion.

¹¹¹⁰ For an increasing number of couples worldwide “until love do us apart” has replaced “until death do us apart.” In other words the lifetime commitment in all situations has been replaced by we can split/separate/divorce if problems arise and mutual love wanes and even disappears.

¹¹¹¹ See Henry Onyango and Stephen Mukhongi, “Tackling Pastoral Challenges Facing the Family,” *Seed*, Vol. 26, Nos. 8/9, p. 10.

¹¹¹² Sister Esther Ichugu, conversation with the author, Nairobi, Kenya, 14 April, 2014.

For various reasons a number of Catholic women want children, but not a husband and a permanent, lifetime marriage. More equality in the government marriage laws is raising new tensions and questions.

There are different patterns in Eastern Africa. While traveling in Malawi in December, 2013, I was pleasantly surprised that many people receive communion at the Sunday masses and major feasts. I was told that many young people are getting married in the Catholic Church today.

During a SCCs Class at Tangaza in February, 2014 we had an animated discussion on Catholic marriages in Africa. One seminarian raised a provocative question: “Why do candidates for the priesthood spend eight to 10 years in formation and studies before ordination to the priesthood (a sacrament in the Catholic Church and a **permanent, lifetime commitment**) while couples preparing for marriage (also a sacrament in the Catholic Church and a **permanent, lifetime commitment**) can have as few as three marriage instructions before their wedding in church?” Another asked: “How come? Why is there such a big difference?” A random sample of marriage instructions in Nairobi Archdiocese ranged from a Crash Course of two weeks to three two hour sessions with the priest to five sessions spread over one and a half months to a six month marriage preparation program. Clearly more needs to be done in depth in preparing couples for Catholic Marriage. Better marriage catechesis should be a high priority.

Ethiopia and Eritrea have a traditional devotional small community or association called *Mahber*. It is a devotional group with a long history and significance. It offers important social support in the Ethiopian family system. Some of the activities of *Mahberat* (plural) in Ethiopia are:

- The small community reconciles members who have disputes through special ceremonies. When every member does not drink from the ceremonial pot (cup), the leaders immediately know something is wrong and try to reconcile the disputing parties. Once reconciled, both parties drink together.
- Helping at marriages, anniversaries and funerals. This includes encouraging young people in the association to get married in the Catholic Church, providing the choir at different events and organizing and serving at the related social events.

Thus a serious, ongoing challenge for SCCs is to help many of their members to regularize their marriages in a Catholic ceremony. One increasingly hears the expression “Eucharistic Famine” referring to the many, many Catholics in Africa who cannot receive communion because they are not officially married in the Catholic Church. M. Cleary states: “In many places of Africa and Madagascar large numbers of baptized are not able to receive communion because of their marital situation.”¹¹¹³ Botswana Bishop Boniface Tshosa emphasizes that this situation causes much pain in an African context:

Many [people], because of what we call irregular marriage situations cannot receive the Eucharist -- the Food of Life. In Botswana, food is a

¹¹¹³ M. Cleary, *Church as Family: Dialogue between African Culture and the Church*, 948

symbol of welcome, of togetherness, of sharing, of celebration, of solidarity. To exclude someone from the Eucharist in Botswana, is interpreted as being excluded from God's company and God's love. Words expressing otherwise do not convince.¹¹¹⁴

Some SCCs have a campaign to help their members to overcome some of the main stumbling blocks such as finalizing the dowry and raising money for the expenses of the marriage celebration.¹¹¹⁵ Our research has gathered case studies of marriages that take place in the home of SCC members and are less expensive than in a Catholic Parish Church. SCCs help couples in arranging Multiple or Group Wedding Ceremonies (many marriages celebrated together at the same time or *ndoa za kwa pamoja* in Swahili) in their outstations and parishes to cut down on the overall expenses.

One SCC member pointed out that we Small Christian Communities adult members are supposed to show a good example to others. It is very embarrassing if our children ask for church weddings before their parents get married in church. Nigerian Salesian seminarian Chiemeka Maria Utazi, SDB confirms this in his analysis on “Good Parenthood: “If youth don’t see their fathers or parents in SCC, they say, why should we go? If their parents are not married in the church, they ask questions on the need of SCCs?”¹¹¹⁶

Sometimes the SCC sends a small committee to mediate a marriage dispute. A Swahili video segment called *Jumuiya ya Upatanisho – Gekano, Kisii [Kenya]* (“SCC of Reconciliation– Gekano, Kisii [Kenya]”) has a short play¹¹¹⁷ about a husband and wife who have a dispute over money. A delegation from the SCC composed of two men and two women visit the couple in their home. They discuss the problem, pray together and resolve the dispute. Then the couple witnesses to their reconciliation in the whole small community. This example of a delegation of SCC members is similar to the designated committee of small community members (*Mahber* and SCCs) used in Ethiopia for marriage counseling.

The SCCs in Moshi Diocese, Tanzania, have a special charism for mediating family disputes especially tensions and disagreements between husband and wife. Sometimes this is done by the whole local small community. Other times the Marriage Counselor – a specific pastoral ministry in the SCCs – helps in the reconciliation. As a result of this SCC outreach, many broken and strained marriages

¹¹¹⁴ Boniface Tshosa, intervention at the 1994 First African Synod, “Fifth General Congregation,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, 17, 1338 (27 April, 1994), p. 11.

¹¹¹⁵ Servant of God Cardinal Maurice Michael Otunga liked to give the example of the SCC members in Nairobi Archdiocese who donated the bride’s wedding dress to a poor couple in their small community who had insufficient money for all their needs for their Marriage Ceremony in the Catholic Church.

¹¹¹⁶ Chiemeka Maria Utazi, “Absence of Youth and Men in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa,” p. 4, SCCs Website, retrieved on 7 December, 2014, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/absence_men_youth.pdf

¹¹¹⁷ This should be used as a teaching video. A segment is shown and then discussed in small groups.

have been healed and other conflicts resolved. Following the traditional Chagga Ethnic Group customs, the SCC members use special cultural symbols of reconciliation such as the green *isale* leaf, the *isale* tree (a special reconciliation tree), a white goat and even a baby.

Recent research¹¹¹⁸ in Nairobi shows that SCCs are actively involved mediating marriage disputes. Issues include that the husband is drinking alcohol too much, in-laws are interfering in the marriage and the effect on raising the children in the Catholic faith when one of the spouses joins a Pentecostal Church. Intervention by a small mixed delegation of men and women from the SCC has been often successful. More complicated marriage problems are referred to a trained Marriage Counselor.

On how SCCs can reconcile married couples with problems Rurinjah states: “The couple should remember their vows that they took during their wedding in the church before God and Christians.” He adds: “The married couple should live as people who forgive each other in order to maintain peace in the family. Remember the Gikuyu, Kenya proverb *A home is for a husband and a wife.*”

“Reflection on Adoptive Parent Families” is a catechism lesson in *The Journey of Faith – 5: Together in Jesus’ Family* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2012). It is based on *Matthew* 18:5 and 25:40; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) Nos. 2379, 1654; and *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC), No. 218. It tells the touching story of Stephen and Caroline, a childless African couple in a Small Christian Community who adopt the three little children of a young couple who lost their lives in a terrible road accident. The lesson also helps SCCs in the ongoing formation of couples and the deeper understanding of family and marriage.¹¹¹⁹

Regarding how Christian families transmit the faith in Kenya we started SCCs of the Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC). Small groups of children meet on Saturdays or Sundays in their parishes to pray and to reflect on the *Bible*. In Kitale Diocese 15 PMC children belong to St. Francisca SCC in Holy Trinity Parish and 30 PMC children belong to St. Ann SCC in St. Peter Claver Parish. Similar SCCs of PMC children are in Chaani Parish in Mombasa Archdiocese. The PMC SCCs use the Lumko Seven Steps Method of *Bible* Sharing/Gospel Sharing. The PMC animators are trained first in this method.

Kenyan Salesian seminarian Isaiah Muthukumi, SDB adds:

When men and women especially husbands and wives attend SCC meetings together it unites them more and they are able to plan and bring up their family together. This will help them instill the spirit of prayer and

¹¹¹⁸ Examples are documented in the SCCs Course Papers and answers to the essay exam questions at Tangaza University College and Don Bosco Utume Salesian Theological College in March, April and May, 2014.

¹¹¹⁹The full reflection is Appendix 16 in the Ebook -- Joseph Healey, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa* -- on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/Build_new.pdf

responsibility in their children, mirroring the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Small deeds such as being with the family and praying together are very important.¹¹²⁰

5. Other Challenges and Proposals in the Questionnaire/Survey of the *Lineamenta* of the 2014 Synod of Bishops

The final question in the survey/questionnaire on family and marriage – “What other challenges or proposals related to the topics in the above questions¹¹²¹ do you consider urgent and useful to treat?” -- was open-ended and offers wide scope to present the Eastern Africa perspectives and grassroots experiences.

Pope Francis says: “I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.” One intriguing proposal in Africa for many years is to develop an inculturated Rite for the Catechumenate of Christian Marriage (Marriage Catechumenate) similar to the Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA or the Adult Catechumenate). This could be two years or more depending on the customs and traditions (cultural dimension) of the local ethnic groups in Africa. It would integrate the basic elements of consent in the traditional African marriage rituals into the Christian sacrament of marriage.

This would follow the stages of marriage¹¹²² in an African context (also called “marriage in stages”) where marriage is a process rather than a single event and marriage is between two families rather than just between two individuals. The Catholic sacramental and spiritual “moments” (not “moment”) would take place during different stages of the marriage process: from the first official meeting and agreement of the two families of the couple to the betrothal (engagement) to the living together to paying of the dowry or bridewealth (that often takes place slowly over many years)¹¹²³ to the wife’s pregnancy to the birth of the first

¹¹²⁰ Isaiah Muthukumi, “Reflection on the Lack of Men and Youth in SCCs,” Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 2014, p. 4.

¹¹²¹ It is surprising that HIV AND AIDS was not mentioned in the questionnaire. Organizers in Rome said that the questionnaire could not cover all the local challenges and topics and it was the responsibility of National Bishops Conferences, etc. to add their own priorities in answering the last question. It is more surprising, and even disturbing, that some of the answers to the questionnaire from Africa do not mention the topic.

¹¹²² In an interview with the author in Washington, DC on 9 October, 2014 Orsy mentioned that in the history of the Catholic Church the German tribes had a “gradual” approach to the sacrament of marriage. It was confirmed after the couple lived together successfully for six months.

¹¹²³ This important ritual is not well understood by Westerners. In some African ethnic groups the dowry or bridewealth payment lasts a lifetime. The groom is required to pay a major portion of it before being allowed to marry the bride in church. The balance is paid in portions throughout the couple’s lifetime to ensure that there is a continuing bond/relationship between the two families.

child¹¹²⁴ to the civil marriage to the Catholic Marriage Rite (that could be in a Catholic Church or in a SCC) to the wedding celebration.¹¹²⁵

The couple usually live together during most of this process -- what is commonly called premarital cohabitation.¹¹²⁶ During this period, sometimes called the “trial marriage” or “the test of compatibility” period, the couple test their ability to live together and to get along with their in-laws such as the wife getting along with her mother-in-law if it is a patrilineal society. In African ethnic groups it is essential for the couple to have successful genital intercourse and for the wife to be fertile. If she is barren (as well as not having children) the marriage can break up. More recently if the wife does not get pregnant the man can also be tested because there are various reasons for male infertility (male's inability to cause pregnancy in a fertile female).

Overall this proposal is based on the principle that the structure of the Catholic Marriage Rite is flexible enough and general enough to integrate cultural differences in the process of African inculturation.

¹¹²⁴ Here is an interesting parallel: “New Catholics who enter the church at the Easter Vigil continue to meet with their group of sponsors and teachers for months after their initiation through a process called *mystagogia*. They are reminded that the parish community still supports them and that the Easter Vigil was not a graduation ceremony from a program, but the start of something new. In a recent email, my friend Isaac posed a question: What might a mystagogical approach to marriage prep look like? Could parishes invite mentor couples to check in on newlyweds at the three-month, six-month, one-year mark? Could parishes gather groups of couples for Faith-sharing, community service activities, and social events, with babysitting provided as necessary? Surely, many parishes are already doing these and other things to support married couples. But it would be so valuable for the synod to encourage church leaders to facilitate opportunities for newly married adults beyond traditional marriage and baptism preparation.” Mike Jordon Laskey, “Three Things I'd Tell the Synod on the Family About Marriage,” National Catholic Reporter Website, retrieved on 16 October, 2014, <http://ncronline.org/blogs/young-voices/three-things-id-tell-synod-family-about-marriage>

¹¹²⁵ I asked a devout Catholic married woman in Iramba Parish in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania what was the happiest day of her life. She answered: “Not the day of my marriage or the day of the birth of my first child. It was the day my firstborn son was circumcised.” For her this symbolized that her son had passed to manhood and the continuance of the family lineage was assured. As a mother she had successfully done her part.

¹¹²⁶ This applies the principle of gradualism to the question of marriage. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn states: “When discussing marriage and the family, we must first of all ask ourselves why couples all over the world often cohabit nowadays without marrying. Before I evaluate this morally, I have to learn to understand why even committed Catholic couples nowadays often only gradually discover the way to the Sacrament of Marriage.” He said that recognizing that cohabiting couples may be on the way to the sacrament of marriage did not mean agreeing with cohabitation as a whole. Christa Pongratz-Lippitt, “Schönborn: The Next Synod Must Concentrate on the Realities of Family Life,” Herder Korrespondenz, December, 2014, NCR Website, retrieved on 10 December, 2014, <http://ncronline.org/news/global/sch-nborn-next-synod-must-concentrate-realities-family-life#.VIdIZvVMc4k.facebook>

This is also being discussed in other parts of the world. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Austria stated: “Cohabitation could be seen as a stage on the way to marriage.”¹¹²⁷

One challenge is how SCCs can reach out to families and married people on the margins and periphery of society. This includes pastoral, missionary and social outreach to (alphabetically): abandoned babies, abused children, families and marriages affected by HIV and AIDS including AIDs orphans, homeless families, migrant families, single parents and their children and young people from broken homes. Segeja states:

SCCs are thus tasked with the responsibility to provide the needs of these vulnerable people. Perhaps this is the most challenging pastoral concern of SCCs especially today when we observe the difficult and intolerable treatment to which so many children in Africa are subjected.¹¹²⁸

SCC members have a special opportunity to minister to families and couples affected by HIV and AIDS. One concrete example is outreach to the millions of AIDs orphans in Africa. Then there is the challenge of marriage counseling to discordant couples. In a SCC how does the Marriage Counselor advise a husband or wife whose spouse has AIDs? How does unaffected partner avoid getting affected himself/herself? Should they use a condom? How does the SCC Marriage Counselor advise a faithful Catholic woman who discovers that her husband is sleeping with other women? Should she and her husband first both get an AIDs test? Should she deny marital privileges to her husband until he is promises to be faithful only to her?

These are real questions that are very complicated, sensitive and nuanced. At a certain point the SCC Marriage Counselor may have to refer the questions to a specially trained Marriage Counselor. Some of the issues to be considered: The primacy of personal conscience informed by the teachings of the church. The use of condoms in special situations. Importance of prayer for deeper discernment. Advice on a case by case basis.

SCC members also have a special opportunity to minister to families and couples in the refugee camps and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Eastern Africa.

This compassion and care for the poorest and neediest mentioned above is a special concern of Pope Francis.

Various bishops and other Catholic Church leaders in Eastern Africa are offering pastoral solutions to these challenges of family and marriage.

6. African Proverbs and Sayings Related to Family and Marriage

¹¹²⁷ Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, *The Tablet*, Vol. 268, No. 9069, 4 October, 2014, p. 1.

¹¹²⁸ Nicholaus Segeja, “Small Christian Communities: A Vital Icon,” p, 27.

Another approach to this final question in the *Lineamenta* is to reflect on African proverbs and sayings related to family and marriage. Pastoral and theological insights emerge. They are used in many SCCs' contexts and situations. A full list is found in Appendix No. 22 of the Ebook -- Joseph Healey, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*.¹¹²⁹ A helpful online resource is the section on "African Wise Proverbs and Inspiring Quotes" on on the [Afritorial Website](#). Some examples by three categories:

- **African proverbs and sayings on family life (19)**

A united family eats from the same plate (Ganda, Uganda).

Home is best. (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

Dine with a stranger but save your love for your family (Ethiopian proverb).

Blood is thicker than water (many African languages).

You can only resemble the parents that gave birth to you. For a cow does not give birth to a sheep (Yoruba, Nigeria).

You only have one mother (many African languages).

A mother is the cornerstone of a family (Somali, Somalia).

A child does not laugh at the ugliness of its mother (Uganda)

The person who has not traveled widely thinks his or her mother is the only cook (the best cook) (many African languages).

*No matter how skinny, the son always belongs to his father*¹¹³⁰ (Galla, Ethiopia)

No matter how useless a person may seem to another, they mean the world to their family (Zulu, South Africa).

Brothers and sisters are like calabashes; even if they knock each other, they don't break (Bunyoro, Uganda).

Brotherhood and sisterhood does not mean physical resemblance but mutual assistance (Africa).

Eating together strengthen brotherhood and sisterhood (Tongo, Ghana).

When a man person walks naked it is the kinspeople who feel the shame not the naked person. (Igbo, Nigeria).

When brothers fight to death, the stranger inherits their father's estate (Igbo, Nigeria).

You must treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It is loaned to you by your children (Gikuyu, Kenya).

A visitor is a guest for two days. On the third day give him or her a hoe. (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

Let the guest come so that the host may benefit (get well). (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

These proverbs and sayings are closely linked to African values of relationships, community and unity. They touch all aspects of human life.

¹¹²⁹ On the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/Build_new.pdf

¹¹³⁰ There is a Sukuma, Tanzania riddle about the importance of the father in the home under the theme "Respect for Those in Authority." The riddle says: "You do not wipe your nose on the pillar that supports the whole house?" The answer is: "Parental father."

Blood is thicker than water is a very common African proverb found in many languages. We have to appreciate the deep African cultural values, ties and loyalties of family, clan and ethnic group. In his intervention during the First African Synod in 1994 on the tragic civil war in Rwanda Nigerian Bishop Albert Obiefuna of Awka, Nigeria explained that "when it comes to the crunch, it is not the Christian concept of the church as a family that prevails but rather the adage that *blood is thicker than water*."¹¹³¹ Thus the blood of family and ethnic group in Africa is thicker than the water of *Baptism*. Stated another way, at the core of an African's priorities and allegiances blood relationship is often more important than the church as a family, even for an African who has become a Christian. This helps to explain how horrible genocide and ethnic cleansing can take place in predominantly Christian countries such as Rwanda and Burundi and more recently in South Sudan.

The Marsabit Diocese,¹¹³² Kenya Website states:

Ethnicity: Our region, for the last couple of years, has been deeply divided on ethnic lines to a point that sessions at deanery level, where different ethnic groups are present, have become a real problem. People identify themselves more with their tribe than with their faith. There is a tedious but obligatory journey of helping the people gain the sense of belonging to a larger Christian Family. It is urgent for the Church to find ways and means of bringing the people together.

In developing African Christianity and the integration of African values and Christian values in the family we are challenged to go further and rephrase this traditional African proverb to say *the water of Baptism is thicker than the blood of tribalism*. This can start at the grassroots level in our homes and SCCs. For the church to see itself as a Christian family is to extend the boundaries beyond the clan and ethnic group. The water of *Baptism* must be stronger than the blood of narrow clannishness and tribalism. In this process SCCs are challenged to become genuine agents of change for the transformation of society. The African theology and praxis of Church as family can be one of the keys to reconciliation, peace, and unity on the continent.

- **African proverbs and sayings on raising children (14)**

The hen with baby chicks doesn't swallow the worm (Sukuma, Tanzania).

A cow never runs away from her calves. (Bemba, Zambia).

When the woman is hungry she says, "Roast something for the children so they might eat" (Akan, Ghana).

Your own child is like an axe; once it falls on you you pick it up. It means no matter how serious the offence that your child has committed, you cannot abandon the child or for the child to cease to be your child (Bemba, Zambia).

A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm (Yoruba, Nigeria).

The old woman looks after the child to grow its teeth and the young one in turn looks after the old woman when she loses her teeth (Akan, Ghana).

¹¹³¹ Albert Obiefuna, "Fourth General Congregation," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17, 1338 (April 27, 1994), p. 9.

¹¹³² Retrieved on 8 June, 2014, <http://marsabitdiocese.org/parishes.html>

Who loves the mother must love the children also (Bemba, Zambia).

A child who is not taught by its mother will be taught by the world (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

The person who does not listen to an elder's advice gets his or her leg broken. (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

A stick is straightened while still young (many African languages).

It takes a whole village to raise a child (Igbo and Yoruba, Nigeria Proverb).

Children of a hippo play in all the pools of water in the river or the lake. (Bemba, Zambia).

You are the child of a duck; take care of yourself (Sukuma, Tanzania).

If you think education is costly, try ignorance (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

African proverbs and sayings teach many values about raising children. Often the mother has the central role. Traditionally the elders' advice was very important, but this is changing especially in urban Africa.

There are many insights in the Igbo and Yoruba, Nigeria proverb *It takes a whole village to raise a child*.¹¹³³ Child upbringing is a communal effort. The responsibility for raising a child is shared with the larger family (sometimes called the extended family). Everyone in the family participates especially the older children, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and even cousins. It is not unusual for African children to stay for long periods with their grandparents or aunts or uncles. Even the wider community gets involved such as neighbors and friends. Children are considered a blessing from God for the whole community. This communal responsibility¹¹³⁴ in raising children is also seen in the Sukuma (Tanzania) proverb *One knee does not bring up a child* and in the Swahili (East and Central Africa) proverb *One hand does not nurse a child*.

This African proverb can be effectively used during infant baptism. It is the whole extended family that has the responsibility of raising the child in the Catholic faith especially the parents and godparents but also the other siblings, aunts and uncles, grandparents and the whole SCC at times. This includes the spirit and practice of pastoral accompaniment.

In general this Nigerian proverb conveys the African worldview that emphasizes the values of family relationships, parenting, parental care, self-sacrificing concern for others, sharing and even hospitality. This is very close to the Biblical worldview as seen in scripture texts related to unity and cooperation (*Ecclesiastes* 4:9,12) and a mother's self-sacrificing love (*Isaiah* 49:15-16).

American politician Hillary Clinton is not the only person who has made this Nigerian proverb popular. In a "Church for Schools" day to support Catholic education in St. Peter's Square, Vatican City on 10 May, 2014 Pope Francis emphasized that family, school and Catholic community go hand in hand and said: "This makes me think of an African proverb which says: *It takes a village to raise a child*. Let us all say it together: *It takes a village to raise a child*. All together: *It takes a village to raise a child*." Inviting the audience or congregation to repeat the proverb is a very African style of communications.

¹¹³³ A full explanation can be found on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved on 16 May, 2014, <http://afriprov.org/index.php/african-proverb-of-the-month/23-1998proverbs/137-november-1998-proverb.html>

¹¹³⁴ The plan of religious education in the USA uses the term "whole community catechesis."

A commentator stated:

Now surely the Pope was meaning to underscore the need for Catholic community in assisting parents to raise children. And that truth needs reinforcing today more than ever. As many growing families in cities in the Western world have found, raising morally healthy children in a secular anti-Christian culture is very challenging. Finding and maintaining a Christian community is essential for good friendships for children, for reinforcing faith and morals, and for giving parents the peers and encouragement they need to continue to go against the tide in raising their children to know, love, and serve God.¹¹³⁵

Thus in the pope's interpretation of this proverb, the village and other local communities supports the parents. The SCC is one of the places where this can happen. The SCC is the church in the neighborhood and closely connected to the local network of clans and families. SCC members are agents of pastoral life, catechetical instructions and evangelization in promoting family life, parenting and family values. Another interpretation of this proverb that the church does not agree with is that the parents and families' help in raising children is insignificant and that more authority should be given to the government and other outside institutions.

There are many other connections of this proverb to African community values and the SCC model of church. In some places such as the Chagga people in Moshi, Tanzania, the geographical village is the center of communal activities and networking for celebrations (births, weddings, graduations, jubilees), feast days and funerals. In other places it is the clan or ethnic group. It can also be a school alumni network. SCC members can fit into all these levels.

- **African proverbs and sayings on marriage ministry/marriage preparation/marriage counseling (14)**

Marriage is like a peanut/groundnut; you have to crack it to see what is inside (Akan, Ghana).

Marriage is like a book; every page/day is a new lesson (Ewe, Ghana).

*Marriage is the main post of the hut.*¹¹³⁶

¹¹³⁵ John-Henry Westen, "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child': Did Pope Francis quote Hillary Clinton?" LifeSiteNews Website, retrieved on 14 May 2014, <http://www.lifesitenews.com/blog/it-takes-a-village-to-raise-a-child-did-pope-francis-quote-hillary-clinton>

¹¹³⁶ "'Marriage,' says an African proverb, is the main post of the hut.' If the house, that is, the Church of Christ in Africa, should sway, perhaps that is because its main support does not plunge deep enough into the earth of Africa. There is a great number of Catholics excluded from the sacraments, the source of unity and strength, by reason of their irregular marital situation. Still others are barred from coming into the Church by reason of already existing relationships. It is good that all of these problems should be treated so as to find out what

My beloved (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

The journey of marriage is far, far (Ashante, Ghana).

No matter how beautiful is your sister, you cannot marry her (Bemba, Zambia).

The house that is built well (like a fixed faith) doesn't move any longer (Lwalu, Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC).

A single person cannot counsel a married couple (Luo, Kenya and Tanzania)

An uncircumcised person can never advise a circumcised person (concerning adulthood including marriage) (Gikuyu, Kenya).

The hoes of two people cultivating together in a field sometimes clash (hit) against each other (Sukuma, Tanzania).

Hoes that dig together never miss to knock at one another (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

Two calabashes in a basin of water will by all means touch each other but not break each other. (Ewe, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria).

Until the nagging wife marries the second husband, she will not know the value of the first one (Igbo, Nigeria).

The electric wires are still live (a warning not to play with the "live wires" of AIDS because they are packed with enough "voltage" to kill). (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

Better a still curtain than a flag blowing in the wind (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

Marriage is basic to African society, but there are many different traditions and customs depending on the local context and situation.

Concerning the Sukuma proverb above – *The hoes of two people cultivating together in a field sometimes clash (hit) against each other*:¹¹³⁷ The Sukuma Ethnic Group is the largest ethnic group (more than six million people) in Tanzania and lives mainly in rural areas in the northwestern part of the country on or near the southern shores of Lake Victoria – mainly in the Mwanza and Shinyanga Regions. The Sukuma are agricultural-pastoralists whose lives focus on farming (maize, sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes, cotton, etc.) and herding cows. The hoes of two people weeding together in their fields sometimes clash (hit) against each other as seen in this Sukuma proverb. This proverb is applied to married people living in close proximity. They experience misunderstandings and differences at times. This is part of daily life. The proverb is used during Wedding Masses to encourage the newly married couple to persevere in bad times and difficult situations. When marital problems occur, it is used in marriage counseling.

Concerning the Lwalu proverb above -- *The house that is built well (like a fixed faith) doesn't move any longer*. The African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website states:

pastoral solutions are possible.” No. 68 of *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Synod of Bishops First Special Assembly for Africa, *The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000: “You Shall Be My Witnesses” (Acts 1:8)*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice and Nairobi Paulines Publications Africa, 1993.

¹¹³⁷ A full explanation can be found on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved on 16 May, 2014, <http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/african-proverb-of-the-month/57-2014-african-proverb-of-the-month/664-february-2014-the-hoes-of-two-people-cultivating-together-in-a-field-sometimes-clash-hit-against-each-other-sukuma-tanzania-proverb.html>

This is a proverb used in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in the daily life of married people that praises them for not having the spirit of divorce. The faith union of the Catholic couple is sacramentalized and there is no question of divorce. When a couple marries, the man and woman should live together and try always to feel happy. When a person builds his or house solidly it should remain forever. Before the construction of a house, the cost estimate should be evaluated so that the person has sufficient money to finish. This is true in marriage where commitment is the foundation that makes the husband and wife want to persevere together until they die. The demolition of a house is connected to its expansion or improvement and not to its total destruction. Faith finishes building a house. It is fixed to continue into its old age. This imitates the marriage contract. Aging in marriage with his or her partner is desirable for the family. Building a permanent home is desirable for the family.

In this Lwalu proverb we learn to respect marriage as a permanent alliance. For example, when we say that something is permanent or mandatory, we say that it is “set in stone” such as referring to the Ten Commandments tablets prescribed by God originally. Marriage is a foundational sacrament so the marriage is “set in stone.” And this stone supports the home.¹¹³⁸

7. Small Christian Communities in the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the 2014 Synod of Bishops

The *Instrumentum Laboris* (Latin for “Working Document”)¹¹³⁹ for the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on “The Pastoral Challenges of the

¹¹³⁸ Laur Mwepu, “June, 2014 African Proverb of the Month,” African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 6 June, 2014, <http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/african-proverb-of-the-month/57-2014-african-proverb-of-the-month/682-june-2014-the-house-that-is-built-well-like-a-fixed-faith-doesnt-move-any-longer-lwalu-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-drc-proverb.html>

¹¹³⁹ There have different responses to this document. The 30 July, 2014 issue of *National Catholic Reporter* has an Editorial (“Obstacles Riddle Synod on the Family's Path”) and two essays. The Editor's note states: “The 50-page *Instrumentum Laboris*, or working document, that was released 26 June and will guide the discussion during the October Synod of Bishops on the family was dry and impersonal, lifeless almost, and that confounded us at NCR. From personal experience and from listening to colleagues, readers and friends, we have experienced marriage and family life as life-giving and joyous. Marriage and family life is not without its challenges and struggles; it offers ample lessons in humility and forgiveness, but that, too, at the best of times can be nurturing. If the writers of the *Instrumentum Laboris*, which is now supposed to be being studied in dioceses throughout the world, had begun with the fundamental experience of people who have lived in marriages and raised families, we wondered, how different would it have been?” See National Catholic Reporter Website, retrieved on 31 July, 2014, <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/editorial-obstacles-riddle-synod-family-path>

Family in the Context of Evangelization” was published in the Vatican on 26 June, 2014. The working document notes that many responses were “submitted by the synods of the Eastern Catholic Churches *sui iuris* (Latin phrase which literally means "of one's own right"), the episcopal conferences, the departments of the Roman Curia and the Union of Superiors General. In addition, other responses — categorized as *observations* — were sent directly to the General Secretariat by a significant number of dioceses, parishes, movements, groups,¹¹⁴⁰ ecclesial associations and families, not to mention academic institutions, specialists, both Catholic and non-Catholic, all interested in sharing their reflections.” Cardinal Baldisseri, Secretary of the Synod of Bishops explained that intervening in the Extraordinary Synod will be 23 lay auditors, seven of whom will be married couples, one of whom will render its testimony during the Synodal sessions.

The document highlights both the pastoral challenges and concrete examples of pastoral care of the family and marriage. It has 26 references to “community” and 10 references to “communities” that are used in different senses: Christian community, church community, ecclesial community, faith community, local community, new community and parish community. Three pertinent sections are:

No. 48 under “The Family and Integral Development” states:

The responses mention the significance of the close collaboration of families/homes and the parish in the mission of evangelization, as well as the need for the active involvement of the family in parish life through support and solidarity on behalf of other families. In this regard, invaluable assistance comes from the community made up of families. Membership in movements and associations can also be a particularly significant source of support.

COMMENTARY

While the expression “the community made up of families” is more general, this is an exact description of Eastern Africa SCCs that are called “a communion of families.” This is part of the “Communion of Communities Model of Church” that is explained at length in other parts of this Ebook. “Movements and associations” cover a wide variety of small communities and small groups. Some Catholics continue to place SCCs in these two categories although they are different theologically.

No. 54 under “Marriage Preparation” states:

Many laudable initiatives in marriage preparation are taking place in various parts of the world, including: “new communities” which promote retreats; personal encounters; groups for prayer, reflection and discussion.

COMMENTARY

What is missing in the document and very important for the AMECEA Region is that Eastern African SCCs have a specific ministry for marriage and a specific minister for

¹¹⁴⁰ The wide variety of names used shows both the richness and complexity of the English language in describing the “small community” or “small group” phenomenon under which SCCs fit.

marriage preparation called the Marriage Animator or Marriage Counselor. This person is responsible for coordinating the marriage preparation of couples and counseling married couples in the SCC.

No. 146 under “The Response of the Particular Churches”¹¹⁴¹ states:

When parents, usually after an absence from the church for some time, request from the ecclesial community the sacramental preparation of their children, the most recommended approach in all the responses is to readily accept them without making any distinctions. Receiving them with a basic attitude of respect, a friendly disposition and a willingness to listen to their human and spiritual needs creates a proper and beneficial atmosphere for communicating the Gospel message. The important and effective ecclesial experiences aimed at assisting parents along the way include: catechesis in the family and community; the ecclesial movements in support of the pastoral care of married couples; Sunday Masses; family visits; prayer groups; popular missions; the activities of Basic Christian Communities; groups of *Bible* study; the pastoral activities of ecclesial movements.

COMMENTARY

While the questionnaire’s responses from around the world lump BCCs or SCCs together with a variety of pastoral options to help the sacramental preparation of children, the Eastern Africa experience of SCCs as a key pastoral priority and a new way of being church is significantly different. Unfortunately the *Instrumentum Laboris* doesn’t reflect the basis insight of the Eastern Africa experience – that parish-based SCCs are a primary means and “place” for family catechesis, marriage catechesis, family life apostolate, religious education, pastoral care and evangelization.

At the same time the document emphasizes various pastoral activities and methods for marriage preparation and catechesis such as “older and more experienced couples act as “godparents” to younger couples who are preparing for marriage” (No. 56). In Eastern Africa often these pastoral activities and methods take place in the SCCs and are carried out by SCCs members.

The day after it was published this *Instrumentum Laboris* was presented during in the AMECEA Pastoral Department Workshop for National Commissions for Marriage and Family Life Apostolate in the AMECEA Region that took place in Nairobi in June, 2014. The theme of the workshop was “Marriage and Family Life” – a Preparation for the Synod of Bishops III Extraordinary General Assembly.”

The presentation on “How SCCs Are an Important Part of the Pastoral Care of the Family and Marriage in Evangelization in Eastern Africa” began with all the participants

¹¹⁴¹ No. 58 under “Support for Familial Spirituality” uses diocese, Particular Church and Local Church interchangeably and states: “Clearly, Local Churches should be able to find that this richness is a real resource for not only promoting various initiatives on behalf of couples intending marriage but devising ways to provide suitable pastoral care for families today.

receiving a bookmark with the map of Eastern Africa that celebrates the 180,000 SCCs in the nine AMECEA countries.¹¹⁴² The bookmark mentions the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and “Facebook Page” (www.smallchristiancommunities.org) that has an Ebook on “SCCs in Eastern Africa” and many online SCCs resources.¹¹⁴³

We can be grateful for the special pastoral experience and activities of parish-based SCCs that are a key pastoral priority in the AMECEA Region. This is seen in the light of the People of God and Communion Ecclesiology that developed after Vatican Two and the African cultural priorities of communion, solidarity, relationships and family values. SCCs are a new way of being church from the bottom up/from the grassroots up. A SCC is a communion of families. An outstation is a communion of SCCs. A parish is a communion of outstations. And so on.

SCCs are the “place” of much pastoral care and the SCC members themselves are the “agents” of pastoral ministry and evangelization. Cardinal Polycarp Pengo of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania calls SCCs in Swahili *chombo mahususi cha uinjilishaji* that can be translated as “a special or privileged instrument or means of evangelization.” Related to our topic SCCs in Eastern Africa have two important lay ministries:

1. Religious Education/Catechesis Animator (for youth and children).
2. Marriage Animator or Marriage Counselor
 - a. Helping young couples sacramentalize their marriages.
 - b. Counseling couples with marital difficulties.

The two meanings of the Eucharist in Africa were explained.

8. Small Christian Communities in the *Final Report and Message* of the 2014 Synod of Bishops

The methodology of the Third Extraordinary Synod was the “See,” “Judge” and “Act” process as follows:”

1. The interventions (written interventions submitted a head of time and oral interventions presented during the sessions) were organized around the eight (8) topics listed in the *Instrumentum Laboris*.

¹¹⁴² During a discussion of the delegates from Kampala Archdiocese, Arua Diocese and Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese it was pointed out that the success of SCCs in Uganda is uneven. There is no “uniform” experience. Arua Diocese has the best overall SCC plan. The *Bible* is used in some youth groups and not in others.

¹¹⁴³ This includes online SCCs that appeal especially to youth. During a discussion on the importance of the *Bible* it was mentioned that young people use an electronic *Bible* on their smartphones rather than a paper *Bible*. A Zambian Sister said, “But the youth should still bring their *Bibles* to the SCC Meetings.” Another person commented, “But they do – on their smartphones.” Electronic devices and the internet require a new way of thinking.

2. Each topic was introduced by an "auditor/auditrice" (mainly married couples) with focus on personal experiences,¹¹⁴⁴ then sharings by the bishops or any other delegates for not more than four minutes ("See" – by listening to the actual experiences of members of the Family of God especially married couples).
3. Then the bishops made their interventions¹¹⁴⁵ on the given topic after having listened to the life experiences ("Judge" – by reflecting on the Teachings of the Sacred Scripture and Magisterium with regard to the topic being discussed).
4. In small groups, the bishops discussed and proposed pastoral responses to the given topic ("Act" – by offering the pastoral guidelines in the light of the teachings of the Church and with consideration of the actual situation).

Many commentators have emphasized the fact that the bishops and cardinals publicly disagreed with one another in their attempt to discern what is good for the church. The Catholic Church really has not had this experience since the open debates of the Second Vatican Council. The pope himself supported this open discussion. This is an on-going process of listening, discussion,¹¹⁴⁶ dialog, debate, discernment and proposed pastoral responses leading up to the Synod of Bishops Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly to take place in Rome from 4-25 October, 2015. The pope likes to call this process a journey or a path -- in the spirit of the meaning of the word "synod." "Synodality is the path of the Catholic Church."¹¹⁴⁷ This process of synodality is a journeying together.¹¹⁴⁸ The Pope often refers to the model of synodality in the Orthodox Churches. He emphasizes, "The synod is not a parliament, it's a protected ecclesial space. And this protection exists so (that) the Holy Spirit can work."¹¹⁴⁹

¹¹⁴⁴ These couples spoke of the deep joy they had experienced in their marriages and family lives – as well as the difficulties they had overcome and the struggles they had faced.

¹¹⁴⁵ During this meeting Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel presented his important intervention on behalf of AMECEA that is referred to above.

¹¹⁴⁶ See the creativity of St. Paul Inside the Walls Madison, New Jersey, USA)'s Young Adult Fireside Chat: Open discussion for young adults that welcomes opposing viewpoints on the great moral issues of our day.

¹¹⁴⁷ Francis, "Homily on 29 June, 2013," America Website, retrieved on 2 February, 2015, <http://americamagazine.org/content/dispatches/pope-decides-pallium-will-be-given-metropolitan-archbishops-home-dioceses>

¹¹⁴⁸ There are many relevant metaphors. The Story of "The Road to Emmaus" in *Luke 24*. The famous Burkina Faso proverb: *If you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk together.*

¹¹⁴⁹ "Pope Francis Speaks Up on Synod Process – 'It Isn't Over,'" *Catholic News Agency* (CNA), 30 November, 2014, retrieved on 2 December, 2014, <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-speaks-up-on-synod-process-it-isnt-over-37950/>

Pope Francis says that he is open to changing Catholic Church regulations and practices (NOT doctrine) for pastoral reasons, that is, finding a “pastoral solution.” He says if there is a consensus of the recommendations of bishops on the local level (for example, a national or regional episcopal conference) on a particular pastoral issue, change is possible in the context of a process of subsidiarity (decentralization) and collegiality.¹¹⁵⁰

The two-week synod in the Vatican produced two major documents on 18 October, 2014 – the *Final Report of the Synod (Relatio Synodi) of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization" (5-19 October 2014)* and the *Message of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops* – and many supporting documents. These official documents highlight both the pastoral challenges and the concrete examples of pastoral care of the family and marriage.

There are many references to “community” and “communities” (or their equivalents marked in **bold**) in these October, 2014 synod documents that are used in different senses (alphabetically):

church community(ies)

community(ies) of believing families

community(ies) of faith or faith community(ies)

community(ies) of the faithful

community(ies) who accompany couples and families and care for their wounds

ecclesial community(ies)

entire community: “The complex social reality and the changes affecting the family today require a greater effort on the part of the whole Christian community in preparing those who are about to be married. The importance of the virtues needs to be included, among these chastity which is invaluable in the genuine growth of love between persons. In this regard, the synod fathers jointly insisted on the need to involve more extensively the entire community by favoring the witness of families themselves and including preparation for marriage in the course of Christian Initiation as well as emphasizing the connection between marriage and the other sacraments. Likewise, they felt that specific programs were needed in preparing couples for marriage, programs which create a true experience of participation in ecclesial life and thoroughly treat the various aspects of family life (Number 39 – “Guiding Engaged Couples in Their Preparation for Marriage” -- in the *Final Report of the Third Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family*)

PROPOSED ACTION: Lengthen and deepen the pre-marital catechesis. Beginning and advanced training programs for married couple accompaniers (mentor couples) and other facilitators/ formators/presenters/ trainers. Emphasize Train the Trainers (TOT) Workshops for parishes, schools and marriage programs. Engaged couples SCCs are both a Faith-sharing

¹¹⁵⁰ In an interview with the author at Georgetown University on 9 October, 2014, Father Ladislaus Orsy, SJ confirmed that “affective collegiality” involves a consultative process by the world bishops while “effective collegiality” is involves a deliberative process (decision-making that includes voting to reach a consensus). Francis wants national bishops’ conferences to be more involved in the collegial process and ideally present a consensus view on a particular pastoral topic from the grassroots level. The Holy Spirit works through the consensus of these local bishops.

group and a support group. Married couple companions are called upon when needed. This overall approach would insure that the engaged couple not focus too much on the celebration and social aspects of their wedding only. One concrete suggestion:

Parishes could encourage couples to go to marriage preparation weekends before any formal preparation takes place in the parish. They can initiate small groups for the married to meet in their own homes and provide resources that will enable them to discuss how to deepen their relationship with their spouse and with God. These could include exercises, reflections and discussions on weekly Scripture readings for Sunday Mass. One such resource is *I Am With You*, a trilogy of books covering the three liturgical years.¹¹⁵¹

family is the core of parish communities: “Family is thus an authentic Domestic Church that expands to become the family of families that is the ecclesial community” (*Message of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*)

local church community(ies)

local community(ies)

new communities: “The initial years of marriage are a vital and sensitive period during which couples become more aware of the challenges and meaning of married life. Consequently, pastoral accompaniment needs to go beyond the actual celebration of the Sacrament (*Familiaris Consortio*, Part III). In this regard, experienced couples are of great importance in any pastoral activity. The parish is the ideal place for these experienced couples to be of service to younger couples, with the possible cooperation of associations, ecclesial movements¹¹⁵² and new communities.¹¹⁵³ Married couples need encouragement in a

¹¹⁵¹ Brian and Maureen Devine, “What Marriage is About,” *Tablet*, 6 December, 2014, retrieved on 6 December, 2014, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/parish-practice/6/4081/what-marriage-is-about>

¹¹⁵² “Ecclesial movements” and “church movements” are used interchangeably.

¹¹⁵³ Another English translation is: “with the possible involvement of associations, church movement and new communities.” The official Italian text of this sentence is: “La parrocchia è considerata come il luogo dove coppie esperte possono essere messe a disposizione di quelle più giovani, con l’eventuale concorso di associazioni, movimenti ecclesiali e nuove comunità.”

In the AMECEA Region in general the Catholic Church see the various associations, ecclesial (church) movements and new communities connected to marriage such as Couples for Christ, Engaged Encounter, Faithful House (FTH) Program, Family Enrichment Clubs, Family Life Ministries, Holy Cross Family Ministry, Marriage Care, Marriage Encounter, Marriage Preparation (Marriage Prep), Pre-Cana, Pro-Life, Retrouvaille, SCCs, Teams of Our Lady, other Christian Family Movements and their various centers and institutes as an important assistance and a big help to the parish. The Catholic Church continue to offer a range of formation opportunities and approaches. There is not a single program/one size fits all approach.

While some priests might see these groups as “sheep stealers” (setting up separate exclusive groups of married couples outside the parish structure), most priests and pastoral agents welcome and depend on these specialized groups in marriage ministry within the parish

basic openness to the great gift of children. Emphasis on the importance of a familial spirituality and prayer life should lead couples to meet regularly to promote growth in their spiritual life and solidarity in the concrete demands of life. Meaningful liturgies, devotional practices and the Eucharist celebrated for entire families were mentioned as vital factors in fostering evangelization through the family” (Number 39 – “Accompanying the Married Couple in the Initial Years of Marriage” – in the *Final Report of the Third Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family*).

A key text is “with the possible cooperation of associations, ecclesial movements and new communities.” Parish-based SCCs are included here. There is a wide range of pastoral possibilities.

PROPOSED ACTION: Lengthen and deepen the post-marital catechesis. Beginning and advanced training programs for married couple accompaniers (mentor couples) and other facilitators/formators/presenters/trainers. Emphasize Train the Trainers (TOT) Workshops for parishes, schools and marriage programs. Newly married couples SCCs that are both a Faith-sharing group and a support group. Married couple accompaniers are called upon when needed.¹¹⁵⁴

parish as the family of families

small activist units

vibrant communities: “Vibrant communities exist in parish composed of married couples or entire families who meet regularly, pray together, study and thoroughly discuss the *Catechism of the Church*, read the *Bible* and talk about everyday problems, difficulties and the beauty of life lived in common by couples and treat questions concerning the upbringing of their children. In other words, they strive to combine faith with life. They help each other in times of illness, unemployment or other problems. Many of them participate in the work of *Caritas*. Many help in the preparation of engaged couples for marriage in strengthening their relationship of friendship which is to endure long after their wedding. Groups of young Catholic mothers with young children also accommodate mothers without any religious affiliation or non-believers, thus creating a new form of mission. Families are forming various new communities which assist couples in crisis or help women in existential or psychological difficulty” (Number 2 – “The Gospel of the Family and Family Ministry” -- in the *Report Preceding the Discussion at the Third Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family*).

PROPOSED ACTION: Special outreach programs beginning with listening, active accompanying, walking with before teaching (the Emmaus model).

welcoming community(ies)

structure. So the best translation of *concorso* has the contextual meaning of cooperation/collaboration/involvement/assistance/a running along with/with the help of.

¹¹⁵⁴ *I Am With You* is a trilogy of books that reflect on the readings at mass for years A, B, and C. They are a new approach to Scripture for married people. They will help them to understand the key messages in the Sunday readings. They include witty illustrations and a prayer for the couple. Website: <http://www.twoinoneflesh.org.uk/> *Marriage Matters* is a Word.doc Book, a weekly 60 word snippet adapted from the reflections on the Sunday Mass Scripture readings in the *I Am With You* series.

COMMENTARY

While the term “Small Christian Communities” is not mentioned specifically in these documents, their life and ministry is definitely described in the examples above. The synod has inspired SCC members and others to become more active in promoting Catholic family life and spirituality in Africa and everywhere. Some concrete examples:

- Experienced SCC couples should pastorally accompany engaged couples.
- Experienced SCC couples should pastorally accompany young married couples.¹¹⁵⁵ SCC members should accompany families and couples who are wounded and on the periphery. This is the Ministry of Compassionate Accompaniment. This includes mercy toward broken and fragile families and couples. There should be special outreach programs beginning with listening, active accompanying, walking with before teaching (the Emmaus model). See Numbers 2, 8, 28 and 45 of the *Final Report of the Third Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family*.

This also includes the important pastoral and missionary outreach of SCCs. In a pastoral metaphor Pope Francis has called the Catholic Church a field hospital after battle. German Cardinal Walter Kaspar extended this metaphor to say that “the family too is a field hospital where it is necessary to bind many wounds.” We can extend this metaphor even further to say that the Small Christian Community as a Domestic Church is also a field hospital called to reach out to needy families, broken homes, to the homeless and to those people Pope Francis calls “the margined and those on the periphery of society.”

- In parishes together with various lay movements SCC members should be united to families and to work with them to promote the living of the “Gospel of the family” in homes. See No. 2 of the *Final Report of the Third Extraordinary Synod*.

¹¹⁵⁵ Eastern African SCCs can learn from Bishop Mario Grech of Gozo Diocese, Malta and president of the Maltese Episcopal Conference how the Gozo diocesan pastoral plan of families was restructured in order to be more effective in accompanying courting couples and the families of today.

In the synod we often spoke about the importance of proposing a pastoral journey that helps couples before and after marriage. In Gozo we propose a journey of marriage preparation lasting two years. During this course a priest and married couples accompany the courting couples so that their love matures humanly and spiritually while preparing for the sacrament of marriage. There is also the proposal of a catechetical accompaniment for young married couples, especially during the first five years of married life, that helps them to build their marriage on the gospel. The Diocesan Family Commission also offers journeys of faith for cohabitating, separated, and divorced remarried couples.

Mario Grech, “Bishop Grech: ‘There Is a Need for Spreading the Gospel of the Family:’ President of the Maltese Episcopal Conference Discusses Aspects Emanating From Synod on the Family, *ZENIT: The World Seen from Rome Daily Dispatch*, 28 October 2014, p. 19.

- SCCs should encourage Catholic men to organize themselves into groups, associations, or even small activist units dedicated to stopping the scourge of abuse in the home and in society.

In summary: Pope Francis' challenge to all Catholics to "evangelize the peripheries and the margined" is a special call. He explains: "Jesus renewed his call to each one of us to become his missionary disciples. May we perceive this call as the most important thing in our lives and share this gift with others, those near and far, even to the distant geographical and existential peripheries¹¹⁵⁶ of our world."¹¹⁵⁷ No. 20 of *The Joy of the Gospel* states: "All of us are asked to obey the Lord's call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel." This is part of the shift in mission being existential/situational as well as geographical/territorial. No. 120 states: "In virtue of their Baptism all members of the People of God have become missionary disciples.

At the end of the October, 2014 synod Cardinal Tagle of Manila commented on the uneven press coverage. He said that not one professional journalist from the continent of Asia (native to a country in Asia like the Philippines, Hong Kong or South Korea, living in Asia and working for Asian media) covered the synod in Rome. All the Asian communicators in Rome were working for Western-based media such as the Vatican Radio or an international news service. The correspondents in Rome for Asian news agencies like UCAN were Westerners. The same was true for the continent of Africa. For example, no Catholic newspaper or news agency in Africa was directly represented in Rome by a professional journalist who lives and works in Africa and would go back to Africa after the synod.

This is a critical incident for the Catholic Church in Africa. The clear teaching is that we need the important voice of Africa to be heard at significant meetings such as the synods of bishops in Rome. But we also need the communications media, and especially African communicators based in Africa, to get the message out to the Africa and to the world.

Specialists continue to study the complex social and cultural reality of our contemporary world. In the follow-down to the Third Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in Rome in October, 2014 on Family and Marriage it was proposed to emphasis SCCs composed of the following specialized groups:

- Youth (Generation Y 18-22 year olds)
- Young Adults (Generation Y 23-35 year olds)
- Engaged Couples
- Newly married Couples
- Married Couples with Little Children

¹¹⁵⁶ These existential peripheries and margins are people and situations in pain and suffering.

¹¹⁵⁷ Pope Francis, "Message of Pope Francis for the Twenty-Ninth World Youth Day" (Palm Sunday, 13 April 2014), *Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) Email News Bulletin*. Issue No. 30, 11 April, 2013.

These small communities would combine lectionary-based Faith-sharing and being a support group. The engaged couples and newly married couples could consult married couple accompaniers (mentor couples) when necessary.¹¹⁵⁸

Indian psychologist and writer Father Sahaya Selvam, SDB explains that the *Final Report of the Third Extraordinary Synod*

follows an adapted rendering of the See-Judge-Act formula which, in the recent decades, has become more used in pastoral reflection in the Catholic Church. The method is also referred to as the Pastoral Cycle. In the present document, seeing or listening consisted in openly perceiving and understanding the prevailing situation regarding marriage and family life in the world today...Almost every plenary session of the synod began with narratives from the [married] couples. They shared their commitment to the truth of the teaching of the church regarding marriage and family, but also brought to the attention of the clerics at the synod the struggles that accompany the commitment.” The stage of making judgment was led by the scripture and the Tradition of the Church. And, finally, a way forward has been proposed in pastoral accompaniment of the faithful.¹¹⁵⁹

This process also called the Pastoral Spiral is described many times in this Ebook as the process of Eastern Africa SCCs.

The *Final Report of the Third Extraordinary Synod* serves as the *Lineamenta (Guidelines)* on the theme of "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World." A new preparatory document based on this final document and containing "a series of main points to lead the discussions and to help in its reception and deepening" with 46 questions was sent to the world's bishops conferences at the beginning of December, 2014.

The year between the synods "should take the path already done as a starting point and take this special opportunity to study issues and promote discussion at the level of

¹¹⁵⁸Taken from Joseph Healey, "What Is The Way Forward? Where Do We Go From Here? Some Reflections on the Evangelizing Ministry of St. Paul Inside the Walls in Preparing for the Synod of Bishops Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly on the "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Modern World" in Rome from 4-25 October, 2015 in the Spirit and Vision of Pope Francis." Madison, New Jersey: Unpublished Paper, 6 December, 2014. 6 pages. Under the "United States of America" under "North America" on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at:
http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/inside_the_wall.pdf

¹¹⁵⁹ Sahaya Selvam, "Bishops Integrate Truth and Mercy in Debate on Divorce and Homosexuals, Daily Nation Website, retrieved on 26 October, 2014,
<http://mobile.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/CATHOLIC-Bishops-integrate-truth-and-mercy-in-debatE/-/1950774/2499484/-/format/xhtml/-/g1lakl/-/index.html>

Episcopal Conferences, finding the means and the tools necessary to further involve also the different ecclesial bodies in the synodal reflection on the family."

Hopefully Eastern African SCCs will participate in this ongoing process of listening, discussion, debate, discernment and proposed pastoral responses.¹¹⁶⁰ The answers to the 46 questions will be sent to Rome by 15 April, 2015 and will be collated to produce the *Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document)* (to be ready by June, 2015) for the Synod of Bishops XIV Ordinary General Assembly to take place in Rome from 4-25 October, 2015.

It was pointed out that Africa has unique challenges and concerns (for example, polygamy, the influence of widespread poverty, economic injustice, war on family life, frozen ideas of culture and tradition usually rooted in powerful patriarchal hierarchies, etc.) and these issues will be addressed more at the October, 2015 synod.

At the same time it was emphasized that Africa is coming of age and that the African bishops at the October, 2014 synod had staked their claim to a say in the Catholic Church's teachings.¹¹⁶¹ An Editorial in *America Magazine* states:

This is a dialog that must include other voices that have been subdued in the past. The more confident presence of African bishops should be welcomed. In fact, the vibrant participation of representatives from all the fast-growing parts of the Catholic world needs to be encouraged.¹¹⁶²

John Allen adds:

¹¹⁶⁰ The Catholic Church in England and Wales has launched a wide-ranging consultation of parishes and clergy ahead of next year's Synod on the Family. There is a period of spiritual reflection in each parish, and separately to hear the experiences of clergy, on the main "pastoral challenges" they encounter with families. Material was sent out to parishes and clergy after Christmas. The period of reflection will go on until June or July ahead of the synod in October, 2015. It is not so much a request for opinions as a request for testimony. The two great features of the Third Extraordinary Synod in October, 2014 were: On the one hand a resounding trumpet call in support of marriage and stability of family life. On the other hand an opportunity to express and strengthen the pastoral response of the Church in a wide variety of difficult and pressurised situations. The material sent out has this same balance. The results of this consultation will be made public.

Summarized from Christopher Lamb, "English and Welsh Bishops Call for Priests and Parishes To Make Voices Heard Ahead of Next Family Synod," Tablet Website, 14 November 2014. Retrieved on 18 November, 2014, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/1396/0/english-and-welsh-bishops-call-for-priests-and-parishes-to-make-voices-heard-ahead-of-next-family-synod>

¹¹⁶¹ See Tina Beattie, "After the Synod – A Journey into the Unknown," "Marginal Musings: Tina Beattie's Intermittent Reflections," retrieved on 25 October, 2014, <http://tina-beattie.blogspot.co.uk>

¹¹⁶² "Editorial: Go in Peace," *America*, Vol. 211, No. 12 (10 November, 2014), p. 5, America Website, retrieved on 15 November, 2014, <http://americamagazine.org/issue/go-peace>

The upshot is that Africa has emerged as a genuine force in Catholic conversation, and Westerners need to get used to establishing trust before real dialog can begin... In today's Catholic Church, Africans have both the numbers and the self-confidence to back up their concerns... If you want to get anything done in 21st century Catholicism, in other words, one great tip is to involve Africans early and often.¹¹⁶³

During the next year the Eastern Africa SCCs can learn from the Small Group Model or Small Parish Discussion Group model in Europe and North America:

The cardinal archbishop of Paris, France André Vingt-Trois, one of the president-delegates at the October meeting, revealed that in preparation for the 2014 synod he had set up small groups (around a dozen people in each group) in every parish throughout his archdiocese to discuss the themes that were on the agenda for that synod. "I will now do the same in preparation for the 2015 synod," he told a press conference in the Vatican.

Cardinal Péter Erdö (Hungary), who had the key role of relator at the 2014 synod, said he had done something similar in preparation for that gathering. He had groups of married couples in almost every parish in his Budapest archdiocese whom he asked to discuss the themes for the recently concluded assembly. He plans to do likewise for the next one.¹¹⁶⁴

9. **Small Christian Communities in the Answers to the 46 Questions in the *Lineamenta* of the 2015 Synod of Bishops**

Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, wrote:

Accompanying this letter, which is being sent to episcopal conferences, the synods of the Eastern Catholic Churches *sui iuris*, the Union of Superiors General and the Roman Curia, is a copy of the *Lineamenta* (http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20141209_lineamenta-xiv-assembly_en.html) composed of the *Relatio Synodi* and a series of questions on the reaction to this synodal document and a thorough examination of its contents, in the process of continuing the synodal journey already begun and in drafting the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the next synodal assembly.

¹¹⁶³ John Allen, "In 21st Century Catholicism, You Can't Ignore Africa Any More," Crux Website, retrieved on 20 November, 2014, http://www.cruxnow.com/church/2014/11/20/in-21st-century-catholicism-you-cant-ignore-africa-any-more/?s_campaign=crux:email:daily

¹¹⁶⁴ Gerald O'Connell, "Looking to the 2015 Synod," *America*, Vol. 211, No. 13 (3 November, 2014), p. 24, America Website, retrieved on 13 November, 2014, <http://americamagazine.org/issue/looking-2015-synod>

The previously mentioned ecclesial entities are asked to choose a suitable manner to engage all components of the particular churches and academic institutions, organizations, lay movements and other ecclesial associations in an ample consultation of the People of God on the family, within the framework of the synodal process. Once this consultation is completed on the local level, the same ecclesial entities are to submit a summary of the results to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops by Easter, 15 April 2015.

Consequently, I ask Your Eminence/Excellency to send this document to dioceses with the request that it be widely circulated in deaneries and parishes so as to obtain the input of all components of the People of God in the preparation of the *Instrumentum Laboris*.¹¹⁶⁵

The Introduction to Part III – “Confronting the Situation: Pastoral Perspectives” states:

In examining Part III of the *Relatio Synodi*, it is important to be guided by the pastoral approach initiated at the Extraordinary Synod which is grounded in Vatican II and the Magisterium of Pope Francis. The episcopal conferences have the responsibility to continue to examine this part thoroughly and seek the involvement, in the most opportune manner possible, all levels of the local Church, thus providing concrete instances from their specific situations. Every effort should be made not to begin anew, but to continue on the path undertaken in the Extraordinary Synod as a point of departure.

COMMENTARY

This statement clearly shows the process and methodology of the two synods.¹¹⁶⁶ The synods emphasize the importance of the documents of the Second

¹¹⁶⁵ Lorenzo Baldisseri, “Letter of the Secretary General to the Episcopal Conferences Accompanying the Lineamenta of XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops,” 12 December 2014, Vatican Website, retrieved on 20 December, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20141212_lettera-lineamenta-xiv-assembly_en.html

¹¹⁶⁶ The Editorial in the 30 December 2014 issue of the *National Catholic Reporter* states:

Perhaps Francis' greatest contribution as pope will be his embrace and advocacy for the Synod of Bishops as central to the governance and mission of the church. The two synods that Francis has called to discuss family life may result in changes in pastoral practices that will welcome Catholics back into full participation in the church, but the process the synods begin may well be their most important outcome. Francis is making of the synod what Pope Paul VI envisioned it to be in 1965: a body that would provide "for a continuance after the [Second Vatican] Council of the great abundance of benefits that ... result of our close collaboration with the bishops."

NCR Website, retrieved on 30 December, 2014, <http://ncronline.org/news/people/editorial-person-year-2014>

Vatican Council and Pope Francis' *The Joy of the Gospel*. Francis is reopening the lifelines to Vatican II as the blueprint for his own vision and programs of renewal. He draws more on the theology of Pope Paul VI than St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. He encourages concrete examples from specific pastoral situations.

While the term "Small Christian Communities" is not mentioned specifically in these questions, their life and ministry is contained to the references to families, parishes, associations and movements. Searching within the SCCs Website we found a lot of material:

Family: 42 results found.
Marriage: 20 results found.

The free online Ebook on "SCCs in Eastern Africa" has these references:

Family: 779 results found.
Marriage: 478 results found.

Here in Eastern Africa we realized the danger of just affirming current Catholic Church teaching and pastoral practice as in "how can the church help folks to live according to our truth." We tried to respond to Pope Francis' call to be "be bold and creative" in finding new pastoral solutions ("think outside the box").

First to the key Preliminary Question: "Does the description of the various familial situations in the *Relatio Synodi* correspond to what exists in the church and society today [such as in Africa]? We said "An overall yes." Then we named the "missing aspects" from our African experience and perspective]¹¹⁶⁷

¹¹⁶⁷ These "missing aspects" and the following answers to the questions were collated from the following sources:

- Meeting of St. Joachim SCC, Kangemi, Nairobi, Kenya, 1 February, 2015.
- SCCs Class on "SCCs Promote Family and Marriage Ministry in Africa Today," 5 February, 2015 and on "SCCs Involvement in the 2015 Kenya Lenten Campaign on the theme *Build Our Family and Nation with Dignity*," 19 February, 2015 at Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Meeting of St. Kizito SCC, Waruku, Nairobi, Kenya, 8 February, 2015.
- Meeting of the Commission for Missions of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)'s Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Watakatifu Wote (All Saints) Pastoral Centre, Ngong Diocese, Kenya, 13 February, 2015.
- Meeting of the Kenya Diocesan Family Life Coordinators at St. Joseph Conference Center, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya, 25 February, 2015.
- Formation Meeting on "Better Pastoral Care of Marriages" of the St. John Paul II Evangelizing Teams in Nairobi, Kenya on 15 March, 2015.
- Meeting of five people to collate the recommendations from the Formation Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya on 17 March, 2015.
- Meeting of Representatives of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) and Justice and Peace Commission with Mrs. Theresa Abuya to answer some of the questions, Nairobi, Kenya on 18 March, 2015.
- Answers of Kenyan Dioceses to the questions.

- The questions have a Western tone or viewpoint and sometimes lack a Global South perspective.
- Children are seen as the objects and receivers of pastoral and missionary care. Children can also be the subjects of promoting family relationships and family life, active participants in church life (for example, the liturgy) and agents of evangelization.
- Add “Traditionally Married” to Numbers 41-43.
- Specifically mention the challenge of HIV AND AIDS in relation to family and marriage.
- Specifically mention the challenge of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Specifically mention the challenge of child-headed households.
- Specifically mention the influence of witchcraft and superstition in African culture.
- The trend towards euthanasia is an alarming aspect in the intergenerational conflict.
- Specifically emphasize the importance of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in promoting family and marriage ministry in the world today. One example is *Bible* reading, reflection and study in SCCs.
- Specifically emphasize the importance of the Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC) in Catholic family life.
- More on traditional family and community values.
- More on “Rites of Passage” especially the communal spirit.
- More on good and responsible parenting.
- Contextualize the hopes of the document more.

Pope Francis' prayer intention for evangelization in February, 2015 was: “That married people who are separated may find welcome and support in the Christian community.” What are our SCCs doing to reach out to these people? Answers posted on the SCCs Facebook Page are found in Chapter 9.

Week Three (“Family and Social Morality”) of the Booklet of the *2015 Kenya Lenten Campaign* presented this question: “What can we do as family or Small Christian Community to promote Christian values in our families?”

In Eastern Africa SCC members focused on Questions 28-39, but we revised them in the Eastern African context. First, we identified 11 marriage situations/categories that need pastoral care ranging from engaged couples to divorced and remarried couples. To make it more real we tried to put people in Kenya that we know in each situation/category.

Then we rewrote and answers some of the questions as follows:

-
- Meeting of eight-member team to consolidate the responses to the "Lineamenta" for the October, 2015 Synod of Bishops at the JJ McCarthy Centre, Nairobi, 7-8 April, 2015.

1. How do SCC members guide and accompany engaged couples (in the middle of courtship)?¹¹⁶⁸ Based on the section “Guiding Engaged Couples in Their Preparation for Marriage” (Nos. 39 - 40) that states: “The synod recognized the steps taken in recent years to facilitate an effective preparation of young people for marriage, stressing, however, a need for a greater commitment of the entire Christian community in not only the preparation but also the initial years of family life.” In Eastern Africa SCCs are an important part of the “entire Christian community.”
2. How do SCC members guide and accompany married couples with children who are not married in the Catholic Church?¹¹⁶⁹ Based on the section “Pastoral Care of Couples Civilly Married, [Traditionally Married] or Living Together¹¹⁷⁰ in Their Preparation for Marriage” (Nos. 41-43) that states: “The Synod discussed diverse situations resulting from a multiplicity of cultural and economic factors, practices grounded in tradition, and the difficulty of young people to make lifetime commitments.”
3. How do SCC members accompany married couples in their first five years of marriage?¹¹⁷¹ Based on “Accompanying Married Couples in the Initial Years of Marriage” (No. 40).

In our SCCs Course at Tangaza University College on Thursday, 5 February, 2015 we discussed two important topics. How SCCs can supply the extra formation needed for longer and deeper marriage preparation? How SCCs can provide pastoral

¹¹⁶⁸ Swahili: *Ni kwa namna gani wanajumuiya wanashauriana na kuaambatana na wanaochumbiana?*

¹¹⁶⁹ Swahili: *Ni kwa namna gani wanajumuiya wanashauriana na kuambatana na wanandoa na watoto wao ambao hawajaoana rasmi katika Kanisa Katoliki?”*

¹¹⁷⁰ This describes cohabitation or the *Come we stay* phenomenon in Eastern Africa. There are many Swahili translations, but young people themselves like *kusukuma maisha* (a temporary, “for the time being” arrangement) and *mke wa deni* (a private, almost hidden, transitory arrangement without the dowry being paid). Another popular slang expression is “UN” referring to a young man in a Nairobi slum taking in a poor, vulnerable young woman into his flat. He provides her with the necessities of life in exchange for sexual favors. Compare with a hookup culture in the USA: a culture that accepts and encourages casual sexual encounters, including one-night stands and other related activity, which focus on physical pleasure without necessarily including emotional bonding or long-term commitment. It is generally associated with Western late adolescent behavior and, in particular, American college culture.

¹¹⁷¹ Swahili: *Ni kwa namna gani wanajumuiya wanaambatana na wanandoa katika ile miaka yao mitano ya kwanza?*

care for Catholic couples who are separated, divorced and happily remarried “outside” the church?

In answering these questions an on-going challenge is to track creatively the social, economic, political, cultural and religious changes in Africa today.¹¹⁷²

- According to the *Urban Dictionary Mpango Wa Kando* (Swahili for “a sideway or outside plan or program” refers to a side relationship or concurrent partnership) or a “jumpoff” is a casual sexual partner or girlfriend, a woman of dubious sexual practices, a mistress, an extramarital partner or a person that is usually only being used for sex while the man is married or in a serious relationship. This is increasing for men as polygamy is decreasing. Even wealthy married women in cities in Africa have these side relationships.
- Young engaged couples are spending so much time on planning the social sides of their marriages (funding raising gatherings, the wedding reception, related parties, etc.) that they give too little time to the religious side and to the specific marriage preparations.

The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) answered the 46 questions in a 37-page document sent to the Vatican on 15 April, 2015. SCCs are mentioned 23 times. Highlights include:

- Specifically emphasize the importance of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in promoting family and marriage ministry in the world today. One example is *Bible* reading, reflection and study in SCCs.
- The elderly and the ill can be taken care of by their Small Christian Communities.
- Formation of Small Christian Communities to support and strengthen families of believers and those faithful to the bond of marriage
- Agents of evangelization such as Small Christian Community animators are urgently needed.
- Often the Local Church of Kenya forms supportive groups to cater for the people’s special needs, for example, in the Small Christian Communities.
- In Kenya the Catholic Church have 45,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs). A SCC is a communion of families in the neighborhood. Many are lectionary-based Faith-sharing groups. On weekly basis these SCCs members read the Gospel of the following Sunday and connect Jesus’ teaching to their everyday life.
- The SCCs are Domestic Churches and through them the Christians and their families are strengthened to be courageous and faithful.

¹¹⁷² Based on various research and conversations with people such as with Kenyan lay women Mary Getui who teaches courses on Marriage and Sexuality at CUEA and Tangaza.

- *Hodi Hodi* (Swahili for “door to door”) visitations through Small Christian Communities is a way of empowering families so that they are also evangelizers to each other.
- The Church’s pastoral activity towards families, especially those which are wounded and fragile, includes accepting them, journeying with them and visiting them through the SCCs.
- Tangaza University College, a constitutive college of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), in Nairobi has two courses for future priests and other pastoral workers in which married people teach about the family, family values and marriage. The two courses are “Family Ministry” and “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today.”
- SCCs are starting a Ministry of Pastoral Accompaniment of newly married couples.
- In Kenya we have *wahudumu wa dini* (lay ministries of religious education, family life catechesis and marriage counseling) in SCCs and other apostolic groups.
- There is urgent need to form support groups especially through the networks of family associations, SCCs and other groups.
- Where SCCs are a pastoral priority they offer support to parents in raising their children.
- Allow children to interact and witness to each other in the SCCs and in *Bible Studies* program.
- Both parents (husband and wife) should participate in a SCC together. This models family participation for the children.¹¹⁷³

On 8 May, 2015 the National Family Life Program of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) General Secretariat published a 46-page booklet: *Relatio Synodi 2015 – Pastoral Guidelines for a Process of Discussion and Action*. The Online Version is *Family and Marriage in Kenya Today: Pastoral Guidelines for a Process of Discussion and Action*, <http://www.kccb.or.ke/home/news-2/pastoral-guidelines-for-a-process-of-discussion-in-action>

The “Preface” by Kenyan Bishop Salesius Mugambi, the Chairman of the National Family Life Program, states:

We invite you to participate in a very important “discernment process” in identifying the challenges and finding the pastoral solutions to family and

¹¹⁷³ Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), “Results of the Consultation in Kenya on the 46 Questions in the *Lineamenta* on *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World*, Nairobi: Unpublished Report, 2015. See Jim McDermott, “Kenya and the Survey for the Synod on the Family,” *America Magazine* Website, retrieved on 18 April, 2015, <http://www.americamagazine.org/content/dispatches/kenya-and-survey-synod-family>

marriage in Kenya today...Most recently the Kenyan Bishops sent to Rome on 15 April, 2015 a 37-page document called “Results of the Consultation in Kenya on the 46 Questions in the *Lineamenta on The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World*. The opening words state:

“The Local Church in Kenya, and in particular the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), is happy to share its pastoral experiences of family and marriage in Kenya with the Catholic Church worldwide”... Due to the positive response to our answers from Kenya, we decided to edit this document and print it in [this] user-friendly booklet form. We hope that you will pray over these answers, reflect on them and discuss them in various meetings coordinated by our Family Life Offices, in small groups involved in family and marriage ministry and in 45,000 SCCs in Kenya. Pope Francis urges us to find concrete, practical, pastoral solutions for our local African reality. As part of our ongoing pastoral process, the Family Life National Office will collate your comments, reflections and pastoral solutions and give them to the Kenyan delegates before they go to Rome in October, 2015.¹¹⁷⁴

The booklet includes a very useful Appendix of “Acronyms and Meanings” of ecclesiastical words.

Copies were distributed throughout Kenya for prayer, discussion, reflection and eventual implementation on the local level.

9. Small Christian Communities in the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the 2015 Synod of Bishops

The *Instrumentum Laboris* was published on 23 June, 2015 and served as the “Working Document” for the October, 2015 meeting. The text is arranged around three pillars: First, the challenges that the family faces today in different parts of the world. Second, the discernment of the family vocation that brings out the beauty and the importance of the family in the light of the Christian Gospel. Third, the mission of the family today. Each pillar took up a week of the discussions at the 4-25 October, 2015 assembly.

In the section on “The Family: Agent of Pastoral Activity” No. 72 states:

The church must instill in families a sense of belonging to the church, a sense of "we", in which no member is forgotten. Everyone ought to be encouraged to develop their skills and accomplish their personal plan of life in service of the Kingdom of God. Likewise, every family within the church ought to rediscover the joy of communion with other families so as to serve the common good of society by promoting a public policy, an economy and a culture in service of the family, even through the use of the social network and the media.

¹¹⁷⁴ Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) General Secretariat, *Relatio Synodi 2015 – Pastoral Guidelines for a Process of Discussion and Action*. Nairobi: Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015, pp. 3-4.

This calls for the ability to create small communities of families as living witnesses of Gospel values. Some families need to be prepared, trained and empowered so they can accompany other families in living in a Christian manner. Families who are willing to assume the mission *ad gentes* are to be acknowledged and encouraged. Finally, linking the pastoral ministry of young people with that on behalf of the family is of noted importance.

The document highlights "Accompanying Engaged Couples in their Preparation for Marriage" (No. 93) and "Accompanying Married Couples in the Initial Years of Marriage" (No. 94). In fact the *Instrumentum Laboris* has 16 references to "accompany," 13 references to "accompaniment" and eight references to "accompanying." SCC members accompany the both engaged couples throughout the stages of their marriage and married couples in their first years of marriage.

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) prepared a document *The Future of the Family, Our Mission* as a "Contribution to the 14th General Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Family." The section on "The Family and the Path Leading to its Fullness" states:

88. We recommend that this pastoral practice be promoted and that the Church develops a pastoral that encourages new couples to become living examples of marital faithfulness in the Small Christian Communities (SCC) and society.

89. The SCC and even parishes are all involved in the celebration of silver, golden and diamond jubilees of wedding. The celebration of these events which can be extended to the diocesan levels in the bishop's presence is the occasion of the proclamation of the Good News of the family, and an encouragement to young people to engage in marital life and stay faithful.

115. The new couples enter into a process and must be given special attention and pastoral care so as to lead a life of faithfulness to their commitment through the joys, the pains, the trials of marriage and family life. We recommend that the preparation for marriage brings new couples to participate in the Small Christian Communities (SCC) and Christian associations in order to benefit from the solidarity and the support of other couples and different members of the church.¹¹⁷⁵

10. Small Christian Communities in the *Relatio Synodi (Final Report)* of the 2015 Synod of Bishops

270 people (bishops, priests and Brother Hervé Janson, the Prior (Superior General) of the Little Brothers of Jesus [one of the communities of Blessed Charles de Foucauld], as the first lay voting member¹¹⁷⁶ in the 50-year history of Post Vatican II synods) were voting participants coming from countries and regions all over the world. These included 10 elected

¹¹⁷⁵ *The Future of the Family, Our Mission*, Accra: SECAM -- SCEAM PUBLICATIONS, 2015

¹¹⁷⁶ Pope Francis himself gave the right (permission) to be a voting member to Brother Hervé at the synod – the first time in the history of synods. At previous synods only priests voted.

representatives of the episcopal conferences from the nine AMECEA countries. Pope Francis appointed 45 members to the Synod on his own authority (PONTIFICAL APPOINTMENTS), selecting a diverse group of prelates and others from Europe and Africa. These included from the Oriental Catholic Churches:

1. ex officio: Cardinal Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel, CM, president of the Episcopal Conference, metropolitan archbishop of Addis Abeba, president of the Council of the Ethiopian Church.
2. ex officio: Archbishop Menghestab Tesfamarian, MCCJ., metropolitan of Asmara, president of the council of the Eritrean Church.

There were 34 auditors taking part in the discussions who participated in the deliberations but did not vote on any final document or issues. Among those auditors were 17 individuals/single (including auditors from Egypt, Nigeria and Rwanda) and 17 married couples (including auditors from Cameroon and South Africa). Thirteen of the individual auditors were women including three religious sisters (Mother Generals of their Religious Congregations). The total of auditors from Africa were seven (four laywomen, two laymen and one priest).

Some of the participants who have special ties to Eastern Africa were:

1. Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa Sr. Carmen Sammut, MSOLA, the head of the International Union of Superiors General Women (UISGW)
2. Fr. Richard Kuuia Baawobr, MAfr, Superior General of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) and now a bishop in Ghana.
3. Fr. Boniface Mungai, Kenya (Collaborators of the General Secretariat, Assistant).

The working method of the October, 2015 meeting was updated. Pope Francis, like Pope Benedict XVI before him, tried to make the synod less a gathering of bishops reading speeches and more a forum for discussing, questioning, studying and praying about the church's response to various pastoral problems.

The [*Final Report \(Relatio Synodi\) of the Synod of Bishops to the Holy Father, Pope Francis*](#) was published on 24 October, 2015 and 40 pages in length. All 94 paragraphs of the document were adopted by the assembly with the required two-thirds vote. Small Christian Communities (or their equivalent) are officially mentioned three times:

No. 60 on “The Initial Years of Family Life” states:

The parish is the place where experienced couples may be made available to the younger ones, possibly in conjunction with associations, ecclesial movements and new communities. Strengthening the network of relationships between couples and creating meaningful connections among people are necessary for the maturation of the family's Christian life. Movements and church groups often provide these moments of growth and formation. The Local Church, by integrating the contributions of various persons and groups, assumes the work of coordinating the pastoral care of young families.

No. 77 on “Accompaniment in Different Situations” states:

The Church will have to initiate everyone — priests, religious and laity — into this ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. *Exodus* 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life” (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 169). The main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the parish, which is the family of families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony.

No. 90 on “The Family as the Subject of Pastoral Ministry” states:

The hope is for the possibility of creating small communities of families as living witnesses of gospel values. There is a felt need to prepare, form and make responsible some families which can accompany others to live in a Christian manner. Those families are noted and encouraged who make themselves available to live the mission “*ad gentes*.” Finally, the importance is highlighted of combining pastoral youth ministry with the pastoral care of the family.

A wide variety of names and terms related to SCCs are used in the document to describe family catechesis, marriage catechesis and different forms of pastoral ministry connected to the family.

Family Associations
 Family Movements
 Ecclesial Associations
 Ecclesial Groups
 Ecclesial Movements
 New Communities
 Popular Movements

The document synthesizes material from previous synods and questionnaires. It affirms the important role of SCCs in pastoral accompaniment of families and married couples. But it does not break too much new ground in providing concrete pastoral solutions to the biggest challenges today.

Some important statements during the synod directly and indirectly affect the ministry of SCCs. These were either spoken interventions, written interventions or statements during media interviews:

Cardinal Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel:

“The important thing that the African Church brings here to the synod is the great traditional values Africans have for life. They like life. They stand for life. They encourage all those who stand for life also. So that respect for life they have brought here. That’s not just an African value but is a world value and Christian value that should be kept and transmitted. That is a big message they have brought: that the family is a very dear unit in the African society because it’s not just a nuclear family but also the extended

family/multigenerational family. If you are a daughter in a village, you are not just a daughter of your mother and father only, but of the whole village that will look after you and take care of you. So that aspect of the love that Africans have for the family has been reflected during this Synod.”

“The universality of the Catholic Church needs to be respected and taken into account. At the same time also see that each conference, in its own area, study these issues, like issues of divorced and remarried. See it on the local issue, and find out what the causes are, and see if couples will come together again, or, if they are separated, what are the remedies, especially for the children. Because of the separation of families because of migration, these are big issues so they need to be seen locally.”

“Pope Francis emphasizes decentralizing, that is, putting into practice the process that had been started in Vatican II, by establishing national conferences, while respecting the autonomy of each diocese. Then that will give cooperation, national cooperation in the conference, and discuss common issues for forming solutions together and also regional cooperation. So that is putting into place the Second Vatican Council’s decision on ecclesial structures, on church structures. So what Pope Francis is saying is more work on the local level because the church is so different in so many parts of the world. So he was reflecting what was being emphasized during the synod. So give more responsibility to the local bishop and to the local bishops’ conference to do more.”¹¹⁷⁷

Cardinal Wilfrid Napier:

There is a deep need for better preparation for marriage among Catholic laity. Having listened to reports, especially in Western countries, about the many marriages ending in divorce, African bishops “don’t want the same thing to happen to us.” Marriage preparation, however, should not merely be a course that lasts a few weeks or months, but a longer process that looks at how marriage should be discerned as a “vocation,” on a par with the priesthood or religious life.

On the issue of cohabitation, more leniency should be granted couples in Africa, for whom living together before marriage is often more a “step” in the marriage process than a rejection of matrimony or a trial marriage. “Cohabitation in our case is pro-marriage, not against marriage. In regard to the traditional African marriage custom, first of all it’s not a marriage between two individuals but between two families. So there’s a whole process of negotiation. When a dowry is established by the bride’s family, it may take a young man a very long time, perhaps years, to raise the money to cover it. In the meantime, the families could agree that at a certain point they would start living together as husband and wife, even

¹¹⁷⁷ Deborah Castellano Lubov, “INTERVIEW: Head of Ethiopian Catholic Church: Human Rights Crises Merit More Attention at Synod,” ZENIT: The World Seen from Rome, 23 October, 2015, ZENIT Website, retrieved 25 October, 2015, http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/interview-head-of-ethiopian-catholic-church-human-rights-crises-merit-more-attention-at-synod?utm_campaign=dailyhtml&utm_content=%5BZEE151023%5D%20The%20world%20seen%20from%20Rome&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dispatch&utm_term=Image

though the marriage is not yet concluded.” The term “cohabitation” doesn't really fit that African experience. In the West couples may also live together for economic or other reasons, but it's not the same. He added that it was up to African bishops to make sure that “this particular custom gets incorporated into the sacrament of matrimony.” That, of course, would be a major change. The same issue was discussed at the First African Synod held at the Vatican in 1994, and there's been no significant action on it since. “With Pope Francis' lead,” African bishops will have a new impetus for studying the issue.

Cardinal Napier is eager to explore the opening toward more local decision-making that Pope Francis raised during his speech at the synod when he spoke of a more "synodal" and collegial exercise of authority in the church. According to the USA bishops, almost half the couples who come in for marriage preparation courses in local parishes are cohabitating. The rates of cohabitation across Africa are generally much lower, but studies indicate they are increasing in some countries, both as a prelude to marriage and an alternative to marriage.¹¹⁷⁸

NOTE: The synod heard a suggestion, for example, for ritual adaptation to accommodate the stages of traditional African marriage – with the African bishops guiding the discussion. After many years of Rome emphasizing the limits of inculturation, this seems to be a time for new exploration of diversity in the church. Pope Francis, in fact, highlighted this possibility in his final synod speech on inculturation.

Bishop (now Cardinal) Antoine Kambanda

Our challenge in Rwanda is to help orphans, assist single mothers, and provide pastoral care for divorced and remarried persons. In Kigali Cyprien and Daphrose Rugamba founded a lay Catholic community focused on helping other couples face crises and developed a six-month marriage preparation course. They also founded a center to transform street children into productive members of society. They were murdered during the horrific 1994 genocide and their cause for canonization is underway. Their memory lives on in their center that helps young people who grew up as orphans following the genocide and now have no experience in how to build families. Such young people have no memories of the interaction between their parents to help them understand what a family is like.

Part of encourage evangelical or mission work in families is to deal with the cultural effects of divorce. The separation of families and remarriage is particularly troubling because of cultural norms in the country regarding how children from first marriages are treated. "When you see families breaking down, it is a great concern for us, especially when it comes to divorce and remarriage." Many times parents will not support children from the first marriage; the child feels that he or she has no home -- neither with the father nor with the mother." Many such children wind up on the streets, living practically as orphans.¹¹⁷⁹

¹¹⁷⁸ John Thavis, “Cardinal Napier Has Praise for Synod Process, Pope Francis' Leadership,” “The Blog,” retrieved on 25 October, 2015, <http://www.johnthavis.com/cardinal-napier-has-praise-for-synod-process-pope-francis-leadership#.VjCWxLerQgs>

¹¹⁷⁹ See Joshua J. McElwee, “Rwandan Bishop Carries Special Concerns to Synod in Rome,”

Archbishop Eamon Martin:

During the Synod of Bishops on “Family and Marriage” in Rome Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh Archdiocese, Northern Ireland said that he has been struck by the ideas put forward by bishops in the Philippines and elsewhere [including Eastern Africa] especially about Small Christian Communities where families support one another in times of need. He compares these to the “paltry efforts I’ve taken so far in my own diocese” where he says he’ll be looking to do much more at the parish and diocesan level.¹¹⁸⁰

This can be applied to urban Africa. The recovery of the traditional family in society today is completely unthinkable due to the changing social, cultural and economic factors. During the synod a clear example of a shift to a more pastoral direction was over cohabiting couples and those who are married in a civil ceremony. There is a recognition that couples live together before marriage due to financial reasons. This is the case in both the West (often due to the cost of housing) and in Africa (while a man pays off his wife’s dowry). It calls for the church to help them on a journey towards “the fullness of matrimony.”

Part of this synodal process is a more active role for the ongoing 14th Ordinary Council of the Synod of Bishops made up of 15 bishops. Also known as the Post-Synod Council or the Synod Ordinary Council, it will coordinate the follow-up to the synod on the family and marriage and prepare the topic of the next synod, traditionally held after three years. From the viewpoint of Africa there are special concerns. Of the three elected African members -- Cardinal Wilfrid Napier from South Africa, Cardinal Peter Turkson from Ghana and Cardinal Robert Sarah from Guinea -- the last two are based in Rome and serving in the Curia. Cardinals in Rome are better known, some even with a celebrity status, and have a better chance of being elected than bishops serving in dioceses in Africa. But how much are they in touch with life in the trenches in Africa? How much of the Catholic Church on the ground in Africa will be represented?

With the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops on the “Family and Marriage,” it is the responsibility of the Local Churches in Africa to “prepare, train and empower” families for this evangelizing work and to identify where, in the local communities, our families are being called to service. SCCs as a communion of families play a big role.

Catholics now await the pope’s document that will probably be an *Apostolic Exhortation* that will come out during the Jubilee Year of Mercy that runs until November, 2016. Meetings now continue on the continental and national levels. Some initial discussions focused on the role of the Local and Universal Church and the part that episcopal conferences might share. In these debates the focus was on what pastoral issues are best handled at what levels. Here is the perfect place for the doctrine of episcopal collegiality based on synodality

National Catholic Reporter (NCR), 22 October 2015, *NCR Website*, retrieved on 25 October, 2015, <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/rwandan-bishop-carries-special-concerns-synod-rome>

¹¹⁸⁰ Eamon Martin, “Irish Church Must Respond Better to Challenges of Family Life.” Vatican Radio 23 October, 2015, retrieved on 24 October, 2015, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/10/23/irish_church_must_respond_better_to_challenge_of_family_life/1181552

and subsidiarity. In this ongoing synodal process and journey the Catholic Church in Africa can share its growing voice and important pastoral experiences of family and marriage with the Catholic Church worldwide.

11. 2014-2016 as the “Years of the Family and Marriage”

The closing of the 2012-2013 Year of Faith at the end of November, 2013 opened the door to a new theme for SCCs in Eastern Africa: 2014-2016 as the “Years of the Family and Marriage.” This is part of SCCs’ active participation in the two World Synod of Bishops Meetings in Rome. Many dioceses have officially declared 2014 as the “Year of the Family” such as: Dar es Salaam Archdiocese, Tanzania; Johannesburg Archdiocese, South Africa; Machakos Diocese, Kenya; Moshi Diocese, Tanzania; Mwanza Archdiocese, Tanzania; Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya; Ngong Diocese, Kenya (the motto on banners is *The family that prays together stays together*); and Shinyanga Diocese, Tanzania. Various Catholic institutions have declared 2014 as the “Year of the Family.” In its information posters the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi includes the saying *A family that prays together stays together*.

Machakos Diocese in Kenya has over 5,000 SCCs. The theme of its 2014 Diocesan Calendar is: “Called to Emulate the Holy Family.” This helps to remind us that the first SCC is the Holy Family.¹¹⁸¹ The diocese’s 10-year report has a section on “The Year of the Family.” First in reviewing the 2012-2013 “The Year of Faith” it states: “Much was accomplished from the Small Christian Communities’ level to the diocesan level.”¹¹⁸² Then SCCs are seen in the context of the family that is the smallest unit of our society.

Mwanza Archdiocese in Tanzania also has an excellent 2014 Archdiocesan Calendar on “The Year of the Family.” Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Ruwa’ichi’s emphasis on family values can be found in Chapter 10.

The theme of the Paulines Publications Africa 2014 Calendar is “Family Calendar with Pope Francis.” The Paulines have a wide range of pamphlets, booklets and books on family life including the “Family Today Series” and the “Joy of Living Series.” These are easily affordable and can be a regular part of SCC meetings and individual family meetings and discussions.

The theme of New People Media Center *Mission Calendar 2015* is “Family and Evangelization” with quotations on the family and mission for each month taken from synod documents, Pope Francis, Vatican II and other sources.

¹¹⁸¹ Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel writes: “Family is facing so many challenges nowadays! May the Holy Family, Jesus - Mary - and Joseph, pray for Christian Families all over the world.” Email message to the author, 12 June, 2014.

¹¹⁸² *Journey of 10 Years Achievements. Catholic Diocese of Machakos. Bishop Martin Kivuva,* Machakos: Privately Printed, 2014, p. 19.

In 2014 the monthly "*Mwaki*" (Gikuyu for "SCC") Radio Program on CORO FM in Nairobi focused on "SCCs Promote the Pastoral Care of Family and Marriage."¹¹⁸³ This theme was also used in a Swahili program (called *Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo, Oyee!*) and an English program on Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC).

"Family Catechism" and "Family Catechesis" were two themes in Week Two on "Family and Faith" in the Kenyan Lenten Campaign 2014 booklet.¹¹⁸⁴ Family is vital in passing on a living faith on to the next generation. In bold print the booklet states: **"Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore, must be recognized as the primary and principal educators."**¹¹⁸⁵

One is reminded that 35 years ago in October, 1980 over 200 bishops from some 90 countries met in Rome for the first World Synod of the Bishops on the Family. The full title was: "On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World." It was the first synod of the papacy of St. John Paul II and ultimately resulted in his 1981 apostolic exhortation on the family called *The Family in the Modern World (Familiaris Consortio)*. It emphasized the family as the "Domestic Church," the place where Christian religion is learned, experienced, lived.

Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa are helping its members in this family catechesis. Education of children starts in the family, in the home. A SCC is a communion of families. The SCC is an important support group for families – for the parents and the children alike. The SCC is also a place for religious education, pastoral care and evangelization. SCCs can promote a family culture. One specific challenge is the education of children in irregular marriages.

¹¹⁸³ The monthly themes were as follows:

MARCH	- helping young couples to solemnize their marriage in the church
APRIL	- helping marriages with problems
MAY	- issue of divorce
JUNE	- religious education for your children
JULY	- tackling various addictions
AUGUST	- single motherhood
SEPTEMBER	- building the family culture
OCTOBER	- celebrating marriages in church
NOVEMBER	- stock taking of what we have done since March

¹¹⁸⁴ Nairobi Archdiocese has conducted "Training of Trainers" (TOTs) Workshops to train people from every deanery (both clergy and lay) on the theme and weekly topics in the booklet. In this way both the process and content get down to the SCC members on the local level. Research over many years clearly shows that SCC leaders and animators need regular training in the use and application of the booklets especially the process/methodology of starting from life experience (a story in Step One -- "See").

¹¹⁸⁵ Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *How Can We Be One?* p. 21.

An interesting Case Study is the St. Andrew Kaggwa Catechetical Training Center in Mumias (also called the Mumias CTC) in Kakamega Diocese, Kenya. During the two year residence course the 15 couples (the catechist and spouse) form a SCC. Each couple has a specific ministry in the SCC, for example, Marriage Counselor. This couple counsels the other couples if problems arise in their marriages. If there is tension between couples themselves the chairperson (another catechist) tries to bring about a reconciliation. During the course talks are given on SCCs and family catechesis. Two of the books required for the catechists' training are *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment and Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*.¹¹⁸⁶

St. Matia Mulumba Catechetical Training Center in Mityana, Uganda has a similar SCC plan. The 60 catechists (presently 45 men and 15 women) form five SCCs each with a priest chaplain. Many liturgical and pastoral activities pass through the SCCs. On Wednesdays the five SCCs read and reflect on the Gospel of the following Sunday.¹¹⁸⁷

"The Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization," was the theme of the Formation Meetings of the St. John Paul II Parish Evangelizing Teams in Nairobi, Kenya in 2014. The theme on Sunday, 16 February, 2014 was: "Using the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Method of "See," "Judge" and "Act" to Reflect on Key Pastoral Problems Related to Family and Marriage in Kenya Today." After wide consultation on the real issues in family and marriage in Kenya today (*hali halisi* in Swahili), the participants divided into SCCs to reflect on some of the following topics:

- *Helping young couples/couples with children to get married in a Catholic Church.*
- *Counseling couples with marriage problems.*
- *Divorce caused by financial pressures.*
- *Advising single mothers on raising their children.*
- *Increasing number of abortions.*
- *Helping children and young people who have addictions including alcoholism, drugs, excessive attachment to electronic devices/gadgets (computer games, internet surfing, online music, social media), gambling and pornography.*
- *Religious education for your children.*

¹¹⁸⁶ Based on the author's conversation with Kenyan diocesan priest Father Vincent Lumumba in Nairobi, Kenya, 18 June 2014.

¹¹⁸⁷ Based on the author's conversation with Ugandan diocesan priest Father Emmanuel Katongole in Nairobi, Kenya, 27 June 2014.

- *Jobs for Youth/Problem of Youth Unemployment*¹¹⁸⁸

After discussing the meaning of the topic, SCC members looked up *Bible* passages on the topic and then discussed the practical solutions and actions to be taken. Some of the influences and factors involved in these problems and challenges included (alphabetically):

- bad local environment
- careless use of money
- curiosity
- effects of poverty
- financial pressures
- generational gap
- lack of communications
- lack of honesty and trust
- losing job
- no children
- no prayer life in the family
- parental neglect
- partner has other relationships
- selfishness
- stress

Under solutions it was recommended that the SCC can be a support system and “home” for its members especially in African cities. Regular prayer in the SCCs is very important including teaching the children how to pray. SCC members can work with professional counselors and groups such as Couples for Christ, Family Enrichment Clubs, Family Life Ministries, Marriage Encounter, Pre-Cana, Retrouvaille and 12 Step Groups (Al-Anon, Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.), etc.

One of the best ways of celebrating the “2014-2015 Years of the Family and Marriage” was to emphasize these priorities in the annual “Days” and “Events” of the SCCs, apostolic groups and parishes. The Catholic Men Association celebrated a National Night Vigil of Prayers with the motto *Good Family, Good Church* on 23 May, 2014 at Karen, Nairobi. Mwalimu Simon Rurinja, a member of our Eastern Africa SCCs Training Team, spoke on “Why Divorce is More Rampant in Christian Marriage than in Traditional Marriage.”

Queen of Apostles Parish in Nairobi, Kenya had an interesting family plan in 2014. Annually all the SCCs in the parish have a lively choir competition when each small community performs the same new religious song in Swahili composed by a Kenyan priest. It is a special teaching moment. The message of the song that emphasizes African Christian values is as important as the skill of the singers. The competition builds up teamwork and collaboration in the practice sessions of the individual SCCs and a sense of solidarity throughout the whole parish. In 2014 the themes of love, joy and sharing appeared in the Swahili song *Familia ya Kikristo*

¹¹⁸⁸ This is a problem that affects the social, economic and pastoral life of families throughout Africa. High unemployment of youth affects the stability of families and marriages.

(“The Family of Christ”). Various family values were highlighted. The preliminary completion started at the outstation level and moved towards choosing the SCC parish winner in a festive grand finale.¹¹⁸⁹

Various workshops and seminars are being conducted on the overall theme “Year of the Family and Marriage.” Leaders of 12 SCCs in Imara Seko Outstation in Mwanhuzi Parish, Shinyanga Diocese, Tanzania participated in a two day workshop on 27-28 June, 2014. Every SCC member is a missionary by virtue of his or her Baptism. Members should proclaim the Good News of Salvation and be active evangelizers. The church is not a building, but a community of believers. We should focus on our heavenly home, rather than earthly values and priorities. Young people should be encouraged to get married in the Catholic Church so they can receive communion.¹¹⁹⁰

Another example is St. Jude Catholic Church, Doonholm, Nairobi, Kenya. Its Family Day is celebrated every year on 28 October, the Feast Day of St. Jude Thaddeus. SCCs participate in the liturgy such as bringing up the Offertory Gifts. After the homily marriages are solemnized in the context of f

Another opportunity is Good Shepherd Sunday also called World Vocations Sunday that is celebrated on the Fourth Sunday after Easter with the Gospel story of Jesus as the Good Shepherd from St. *John*. Traditionally this day focused specifically on vocations to the priesthood and religious life. But now guidelines from the Vatican encourage prayers for vocations to all walks of life including married people and families. The 11 May, 2014 Vocations Sunday Poster of the Kenya Pontifical Missionary Societies (PMS) has the theme: “Witness to the Truth.” It has photos of an African bishop ordaining a priest, African religious sisters praying together and a groom at a marriage ceremony putting the ring on his bride’s finger. By extension we can pray for the vocation to be SCC members and members of apostolic groups.

The Synod of Bishops XIV Ordinary General Assembly took place in Rome in October, 2015 and I sought “working guidelines in the pastoral care of the person and the family.” *New People Magazine* introduced a new section in 2015 called “Family on Mission.” Married couples were be invited to write articles on the following suggested themes:

- “Marriage as a Vocation:” January-February, 2015
- “Praying within the Family:” March-April, 2015
- “Education of the Children:” May-June, 2015
- “Family: The Domestic Church:” June-July, 2015
- “Evangelizing as a Family:” September-October, 2015.

¹¹⁸⁹ Based on a conversation with Kenyan layman Steve Mwangi, a member of St. Peter SCC in Thome 1 Estate, St. Gabriel Outstation, Queen of Apostles Parish, Ruaraka in Nairobi on 13 June, 2014.

¹¹⁹⁰ Information supplied by Simon Rurinjah

- “Responsible Parenthood:” November-December, 2015

Married couples in SCCs were challenged to volunteer to write some of these articles. The theme of the “Mission Calendar 2015” of the New People Media Center was “Family and Evangelization.”

Many catechetical and liturgical materials are being produced that can be used in SCCs like *Together as One: Catechetical Sessions for Married Couples* (Arua Diocese, Uganda Publications). This is an 84-page booklet with 13 catechetical sessions for married couples and designed to be led by a married couple (or by a married man and a married woman).

In summary: During this “2014-2015 Years of the Family and Marriage” SCC members in Eastern Africa helped young people to have a sacramental marriage in church and helping to reconcile couples who are having difficulties in their marriages. Parish-based SCCs¹¹⁹¹ have many opportunities to promote family ministry, family life apostolate, family evangelization, family catechesis, family values and marriage catechesis in their parishes and other places in Eastern Africa. This contributes to the ongoing development of the identity and pastoral mission of the Church as Family of God in Africa.

12. Toward Bold and Creative Pastoral Solutions in Africa

In No. 33 of *The Joy of the Gospel* Pope Francis says:

Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way.” I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory. I encourage everyone to apply the guidelines

¹¹⁹¹ Marriage experts and marriage advocates from all over the world signed an open letter in June, 2014 addressed to Pope Francis and the members of the 2014 Synod on the Family that stated:

Perhaps the boldest new way we can evangelize married couples (and by extension their children’s future marriages) is to build small communities of married couples who support each other unconditionally in their vocations to married life. These communities would provide networks of support grounded in the bonds of faith and family, commitment to lifelong marriage, and responsibility to and for each other.

The letter also recommended “creating small clusters of married couples at the parish level for mutual support.”

“Marriage Experts Send Open Letter to Pope, Synod Members: Underline Challenges Facing Family, Timeless Truths About Marriage, “ZENIT: The World Seen From Rome” 29 September, 2014. Thus small communities of married couples can be an important type of SCC.

found in this document generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear. The important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, and especially under the leadership of the bishops, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment.¹¹⁹²

Thus we are challenged to this task of rethinking in a communal search and in wise and realistic pastoral communal discernment. In various documents and speeches Pope Francis explains this new process. Pope Francis says that he is open to changing Catholic Church regulations (NOT doctrine) for urgent pastoral reasons, that is, finding a “pastoral solution.” He says if there is a consensus of the recommendations of bishops on the local level (for example, a national or regional episcopal conference) on a particular urgent pastoral issue, change is possible in the context of a process of synodality, subsidiarity (decentralization) and collegiality.¹¹⁹³

More specifically Pope Francis said: “We are on the way towards a deeper matrimonial pastoral care.”¹¹⁹⁴ He recommends that we should respond pastorally to the facts on the ground and not try to impose an ideological solution based on some ideal that rarely exists in the real world.

American Archbishop Blase Cupich, the Archbishop of Chicago, Illinois describes Pope Francis’ method or process as follows:

What is intriguing to me about what the Holy Father is doing with the synod is that he is saying “we need to walk together and we need to listen to each other. Nothing should be kept off the table, people should not say you can’t say that.” If you start only with ideas and fixed notions then you are not going to get too far because you are going to use a very deductive rather than

¹¹⁹² Magesa insightfully commented:

John Paul II’s papacy and the nearly eight years of his successor Benedict XVI (2005-2013) saw some practical retrenchment from the theological vision of Vatican II, something which, after Benedict’s surprise resignation on 28 February, 2014, Pope Francis his successor, has been trying to undo since his election on 13 March.

Laurenti Magesa, “Endless Quest,” p. 9.

¹¹⁹³ In an interview with the author at Georgetown University on 9 October, 2014, Ladislaus Orsy confirmed that “affective collegiality” involves a consultative process by the world bishops while “effective collegiality” involves a deliberative process (decision-making that includes voting to reach a consensus). Francis wants national bishops’ conferences to be more involved in the collegial process and ideally present a consensus view on a particular pastoral topic from the grassroots level. The Holy Spirit works through the consensus of these local bishops.

¹¹⁹⁴ Francis, *Vatican Information Service*, 31 July, 2013, p. 20.

an inductive method. The Pope wants to be close to the “pulse” of real life which can help “spark creativity and imagination” in pastoral situations.¹¹⁹⁵

Francis seems to favor a more pastoral approach to the equally perplexing questions of “invalid” marriages -- couples who do not get married in church in the first place and couples who remarry outside the church without getting an annulment. Regarding the Eucharist, in No. 47 of *The Joy of the Gospel* he says: “The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.”

A key issue is finding a pastoral solution to the two meanings of the “Eucharistic Famine” (also called the “Eucharistic Hunger”) in Africa today that are described as follows:

Due to the lack of priests (and lack of sacramentalized marriages) on any given Sunday in Africa most Catholics (up to 60% in some surveys¹¹⁹⁶) participate in a “Sunday Service Without a Priest” (especially in rural areas) where there is no Holy Communion rather than participate in a regular mass. This is popularly called “the Eucharistic Famine.” In a few of these services, communion is distributed by the catechist or by a trained and installed lay leader.

While statistics vary here is a dramatic Case Study from Uganda:

With such a huge area to cover, St. Matia Mulumba Parish in Irundu in Jinja Diocese, Uganda has developed in a typically African way – with a fully involved laity running most of the parish activities. Because of the vastness of the parish and lack of transport, fewer than one per cent of parishioners are able to attend one of the six Sunday Masses. There are 36 sub-centers where a “Sunday Service Without a Priest”¹¹⁹⁷ is offered without clergy. This is the main Sunday worship for the vast majority. A full-time catechist leads a team of eight part-time paid catechists who lead these liturgies.¹¹⁹⁸

A complete analysis of St. Matia Mulumba Parish shows that each of the three priests celebrate two masses in a Sunday Mass Center making up the

¹¹⁹⁵ Blase Cupich, “Synod Must Focus on ‘Real Life’ Says Cupich,” *Tablet*, 5 September, 2015 (Volume 269, No. 9116), p. 25, *Tablet* Website, retrieved on 4 September, 2015, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/downloadpdf/050915issue.pdf>

¹¹⁹⁶ More alarming statistics come from individual sources. Church historian Ugandan diocesan priest Father Joseph Ngulu says that in his home diocese of Jinja, Uganda the farthest outstations may get mass only once a year. Maryknoll missionary priest Father Dick Albertine, MM reports that the Vicar General of Windhoek, Namibia said that only 5% of the Catholics in the country have a mass on Sunday.

¹¹⁹⁷ There are many names: “Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest,” “Celebration of the Word with Distribution of Communion,” “Liturgy of the Word,” “Paraliturgy” and “Paralitururgical Service.”

¹¹⁹⁸ James Cutts, “Across the Continents,” 22 January 2015, *Tablet*, *Tablet* Website, retrieved on 24 January, 2015, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/parish-practice/6/4469/across-the-continents>

total of six masses in the parish every Sunday. 99% of the Catholics participate in the services in the 36 sub-centers that do not have a tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament reserved. Some, not all catechists, are installed to carry the Eucharist from the main center to the sub-centers. This happens mainly on Christmas and Easter. So many people go spiritually hungry.

Another Case Study comes from by Malawian diocese priest Father Henry Chinkanda. Building on an analysis of his parish in Blantyre Archdiocese, Malawi and other statistics he states: “On a given Sunday 80% of the Catholic Christians in Malawi participate in a “Sunday Service Without a Priest” due to the scarcity of ordained personnel. For these ‘Sunday Services Without a Priest,’ good preachers come from those SCCs that prepare together in their weekly gatherings and share the Word of God taken from the readings of the following Sunday.”¹¹⁹⁹

A similar pattern is in Iramba Parish in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania where the author served for five years, most of the time as the lone priest. I celebrated two masses each Sunday, one mass at the Iramba Parish Center and one mass at one of the three subparishes or Sunday Mass centers on a rotation basis. In addition there were nine outstations where the catechist led the “Sunday Service Without a Priest” in small chapels that did not have a tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. The catechists did not carry the Eucharist by motorcycle or bicycle from the Parish Center to the outstations. So on a given Sunday the Catholics received communion in only two out of the 13 places of worship. Again many people went spiritually hungry.¹²⁰⁰

In general the AMECEA Bishops do not allow the Eucharist to be reserved in outstation chapels mainly because of security issues and do not allow the catechists to give out communion because of the abuses that have taken place.

- Up to 60% of adult Catholics in Africa have not had their marriages blessed in church (sacramentalized). So one increasingly hears the expression “Eucharistic Famine” referring to the many, many Catholics in Africa who cannot receive communion because they are not officially married in the Catholic Church A serious, ongoing pastoral challenge for SCCs is to help many of their members to regularize their marriages in a Catholic ceremony so they can receive communion.
- Practical pastoral solutions would help lay people in Africa to receive communion more frequently and thus nourish their all-important eucharistic spirituality (“the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life,” Second Vatican Council,

¹¹⁹⁹ Henry Chinkanda, “Malawi Report” in Johannes Duwe, ed., *Network Small Christian Communities Africa: Small Christian Communities as Missionary Agents*, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 12 September, 2019, pp. 42-43.

¹²⁰⁰ There are similar situations in Asia and Latin America. At the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October, 2018 a Brazilian Bishop said that in his diocese there are some rural villages that get a visit from a priest once a year. On that day he celebrates Mass, performs marriages, baptizes children and conducts the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He departs saying that he will return after a year.

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 10 and *Catechism of the Catholic Church*), No. 1324).

With such a wide variety of bishops and their different cultural, theological and pastoral views in the national bishops' conferences, one might ask: Is a consensus possible right now on a new pastoral solution to a pastoral issue such as the Eucharistic Famine in Africa with its two meanings? Tanzanian Archbishop Rénatus Nkwande of Mwanza Archdiocese comments that the bishops themselves argue about the best pastoral solutions to this issue so consensus is very hard.¹²⁰¹

First let us look at a new process that is evolving that we might call "open discussion and debate leading to a deeper discernment" under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Many commentators have emphasized the fact that at the Third Extraordinary Synod in October, 2014 the bishops and cardinals publicly disagreed with one another in their attempt to discern what is good for the church. The Catholic Church really has not had this experience since the open debates of the Second Vatican Council.¹²⁰² The pope himself supported this open discussion and said in "Address of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Conclusion of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops":

Personally I would be very worried and saddened if it were not for these temptations and these animated discussions; this movement of the spirits, as St Ignatius called it (*Spiritual Exercises*, 6), if all were in a state of agreement, or silent in a false and quietist peace.... Many commentators, or people who talk, have imagined that they see a disputatious Church where one part is against the other, doubting even the Holy Spirit, the true promoter and guarantor of the unity and harmony of the Church... now we still have one year to mature, with true spiritual discernment, the proposed ideas and to find concrete solutions to so many difficulties and innumerable challenges that families must confront; to give answers to the many discouragements that surround and suffocate families.

Then in the "Homily of Pope Francis" at the "Closing Mass of the Extraordinary Synod on The Family and the Beatification of the Servant of God Paul VI":

¹²⁰¹ Rénatus Nkwande, conversation with the author, Maryknoll, New York, 14 May, 2015.

¹²⁰² Historians comment on the great influence and help of Catholic theologians on the bishops and documents of Vatican Two. Today there is a lot of discussion on the uneasy relationship between theologians and bishops, for example, in the USA. John Allen points out that the African theologians, especially the progressive theologians, and the African bishops seem to move on parallel tracks without too much dialog and communications. Commentators have said that at various synods of bishops that without the help of theologians the African bishops' interventions are less theologically sound or astute.

Terminology is tricky. Rather than the common terms "conservative" and "liberal," I prefer "traditional"* and "progressive." I use the * (star) for "traditional"* (a person is a "traditionalist"*) to refer to a person who is orthodox. "Tradition" by itself is a positive word and important in the history of the Catholic Church as in the "Church Tradition."

In these days, during the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, we have seen how true this is. “Synod” means “journeying together”. And indeed pastors and lay people from every part of the world have come to Rome, bringing the voice of their particular Churches in order to help today’s families walk the path the Gospel with their gaze fixed on Jesus. It has been a great experience in which we have lived *synodality* and *collegiality*,¹²⁰³ and felt the power of the Holy Spirit who constantly guides and renews the Church.

The goal is deeper pastoral and theological communal discernment leading to new pastoral solutions. This is an on-going process of listening, discussion,¹²⁰⁴ dialog, debate, discernment and proposed pastoral responses. Open discussion, debate and even disagreement may be new for African bishops, but it can be creative. It is the spirit, process and practice of synodality and collegiality under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Let us review the ongoing discussion and discernment regarding:

- **Pastoral Solution to the First Meaning of the Eucharistic Famine: Ordination of Married Community Elders.**

Providing the Eucharist to all Catholics in Africa is a great need. Malawian theologian Bishop Patrick Kalilombe, MAfr emphasizes that the Eucharist community is the heart of our Christian life. He says that if Christian communities in Africa cannot receive the Eucharist because of the lack of ordained ministers that presently in the Latin Rite are male, celibate priests, then we must rethink our church laws and pastoral practices, for example, ordain mature married men of proven leadership skills (*virī probati* in Latin). Then many more people would be able to receive communion and our SCCs would truly be Eucharistic Communities.

¹²⁰³ Robert Michens explains in very clear, succinct language:

At the heart of this reform are (author’s bold) **synodality** (the entire Church walking, discerning and evangelizing together), **episcopal collegiality** (shared governing responsibility between pope and bishops) and **subsidiarity** (decentralization of decision-making authority) - - to name just three core principles the apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel* says are needed in order to renew the church. What the document leaves unsaid is that the creation of new structures or the significant alteration of old ones is absolutely essential to making these principles integral to the Catholic church's life. And they are key to hastening the increasingly urgent task of bringing about full church unity, especially with the Orthodox and the Reform Communities.

Robert Michens, "Pope Francis: Forging a Legacy," *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)*, 31 August, 2015, NCRonline Website, retrieved 2 September, 2015, <http://ncronline.org/blogs/roman-observer/pope-francis-forging-legacy>

¹²⁰⁴ See the creativity of St. Paul Inside the Wall in Madison New Jersey, USA’s Young Adult Fireside Chat: Open discussion for young adults that welcomes opposing viewpoints on the great moral issues of our day.

In another part of the Global South Bishop Erwin Kräutler, bishop of Xingu (pronounced Shin-goo) Diocese, Brazil has argued that the pastoral situation calls for drastic measures. His diocese in the region of Pará has 800 parishes or missions in a territory the size of Germany, but just 27 priests, meaning that more than two-thirds of the faithful take part in Sunday Mass just two or three times a year.

In April, 2014 he took his case to the Vatican where he met with Pope Francis. Recently, Kräutler and Cardinal Claudio Hummes, a friend of Pope Francis, presented the idea of ordaining married community elders to Brazil's National Conference of Bishops that is now in the process of forming a commission to delve deeper into the matter. Kräutler said that he counted himself among a group of bishops, mostly in the Global South, who see the ordination of such elders as a potential solution for the countless rural congregations that cannot receive the sacraments, including Holy Communion, marriage and baptism. Kräutler said that Pope Francis has encouraged open dialog on the issue and urged bishops at the national level to come up with "courageous" proposals to address the priest shortage.¹²⁰⁵

An Editorial in *Tablet* points out: "Pope Francis has indicated that he is prepared to lift the obligation of celibacy for candidates for the priesthood in response to a plea from an individual diocesan bishop or from a bishops' conference."¹²⁰⁶ Michens adds:

There is an acute priest shortage throughout most of the world and unless the structures and disciplines that regulate ordained ministry are changed the shortage will become even more severe. Francis could make a major contribution to this area as a reformer if he were to revive -- as he has indicated his willingness to do -- the ancient practice of allowing married men to be ordained to the presbyterate. This will not, in and of itself, stem the tide of those leaving the church, but it would be a just and charitable response to those many millions of Catholics who are now deprived of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, because there are too few priests. A married priesthood, if implemented with care and farsightedness, could also contribute to the dismantling of the cancer of clericalism, which finds especially fertile soil amidst an all-male (and disproportionately gay) priestly class.¹²⁰⁷

¹²⁰⁵ Summary of Benjamin Soloway, "Brazilian Bishop Urges Ordination of Married Community Elders, *Religious News Service*, 24 November, 2014, Reprinted in *Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/brazilian-bishop-urges-ordination-of-married-community-elders-as-priest-shortage-grows/2014/11/24/1e657fb8-7412-11e4-95a8-fe0b46e8751a_story.html and *Huffington Post*, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/25/brazilian-bishop-ordain-married-elders_n_6215286.html

¹²⁰⁶ "England Can Break New Ground," *Tablet*, 13 November 2014, retrieved from the Tablet Website, 20 November, 2104, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/editors-desk/1/3879/england-can-break-new-ground>. See also the cover story "Married Priests: The Bishops Speak Out in Support" in the *Tablet* (Vol. 269, No. 9108, 11 July, 2015) including the editorial "Celibacy is Not the Only Option."

¹²⁰⁷ Robert Michens, "Pope Francis: Forging a Legacy."

The retired German Fidei Donum Bishop Fritz Lobinger of Aliwal Diocese, South Africa has written extensively on topics such as *Teams of Elders: Moving Beyond "Viri Probati"* (Claretian Publications, 2007), *Every Community Its Own Ordained Leaders* (Claretian Publications, Philippines, 2008) and *The Empty Altar: An Illustrated Book to Help Talk about the Lack of Parish Priests* (Crossroad Publishing Company, 2016).

He puts forward the case for ordaining married men ("locally ordained ministers") in underserved areas. In commenting on the World Church, and particularly the Global South, Lobinger states: "The priestless communities of the South have already developed a ministry structure of their own. We just have to build on it."¹²⁰⁸ "Lay leaders preach, conduct services, conduct funerals, pray for the sick and in some areas they are even authorized to conduct baptisms and marriages. There can be no doubt that they would also be accepted if they were ordained to the ministerial priesthood."¹²⁰⁹

A key for Lobinger is that the ordination of elders would work in vibrant, self-reliant Catholic communities in Africa such as the networks of parish-based SCCs. He admits that some priests view a new path to ordination without formal academic training or the celibacy requirement as a threat that could undermine the traditional priesthood. But Lobinger argues that traditionally trained priests would fit into the new system. "The new local leaders (Married Community Elders) become a leadership team and the priests become formators."¹²¹⁰ He adds:

I hope that some Bishops Conferences will make such proposals [on married priests] during this year. I am strongly in favor of this proposal but I feel we have to go into some detail because we might otherwise make some mistakes and might cause more problems than we solve. You remember that several bishops of Africa were convinced we should ordain the existing catechists. That would have caused problems indeed. The theme needs to be discussed thoroughly.¹²¹¹

There are innovative and exciting models for re-imagining parish leadership and ministry. The Lobinger Model is one of the creative models that has roots in the past and a sense of what is needed for the future:

The Lobinger Model is an innovative model rooted in the particular needs and talents of local communities. It addresses the theological conundrum presented by the priest shortage by expanding the role of lay leaders and ordaining them into service. The Lobinger model was developed by Bishop Fritz Lobinger who, early on, was instrumental in developing the pastoral model of the Small Christian Communities -- including a particular model of *Bible* study with central roles for lay leadership in liturgical services, catechesis and the social gospel. He ministered in regions of South Africa where there were few

¹²⁰⁸ Fritz Lobinger, letter to the author dated 28 September, 2013.

¹²⁰⁹ Fritz Lobinger in Benjamin Soloway, "Brazilian Bishop," p. 1.

¹²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹¹ Fritz Lobinger, email message to author dated 31 January, 2015.

priests. He recognized the enormous faith and talents of lay people in the communities under his care and sought to empower them to carry out the fullness of sacramental life in their local community. You can learn more about his model by reading his interview at: <http://www.uscatholic.org/ordainelders>

In preparation for the 3rd international meeting of priest associations and reform groups in October, 2017 Father Wolfgang Gamer offers his view of the Lobinger model based on his experience as a priest in South America. His model is based on the one advanced by Bishop Fritz Lobinger and the Vienna pastoral theologian Paul Zulehner of “Paul priests (originating outside the community, i.e. ordained by the bishop)” and “Corinth priests (originating within the community—recognized and chosen from within the community).” Gamer notes that in *Romans* 16 and 1 *Corinthians* 16 the apostle Paul offers a variety of leadership roles that are exercised in Rome and Corinth.

To begin, each community opens itself to that Spirit, prayerfully reflects on its situation and sets priorities in order to live out their faith in today’s world. In order to be a community of mission, they spell out their activities under the guidelines of worship, service and witness. In this process, the community is accompanied and supported by “Paul priests” and full time lay people who assist in the discovery of charisms within the community. The aim of this process is to build a team of “Corinth priests” of at least three persons. Lobinger and Zulehner speak of *virī probati* and eventually also of *feminae probatae*. Women and men, both single or married and couples, like Prisca and Aquilla in *Acts of the Apostles*, provide a robust model for missionary outreach and community leadership and ministry. From this process emerges a team of leaders, accepted and supported by all members of a community, whatever their size or number. This team may well undergo formation and will eventually be ordained for service.¹²¹²

Lobinger comments positively on the SCCs in Eastern Africa: “The Catholic Church in Eastern Africa is firmly on the path of community building, exactly following the path on which the Early Church has put us. You have developed SCCs in your parishes in order to learn more about ways of becoming a community in Christ, as brothers and sisters. What would make my joy even greater would be to see how some of you are developing new materials for further developing this aim of becoming a Community Church. Times are moving on and we have to move on with them.”¹²¹³

Bishop Colin Davies of Ngong Diocese, Kenya writes:

¹²¹² “The Lobinger Model,” retrieved on 30 December, 2016, <http://files.constantcontact.com/7f9bce08001/9ccb623b-3847-4f4b-8666-862ddae84f3.pdf>. Source: https://www.amazon.com/Like-His-Brothers-SistersOrdaining/dp/0824518500/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8 Also available on the Future Church Website, <https://www.futurechurch.org>

¹²¹³ Fritz Lobinger, email message to Ephigenia Gachiri, 2013.

I am going to advocate the incorporation of the Byzantine Rite into the Roman Rite which has the option of having married priests. Celibacy, a most treasured gift to the Catholic Church, has now become a block to helping to solve the problem, not only of Eucharistic Hunger but also of the Pastoral (Prophetic) Role of Christ active in the Eucharistic Ministry and in the Priesthood of the Laity. I am hoping it will be recognized and discussed as one of the “Sign of the Times” at the forthcoming Synods of Bishops. I see SCCs as seeds for the growth of Eucharistic Communities with the possibility of mature laymen becoming ordained priests!!!¹²¹⁴

In another article Davies writes about the Eucharistic Hunger in the Catholic Church today and the urgent pastoral need for more priests to celebrate mass. He cites the diocese in Brazil that has 800 Eucharistic Communities but only 17 active celibate priests. He strongly advocates married priests in a section on “Some Considerations on Proposed Neighborhood Eucharistic Communities (NECs)”:

The Byzantine Rite Model (adapted as necessary) would not prevent the present structures to continue but would allow additional ones. It would not require changes to the call for celibate priests. There would not seem to be any theological difficulties. Each potential NEC would be required to solve its own problems, case by case, regarding choice and acceptance of a married priest and his sustainability. A solution in a particular case should be possible since it has been found in Slovakia and other countries with the Byzantine Rite. Even Pentecostal sects have thrived on their own financial self-support. It would not be the total solution to the problems resulting from lack of vocations in the Catholic Church, but it would make a big difference. It would overcome the present pessimism in many quarters.

We recall that in the parable of the workers in the vineyard Christ proposed the idea of hiring workers in the vineyard, “even” at the eleventh hour (*Matthew* 20:1-16). The priority was the harvest, not financial or other considerations. These “extra workers” did the job, but why had they not been recruited? “Because no one has hired us...”

The Chairman of the NEC would be sure that plans, ideas, be discussed and ensure that all those involved were there. If someone was absent it was a community concern. If someone was sick or defaulting the community would be aware and positively concerned. Truly it would be a Christian Community. Everyone would know each other as a brother or sister. As Pope Francis reminds us in *The Joy of the Gospel* the parish structures “must really be in touch with the people and not absorbed in useless structures, out of touch with the people or a self-absorbed group made up of only a chosen few.” The whole situation would encourage community-building relationships. Instead, in present legislation, such happy developments are stifled from the beginning and are responsible for a rather apathetic attitude on the part of many clergy and laity.

¹²¹⁴ Colin Davies, email messages to the author, 21 April, 2014 and 22 April, 2014.

The NEC model would enable a bishop to provide priests more easily, in progressive stages, but also bring the church nearer to the people involving them fully in the mission of the church at the individual as well as the community level. In present circumstances in the [Catholic] Church in the West, the “signs of the times” point in only one direction, that is, to have to go back to the Gospel vitality such as that of the early church, where the laity, at their level, were made responsible and were fully involved in the mission of the church.¹²¹⁵

Davies adds:

The SCC idea is the basis for the Neighborhood Eucharistic Communities (NECs) that are related to the Synagogue for the Jews, the Mosque for the Moslems and the Pentecostal Sect Churches. The geographic factor is essential to the lively community life.¹²¹⁶

But many other African bishops differ and want to maintain the present celibate priesthood discipline.

One pastoral solution in Africa is local experimentation within a specific context. An interesting proposal comes from England:

It is estimated that one in 10 priests in diocesan ministry in the Catholic Church in England and Wales began his priestly vocation in the Church of England. Many of them are married... Pope Francis has indicated that he is prepared to lift the obligation of celibacy for candidates for the priesthood in response to a plea from an individual diocesan bishop or from a bishops’ conference... Because of the successful arrangement regarding married former Anglicans, England is uniquely situated to pilot a modest experiment. It is not hard to imagine a bishop finding himself faced with having to close a parish church despite there being a married deacon in the parish. An application to Rome to ordain that deacon to the priesthood, if he is willing, would be by far the better outcome. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor indicated recently that there are circumstances where he would do precisely that.¹²¹⁷

A related pastoral solution to the Eucharistic Famine is twofold:¹²¹⁸

¹²¹⁵ Colon Davies, “A Call to Action on Eucharistic Hunger – Now! Making the Eucharist Available to all Baptized People as the Bread of Eternal Life,” Manchester, England: Unpublished Paper, 2015.

¹²¹⁶ Colon Davies, email message to the author dated 26 June, 2015.

¹²¹⁷ Editorial: Married Priests: “England Can Break New Ground,” *Tablet*, Vol. 268, No. 905 (15 November, 2014), p. 2, retrieved on the Tablet Website on 28 November, 2014, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/editors-desk/1/3879/england-can-break-new-ground>

¹²¹⁸ This solution was developed during discussions in a SCCs Workshop in Tororo, Uganda in May, 2015. This could solve the problem of some Catholics in distant rural areas in Uganda (and other African countries) only receiving the Eucharist twice a year.

1. Dramatically increase the number of Eucharistic Ministers – sisters, brothers and especially lay people. More religious sisters and brothers could easily make this part of their pastoral ministry. Catechists receive the Order of Eucharistic Minister at the end of catechist school training program. But other part--time catechists could be installed as Eucharistic Ministers after specialized training. Other lay people – men and women – such as teachers, professional people, parish, sub-parish and outstation leaders, etc. could be trained and installed as well. They could assist the priests in large parishes on Sundays as well as give out the Eucharist at “Sunday Services Without a Priest.” They could bring the Eucharist to sick people in their homes on a regular basis.
2. Build strong, secure churches in the sub-parishes or Mass Centers. Have the Blessed Sacrament reserved in these churches. Then the Eucharist could be given out at all services. Have a designated area of the church, or even a secure side chapel (separate or connected) as an Adoration Chapel. Challenge the local lay leaders that they are responsible for the security and upkeep of “their” church.

- **Pastoral Solution to the Second Meaning of the Eucharistic Famine: African Stages of Marriage.**

One intriguing proposal in Africa for many years is to develop an inculturated Rite for the Catechumenate of Christian Marriage (Marriage Catechumenate) similar to the Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA or the adult catechumenate). This could be two years or more depending on the customs and traditions (cultural dimension) of the local ethnic groups in Africa. It would integrate the basic elements of consent in the traditional African marriage rituals into the Christian sacrament of marriage.

This would follow the stages of marriage¹²¹⁹ in an African context (also called “marriage in stages”) where marriage is a process rather than a single event and marriage is between two families rather than just between two individuals. The Catholic sacramental and spiritual “moments” (not “moment”) would take place during different stages of the marriage process: from the first official meeting and agreement of the two families of the couple to the betrothal (engagement) to the living together to paying of the dowry or bridewealth (that often takes place slowly over many years)¹²²⁰ to the wife’s pregnancy to the birth of the first

¹²¹⁹ In an interview with the author in Washington, DC on 9 October, 2014 Orsy mentioned that in the history of the Catholic Church the German tribes had this “gradual” approach to the sacrament of marriage. It was confirmed after the couple lived together successfully for six months.

¹²²⁰ This important ritual is not well understood by Westerners. In some African ethnic groups the dowry or bridewealth payment lasts a lifetime. The groom is required to pay a major portion of it before being allowed to marry the bride. The balance is paid in portions throughout the couple’s lifetime to ensure that there is a continued relationship between the two families.

child¹²²¹ to the civil marriage to the Catholic Marriage Rite (that could be in a Catholic Church or in a SCC) to the wedding celebration.¹²²²

The couple usually live together during most of this process -- what is commonly called premarital cohabitation. During this period, sometimes called the “trial marriage” or “the test of compatibility” period, the couple test their ability to live together and to get along with their in-laws such as the wife getting along with her mother-in-law if it is a patrilineal society. In African ethnic groups it is essential for the couple to have successful genital intercourse and for the wife to be fertile. If she is barren (as well as not having children) the marriage can break up. More recently if the wife does not get pregnant the man can also be tested because there are various reasons for male infertility (male's inability to cause pregnancy in a fertile female).

An important dimension is the Ministry of Pastoral Accompaniment that is emphasized in the documents of the two World Synods of Bishops (2014-2015) on “Family and Marriage.” SCC members accompany the engaged couple throughout the stages of marriage. A representative of the Catholic Church such as a priest or catechist is present at the important ceremonies and accompanies the couple in the key moments. For example, in a wedding of a couple of the Sukuma Ethnic Group in Tanzania the most important cultural ceremony is when the father of the groom hands over the dowry/bridewealth of cows to the father of the bride. This is a large, joyous event of the two families and the local community that includes the elders making a careful inspection of the cows themselves and a festive meal with plenty of food and local beer. In Bunda Parish in Bunda Diocese the parish priest participates in this celebration and gives a blessing.¹²²³ Magesa goes even further in

¹²²¹ Here is an interesting parallel: “New Catholics who enter the church at the Easter Vigil continue to meet with their group of sponsors and teachers for months after their initiation through a process called *mystagogia*. They are reminded that the parish community still supports them and that the Easter Vigil was not a graduation ceremony from a program, but the start of something new. In a recent email, my friend Isaac posed a question: What might a mystagogical approach to marriage prep look like? Could parishes invite mentor couples to check in on newlyweds at the three-month, six-month, one-year mark? Could parishes gather groups of couples for Faith-sharing, community service activities, and social events, with babysitting provided as necessary? Surely, many parishes are already doing these and other things to support married couples. But it would be so valuable for the synod to encourage church leaders to facilitate opportunities for newly married adults beyond traditional marriage and baptism preparation.” Mike Jordon Laskey, “Three Things I'd Tell the Synod on the Family About Marriage,” National Catholic Reporter Website, retrieved on 16 October, 2014, <http://ncronline.org/blogs/young-voices/three-things-id-tell-synod-family-about-marriage>

¹²²² I asked a devout Catholic married woman in Iramba Parish in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania what was the happiest day of her life. She answered: “Not the day of my marriage or the day of the birth of my first child. It was the day my firstborn son was circumcised.” For her this symbolized that her son had passed to manhood and the continuance of the family lineage was assured. As a mother she had successfully done her part.

¹²²³ Based on several conversations with Bill Vos in 2013 and 2014.

suggesting that the cultural ceremony of the cows should be combined/integrated with the Catholic Church marriage ceremony.¹²²⁴

A number of African bishops have pointed out how hard it is to achieve a consensus on marriage rites given the wide variety of African cultural traditions, customs and rites. In an interview with the author, retired Archbishop Raphael Ndingi Mwana a’Nzeki of Nairobi, Kenya mentioned that the 1994 First African Synod appointed him to a Commission on Marriage in an African Context. He said that our Catholic marriage laws are based on Western law (for example, German law). The hope was to develop common inculturated guidelines on marriage that could be used throughout Africa. But the commission failed and was disbanded. Ndingi said that he could not even get the bishops in Kenya to agree on a common marriage rite for the whole country. He said, “Every bishop wants to be king in his own diocese.” Presently in Kenya there are 27 Catholic Dioceses and 44 to 71 ethnic groups (depending on how you count), each with its African traditional marriage customs and rites.¹²²⁵

Today in Africa there are many John Paul II and Benedict-appointed bishops with their more orthodox, traditional, cautious pastoral style. Now Francis-appointed bishops are emerging who have simpler lifestyles and are closer to the people. Following the process of synodality, subsidiarity (decentralization) and collegiality, a big question is how a consensus on new pastoral solutions can evolve in national bishops conferences on the local level in Africa on the challenges such as liturgy, sacraments, marriage, family and young people?

An example of this diversity is the Catholic Bishops’ Conference in South Africa. South African Redemptorist Bishop Kevin Dowling, CSSR of Rustenburg Diocese points out that with the wide diversity of pastoral and cultural views it is very hard for the conference to agree on joint pastoral solutions.

13. Small Christian Communities in the Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of Love*¹²²⁶

Based on the recommendations and contributions of the two synods and other input, Pope Francis promulgated the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of Love* (sub-titled *On Love in the Family*) on 19 March, 2016, the Feast of St. Joseph. It is addressed to “Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Persons, Christian married couples and all the lay faithful.” This is the traditional language of the hierarchal Catholic Church. In one sense it should be addressed to/given to Christian married couples and all the lay faithful *first* since it about them and for them.¹²²⁷ The document uses the traditional language of “as the Synod

¹²²⁴ Laurenti Magesa in a conversation with the author in Nairobi, Kenya on 14 March, 2007.

¹²²⁵ Raphael Ndingi in a conversation with the author in Nairobi, Kenya in March, 2007.

¹²²⁶ See Joseph G. Healey, “Small Christian Communities, The Joy of Love,” *The Catholic Mirror*, Issue No. 5/16 (May, 2006), p. 8.

¹²²⁷ In describing the Synodal Church Pope Francis says that the Catholic Church's hierarchical structure "is like “an inverted pyramid” (upside down pyramid) with the top on the bottom, which is why the ordained are called "ministers" -- they serve the others.

Fathers noted . . .” when Synod “participants” would be more accurate. There were priests and even one lay Brother as voting members and a variety of experts and auditors including lay people/married couples.

Small Christian Communities (or their equivalent) are officially mentioned two times:

No. 202 under the section " Proclaiming the Gospel of the Family Today” states: “The main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the parish, which is the family of families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony.”

No. 223 under “Accompanying the First Years of Married Life – Some Resources” states: “The parish is a place where such experienced couples can help younger couples, with the eventual cooperation of associations, ecclesial movements and new communities.”

SCCs members are involved in parish marriage ministry and parish family ministry. New initiatives are needed to help families to bond together to survive in today’s secular environment especially cities. Extended families are very important in Africa. Pope Francis talks about the family as multigenerational, not just nuclear. There is an opportunity for a variety of Intentional Communities that has several meanings.

In developing the SCCs Pastoral Model of Church Bishop Christopher Mwoleka stated that in his diocese of Rulenge, Tanzania "the entire pastoral work will be carried out by means of Small Christian Communities.” Using this lens many references to small groups in Chapter Six on “Some Pastoral Perspectives” can apply to, and involve, SCCs: “Discussion Groups” (No. 223); “Groups of Married People” (No. 224); “Meetings of Couples Living in the Same Neighborhood” (No. 229); “Groups of Married Couples” (No. 229); and “Younger Couples in the Neighborhood” (No. 230). The presence of parish-based SCCs can be seen in the various references to “Christian Community,” “Christian Communities” and “Church Community.”

Among the lay ecclesial ministries in SCCs in Eastern Africa the Marriage Minister¹²²⁸ goes by many names (alphabetically):

1. Marriage Pastoral Accompanier (before and after marriage). Also referred to as Marriage Mentor after marriage.¹²²⁹

Everyone listens to one another, learns from one another and takes responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel. “Pope Francis’ Address at Commemorative Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops,” 17 October, 2015, retrieved on 23 April, 2016, <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/pope-lays-out-vision-for-a-more-listening-decentralized-church/#ixzz46eBAb0St>

¹²²⁸ This person/persons works closely with movements and organizations in Eastern Africa such as Couples for Christ, Family Enrichment Clubs, Focolare, Marriage Encounter, National and Diocesan Family Life Programs, Project Rachel and True Love Waits.

¹²²⁹ The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)’s “Results of the Consultation in

2. Single Mother Pastoral Accompanier.
3. Marriage Animator (before marriage like a Formation Animator).
4. Marriage Counselor¹²³⁰ (after marriage).

Taking a specific example, in No. 215 of *The Joy of Love* Pope Francis states: “The Kenyan Bishops have observed that “many [young people] concentrate on their wedding day and forget the life-long commitment they are about to enter into.”¹²³¹ They need to be encouraged to see the sacrament not as a single moment that then becomes a part of the past and its memories, but rather as a reality that permanently influences the whole of married life.¹²³²

Here in Nairobi and other places in Africa (and around the world), we notice that increasingly young couples spend most their time and energy on the social aspects of their wedding especially the fund raising and a big reception. The religious aspect can get lost. Here SCCs members can help the married couple to emphasize the balance.

Following the pastoral guidelines of *The Joy of Love*, the Pastoral Accompaniers in Eastern Africa walk with specific kinds of SCCs:

1. Teenagers.
2. College Students.
3. Young Adults.
4. Newly Married Couples.¹²³³

Kenya on the 46 Questions in the *Lineamenta on The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World* has a very good section explaining how a happily married couple can “mentor” (serve as “mentors”) for a newly married couple.

¹²³⁰ “Counselor” or Counseling” is a tricky word because for many it is interpreted as “problem-centered.” Research surveys in Kenya indicate that many couples faced by marital problems do not want or seek real counseling. In a recent study only 1.8% sought professional psychological counseling. Men in particular resist counseling and deny that they have a “problem” with fidelity, alcohol, spending money, etc. Perhaps “marriage guidance” is a better term.

¹²³¹ Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Lenten Message* (18 February 2015). It is significant that this the only reference to a document from Africa in the *Apostolic Exhortation*.

¹²³² Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Casti Connubii* (31 December 1930): AAS 22 (1930), 583.

¹²³³ In an interview with the author in Nairobi, Kenya on 14 January, 2015 Kenyan layman Henry Kiranga emphasized the importance of specific SCCs for newly married couples. He said that after finishing school and getting married, a lot of Catholic young people drift away from the church and seem to disappear. They do not feel at home in the Adult SCCs. Their

5. Young Married Couples Without Children.
6. Young Married Couples with Children.

In our SCCs we have the Ministry of Pastoral Accompaniment -- both for engaged couples and for newly married couples. We are trying to respond to Pope Francis's 2017 talk to priests in Rome:

Dear brothers, speaking recently at the Roman Rota I recommended carrying out a true catechumenate of future spouses, which includes all the stages of the sacramental journey: the times of preparation for marriage, of its celebration and of the immediate subsequent years. To you, parish priests, indispensable collaborators of the bishops, this catechumenate is primarily entrusted. I encourage you to implement it despite the difficulties you might meet. And I believe the greatest difficulty is to think or live marriage as a social event – “we must have this social event” – and not as a true Sacrament, which requires long, long preparation.”

14. We Go from Here?

In summary what is the way forward? Where do we go from here? How is the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa implementing the two synods and the *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*. How can Eastern Africa SCCs participate in these practical, pastoral recommendations of AMECEA:

1. Promote the active ministry of the various Commissions/Committees for Marriage and the Family Life Apostolate including the Family Life Desk on the diocesan and national levels in Eastern Africa.
2. Help those looking forward to having their marriages blessed to come to the parish office with their parents, godparents and the chairpersons of their Small Christian Communities to begin a period of catechesis to prepare them to actively participate in the Catholic Church and understand their faith.
3. Lengthen the pre-marital catechesis. Have it focus not just on the wedding ceremony itself, but on the whole Christian life.
4. Lengthen the post-marital catechesis. Create occasions for those who have wedded during the course of the year to meet for an event and share their experiences.

parents and the other adults have other interests and discuss other topics. The solution is specific Newly Married Couples SCCs and Young Married Couples Without Children SCCs (the same age group or peer group) where they can discuss and focus on their own issues and concerns.

5. Offer more counselling services that help married couples pull through periods of crisis.
6. Provide priest chaplains in the various Christian Family Movements.
7. Promotion Holy Childhood programs at various levels to bring the family together and to appreciate the role of parents in educating children on prayer and giving witness to their faith.
8. Organize celebrations of special masses for Christian families.
9. Bring the administrative process in nullifying marriages to the local level. The National Episcopal Conferences should come up with Judicial Procedures suitable for the local context and the Local Ordinary (Diocesan Bishop) should create a process so that the Marriage Tribunal study the specific cases and submit them to the National Episcopal Conferences for final judgment.¹²³⁴

Responding to the call of Pope Francis and the recommendations of the two synods and the *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*, we are challenged to continue to explore how SCC members and others should accompany families and couples who are wounded. This is the Ministry of Compassionate Accompaniment. This part of the imperative for all Catholics to go to the margins of society to serve the poor, migrants and those without hope. Pope Francis also emphasizes the importance of welcoming, listening to and accompanying young people today.

After the October, 2015 Synod of Bishops itself there is an ongoing process involving collegiality and subsidiarity. There are meetings and various commissions related to pastoral solutions to the challenges of family and marriage. Ongoing discussion and decision-making is taking place on the local level through national episcopal conferences. Pope Francis' *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation* has an ongoing plan of action that includes concrete pastoral solutions.

Creativity and new ideas is a good sign of the growth of the SCCs. Our SCC members are actively participate in the Kenya Lenten Campaign 2021. The theme: "Rebuilding our Nation through Inclusive and Accountable Governance."

Lenten 2021 English: [Lenten 2021 English Final final.indd \(kccb.or.ke\)](#) Final final.indd (kccb.or.ke)

Lenten 2021 Swahili: [Final-Lenten-Campaign-2021-Kiswahili.pdf \(kccb.or.ke\)](#)

In Week One on "Family" among the proposed actions are: 1. The SCC to identify a Mentor Family that journeys with families facing challenges. 2. Establish, promote and strengthen family life programs in the parish, prayer houses and SCCs. In our free, online Ebook the section on "Lay Ecclesial Ministries in Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa" includes different kinds of mentoring. Having a Mentor Family is new and creative idea. This is very valuable during this Covid-19 pandemic.

¹²³⁴ Based on the recommendations of AMECEA Pastoral Department, *AMECEA Contribution to the III Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization*, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2014.

Our free, online Ebook (https://smallchristiancommunities.org/.../04/Build_new.pdf) has 210 African Proverbs and Sayings related to family and marriage: They are classified in the three categories in Chapter 12:

Family Life (99)

Raising Children (63)

Marriage Ministry/Marriage Preparation/Marriage Counseling (48)

It is interesting to analyze these African proverbs and sayings and understand their use in family gatherings and discussions, SCCs meetings, counseling sessions, etc. family life, raising children and marriage ministry/marriage preparation/marriage counseling. Some are universal proverbs applied to the African context and situation.

Let us try to choose one African proverb for each week of Lent: "Members of the same family are open to each other and can discuss anything" (Samburu, Kenya). "A family is like a forest. When you are outside it is dense. When you are inside each tree has its place" (Africa). "A united family eats from the same plate" (Ganda, Uganda).

14. Tracking the Growth of Young People¹²³⁵ Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs)

Two sayings – *There is no blueprint in building SCCs* and *We create the path by walking* – set the tone for the growth of Young People (Youth/Young Adults) Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) in Eastern Africa. A major finding is that there are four major types of YPSCCs:

1. Parish-based Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) that include Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) and Young Adults Small Christian Communities (YASCCs). Besides meeting physically, they include online Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) and online Young Adults Small Christian Communities (YASCCs) using What’sApp, Zoom, Skype, Facebook, Google Meet, etc.

2. School-based/campus-based/institution-based/center-based Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs). Besides meeting physically, they include online Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) and online Young Adults Small Christian Communities (YASCCs) using What’sApp, Zoom, Skype, Facebook, Google Meet, etc. This includes the growing number of Alumni Young Adults Small Christian Communities.

3. Specialized Young Adults Small Christian Communities (YASCCs). Also called Floating SCCs. These include Young Professionals Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) – teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, public relations, accountants, IT people, etc.). Besides meeting physically in different locations, they include online Young Adults Small Christian Communities (YASCCs) using What’sApp, Zoom, Skype, Facebook, Google Meet, etc.

4. Specifically online (virtual or digital) SCCs of young people¹²³⁶ are a growing fast and can cover the three types above.

We follow the general guideline in African society that young people are in the 15¹²³⁷ to 35 age group. We use the umbrella term Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) that covers:

1. Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs). 15 to 21 years old.
2. Young Adults Small Christian Communities (YASCCs). 21 to 35 old. These include specialized communities such as Young Professionals Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) – doctors, nurses, lawyers, public relations, accountants, IT people, etc.

¹²³⁵ We continue to use “Youth” in the local context of Eastern Africa, but the terms “Young People” and “Young Adults” are becoming more common.

¹²³⁶ Not connected to a parish or school.

¹²³⁷ 15 years is the standard (“start”) age used in the African Youth Charter and in the Commonwealth documents.

If for various reasons these people cannot meet physically, they meet regularly, even weekly, on What'sApp, Zoom, Skype, Facebook, Google Meet, etc.

This evaluation has studied carefully the important role of young people (youth/young Adults) in SCCs.¹²³⁸ Given the importance of youth in the demographics of both the general population and the Catholic population in Africa, the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the 2009 Second African Synod did not give enough attention to youth in Africa. A single section -- Number 27 -- in *Message of the Bishops of Africa to the People of God*-- treats youth after priests, religious, lay faithful, Catholics in public life, families, women and men. It states: “You are not just the future of the Church: you are with us already in big numbers. In many countries of Africa, over 60% of the population is under 25. The ratio in the Church would not be much different.” But the message could have said much more. *Proposition 48* treats youth in a problem-centered way saying that the Synod Fathers “are deeply concerned about the plight of youth” and proposes various recommendations. Much more could have been said about the great potential of young people in the Catholic Church and in the general society in Africa.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Africa's Commitment* is more positive and expansive. Especially in Number 63 on “Young People” the pope encourages young people to “active and enthusiastic participation in ecclesial groups and movements. Cultivate a yearning for fraternity,¹²³⁹ justice and peace...the future is in your hands.”

Due to African cultural traditions, African youth normally do not speak in public in front of adults. Youth do not usually actively participate in adult SCCs in Eastern Africa. Thus, it is crucial to form specific Young People SCCs (YPSCCs in short) that give young people a specific voice and role and to encourage them to plan their own discussions, reflections and activities.

During the Mwanza Metropolitan Workshop on the theme “Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Embrace the Word of God” at the St. Dominic Pastoral Centre in Mwanza, Tanzania from 19 to 22 May, 2014 there was a spirited discussion on the advisability of Youth SCCs. A number of delegates who because of their age or their involvement in the Catholic Church in rural areas of northwestern Tanzania only were against Youth SCCs. They stressed that this would create a gap between parents and youth, between the elders' values/supervision of youth and the youth themselves. Youth would go off on their own and be influenced by the negative aspects of our secular and postmodern world. But Bishop Method Kilaini and Sister Rita Ishengoma explained that this would not happen if the Youth SCCs (and even Children SCCs) would be formed within the overall Mama SCC in a particular geographical area. There would be an ongoing link and mutual communication. Sometimes the Adult SCC and the Youth SCC would meet together. They gave examples in Lusaka, Zambia and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania where adult SCC members serve as advisors or guardians of the Youth SCCs. An adult man is the Patron and an adult woman is the Matron.

¹²³⁸ Our SCCs Website (<https://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>) has a user friendly Search Feature. A Search on 24 August, 2022 shows: If you search for “youth” you get 81 hits (visits). If you search for “young people” you get 27 hits (visits). If you search for “young adults” you get 6 hits (visits).

¹²³⁹ Fraternity is a word that needs to be changed to inclusive (nonsexist) language like “brotherhood and sisterhood.” To 95% of the youth in the USA “fraternity” refers to the social club and residence for young men on college campuses. The equivalent for young women is “sorority.”

In one parish in Monze Diocese, Zambia youth meet as part of the “Mama SCC.” There is a common *Bible* reading for everyone. Then they go into specific groups with prepared questions: a teenage group; a young adult group; a married young adult group; and an older adult group. At the end they come back together into the full SCC for announcements and closing prayers.

1. Surveys Among Young People

A survey among young people in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Mwanza, Tanzania, Lilongwe, Malawi, Lusaka, Zambia and Nairobi, Kenya and reinforced by interviews with young people in the USA revealed that their favorite discussion topics in their YSCCs meetings are:

- Topics clustered around boy-girl relationships, sex,¹²⁴⁰ sexuality, peer pressure, dating, fashion, popular music, video games, social networks, information technology, sports and the use of leisure time. Kenyan layman Steven Juma says:

I spent a lot of time going to church, *jumuiya*, fellowship and all kinds of Small Christian Communities where we talked about everything from feeding the poor to Jesus forgiving the prostitutes. We talked about everything but sex. Yet most of my Christian formation happened in a Small Christian Community... We have to talk about sex in an honest, candid way, and that talk has to start in our Small Christian Communities because we are not going to hear it at the 10.30 mass on Sunday.¹²⁴¹

- Whole area of searching for one’s human and Christian identity and self-discovery in a faith-sharing context. What are youth’s aspirations and dreams?¹²⁴² This includes vocational discernment (covering religious vocations and vocations in the secular

¹²⁴⁰ In our SCCs Class at Tangaza in March, 2016 the students (mostly seminarians) were reluctant to mention sex as one of the African youth’s favorite topic (as though it was not proper to discuss sex in public). Finally the sole priest in the class said, “Let’s say it openly. Youth want to talk about sex.”

During research on university and college campuses in the USA, the topic “sex” was widened to include LGBTQ -- lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered, queer people.

¹²⁴¹ Steven Juma, St. Gonzaga Gonza SCC Youth Group Website, retrieved on 20 July, 2013, https://www.Facebook.com/groups/gonzagagonzascc/494064024005727/?notif_t=group_comment_reply

¹²⁴² At a workshop at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya on Saturday, 5 November, 2016 the title of my interactive presentation was: “Positive Use of the Social Media: Suggestions on How Students at Kenyatta University Can Use Their Leisure Time Better.” I began by asking the students in buzz groups of two each to discuss the question: “What gets me up in

world.) This touches career planning,¹²⁴³ job hunting and the challenges of employment/unemployment.

- Involvement in justice and peace issues including causes, protests, demonstrations, service and outreach opportunities. In his research American theologian Father Bernard Lee, SM makes a valuable distinction that applies to African YPSCCs summarized as follows:

Full Christianhood is necessarily gathered and sent—community and mission belong together. I can say clearly that while traditional SCC members (the elder groups) do care about the shape of the world outside of their gathering, they tend to be more attentive to being gathered than to being sent (in mission). Some of us are guessing that for today’s young adult Catholics, “sending” will attract attention sooner than “gathering.” Young adults deserve some prioritized attention *vis-à-vis* their social agency in the world, and base communities are a way of connecting social agency with sound Christian hearts, heads, and feet.¹²⁴⁴

- How to answer challenges from their Protestant friends especially Pentecostals on the *Bible*, Catholic Church teachings, etc. Recent research shows this is the main reason that African Catholic youth want to learn more about the *Bible*.

- Fund raising projects (money). This included emphasis on long range goals and achievements and how to be financially successful in life.

- Generation gap – communications problems between themselves and their parents.

- Politics – always a fascinating topic especially connected to election time in African countries.

- Culture including African ethnic group identity and challenges and pop culture especially in cities.

In 2016 Father Febian Pikiti, the AMECEA Pastoral Coordinator, conducted a survey about where you find Catholic youth, young people and young adults on Sunday morning in Nairobi, Kenya, the largest city in East Africa. The results: “You do not find them outside of the Catholic Church after mass. You find them on social media.”

2. Case Studies and Workshops of YPSCCs

the morning?” “Why do I get up in the morning?” Then we shared our answers in the whole group of about 70 students.

¹²⁴³ Research in USA indicate that university and college students and graduates want to talk about how to pay off their student loans.

¹²⁴⁴ Bernard Lee, “Young Adults Gathered & Sent or Sent & Gathered,” in Moerschbacher, *Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 2-3.

A very good example of a Youth SCC is St. Stephen Youth Small Christian Community (YSCC) in St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Kangemi in Nairobi. It meets on Sundays for announcements and planning and then choir practice with the other parish choir and on Thursdays for a variety of activities: *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection; Mass; Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; sports like football, darts, etc.; discussion on various topics; and music, singing and dancing. This Youth SCC emphasizes social outreach. Members of St. Stephen SCC joined other youth in the parish to bring foodstuffs and other gifts to a camp of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) outside of Nairobi.

Another active youth haven is Dandora Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese. It has 59 SCCs including six active Youth SCCs. The Patron/Patroness Saints are: Achille Kiwanuka, Gonzaga Gonza, Kizito, Marcelino, Perpetua and Sylvester. These are neighborhood groups of young people between 14-29 years-old who are organized according to the five geographical phases (divided by the streets). When the number of youth in one phase became too many they divided into two YSCCs. These Youth SCCs are connected to the regular (mainly adult) SCCs in their phases. Youth who have experienced SCCs in their high school boarding schools have an excellent background for these parish-based Youth SCCs. They have many activities similar to the Kangemi Youth SCC above. The young men and women of these different Youth SCCs communicate the feeling that “we young people are the church too.” They reach out to various Youth Groups in other parishes to encourage them to start specific YSCCs.

In terms of ecclesial structure the chairperson and secretary of each YSCC are on the 15-member Central Youth Committee whose chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary are on the PPC. The five-member Executive Committee is on the Outer Ring Deanery Council.

One example is the St. Gonzaga Gonza Youth SCC over the years coordinated by Mercy Wandera, James Omondi, Evelyn Nyaituga, Anthony Odoyo, Jenny Kyalo, Gibson Thiongo, Johnte Ndiawo and others. Their photograph is posted in the Photo Gallery of our SCCs Website. <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/photo-gallery.html>. The members have weekly *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection every Sunday afternoon as well as many other activities – social, apostolic and spiritual. They have a “Public (Open) Group” on Facebook that presently has 154 members as of 27 December, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gonzagagonzasc#> = Their posts on this Facebook Page are like a Case Study of a Youth SCC and describe the members’ lives, priorities and activities very well.

A creative example is the question: “What's your favorite verse in the *Bible*? Aand why? It might be a verse that defines you or your life.¹²⁴⁵ Kindly just share it out.” Some answers:

- *Psalms* 139:1-18, 23-24.
- *Luke* 24:26. “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”
- *Psalms* 41:10: "Be still and know that I am God".
- *1 Peter* 2:9: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and a holy nation..... God has brought you from darkness to his precious light."

¹²⁴⁵ Another approach is to mention one’s favorite verse(s) at different stages in one’s life.

- *Luke* 4:43: “Jesus said to them, ‘I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because for this purpose I was sent/have been sent.’” Also, the version in *Mark* 1:38: “Jesus said to them, ‘Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also; for this propose have I come.’”¹²⁴⁶
- *John* 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life”.¹²⁴⁷
- *Matthew* 25:1: “Come, blessed of my Father.”

Another example is to ask on any given Sunday: “What have you learned in today’s gospel?” Based on Sunday, 21 September, 2015’s Gospel story of the “Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard” (*Matthew* 20:1-16)” some answers are:

- That I should seek the Lord while He can be found.
- That he will reward us with his salvation and make us be under his lordship.
- That he will give to everyone who comes into his field the automatic one denarius.
- That He is always with us in our times of trouble and whenever we call unto him.
- This mantra: “Faith and salvation are generous free gifts from God.”
- We should hope the first shall be the last. We should not covet anything before God. We are all equal.
- God is always merciful.

Representatives of St. Stephen Youth SCC and the Dandora Youth SCCs have presented their experiences in our SCC Classes in Nairobi and posted material on our SCCs Website and Facebook Page.

Another model is Christ the King Parish, Kibera in Nairobi Archdiocese. In the Parish Center and in each outstation the youth form separate Youth SCCs. For example, around 25 youth at the Parish Center (the geographical section called *Laini Saba*) are members of St. John Bosco SCC. Filipino Comboni seminarian Caspis Jemboy, MCCJ reports:

¹²⁴⁶ When Ukweli Video produced a DVD on my missionary ministry in Eastern Africa in 2004 I used this Gospel text to trace a chronological line in my missionary journeys/travels to other towns and places in Kenya and Tanzania. Starting in Nairobi, Kenya in 1968 and then on to Rulenge, Iramba, Makoko and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. NOTE: By returning to Nairobi in 2007 in the words of William Shakespeare, “the wheel has come full circle.”

During the Buzz Groups *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection on this passage in our SCCs Class at Tangaza University College on 5 February, 2015 I shared that a new “town or place” for me is not a geographical or physical place but a virtual or existential or situational place such as the internet, social media and social networking.

¹²⁴⁷ This is part of the Gospel for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on 14 September. In an online internet poll it was voted the most popular *Bible* verse. In USA it was made famous by the American football quarterback Tim Tebow who wore eye black with this inscription. He caused millions of football fans to Google the meaning of *John* 3:16.

Each Sunday of the month has its schedule for an activity. Such activities in SCC are: *Bible* Sharing (once a month), Meetings and Planning, Seminars on Justice and Peace including Ethnic Identity, Recollection or Retreat Outreach Program for the poor and Catechism (once a month). For the past months and weeks [in 2013], concentration was made on the focus of rights, justice and peace in political and social responsibilities...The youth themselves are enthusiastic in promulgating what is good and better for everyone, starting from family, community and society as a whole. Despite their different ethnic identities, they hope for change and transformation towards a better way of life and participate in eradicating ethnicity conflict. The whole parish and other organizations are very supportive in helping the young people for their vision and mission for the betterment of the family, community, church, and society as a whole.¹²⁴⁸

The Fish Youth Group was founded in 1985 in Kisumu City, Kenya by two Catholic missionaries, English Mill Hill Missionary Father Anthony Chantry, MHM and American Notre Dame de Namur Sister Mary Ellen Howard, SND. Their main goal was to bring the Catholic youth together to strengthen their common faith, become strong members of the church and grow into responsible adults. The group was officially launched on 21 April, 1985 when the first 22 trained youth leaders were sent out, two by two to start their small groups following the SCCs Model of Church. The Fish Group was founded on the principles of Small Christian Communities. The motto of the group is SHARING which enables the members to grow and nourish their faith by encouraging each other to be faithful to God as they share continuously. At least here, the youth have a church group they can call their own.

Today after 36 years of existence the Fish Group is very active. First, to hear the Word of God and by sharing and answering questions find out how to apply it to our daily lives. Second, to do a group action to serve the local communities especially by helping the poor, the sick, the elderly and the suffering. Third, to arrange social and educational activities for the group such as sports, music, seminars/trainings, etc.¹²⁴⁹

¹²⁴⁸ Caspis Jemboy, "Missionary Life and Outreach of SCCs in Africa and around the World," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on the on 28 April, 2013 at: <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/kenya/237-missionary-life-and-outreach-of-sccs-in-africa-and-around-the-world.html>

¹²⁴⁹ Based on "The Fish Group Profile." Retrieved on 7 January, 2014, The Fish Group Blogspot, <http://fygroup.blogspot.co.ke>



FISH Youth Group Alumni during the *Bible* Sharing session in one of their monthly meetings in Kisumu, Kenya

The members in the Fish Youth Group – the alumni and the young men and women of today -- have many opportunities to use the social media for communications and evangelization such as (alphabetically): BlogSpot, Facebook, Online Chatrooms and Online Small Communities, Skype, Twitter, Websites, WhatsApp and Zoom. Their choices are important and are determined by various factors such as (alphabetically): accessibility, commitment, context, cost, education, focus, interest, priorities and time.

One “thinking outside the box” solution is to encourage Kenyan youth to use [Sheng](#) in their SCC meetings. Sheng, the short form of Swahili and English, is a common language of interaction among youth especially in Kenyan cities. It is a blend of Swahili, English and other local Kenyan languages such as Gikuyu, Kamba, Luo, etc. This will send a message that the Catholic Church is interested in youth and their unique world. Using Sheng can also help overcome tribalism and specific ethnic loyalties.

Another good example is the SCCs in Hekima Secondary School in Bukoba, Tanzania that started in 1992. As of 2014 there were eight SCCs of Catholic girls and one SCC of girls of different Protestant denominations. These SCC members meet every Monday to read and reflect on the *Bible* passages related to formation of youth and liturgical themes. These

students are very active in participating in various religious activities and helping one another.¹²⁵⁰

Tanzanian Msgr. Deogratias Mbiku, the Catholic Chaplain at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania reports on SCCs on the university level:

The students are organized as Small Christian Communities in every residential hall. In every hall there are leaders chosen through free election who cater for the welfare of the students spiritually, academically, socially and materially. The leaders are five: Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer. Several halls join together to form zones. For example, at the University of Dar es Salaam Main Campus, there are seven halls and two zones. Halls I, II, III & V form one zone and Halls IV, VI & VII form the second zone. The leaders of each zone choose five leaders who become zonal leaders.

As to participation in the sacramental life and service/witness in the community, the Family Apostolate Committee and Small Christian Communities have great impact. Through Small Christian Communities I facilitate a program for both students and non-students to visit orphans and the sick in hospitals and bring them spiritual and material help.¹²⁵¹

An interesting Case Study is St. Clement's Youth SCC in Mary Immaculate Parish in Lusaka Archdiocese, Zambia. The parish has 11 SCCs that meet twice a month as the Adults SCC and twice a month as the Youth SCC. Our SCC team participated in a meeting on Sunday, 1 December, 2013 in the home of two of the youth. The 13 SCC members included seven young women and six young men.

In a frank discussion members said that many Catholic youth find the Adult SCCs boring because the *Bible* Sharing is long and "heavy." The meetings become too dull, boring and routine.¹²⁵² They mentioned that many youths are attracted to the singing, dancing and liveliness of Pentecostal worship services in Zambia. They urged Eastern African SCCs to use creative ways of reflecting on the *Bible*¹²⁵³ and applying it to our everyday life. They used an exercise starting with a reading of *John* 14:15-17. Then participants spontaneously drew out of a basket questions written on slips of paper related to friends and relationships.

¹²⁵⁰ Based on an interview with Sister Rita Ishengoma, STH in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 19 April, 2012.

¹²⁵¹ Deogratias Mbiku, "Report on Campus Ministry and Chaplaincy," Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) Unpublished Report, 2014.

¹²⁵² In meetings, workshops and seminars the young people designate one person as the "energizer." When he or she sees that the participants are sitting for too long or are distracted or are nodding off, this person gets the audience to stand up and wave their arms or do a special exercise or a role play or sing a song.

¹²⁵³ Creative *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection can include: dramatic reading of the *Bible* text chosen. Acting out/dramatizing the *Bible* text chosen. Playing a DVD/Video version or audio version of the *Bible* text chosen.

After a period of quiet reflection each SCC member answered his or her question from their personal experience. An example: “Do you rely on your good friends in time of troubles and problems? One answer used the saying *Friends in need are friends indeed*.

Then St. Clement Youth SCC discussed general issues including plans for the annual Christmas party; a new self-reliance project and a charity outreach in January, 2014 – to buy foodstuffs and gifts to take to a hospice of disabled children. They displayed the bookmarks with *Bible* verses in different languages such as Nyanja, English, etc. that they made as a self-reliance project.

36 people participated in a National Youth SCCs Workshop on the theme “Youth SCCs Embrace the Word of God” at the Salesian Pastoral Centre, Bauleni in Lusaka, Zambia from 2 to 5 December, 2013. Participants included representatives from seven dioceses and three youth movements: 14 young men, nine young women, two Youth Coordinators, five Youth Priest Chaplains, one religious sister, three priest visitors and two priest facilitators. The workshop was sponsored by the Pastoral Department of the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) and the Zambian National Council for Catholic Youth (ZNCCY) in conjunction with the Pastoral Department of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA).

It is the first of a series of national SCCs Workshops in the nine AMECEA countries. The SCCs Workshop was facilitated by Father Febian Pikiti and Father Joseph Healey, MM.

In the spirit of “learning by doing” participants formed four SCCs (St. Kizito, St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Mary) for three separate sessions:

- Lectionary-based Faith-sharing on the Gospel of the following 2nd Sunday of Advent (*Matthew* 3: 1-12);
- Using the **SEE – DISCERN/JUDGE – ACT** reflection method/process on topics in the general society in Zambia: “Gender-based Violence; “Poverty” (two SCCs); and “Youth Unemployment” and in the Catholic Church in Zambia: “The Church Hierarchy is Too Closed;” “Resistance to Change in the Catholic Church;” “Youth Do Not Know the Catholic Church Teaching on Sex and Marriage;” and “Youth Leaving the Catholic Church.”
- Reflecting on passages in the *Bible* using the “Reading Guide for Understanding the *Bible*.”

Highlights included two SCCs Masses with plenty of youth participation; a session on “Interacting with Youth in the Social Media”¹²⁵⁴ including an online presentation of the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and “Facebook Page” (www.smallchristiancommunities.org) and participants demonstrating their own websites and Facebook Pages connected to youth in Zambia;¹²⁵⁵ and an African-based DVD, *The Church*

¹²⁵⁴ An interesting study is Pius Wesonga, *An Evaluation of the Use of New Media in Evangelizing Youth in the Roman Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Nairobi*, Nairobi: Unpublished MA Thesis at Daystar University, 2014.

¹²⁵⁵ See Archdiocese of Lusaka Youth Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/groups/196941513776884/334481956689505/?notif_t=group_activity

in the Neighborhood: Small Christian Communities that included Segment I on “Life and Activities of SCCs” and Segment II on “Services (Ministries) in the SCC.”

Recommendations included: Plan and schedule Training of Trainers (TOT) Workshops on Youth SCCs on the diocesan and parish levels in Zambia. Importance of sharing resources on SCCs – printed materials, audio-visual materials and online materials. With the help of Diocesan Youth Chaplains, the youth leaders will encourage their fellow youth to embrace the Word of God in their lives and actively participate in Youth SCCs. Communicate the results and follow-up plans of this SCCs Workshop to the Bishop and Youth Chaplain in each diocese in Zambia.

Some feedback and comments on the Youth SCCs Workshop that the youth participants posted on Facebook: “Wow!!! So youthful and yet so fulfilling. This is a really wonderful experience.” “It has been nice for me to attend this type of workshop. It has really helped me to know more about Small Christian Communities.” “The lectionary-based *Bible* sharing in our St. Mary's SCC was so enriching. We realized that Zambian youth today are so busy preparing for Christmas without understanding the meaning of Advent and what to do during this period. In fact, preparations for the coming Christmas celebrations have hijacked the meaning of this Advent season. A challenge to us all is: Do we understand the meaning of Advent and how can we take Advent to the secular world? “I participated in the workshop session on “See,” “Judge” and “Act.” It was awesome.” “Surely Small Christian Communities is the way to go. Can't wait to implement the lectionary-based *Bible* sharing in Ndola Diocese.” “Having such a workshop at parish level would really help to reboot our Youth SCCs.”¹²⁵⁶

Some later feedback in email messages: “Thank you very much for the work you did in Bauleni. Youth and SCCs is such an important issue that needs a lot of attention in our church in Zambia. The workshop in Bauleni gave us a point of departure in tackling this issue. We have already had a follow-up workshop in December, 2014 where we gave feedback to the members of our Diocesan Youth Council. We are yet to visit each deanery to share on this same topic. These notes you have sent will give us good material as we try to help our youth appreciate the SCCs.” “I can gladly report that the document is very useful so was the workshop. Two weeks ago I visited St. John the Baptist Parish in Chinsali, Mpika Diocese where I attended a Youth SCC. I was amazed with what I found there. This SCC is now using most of the ideas from the SCCs Workshop and this document too. We are so grateful for you taking the time to send it to all of us. I am yet to visit many other dioceses to see if this information has been delivered. You may start working on something more for the future.” “We are having our end of year council meeting in Ndola where we intend to talk on the SCCs report and how the workshop was helpful to us and our diocese.”

Youth SCCs in Zambia are an idea whose time has come. Zambian Bishop Clement Mulenga, SDB is presently the Bishop of Kabwe Diocese. Previously he was a Diocesan Youth Coordinator of Lusaka Archdiocese and is committed to the SCCs Model of Church. As the present Chairman of the Pastoral Department of ZCCB (that includes Youth Ministry)

¹²⁵⁶ A full report, [Zambia Hosts National Youth SCCs Workshop on the Theme “Youth SCCs Embrace the Word of God”](#) is found on the SCCs Website and [ZAMBIA: ZEC Hosts National Youth SCCs Workshop on the Theme “Youth SCCs Embrace the Word of God”](#) is found on the AMECEA Website.

he feels that young people need their own SCCs separate from the Adult SCCs.¹²⁵⁷ This was reinforced by Chishimba Chishimba, the Vice Chairperson of the Zambia National Council for Catholic Youth (ZNCCY). She is a member of St. Maxmillian Kolbe YSCC that became independent of but is still connected to, the Adult SCC. The young people want to have their own identity and activities. She wrote on the SCCs Facebook Page on 1 May, 2014: “My YSCC, Maxmillian Kolbe, is dealing with PMC which is an interesting venture.”

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10152101885698316&id=279921983315¬if_t=like¹²⁵⁸

Another approach is Catholic Youth in Malawi who have a Facebook Page called “A Am a Catholic and I Am Proud” that has 8,684 fans (members). It is a closed group where young Catholics can discuss issues related to their faith. These youth exchange views on the growth of Youth SCCs and the spiritual values underlying SCCs.

In our SCCs Workshops we discussed that Facebook and other social media are not just casual and superficial activity, but can be a ministry and evangelization. It was mentioned that the Catholic Bishop of Kitui Diocese, Kenya has appointed two priests to be Facebook Chaplains to reach out to young people. Is Facebook Ministry and Facebook Evangelization the wave of the future?

Ugandan Consolata Sister Immaculate Nyaketcho Spe, MC provides very valuable qualitative research in her 2014 long essay on the “Impact of Small Christian Communities on Youth: A Qualitative Case Study in Our Lady Consolata Catholic Church, Riara Ridge” in the Institute of Youth Studies (IYS), Tangaza, University College. The research asks the same question in two different ways. How have SCCs impacted on the youth? What has been the impact of SCCs on youth? She surveys the participation of 12 youth between the ages of 18 and 29 (seven male and five female) in the four SCCs in Our Lady of Consolata Catholic Church in Nazareth, Riara Ridge, Nairobi Archdiocese. She analyzes eight positive themes of the impact or influence in the order of importance:

- Prayer.
- Spiritual growth.
- Togetherness and living as a family.
- Encouragement.
- Happiness.
- Support of the needs of others.
- Nurturing and molding.
- Learning the Catholic faith.

Hopefully another study will analyze the negative themes of the youth in these SCCs such as boredom, exclusive use of the Gikuyu language in three of the four SCCs, excessive length of SCC meetings, irrelevance of some discussion topics, etc.

One concrete follow-down/follow-up in Eastern Africa was the one-day Eastern Africa Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya on

¹²⁵⁷ Clement Mulenga in a conversation with the author in Monze, Zambia on 2 May, 2014.

¹²⁵⁸ Chishimba Chishimba in a conversation with the author in Lusaka, Zambia on 2 May, 2014.

Saturday, 30 August, 2014. There were 31 participants (22 men and 9 women) from six countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia. These included two young people from Kenya and Tanzania who received scholarships to the three-week Lumko SCCs Workshop. It was the first time for this kind of workshop. Ten participants said they heard the acronym YSCCs (Youth Small Christian Communities) for the FIRST time.¹²⁵⁹ The basic process/methodology of the workshop was "See," "Judge" and "Act" pioneered by youth around the world.

Highlights were:

- Presentation on the nine SCCs of university students¹²⁶⁰ in Christ the Teacher Catholic Parish at Kenyatta University (KU)¹²⁶¹ in Nairobi, Kenya. Kenyatta University is the largest university in Kenya with over 80,000 students and over 20,000 members of staff. 25-30 % of the students are Catholic. Kenyan student Kevin Arori, the Parish Chairman, emphasized, in addition to the weekly *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection*, special SCC activities such as:
 - a. Charity work such as visiting children homes and hospitals that included cleaning the compound, washing clothes and out giving food.
 - b. During SCC meetings having prayer partners.
 - c. Smaller family-type groups in the SCCs where students visit each other in their rooms to pray and share about their daily problems and challenges.
 - d. Door to door visitations to get more students to join the SCCs.
 - e. Helping new students to get settled on the KU campus, to foster a good spiritual life and to cope with various challenges.

He stated:

Generally, the Small Christian Communities are of great importance to the youth since they help us to learn, to share and to grow spiritually. These small groups have helped to bring people together and to understand each other no matter where one comes from. Indeed, this has facilitated living in

¹²⁵⁹ A Search on Google for "Youth Small Christian Community" (using the quotation marks) gives 99 hits (visits) as of 5 February, 2015. Many examples are part of the name of the YSCC preceded by a saint's name. Examples come from Australia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, USA and Zambia. Many comments on YSCCs are on Facebook.

¹²⁶⁰ There are many examples of YSCCs in high schools, Teachers Training Colleges, seminaries, theological consortia, catechists' school, colleges, universities and other educational institutions/institutions of learning. These are called school-based YSCCs.

¹²⁶¹ As an example, St. Dominic SCC has about 100 members that meet all together on Wednesday evenings in one of the classrooms for prayers and discussion. It has four smaller groups called "families" that meet on Monday evenings for prayer, Faith-sharing and *Bible Reflection*: Saints John, Jude, Maria Goretti and Patrick.

peace with each other. SCCs have also helped students to create an impact on the community through charity work services.¹²⁶²

- Presentation on the six Youth SCCs (YSCCs) in Holy Cross Parish, Dandora in Nairobi, Kenya.¹²⁶³ Kenyan youth leader Anthony Adoyo emphasized special YSCC activities that make this parish so unique in Kenya:
 - a. Structure: the six YSCCs are formed within the five geographical regions or phases of the parish and are linked to the 59 general (adults) SCCs. Once a month the youth meet with their parents in the general (adults) SCCs. Each SCC has two representatives on the Parish Central Youth Committee. Together with the representatives of the Youth Fellowship and Youth Choir and this makes 15 members. The chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary are members of the Parish Pastoral Council. They are guided by the Youth Chaplain who is appointed by the Parish Priest.
 - b. There is a careful plan of combining individual meetings of the six YSCCs and youth fellowship of all the communities together.
 - c. The YSCCs produce and sell the parish leaflet of the Sunday Readings as a means of self-support.
 - d. The youth in the six YSCCs support each other in times of trouble especially in sickness and death. This is both financial support and physical presence to the bereaved family.
 - e. There is a general Parish Youth Facebook Page and individual YSCCs have their own pages.

Online demonstration of basic computer and internet skills like searching for content within a long .pdf document, e.g. searching information in Ebooks using Ctrl + f (Command f on an Apple Computer) was taught. Online demonstration of the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and Facebook Page and other Youth Facebook Pages. The JP II Evangelizing Teams Facebook Page was officially launched.

In connection to one session of *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection on the Gospel of the following Sunday in small groups of five or six people, there was a stimulating and challenging discussion on the importance of regular lectionary-based reading and reflecting on the *Bible*. Only four of the 31 participants had read the following Sunday's Gospel in advance. Some participants said that they read the Gospel every Saturday evening. It was pointed out that at least four types of Catholics read the Sunday Scripture readings in advance, ideally starting on the previous Monday or Tuesday:

- Priest or deacon preparing the homily for the following Sunday Mass.
- Catechist preparing the homily for the following "Sunday Service Without a Priest."
- Prayer Leader of a SCC preparing the readings of the following Sunday for the midweek *Bible* Service.

¹²⁶² Kevin Arori, "Christ the Teacher Catholic Church Kenyatta University Small Christian Communities Report," Nairobi: Unpublished Report, 2014.

¹²⁶³ Described in other sections of this Ebook.

- Religious Education teachers preparing their *Bible* lessons for the following weekend.

It was emphasized that this lectionary-based *Bible* reading and reflection should be “a regular way of life” of serious Catholics. If the following Sunday’s Gospel can be read on Monday or Tuesday, key words, phrases and verses (like a *mantra*) and themes can be rich sources of prayer and meditation during the week.

During the workshop we discussed ways of promoting a SCCs model of church of church among youth in Eastern Africa. This connects to what Pope Francis said to the DRC Bishops on 12 September, 2014 about pastoral outreach to young people:

The most effective way to overcome violence, inequality and ethnic divisions is to equip the young with a critical mind and to offer them the opportunity to mature an understanding of Gospel values. It is also necessary to strengthen pastoral care in universities and in Catholic and public schools, combining education with the clear proclamation of the Gospel.¹²⁶⁴

The “See,” “Judge/Discern” and “Act” process/methodology helps young people to develop a critical mind. YSCCs can be an important part of pastoral care in universities. The weekly *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* is an opportunity to connect the Gospel to our daily lives.

One concrete fruit of the workshop was the establishment of the Kenyatta University Catholic Community (KUCC) Youth Small Christian Community (YSCC) Facebook Page described as “a small family under the Catholic Church whose purpose is to bring Catholic youth together in spiritual and social growth, pray together and share challenges that face us as the young generation.”¹²⁶⁵ The founder Arori said: “Let’s use the time that we spend in social media for our YSCC as this will help us share a lot as young people in the Catholic Church. All of us in this family will be identified as ‘WANAJUMUIYA’.”¹²⁶⁶

The next day we had a special Youth Small Christian Communities Mass in Christ the King Outstation (Subparish) in St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Kangemi. There was a Shared Homily in buzz groups of two followed by sharing highlights of the small *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflections* groups of the previous day’s workshop. Stories included St. John Paul II explaining why Baptism was the most important day of his life, St. “Mother” Teresa’s famous quotation “God does not ask us to be successful but to be faithful,” the heroic example of the young Kenyan woman who donated her kidney to her sick uncle and then died herself of medical complications and why YSCCs bring something new to the Catholic Church in Africa.

¹²⁶⁴ Francis, “Pope to DRC Bishops: Work for Society Based on Respect for Human Dignity: Shares His Concerns for Congolese Youth, Urges Fidelity to the Gospel in Ad Limina Message,” *ZENIT International News Agency The World Seen from Rome*, email dated 12 September, 2014.

¹²⁶⁵ KUCC Youth Small Christian Community (YSCC) Facebook Page, retrieved on 20 October, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1549609615274202/>

¹²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

3. Case Study of the YSCCs at Kenyatta University Christ the Teacher Catholic Parish in Nairobi, Kenya

These are highlights of Alloys Nyakundi's 2016 report:¹²⁶⁷

Kenyatta University Catholic Church in Nairobi, Kenya has nine Small Christian Communities¹²⁶⁸ in which the students are the main stake holders followed by Kenyatta University staff. It is also an example of school-based or campus-based Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs). Our Chaplain is Father Lance Nadeau, MM who is an American Maryknoll priest. The nine Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) are:

1. St. Dominic
2. St. Patrick
3. St. Francis of Assisi
4. St. Catherine of Siena
5. St. Michael the Archangel
6. St. Augustine
7. Cardinal Maurice Otunga
8. St. Perpetual and Felicity
9. St. Anne

All the YSCCs meet weekly on Wednesday as from 6:45 pm to 8:45 pm inside the campus in various lecture halls that are booked at the start of the semester except St Ann's which meets on Thursday. St Dominic comprises students who stay outside the campus. St Patrick and St Ann comprise students who study at the Ruiru Campus which is a branch of Kenyatta University. St. Francis, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Perpetual and Felicity and St. Michael are for students who stay inside the campus. Cardinal Otunga is for the alumni. This includes KU graduates who have finished their BA and are continuing in Graduate School and Alumni living in the Nairobi Area. They met every week in one of their homes. They have a representative on the Parish Pastoral Council. Lastly, St Augustine is for those who are not students.

Some of these YSCCs are really "large" communities of up to 100 students.

YSCC LEADERSHIP HIERACHY

- 1: Coordinator
- 2: Vice Coordinator
- 3: Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) Representative
- 4: Treasurer
- 5: Secretary
- 6: Publicity Secretary

¹²⁶⁷ Alloys Nyakundi, "Report on the Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) at Kenyatta University Christ the Teacher Catholic Parish in Nairobi, Kenya," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 26 December, 2016, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/kucc_report_2016.pdf

¹²⁶⁸ See a write-up and photos of the activities of these nine YSCCs on the Christ the Teacher Parish, Kenyatta University Website, <http://www.kucatholic.or.ke>

SCCs are also divided into smaller groups called “families” of 20 to 30 students or Family SCCs. The larger YSCCs meet once in a week. The smaller families also meet once in a week on a day of their choice that doesn’t collide with the day of the YSCC meeting. I want to use an example of St Dominic that has four families: St Jude, St Patrick, St John and St Maria Goretti. St Patrick meets on Monday evening, St John meets on Thursday evening, St Jude and St Maria Goretti meet on Sunday evening. In the Family SCCs we also share and reflect on the gospel of the coming Sunday. We do more sharing and solving problems facing us as students. Families also meet at different hostels where the students stay.



St. Francis of Assisi YSCC at Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya.

FAMILY LEADERSHIP HIERACHY

- 1: Father
- 2: Mother
- 3: Secretary
- 4: Treasurer

PROGRAM OF THE WEEKLY YSCCs

- 6:45 pm to 7:10 pm: Rosary prayer
- 7:10 pm to 7:20 pm: Song session
- 7:20 pm to 7:50 pm: Reading of the gospel of the coming Sunday
- 7:50 pm to 8:20 pm: Topic of discussion or a debate
- 8:20 pm to 8:30 pm: Announcements
- 8:30 pm to 8:45 pm: AOBs, final prayers and departure to our rooms

YSCCs ACTIVITIES

Our *jumuiyas* carry various activities throughout the semester that bond us together both to the community and to our fellow students. For example:

4. Charity work

As YSCCs we conduct various charitable activities, for example visiting the children's homes, visiting prisoners, visiting the sick in hospitals and visiting the physically challenged, i.e. the blind.



St. Dominic YSCC members from Kenyatta University washing clothes while doing charity work at the House of Mercy Children's Home in Nairobi, Kenya on Saturday, 15 October, 2016.

5. Animation of mass

Every YSCC is given a chance to animate mass every new semester through various ways for example, dancing, prepare for the Prayer of the Faithful and arranging chairs in the church. Through this the YSCCs are involved fully in preparation of mass and church activities.

6. Fun day and end of semester bash

YSCCs organize get togethers which breaks the monotony of the status quo. Once or twice they organize for fun activities for example, dance, play football and have a meal together. They finally end the semester with a bash where they share about their challenges and their strengths. They also cook food which they eat together and even give some awards to their leaders.

7. Visiting and helping YSCCs members

All YSCCs have organized a way in which we visit some of our friends who have problems. If a friend is sick, we choose some YSCC members to go on behalf of the YSCC to see him or her. We make some little contribution which is given to that person. Sometimes we also organize fundraising to help some of our members who are unable to clear their fees, their rent and even buy food for those who don't have food as some of us come from different backgrounds and the majority from poor homes.

COMMUNICATION

The YSCCs in Kenyatta University use various ways to continue sharing even after our YSCC and family meetings. Bearing in mind that the majority have embraced technology, we try to use social media in spreading the gospel such as the daily readings. There are Facebook Pages and every YSCC has its own WhatsApp.

FINANCES

Kenyatta University carries many activities throughout the semester and they all need money. Most of our finances come from the student contributions. Then friends and people of good will, for example Mwanajumuiya Father Joseph Healey a Maryknoll priest, once in a while support our activities in terms of financing some of them. We ensure there is accountability, transparency and openness in handling our finances by writing a report to the Parish Pastoral Council on how we spent our finances.

CHALLENGES FACING YSCCs

1. Mixing the YSCCs model of church and other small apostolic groups of the Catholic Church. Right now KUCC has 28 Volunteer Apostolic Groups (similar to Catholic Action Groups, some of which are movements in the Catholic Church).¹²⁶⁹ There is a sign up at the beginning of each semester and a small entrance/registration fee of 50 Kenyan Shillings (50 USA cents). Many use a small group model of prayer and reflection similar to a SCC. Some groups have lectionary-based Faith-sharing/Gospel-based Faith-sharing.¹²⁷⁰ Some examples (in alphabetical order):

- a. Acolytes.
- b. Catholic Charismatics.
- c. Choir Alumni.
- d. Christian Life Community (CLC).
- e. Communion and Liberation.
- f. Dance Troop.
- g. Evangelizers of the Sick.
- h. Evangelizers of the Word.
- i. Guidance and Counseling.
- j. International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS).
- k. John Paul II Evangelizers.
- l. KUCC Choir.

¹²⁶⁹ Then there are the many other clubs and extra-curricular activities on the KU campus.

¹²⁷⁰ A description of each group is found on the KUCC Website, accessed on 19 March, 2017, <http://www.kucatholic.or.ke>

- m. KU Post-Graduate Group.
- n. KU Young Christian Students (YSC).¹²⁷¹
- o. Legion of Mary.
- p. Pro-Life.
- q. Reigniters of Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) Team.
- r. Sant'Egidio.
- s. Sunday School.

Sometimes people confuse these small apostolic groups with YSCCs. Since they feel comfortable belonging to one of these small apostolic groups, they don't see the importance of the YSCCs. Also, the two models sometimes collide.

2. Some students see YSCCs as a waste of time. They don't set aside time for attending the YSCCs and keep themselves busy elsewhere -- sometimes doing nothing.

3. Poverty, i.e. most of the students come from poor humble families whereby meeting the demands of daily living is a challenge. This hinders them from contributing to the activities of the YSCCs.

WHAT MOST YOUTH WANT ADDRESSED IN THE YSCCs

1. Sex (especially boy-girl relationships)
2. Job opportunities.
3. Use of free time.
4. Justice and peace.
5. Gambling, i.e., sports betting.

Finally, I am grateful to God who enabled me to meet Father Joseph Healey a Maryknoll priest. He is a member of a Small Christian Community in Waruku, Nairobi and a prolific writer of many books and articles about SCCs. He introduced me to SCCs and cultivated in me the spirit of SCCs and YSCCs. I wish to challenge the priests in the AMECEA region to support the YSCCs since most of the young people need to be involved in church activities so that they don't feel left out.

In April, 2017 (end of Second Semester) once again our St. Dominic SCC of Kenyatta University Catholic Church took position one out of the nine Small Christian Communities. We had the largest number of members pay a one semester subscription fee of 150/= Kenyan Shillings (\$1.50) to the parish (in addition we pay 20/= to our own SCC Fund). We have always worked as one team and this reminds me of the proverb *one hand washes another hand*. I am also sure that our saint is fighting for us and he is happy. St. Dominic, please continue praying for us.

¹²⁷¹ YCS is over 100 students so it is a "large" Christian community. Most were members of YCS in their secondary schools. They follow the international charter. The students meet weekly and use a variety of Scripture texts, not necessarily from the following Sunday.



Leaders of St. Dominic SCC with the 2017 trophy.

The “Minutes” of a meeting of the Kenyatta University Youth Small Christian Communities Team are:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. Alloys M Nyakundi
2. Collins Ongoma
3. Edwin Wesonga
4. Nancy Njehia
5. John Mwaura

AGENDA

1. Proposal about communications in Radio Waumini and KU FM.
2. Having talks in various secondary schools.
3. Visiting the youth in the slums.
4. Organize a Youth SCCs Workshop.

We saw it wise to name our team and after detailed consultation we decided on “Reigniters of Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) Team.”

We agreed to have a talk at the Chaplaincy Centre. about Youth Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and share the challenges that young people are facing. We tried to look

for possible ways of capturing the youth and we saw it better that we involve them through asking questions and giving some token (gift) to those who are able to answer correctly.

We also figured out on the possibility of visiting various Catholic Secondary Schools when we will be give talks about SCCs. Already we have an invitation to Mogoiri Secondary School in Muranga. We are requesting financial support from the Eastern Africa Small Christian Community Training Team.

On visiting the youth in slums we had an idea that we can visit the youths in the slums and encourage, enlighten and show love to them courtesy of the Kenyatta University Youth Small Christian Communities.

On the workshop we came with an idea to organize a University/College Youth Small Christian Community Workshop. Since majority of the youth who have gone to the university and college are seen as a mirror of the society, we need to ground them well with information about Small Christian Communities. The church should not take us for granted since we are the church of today and tomorrow.

We have prepared a budget for our presentation in KU FM Radio Station (9,000 Kenyan shillings or \$90 per month) and our visit to Mogoiri Secondary School (12,000 Kenyan shillings or \$120).



Meeting of the Reigniters of Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) Team at Kenyatta University.

Nancy Njehia affirms their missionary spirit: “Yesterday we had a meeting with five *wanajumuiyas* from Kenyatta University where we deliberated on forming a group to reignite the YSCCs in high schools and dioceses where they have been dormant over time. Requesting your prayers so that all our plans will be successful.”

The newest project is to give talks every Sunday from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m at KU FM about SCCs and related topics. The coordinators give a small stipend to the presenters in the radio studio who have to wake up early in the morning.



Alloys Nyakundi presenting at KU FM about SCCs and talking about the 2017 Kenya Lenten Campaign.



A nice reminder of teaching on SCCs at Hekima University College in Nairobi. Interesting mixture of the Catholic Church: two laywomen, one layman, one seminarian, one sister, one priest.

The KU SCCs Team presented on school-based/campus-based YSCCs during the SCCS Class at Tangaza. Two representatives of the YSCCs in Dandora Parish, Nairobi presented on parish-based YSCCs.

The success of these all YSCCs follows a common pattern:

1. Continuity in youth leadership.
2. Self-reliance plan (good fund-raising). Example: The youth in Dandora raise 500,000/= Kenyan Shillings (\$5,000) a year in selling the weekly mass leaflet.
3. Priority in focus and strategic planning.



Presenting on YSCCs in the SCCs Class at Tangaza.

CHANGE NUMBERS

8. St. Augustine Hybrid Young People Small Christian Community

St. Augustine is a hybrid model of a Young People Small Christian Community because members meet in person both online and to read and reflect on the Gospel of the coming

Sunday. It comprises young people from Christ the Teacher Kenyatta University Parish who have completed their undergraduate studies at Kenyatta University (KU) and are now alumni of KU. Young people belong to Small Christian Communities when they are doing their undergraduate degrees and St. Augustine is meant to accommodate alumni so as to continue actively engaging one another even after college. For one to be a member of this community, he/she has to pay a registration fee and a subsequent monthly subscription, as well as be a committed member in terms of attendance and active participation.

- 6.
7. The leadership structure consists of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, Treasurer, Organizing Secretary, Secretary, and the Parish Pastoral Council Representative (PPC). The PPC acts as an intermediary between the community and the Parish.
- 8.
9. They meet every Sunday afternoon from 3 p.m. to 5p.m at a member's house on a voluntary rotational basis. The gathering begins with the Rosary or the Chaplet of divine mercy and then the reading and reflection on the Gospel of the coming Sunday. Members take a minute of silence after reading the gospel and the latter relate it to what is happening in their lives. Members also use this opportunity to listen to one another and try to help solve the challenges they are facing as young people hence showing solidarity with one another.
- 10.
11. After the reading and sharing of the Gospel, members have different activities for example bible trivial, a topic of discussion raised by a member, or a song. The activity of the day is followed by prayers of the faithful majorly focusing on the intentions raised by members.
12. Apart from the weekly meetings, the community is involved with different activities throughout the year for example charity work, Retreat Day, Baby visits, St. Augustine anniversary day, and Fun day. All these activities are done as a way of giving back to the community and helping members bond.
- 13.
14. In summary, St. Augustine SCCs can be used as a case study by parishes that do not have an idea on how to actively keep young people engaged.

1.

4. African Proverbs and Sayings Related to Youth/Young People

Alone, a youth runs fast; with an elder slow, but together they go far (Luo, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda).

A child or youth who does not listen to an elder's advice gets his or her leg broken (Nyanja, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia). (Chewa, Malawi). (Bemba, Zambia).

A child or young person does not fear treading on dangerous ground until he or she gets hurt/stumbles (Bukusu, Kenya).

A child who is not taught by its mother will be taught by the world (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

An elder (or a parent) who won't sharply reprimand a child when young will be compelled to run helter skelter when the child is fully grown, and becomes grossly disobedient.

Even if your mother has a short leg she is still your mother (Malawi).

Good actions are nourishment for youth, much more than words (North Africa).

If a girl sits badly, it is up to her mother to cover her thighs (Orma, Kenya).

I'll teach the youth to fish, not just give them a fish (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

It is better to be poor when one is young rather than becoming poor at old age (Kuria, Kenya, Tanzania).

It is the boy who lifts up the fallen houses (ruins) (Havu, Democratic Republic of Congo).

It takes a whole village to raise a child (Igbo, Yoruba, Nigeria).

No matter how skinny, the son always belongs to his father (Kipsigis, Kenya and Galla, Ethiopia).

The old woman looks after the child to grow its teeth and the young one in turn looks after the old woman when she loses her teeth (Akan, Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast).

One knee does not bring up a child (Sukuma, Tanzania).

One hand does not nurse a child. (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

The patience of a young girl brings joy to the parents; at the end, it brings celebration (Rundi, Burundi and Rwanda).

The person who has not traveled widely thinks his or her mother is the only cook (the best cook) (many African languages).

Preventing the conflicts of tomorrow means changing the mindset of youth today (Zimbabwe).

A soft tree is never broken by wind (Haya, Tanzania).

Spare the rod, spoil the child (Tugen, Kenya).

A stick is straightened while still young (Kiga, Ankole, Uganda and many African languages).

A village never lacks a beautiful young woman (Lingala, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of the Congo, Angola, Central African Republic).

When a leaf falls to the ground, the tree gets the blame/the shame goes to the tree (Nyanja, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe) (Chewa, Malawi).

Why do you behave like a woman whose son has just gotten married? Maasai (Kenya, Tanzania).

Young growing cuttings determine a good harvest of cassava (Tonga, Malawi).

5. Learning from Campus Ministry Programs in the USA

Eastern African universities can learn from the campus ministry programs¹²⁷² and the rich variety of school-based SCCs and especially the Young Adult¹²⁷³ Small Christian Communities (YASCCs) on USA campuses.¹²⁷⁴

From 2014 to 2017 I had the opportunity to meet, and learn from, students, chaplains and campus ministers at the following 15 campuses in the USA (alphabetically): Boston College, DePaul, Drew, Duquesne, Fairleigh Dickerson, Georgetown, Loyola New Orleans, Morgan State, Notre Dame, Princeton, Rice, Santa Clara, Stanford, Williams and Yale. This research was published in Healey, Joseph, "What Catholic Young People Really Want to Talk About?" in Kevin Ahern and Christopher Derige Malano, (eds.), *God's Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018. The chapter can be found online on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: http://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/what_catholic.pdf

¹²⁷² American lay theologian Kevin Ahern estimates that 70 % of the university and colleges in the USA do not have an organized Catholic Campus Ministry Program. He distinguishes between the schools with excellent programs like a Yale University or any of any Jesuit Universities and a Bronx Community College in New York with no program. There is also economic inequality and opportunity gaps among the students. Interview with the author at Maryknoll, NY on 16 December, 2015.

¹²⁷³ The views of youth in the United States are very complex. In a discussion with the staff of St. Paul Inside the Walls Evangelization Center in Madison, New Jersey, USA, they commented that youth are connected but not committed. Young people like words such as "chat" or "event" rather than "group" or "community." Conversation with the author on 3 December, 2014.

¹²⁷⁴ During my research on US college campuses "I learned through my discussions that young people today are not necessarily angry with or opposed to the church. They simply feel it's not relevant to their lives. Instead, they're looking to share and express their Catholicism in a less institutionalized, more personalized setting, one that's more community-minded and service-minded. They're looking for more than traditional Sunday Mass to hone their faith." Healey, Joseph, "When It Comes To Nurturing Faith, Smaller Is Often Better" and "When Smaller is Better: Small Faith Communities and the Future of the U.S. Church," *America*, 24 May 2016, *America Website*, retrieved on 25 May, 2016, <http://americamagazine.org/issue/when-smaller-better>.

This is confirmed by a statement from the "Joy of the Gospel in America" Convocation in Orlando, Florida, USA fro, 1-4 July, 2017:

The panel on young adults - specifically on the "nones" - was again sobering. 50% of baptized Catholics no longer identify themselves as Catholic. Of those, 79% leave the church before they are 23. And they are not angry. They are indifferent. They do not leave the church in a huff; they simply drift away.

US Catholic Mission Association Email Message, 4 July, 2017.

From 2018 to 2024 I visited the following campuses (alphabetical): Ave Maria, Duke, Elon,¹²⁷⁵ Loyola Marymount, San Diego.

Take the example of the Saint Thomas More Chapel and Center at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. One staff person emphasized: “The 14 Small Church Communities are central to the whole ministry at Yale.” Faith-sharing in small groups at Yale is described as follows: “Small communities are powerful vehicles for adult faith formation, providing opportunities for learning, prayer, mutual support, and the shared experience of Christian living and service to Church and society.”¹²⁷⁶ A further explanation:

On any given evening during the week, groups of five, twelve, or fifteen gather in seminar rooms of the Thomas E. Golden, Jr. Center to prayerfully read and discuss the readings for the coming Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The leader welcomes those gathered and prays an opening prayer, then invites different members to read a small section of the readings. Using a journal with commentary and questions prepared by the chaplains, the members consider the passage in relation to its historical context, its thematic relationship to other readings for that Sunday, and possible application for our lives.

Sometimes the conversation meanders into such heady questions as string theory or foreign policy (this is Yale, after all!), but at the end of the discussion members consider ways to put their faith into action. The leader for the evening writes down a short summary and gives it to the chaplains, who answer any outstanding questions or incorporate the insights into the Sunday homily.

One goal of the SCCs is that participants join the Sunday assembly better prepared to hear the readings, having prayerfully considered them earlier in the week. Each semester students form relationships through these groups with students they might not otherwise have met at Yale – Forestry students with Divinity students and Timothy Dwight students with Pierson students. The interactions formed in these groups invite peer ministry in a new way. As each group fills out their summary of the discussion each week they are also invited to bring to the chaplains' attention students who were missing or might need help in some way -- empowering care for one another on a deep level.

Our chapel setting is an intimate gathering of busy people who recognize the need to develop a spiritual life. Through the SCC structure we hope to give students, faculty, staff and community members an experience of church that is small in scale and that helps each member see the relevance of faith for their everyday lives. A freshman coming to Yale learns to be an

¹²⁷⁵ What struck me when visiting the Elon University campus on 24 May, 2024 was that the Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) Program is part of a Multifaith Campus including Protestant, Jewish and Muslim Faiths in the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life. CCM has Small Faith Sharing Communities/Groups.

¹²⁷⁶ Saint Thomas More Website, retrieved on 22 October, 2012, <http://stm.yale.edu/FaithSharing.php>

active participant in classroom discussion and research. So too at the chapel, students learn to share their unique perspective and faith experience with others. The Small Church Community structure began in the spring of 1996 and today over 150 people are taking part each week, mainly students.

Participants broaden their understanding of God's Word. Small Church Communities help persons grow in living their faith by reflecting on God's word in their lives and their response to the world around them. The gatherings are a time for bringing people together for personal reflection, Faith-sharing based on scripture, responding to individual and family needs, and socializing.¹²⁷⁷

Campus Ministry of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, USA directly sponsors two undergraduate Faith-sharing groups to help students strengthen their faith, meet new friends and worship with others. First, Compass Freshman Fellowship is a program for freshmen Catholic students. The Compass Freshman Formation program is designed to deepen students' faith through monthly large group and weekly small group sessions. The goal of the program is for students to learn what it means to be a Catholic young adult at Notre Dame and continue their formation as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Second, Iron Sharpens Iron (ISI) Christian Fellowship is a community of Christians from many denominations who meet for a weekly praise and worship service in addition to men's and women's *Bible* studies groups and other fellowship events. Anyone seeking genuine Christian fellowship is welcome to attend.¹²⁷⁸



Catholic CAFÉ at Notre Dame University, South Bend, Indiana, USA

Campus Ministry regularly hosts Catholic CAFE (Conversation and Faith Exploration), undergraduate student groups in residence halls and off campus at Notre Dame

¹²⁷⁷ Ibid., retrieved on 8 December, 2015, <http://stm.yale.edu/SmallChurchCommunities.php>

¹²⁷⁸ Notre Dame Website, retrieved on 8 December, 2015, <http://campusministry.nd.edu/undergraduate-resources/Faith-sharing-group>

that share their faith and address the many ways in which the Catholic faith and their everyday lives intersect. Groups meet on various evenings at convenient times and locations for hour-long conversations to discuss their faith in a casual, safe and engaging environment. Students can come and go as they please or stay for the entire semester-long series. Catholic CAFE groups are led by a pair of students who serve as conversation facilitators, guiding the group's discussion and inviting all to share their insights, with the leaders drawing from Scripture and the Catholic Church's tradition as necessary to aid in the group's understanding.¹²⁷⁹

Catholic and Protestant graduate students participate in an Ecumenical Bible Study Group every Friday.

The Office of Campus Ministry at Notre Dame produced a *Spiritual Study 2015: Reshape. Reimagine. Rethink* to assess the evolving needs of Notre Dame students and to capture a qualitative glimpse of their interests, successes, challenges and desires. The 65-page booklet included reports on Benchmarking Visits to campus ministry programs including Boston College, Dayton, Texas A&M and Yale. The latter's Small Church Communities offer an incredible opportunity for faith-sharing. The weekly scripture reflection is an anchor-point for conversation. Vulnerable disclosure of self, faith/doubt, relationships, etc. only comes with time.

At Boston College¹²⁸⁰ in Boston, Massachusetts, USA Cura Christian Life Groups are student-led Small Faith-sharing Groups that meet once a week for an hour to pray, share highs and lows, and uncover where we see God in our lives. *Cura* is the Latin word for care as in *cura personalis* ("care of the whole person"). Goals of Cura are "Community," "Ignatian Reflection," "Spirituality," and "Care for Others." This name was chosen to express the distinct Jesuit identity and charism at Boston College.¹²⁸¹ Cura groups include groups of a mixture of undergraduate students as well as specific special interest groups such as rugby players and nurses.

The process of a weekly session is described as follows:

Articulate a particular instance in which a decision he/she made was a direct result of shared prayer and/or group reflection and will develop a language of discernment in his/her life. Learn a variety of spiritual prayer

¹²⁷⁹ Ibid., <https://campusministry.nd.edu/about-catholicism/sacramental-preparation/cross-examination-investigating-the-catholic-faith>

¹²⁸⁰ Other Jesuit Colleges in the USA with good Small Faith-sharing Groups of college students are (alphabetically): Georgetown University, Washington, DC; Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California; Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California. Some use the Christian Life Communities (CLCs) Model.

¹²⁸¹ Based on a conversation with American laywoman Ellen Modica, Assistant Campus Minister, Boston College, Boston Massachusetts, USA on 19 November, 2015.

practices (*Lectio Divina*, contemplation of place,¹²⁸² praying with art, centering prayer, meditation, etc.) that will serve to instill a habit of prayer and deepen your relationship with God.¹²⁸³

Cura members have the opportunity to attend retreats and other activities throughout the year.

The RCIA sessions at Boston College includes weekly lectionary-based Faith-sharing in the Spring Semester. A question can be asked: after being baptized do these new Catholics have the desire to continue in small groups in their parishes?

The Arrupe International Immersion Program at Boston College includes small intentional Faith-sharing communities both before and after immersion trips to countries in Central and South America. Since participants come from different religions, Protestant denominations and even outside institutional religion, as well as from different political and social backgrounds, they reflect on their experiences in the immersion program that can have both an explicit and implicit faith dimension. So it is not sharing of the Catholic faith specifically, but sharing values and priorities connected to solidarity with a suffering world, social analysis of Global South issues and encountering people from another country who struggle in poverty. It is interesting to compare and contrast the students' reflection before and after their immersion experiences in Central America.¹²⁸⁴

Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California, USA has 30 weekly Christian Life Communities (CLCs) of seven to 10 students each. 70 % are women. A careful formation plan is based on Ignatian spirituality and the principal of finding God in all things. It includes Phase 1 for Freshmen focusing on support groups: "Friends in God." Phase 2 for Sophomores focusing on Faith-sharing: "Finding God in All Things." Phase 3 for Juniors and Seniors focusing on vocation discernment: "Vocation Discernment."

The weekly meetings include a selection from a wide variety of activities (alphabetically):

- Breathing Meditation.
- Discussion on key reflection questions for Santa Clara students.
- Draw your image of God.
- Our covenant with God.

¹²⁸² Ignatian contemplation is suited especially for the gospels. In the Second Week of the Exercises, we accompany Jesus through his life by imagining scenes from the Gospel stories. Let the events of Jesus' life be present to you right now. Visualize the event as if you were making a movie. Pay attention to the details: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings of the event. Lose yourself in the story; don't worry if your imagination is running too wild. At some point, place yourself in the scene. See more at:

<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises/ignatian-contemplation-imaginative-prayer#sthash.SzpLba5D.dpuf>

¹²⁸³ "Cura -- Christian Life Community," Boston College Website, retrieved on 21 September, 2014, <http://www.bc.edu/offices/ministry/faithcommunities/cura.html>

¹²⁸⁴ Based on a conversation with American student Chris Colgan, Boston College Senior, Boston Massachusetts, USA on 19 November, 2015.

- Draw an image of your inner journey.
- Draw your life path.
- *Lectio Divina*.
- Prayer time.
- Share highs and lows of previous week.

Participants take their faith seriously as they explore questions about God and their own faith life.

On Monday evening, 30 November, 2015 the author participated in one of these small weekly communities at Santa Clara composed of juniors. The senior student facilitator announced that two members texted that could not come because they were busy preparing for exams. In the touchdown period one junior said that she “needed” to be there. She wanted and needed this period of prayer and Faith-sharing to help her be “grounded” before her busy round of exams.

Living out a CLC way of life includes journaling, serving the poor and marginalized regularly such as teaching in nearby school for deprived children and campus wide CLC events such as BBQ, bowling and Agapa Latte.

A key part of this campus ministry program is training juniors and seniors as facilitators of the small groups/YSCCs.

CLCs alumni groups are being formed.¹²⁸⁵

¹²⁸⁵ Based on conversations with Vietnamese Jesuit Father Manh Tran, SJ and student leaders in Santa Clara, California on 29-30 November, 2015.

For a very good article on, and interview with, Tran see Thomas Reese, “Community, Spirituality and Service: Christianity for College Students,” *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)*, 27 October, 2016, *NCR Website*, retrieved on 29 October, 2016, <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/community-spirituality-and-service-christianity-college-students>

1. But there are lots of communities [groups, clubs, student organizations, extra-curricular activities] available on college campuses — sports teams, fraternities, sororities, academic clubs, service projects, etc. So the question is what does CLC offer that's different? Here the second pillar, spirituality, is important. I would have to say that what's unique about CLC definitely has to do with faith. The faith in the God that we try to introduce to them is the God who is active and attractive. It's not just doctrine, but a God that is active in their lives. It is an open faith. We provide the space and opportunities for people to dare to ask questions. It definitely creates space for people to just explore their faith.

2. Small group experience — they just want to experience that. They hunger for those small group experiences and CLC provides that. How to start a CLC on their campuses: The best way is to just bring a group of friends, four or five friends, and get together once a week just to pray and talk about what's going on in your lives. Then after that first group, as you multiply, those students will become leaders and then they will go and form other small groups.

The nine-member Liturgy Team meets as a “Breaking Open the Word” (BOW) Group every Tuesday from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. They reflect on the three readings of the following Sunday, select the songs and organize the Sunday Eucharist. They send their scripture notes to the Presider for his homily.

Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, USA has Small Christian Communities that are small groups (6-8 students) that meet regularly throughout the semester and create a supportive faith community through sharing, prayer and discussing faith. Through the St. Paul Inside the Walls Evangelization Center in Madison, New Jersey, USA teams of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) did evangelizing ministry on the nearby campuses of Farleigh Dickinson University and Drew University.

Many USA colleges and universities participate in [Campus RENEW](#) sponsored by RENEW International as part of its young adult outreach programs and young adult evangelization. There are three components of Campus RENEW’s unique approach:

Process: Campus RENEW collaborates with the current campus ministry to offer a structure which facilitates the growth of Small Christian communities on the campus. The structure includes leadership and invitation training over two and a half years to create a campus-wide initiative which is ultimately self-sustaining. Campus RENEW is a two and a half year (or five semester) process which facilitates renewal and transformation on college campuses. [Small Christian Communities](#), groups of eight to 12 students who come together weekly to share faith, are the building blocks of this process. These communities create opportunities for students to experience [community](#), [spirituality](#), and be challenged outward to [service](#).

Resources: Campus RENEW offers a variety of resources for reflection which have been written for the campus population: *The Word on Campus*, a lectionary-based series, and *As I Have Loved You*, a service-focused series. RENEW also offers justice-based, Catechism-based and thematic resources.

Pastoring: The process is accompanied by onsite and offsite pastoral support from a RENEW staff member, including workshops, retreat days and ongoing mentoring.¹²⁸⁶

Georgetown University in Washington, DC, USA adapts Campus RENEW to its own local context in a process of liturgical spirituality. American layman President John DeGioia commented that “in our RENEW Faith-sharing groups on campus our Catholic students are so grateful for the opportunity to deepen their faith through discussion with fellow participants.”¹²⁸⁷ Ideally members of the Small Faith-sharing Groups read and reflect on the upcoming Sunday Gospel on the previous Saturday. After participating in the Sunday Eucharist and reflecting on the priest’s homily they meet in the middle of the week to share on this same Gospel using the steps in *The Word on Campus*, a lectionary-based series. In the

¹²⁸⁶ RENEW International Website, retrieved on 21 September, 2014, <http://www.renewintl.org/Renew/Index.nsf/vpages/CampusRENEW?opendocument>

¹²⁸⁷ John DeGioia, letter to the author dated 26 July, 2013.

step “Faith in Action” they share their experiences (highs and lows) of the past week. In the step “Questions for Reflection” they reflect more deeply on the meaning of Gospel text. In the step “Beckoned to Action” participants chose an action for the coming week that flows from their thoughts and reflections.¹²⁸⁸ Sometimes the Campus RENEW groups use the sessions of *The World on Campus*, the six-part global justice reflection series from Catholic Relief Services and RENEW International.

Other Small Faith-sharing Groups at Georgetown in the context of adult faith formation include:

- The weekly Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) Group. Students participate in a process that leads to Baptism.
- The weekly “Georgetown Group” that is part of the medical school and hospital. It starts with reflecting on the scripture readings of the following Sunday and concludes with a “how are you doing” catch up.

Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey, USA promotes a variety of small groups. In the four weeks of Lent, 2015 students came together in 14 small groups in the

¹²⁸⁸As of October, 2014 there were only three Campus RENEW Groups composed of eight students each that meet weekly – a small number. At a meeting of Campus RENEW student facilitators on 7 October, 2014 it was pointed out that at Georgetown there are many different ways of coming to God. There are dozens of ways of developing one’s spirituality and exploring one’s relationship to God (alphabetically): *Bible* study groups, discussion groups, immersion programs, lecture series, LGBTQ prayer groups, prayer groups, retreats, spiritual direction and various student organizations.

A few groups use the Small Faith-sharing Group model. Conversations with Roman Catholic Chaplain American Jesuit Greg Schenden, SJ, American layman Ennio Mastroianni, the Director of Adult Faith Formation, and some the Georgetown undergraduate students on 6-9 October, 2014 gave some of the reasons. The students are very busy and have many other competing priorities for their time. In a success-oriented culture campus life inhibits small group sharing of one’s struggles and weaknesses. *Bible* sharing and *Bible* Reflection are not a daily habit.

In the wider context of American society the Small Faith-sharing Group model is not a priority in Adult Faith Formation and Catholic life. Contemporary American culture emphasizes individualism, privacy and multi-tasking over community models. American Catholics are “busy about many things” and have trouble slowing down, being quiet, being silent. Most young Catholic lay adults (young parents with children, single mothers) live hectic life styles and have little or no time beyond their immediate families. Also the SCC model is not popular in parts of the Catholic Church that emphasize clerical control and the institutional church.

In the United States there are literally hundreds of books, booklets and online, web-based resources on the *Bible*, Faith-sharing, faith formation and other lectionary-based small community resources, etc. but research shows there are “relatively” few small communities of any kind in the Catholic Church using them on a regular basis.

“Faith of Our Fathers” program that was developed by Princeton graduate students and lead by faithful undergraduate students on some of the basics of Catholicism. The sessions combined prayer and discussion. In Fall, 2015 this tradition continued with 12 small groups participating in the seven-week program called *Papal docs*, a discussion about Catholic teachings based on the encyclicals and exhortations from which they were originally promulgated. All of the material was prepared for Princeton undergraduates by the graduating Class of 2015.¹²⁸⁹

The RCIA Small Group at Princeton begins each week with prayer by reflecting on the scripture readings and homily of the previous Sunday. The meeting closes by reading and reflecting on the scripture readings of the next Sunday. A good combination.¹²⁹⁰ Princeton also has Opus Dei’s Circle, a weekly small group meeting of spiritual formation.

There are different models on college campuses according to the specific context and situation. Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, USA has seven Small Faith Groups in a ministry called Encounter Christ (EC) that is coordinated by [Evangelical Catholic](#) (one of the new programs answering the Catholic Church’s call for a new evangelization), and are described as follows:

The beginning of the 2015-16 year sees the Catholic Community @ Stanford embracing a new model of small group fellowship, based upon inviting others to encounter Jesus through trusting relationships. We are doing this because knowing Jesus and walking with him transforms our lives into one of joy. Once we experience this joy, we will want to share it with others: a joy shared is twice a joy!

Undergrad student leaders were trained by our partners at Evangelical Catholic to learn to reach out to peers and form small groups to reflect on scripture, share, and pray. People in these groups will walk intentionally with each other leading to a deeper encounter with Jesus. Lent will see the program expand. It will later expand to the entire community. Even if you cannot immediately join a group, you are invited to take steps to deepen your relationship with Jesus through developing trusting relationships with others in the community.¹²⁹¹

The groups of eight to 12 students meet once a week in the dorms and focus on their relationships to Jesus Christ. The Training of Trainers (TOT) program of student leaders is coordinated by Evangelical Catholic.¹²⁹²

¹²⁸⁹See the Aquinas Institute Princeton University’s Official Catholic Campus Ministry Website, retrieved on 30 May, 2015, <http://princetoncatholic.org>

¹²⁹⁰ Material provided by the former Catholic Chaplain Father Brian Page.

¹²⁹¹ Catholic Community @ Stanford Website, retrieved on 28 November, 2015 <http://catholic.stanford.edu/ministries-programs/small-groups>

¹²⁹² Based on a conversation with American Dominican priest Father Xavier Lavagetto, OP, Stanford University Catholic Chaplain, Palo Alto, California, USA on 27 November, 2015. He pointed out that the Evangelical Catholic (EC) program or approach is the right fit for

American Freshman Carlyne Manion belongs to the Thursday evening Small Faith Group. She explained that she has many extra-curricular activities to choose from at Stanford, but she wants to focus on deepening her faith life and Catholic identity on the Stanford campus. Sometimes her group uses *Lectio Divina*. She feels a close friendship with the other members of her group. They even study together in the Catholic Community “space” on campus. The weekly meetings include creative group dynamic activities such as each participant writing on a piece of paper “a deep question on my faith.” These questions are drawn randomly from a hat and discussed by the whole group. She says that maybe she will become an undergraduate student leader in her Sophomore Year.¹²⁹³

Today many young people are searching for meaning in life. One college student told me she was a devout Catholic who went to a Catholic High School on the East Coast. Every Sunday she went to Mass with her parents. In her freshman year at Michigan State University she dutifully participated Sunday Mass on the campus. Then she began to “drift” and didn’t find mass that interesting. She joined an Evangelical Church on campus that had lively singing, a band and entertaining sermons. But after a few months she felt something was missing. She had an unfulfilled yearning, desire, hunger for something more. Finally, she discovered that she really missed the Eucharist at the Catholic Mass. So she returned to the Catholic Church on campus and now feels very nourished by receiving Jesus Christ every Sunday in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

In interviewing students who participate in these university and college small groups -- most of whom are young women -- a question emerges: After college what? After a positive experience of participating in a wide variety of campus Small Faith-sharing Groups and Small *Bible* Study Groups, how can they find a similar experience in their parishes and other pastoral and spiritual settings? Our research indicates that a large number of graduates cannot find a good fit/a spiritual home in Catholic parishes in the USA.¹²⁹⁴ Parish-based SCCs especially for young adults are few and far between. Some graduates continue in Alumni SCCs. Some graduates connect with the various new ecclesial movements in the Catholic Church. Some graduates gravitate to Small *Bible* Study Groups in Protestant Churches.

Much of the above material was summarized in an article

Stanford. The more directly evangelical and “apologetic” Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) program or approach does not fit the Stanford context.

¹²⁹³ Based on a conversation with Carlyne Manion in Palo Alto, California, USA on 28 November, 2015.

¹²⁹⁴ The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, an organization of Catholic lay and clergy leaders, is training college students to move into church leadership roles the moment that they graduate with a program called ESTEEM (Engaging Students to Enliven the Ecclesial Mission). The program is designed to keep young adults from drifting away by giving them the knowledge, confidence and skills to change and improve their churches -- right after college when they’re still revved up and raring to go. ESTEEM is now a church leadership development program at a dozen public, private and Catholic colleges and universities nationwide. <https://www.faithandleadership.com/esteem-prepares-catholic-college-students-church-leadership-now>

“When Smaller is Better: Small Faith Communities and the Future of the U.S. Church,” *America*, 24 May 2016, *America* Website, retrieved on 25 May, 2016, <http://americamagazine.org/issue/when-smaller-better>. Also listed on the bottom of page 25 of the 20-27 June, 2016 paper edition of *America* Magazine under “Digital Highlights” as a WEB EXCLUSIVE: “Small Faith Communities and the future of the U.S. church,” <http://americamagazine.org/webfeatures>.



A small group meets with a seminarian at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, Florida, USA in 2015 -- during the seminary's annual retreat for young adults, attendees formed small groups led by seminarians, deacons, religious sisters and campus ministers.

Specialists continue to study the complex social and cultural reality of the USA. In the follow-down to the two sessions of the Synods of Bishops in Rome in October, 2014 and October, 2015 on “Family and Marriage” it was proposed to emphasis YSCCs composed of the following specialized groups:

- Youth (Generation Y¹²⁹⁵ 18-22 year-olds)/Millennials
- Young Adults (Generation Y 23-35 year-olds)

¹²⁹⁵ Generation Y are the Millennials and also known as the Millennial Generation. They are the demographic cohort following Generation X. There are no precise dates when the generation starts and ends. Researchers and commentators use birth years ranging from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. Authors William Strauss and Neil Howe believe that each generation has common characteristics that give it a specific character, with four basic generational archetypes, repeating in a cycle. According to their theory, they predicted that Millennials will become more like the "civic-minded" G.I. generation with a strong sense of community both local and global. A similar portrait is that these young people emphasize family values, a strong sense of community both local and global and civic-mindedness.

- Engaged Couples
- Newly married Couples
- Married Couples with Little Children

These small communities combine lectionary-based Faith-sharing and being a support group. The engaged couples and newly married couples can consult married couple pastoral accompaniers (mentor couples) when necessary.¹²⁹⁶

As we read the “signs of the times,” new types of Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) emerge on college campuses. The Aquinas Institute, the Catholic Campus Ministry at Princeton University, New Jersey, USA has developed the Joan of Arc Ministry that is a welcoming and confidential space to openly discuss the intersections of Catholic faith, sexuality and gender identity. All are welcome!

A big question is: “After College What?”¹²⁹⁷ One solution is RENEW Theology on Tap that offers an innovative solution to one of today’s most pressing pastoral concerns: how to reach out to young Catholic adults.¹²⁹⁸ Young adults can sometimes be overlooked to the extent that even their absence goes unnoticed. RENEW Theology on Tap reaches young adults where they are, while inviting them to discover how faith can give sense to their everyday lives. It is a way for dioceses, parishes, alumni associations and young adult organizations to discover (or rediscover) these young adults in comfortable, relaxed settings.

There are four essential components for the most successful RENEW Theology on Tap program:

- building a strong core community
- invitation
- hospitality
- follow-up

Since its creation in the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1981, this program has proven to be a successful vehicle for reaching young adults interested in learning more about their faith, coming together to share community, and feeling welcomed and valued in the Catholic Church. In 2003, RENEW was entrusted to launch an initiative to bring Theology on Tap nationwide. To achieve that goal, we created an official registration process to license the

¹²⁹⁶ For Parent (Adult) Faith-sharing/Small Christian Communities: Lectionary-based booklets see the Strong Catholic Family Faith Website, retrieved on 20 December, 2014, <http://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/parent-faith-formation.html> and “Hosting Small Faith Groups: A Summary of Links” and “Loyola Press Resources for Small Faith Groups,” Joe Paprocki’s Catechist’s Journey Website, retrieved on 20 December, 2014, <http://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/2014/12/hosting-small-faith-groups-a-summary>

¹²⁹⁷ The more pertinent question is: “After Confirmation, What? Research in both Eastern Africa and USA found that after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation Catholic teenagers tend to disappear from Mass and Catholic Youth and Young Adults Groups. Irene Kessy, conversation with the author, Naivasha, Kenya, 29 April, 2018.

¹²⁹⁸ Another program is “Pizza Night With...” in which young Catholic adults informally meet with a Catholic Church leader or representative for dialog, discussion and discernment on a variety of topics and questions.

RENEW Theology on Tap name to ensure quality of programming and a plethora of pastoral support.¹²⁹⁹

One challenge is that Theology on Tap does not become one way: that is, an adult speaker (like a bishop) “talks” to 30 or 50 or 75 youth adults in a bar or hall. Process is important. The young adults should be able to speak. The older people should listen. If during the session the young adults break out into small Faith-sharing communities, there can be more interaction and dialog.

Justice Café is a similar ministry.

6. YSCCs Activities in Eastern Africa

Pamela Ogoi writes:

I work in partnership with the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) Kisumu, Kenya Campus on training and building capacity of various people on Basic Counseling skills -- an initiative that will be picking up in the month of April, 2017. At the same time I had a discussion with the Vice Principal of the University Father Mvumbi about training leaders of Small Christian Communities, newly ordained priests in western Kenya and Catholic university students about SCCs. He was very happy about the whole issue and he thereby handed over this activity to be spearheaded by the University Chaplain Father George Omondi, a Consolata Missionary Priest who is based at CUEA Kisumu.¹³⁰⁰

¹²⁹⁹ See “What is RENEW Theology on Tap?”, RENEW International Website, retrieved on 10 June, 2017, <http://www.renewintl.org/renew/index.nsf/vPages/AboutToT?OpenDocument>

¹³⁰⁰ University and High School chaplains are key players in our SCCs Networking.



At Wamwangi Secondary School in Kenya we were invited to give a workshop about “*Jumuiya ya Vijana*” and to talk about and ignite the YSCCs. The students were very happy when we introduced to them a new name (*mwanajumuiya*). We explained to the students how to sit in circle in the *jumuiya* way when having a YSCC meeting and sharing the gospel. The Young Christian Students (YCS) apostolic group are about 200 students. They were very happy and promised to meet every Friday afternoon in their YSCCs. They all extended their gratitude to the Eastern African Small Christian Communities Training Team.

A model of a YSCCs Workshop at the parish level is our every six months formation sessions at the Consolata Shrine Community, Nairobi, Kenya coordinated by the Parish Apostolate Group. On Sunday, 28 May, 2017 we focused on starting a YSCC. Beginning with the many members of the Youth Group in the parish we invited 20 young people under 30 years old to the formation session. Then the nine most interested young adults formed a small community facilitated by Alloys Nyakundi. Now we want to do follow-up.

We also discussed with the adult members of the eight SCCs in the parish the growing importance of Children Small Christian Communities (CSCCs) commonly known as PMC SCCs.



Today 11 June 2017, I helped to start seven Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) at St. Teresa of Calcutta Secondary School in Machakos Diocese, Kenya. I showed the students how to sit in a *jumuiya* way (circle). This is a good start in AMECEA Region.

Brief report about Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) in St. Teresa of Calcutta Girls Secondary School, Makindu Parish, Machakos Diocese. There are seven YSCCs with a membership of 15 to 17 members each. They are St. Martin, St. Albanus, St. Michael, St. Teresa, St. Jude, St. Augustine and St. Dominic. All YSCCs meet every Sunday as from 2:50 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Update:

REPORT ON YOUTH SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN CALCUTTA GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL, MAKINDU PARISH, MACHAKOS DIOCESE

By Alloys Nyakundi

St. Teresa of Calcutta Girls' Secondary School, Makindu Parish, Machakos Diocese, Kenya has seven Youth Small Christian Communities in which the students are the main stakeholders followed by staff. It is also an example of school-based Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs). Our Chaplain is Father Mathew Yakan, who is an Apostles of Jesus priest.

The seven Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) are:

1. ST. MICHAEL
2. ST. PAUL
3. ST. MARTIN
4. ST. ANGELA
5. ST. AUGUSTINE

6. ST. TERESA
7. ST. JUDE

All the YSCCs meet weekly on Sunday afternoon as from 2:50 pm to 4:00 pm inside the school in various places e.g. dining hall and outside classes.

YSCC LEADERSHIP HIERARCHY

- 1: Coordinator
- 2: Vice Coordinator
- 3: Secretary

PROGRAM OF THE WEEKLY YSCCs

- 3:00 pm to 3:10 pm: Opening prayer and sharing of our past week experiences.
 3:10 pm to 3:40 pm: Reading the gospel of the coming Sunday
 3:40 pm to 4:00 pm: Topic of discussion and final prayers.

The topics and challenges that these teenage girls like to discuss are:

1. Sexuality.
2. Peer pressure.
3. Life after school.
4. Impact of social media on youth.
5. Unfaithfulness in many families.
6. Single families.

Today via Skype from New Jersey, USA I talked with members of St. Angela SCC in St. Teresa of Calcutta Girls Secondary School, Makindu Parish, Machakos Diocese, Kenya. If SCCs are a new model of church, then there is a SCC way of answering this questionnaire. The SCC members discuss the questions together (*kijumuiya* in Swahili) and then answer the online questionnaire individually.

Today I got an opportunity to visit St. Martin, an outstation in Makindu Parish, Machakos Diocese. It was part of the follow up exercise on the YSCCs workshop that took place two months ago. I can confirm that YSCCs are picking up well, but the youth raised some concerns. One of the concerns they raised is that some of their parents do not go to *jumuiyas* and Sunday Mass. This discourages them since most of them said that their parents are their role models and they copy what their parents do. They have also started some projects which will increase the bond among the members and keep them together.



While the development of SCCs in Meru Diocese, Kenya are documented in Chapter Three, Pope Francis challenges us to listen closely to young people (youth and young adults) in and through our YSCCs. Here are some findings:

FINDINGS OF YSCC WORKSHOPS IN MERU DIOCESE, KENYA

- 1: Youth fear the adults.
- 2: They get bored in SCC meetings.
- 3: They don't know the meaning of prayers and the importance of SCCs.
- 4: Our adult behaviors as Christians discourage them.
- 5: Youth are not exposed to meeting many people and this makes them shy off.
- 6: They see the SCC to be for the adults.
- 7: In some of the SCCs women are the majority and this makes the youth not to be interested.
8. If there are no family prayers and religious activities in a family, then the youth don't see the importance of SCCs.

7. YSCCs in the Questionnaire/Survey of the Preparatory Document of the 2018 World Synod of Bishops

The Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops took place in Rome in October, 2018 on the theme: "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment." Many Catholic Church organizations and individuals are invited to send in answers to the questionnaire directly to the Synod Secretariat in Rome. It is important that Catholic Youth Organizations and YSCCs be directly involved in this process and get their voices heard.

The aim of the synod is to "accompany young people on their way of life towards maturity so that, through a process of discernment, they can discover their life project and

realize it with joy, opening the encounter with God and with humans, and actively participating in the building up of the Church and society." The Church recognizes four vocations: married life, single life, religious life, and ordained life. This synod is in continuity with the findings of the two-fold synod on the family and Francis's post-synodal document *Amoris Laetitia*. The theme was chosen by the members on the Fourteenth Ordinary Council of the Synod of Bishops.

Some excerpts from the *Preparatory Document*:¹³⁰¹

In keeping with this mission and introducing a new approach through a Synod with the topic, "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment", the Church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today. By listening to young people, the Church will once again hear the Lord speaking in today's world. As in the days of Samuel (cf. 1 *Samuel* 3:1-21) and Jeremiah (cf. *Jeremiah* 1:4-10), young people know how to discern the signs of our times, indicated by the Spirit. Listening to their aspirations, the Church can glimpse the world which lies ahead and the paths the Church is called to follow.

The consultation will also include all young people through a website with questions on their expectations and their lives. The answers to both series of questions will be the basis for drafting the "work-document" or *Instrumentum Laboris*, which will be the reference point in the discussion of the synod fathers.

"The Digital World:" Because of all that has been previously mentioned, the world of the new media deserves special attention, since, especially in the case of younger generations, it really occupies a major place in their lives. The new media offer many new opportunities, especially with regard to access to information and creating relations with those in distant places. However, they also pose risks (such as cyber-bullying, gambling, pornography, hidden dangers in chat rooms, ideological manipulation, etc.). Despite the differences in this field among various regions, the Christian community is still developing her presence in this new Areopagus, where young people certainly have something to teach her...

Finally and most importantly, no discernment is possible without cultivating a familiarity with the Lord and a dialog with his Word. In particular, *Lectio Divina* is a valuable method, which Church tradition has always followed...

Specific Questions According to Geographic Areas:

¹³⁰¹ *Preparatory Document* for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly. *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2017. Vatican Website.
<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/01/13/0021/00050.html#EN>

AFRICA:

1. What plans and structures in pastoral vocational care for young people best respond to the needs of your continent?
2. What does “spiritual fatherhood” mean in places where a person grows without a father figure? What formation is offered?
3. How do you communicate to young people that they are needed to build the future of the Church?

In a separate letter released with the *Preparatory Document*, Pope Francis aimed to directly address the youth and young adults of the Global Church, saying that he wants them "to be the center of attention" for the entire process "because you are in my heart." He adds: "The Catholic Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls."¹³⁰²

In another message Pope Francis emphasized that in this broad consultation he wants to reach out to all young people – not just committed Catholic young people (the “World Youth Day young Catholics,” the young Catholics “in the choir”/” the young Catholics in the pews,” so to speak). He wants to reach to young people who have drifted away from the Catholic Church, those who don’t go to mass any more or very irregularly, to agnostics, to atheists.

Then finally on 17 June, 2017 we posted this message on our SCCs Facebook Page:

“Let us hope that many YSCCs members vote in this online poll:
The Synod Survey for Youth is finally out.

To involve young people in preparations for the Synod of Bishops on youth in 2018, the Vatican has released an online questionnaire to better understand the lives, attitudes, and concerns of 16 to 29-year-olds around the world. The questionnaire — available in English, Spanish, French, and Italian — can be found on the synod's official website: youth.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/it.html and is open to any young person, regardless of faith or religious belief.

The general secretariat of the synod launched the website 14 June 2017 to share information about the October, 2018 synod on "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment" and to link to an online, anonymous survey asking young people about their lives and expectations.

¹³⁰² Francis, “Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to Young People on the Occasion of the Presentation of the Preparatory Document,” *Preparatory Document* for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly. *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2017, p. 6. Vatican Website.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20170113_documento-preparatorio-xv_en.html

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/01/13/0021/00050.html#EN>

Question: In our SCCs and YSCCs are we encouraging youth and young people to answer the online questionnaire for the October, 2018 World Synod of Bishops in Rome?¹³⁰³ Here in the USA my 17-year-old grandniece answered the questions and was struck by the wide range and variety of answers that could come from the 16-29 year-old audience: from teenagers to married young adults with children.

One learning for me here in the USA: One mistake is to mix up "youth" programs with "young adults" programs without recognizing the huge differences between them. College students say that the word "youth" refers to teenagers. One suggestion: In our Catholic parishes have a young adults "meet and greet" to get ideas for the programs they want — and then implement them.

Another learning: When asked what young people want from the Catholic Church, college students said that their generation desires a safe place to go to truly ask questions and feel validated in their concerns. This is why we are promoting small Faith-sharing communities for young people that are also called student small Faith-sharing communities.

Reports from around the world including England and France indicate that many committed Catholic young people have answered the survey, but relatively few who have drifted away from the institutional church. The survey was designed to be open to all young people irrespective of religion or geographic origin.

The survey closed on 31 December, 2017. The Synod's secretary general, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, revealed some interesting statistics:

There were about 221,000 participants in the Questionnaire. Of these, 100,500 answered all the questions: 58,000 girls and 42,500 boys. Almost 51,000 participants, corresponding to 50.6% of completed questionnaires, are young people between 16 and 19 years of age, demonstrating that the youngest have proved to be more sensitive to the initiative. The most represented continent is Europe, with 56.4%, followed by Central and Southern America with 19.8% and Africa with 18.1%. Among the participants who completed the Questionnaire, 73.9% declare themselves to be Catholics who consider religion important, while the remaining are Catholics who do not consider religion important (8.8%), non-Catholics who consider religion important (6.1%) and non-Catholics who do not consider religion to be important (11.1%).¹³⁰⁴

However, some 3,000 respondents left their email addresses and said they wished to be kept informed of the survey's outcome.¹³⁰⁵

¹³⁰³ As an experiment I answered the questionnaire based on interviews with young people in Nairobi. I pretended that I was a "composite" 22-year-old Kenyan man who had just graduated from Kenyatta University. I did not have a steady full-time job, but several part time jobs in the Nairobi area. I was living with my girlfriend Virginia, but we were not married yet.

¹³⁰⁴ Lorenzo Baldisseri,

¹³⁰⁵ These figures were reported in the 25 October, 2017 edition of the Vatican's daily newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

Given a global Catholic population of roughly 1.2 billion, a strong share of that total made of youth, especially in the Global South, the results were lower than many anticipated. The figures were also quite low for a worldwide survey, particularly if compared to the 2.5 million people who participated in the World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland during the summer, 2016.

Baldisseri noted various criticisms of the survey. For example, some respondents felt the questionnaire was too long, while others felt a number of important issues were hardly addressed or not tackled at all. These include problems linked to alcohol, drug and medicine consumption; sexuality and relationship issues; or even links with other religions.

Individual countries have had their own surveys. Three thousand 16 to 29-year olds replied to a questionnaire sent out by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The executive summary states that

the responses reveal two distinct groups: "a small but vocal group who want to draw the church back into an era that they have been told was far better than it is today and a much larger, though less evident group, who adhere to the predominant narratives within society, wanting the Church to follow suit. The first group asks for clarity, the second for authenticity." Young people, concludes the summary, are asking the Church in England and Wales for a "monumental change of attitude, orientation and practice... the young people were keen to bring a greater outward focus to the church and were concerned for the plight of the marginalised...the most popular events for young people don't take place in parishes."¹³⁰⁶

Twenty people under the age of 35, along with 70 theologians, priests and academics met 11-15 September, 2017 as part of the preparatory process for the 2018 Synod of Bishops. One report stated:

Several young people who attending the seminar urged the Vatican and the bishops themselves to be open to listening to youth talk and ask questions about love, sex and sexuality. A "big gap" exists between the concerns young people want to talk about and the issues most bishops are comfortable discussing, said Therese Hargot, who describes herself as a philosopher and sexologist.

Baldisseri, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, said he wanted to hear from young adults and experts about the challenges young people are facing in the church and society. The cardinal's office planned a dozen long, formal talks on subjects including "the search for identity," political commitment, planning for the future, technology and transcendence. But Hargot, who leads sex education programs at Catholic schools in Paris, told the gathering, "it's surprising we are looking at politics, economics, etc., but not at sexuality and affectivity, which are very important topics for young people. Young people want to talk about sexuality and love, They love learning about the theology of the body, a term referring to St. John Paul II's

¹³⁰⁶ Bernadette Kehoe, "Young People Express Their Alienation from the Church," *The Tablet*, Volume 271, No. 9227 (25 November, 2107), *The Tablet Website*, retrieved 23 November, 2017, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/downloadpdf/25117issue.pdf>

approach to sex and sexuality. I don't know why no one here is speaking about love. It's amazing."

Ashleigh Green, an Australian delegate to the seminar, said that going around Australia in preparation for the synod she found that "a lot of young people feel like they cannot talk about issues that matter to them" in most church settings. It's important to open up and talk about sex, sexuality and sexual orientation. And it's central to vocation."¹³⁰⁷

American Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington DC wrote:

One of the most important elements of the preparation for this gathering was the call for listening sessions with young people throughout the world. "By listening to young people, the Church will once again hear the Lord speaking in today's world," explains the [Preparatory Document](#) for the Synod. "As in the days of Samuel (cf. 1 *Samuel* 3:1-21) and Jeremiah (cf. Jeremiah 1:4-10), young people know how to discern the signs of our times, indicated by the Spirit. Listening to their aspirations, the Church can glimpse the world which lies ahead and the paths the Church is called to follow."

In Washington Archdiocese, this took the form of listening sessions and an online survey. With this stage now completed, I want to express my gratitude for the more than 1,500 responses that were received in 40 parish listening sessions, with hundreds of young adults also participating online. The responses show some common areas of concern among young people.

1. Many young adults feel the pressures of a secularized world, particularly in the area of human sexuality, and a lack of community and authentic friendships in their lives.
2. Many young adults also feel the pressures of heavy debts and managing finances.
3. When asked to talk about where they find meaning in their lives, both Catholic and non-Catholics spoke of the importance of service experiences.
4. Among young people who make the Catholic Church a part of their life, they value the invitation and initiation into the experience of personal prayer and those adults who seem "authentic," and also the opportunity they have for spiritual direction and help with discernment.¹³⁰⁸

¹³⁰⁷ Cindy Wooden, "Don't Be Embarrassed to Talk About Sex, Youths Tell Vatican Officials," *Catholic News Service* (CNS), 13 September 2017. Reprinted on NCR Website and CANAA Website, retrieved on 14 September, 2107, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/dont-be-embarrassed-talk-about-sex-youths-tell-vatican-officials>

¹³⁰⁸ "A Listening Church and Helping Young People in Vocational Discernment," -- A Blog by Cardinal Donald Wuerl, 10 June, 2017, retrieved on 20 September, 2017,

Comments and feedback are slowly coming in on our "Listening Session"¹³⁰⁹ with college students at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, USA on 17 September, 2017. We are waiting for the students themselves to prepare a report/commentary, but for the moment:

1. There is a real disconnect. Through Campus Ministry and other activities a number of students find community at Georgetown, but then after graduation find nothing in their home parishes. So they leave the university and end up in a place where there is no community of other young people with similar concerns within the Catholic Church.
2. The strength of Catholic Social Teaching is undermined for young people by the Catholic Church's intransigence on the issues of women and LGBTQ.
3. Many college students are more conservative and simply not concerned about justice issues in the Catholic Church.
4. Many ask whether the official Catholic Church (that is, the Vatican and the bishops) really wants to listen to the concerns of young people such as the areas of sexuality, affectivity and personal relationships.
5. For many young people the "Institutional Church" is not welcoming and nourishing.
6. Following the one hour listening session three Georgetown students (one woman, two men) participated in a fruitful 40-minute Zoom video conference call with young people from Mexico and India. The students related to one another and recognized common themes in their respective concerns about the strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic Church.

A survey of more than 4,000 Catholic campus ministers and students at U.S. colleges in 2017, commissioned by the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat of Catholic Education, showed that both the ministers and the students generally like what's happening in their campus ministry setting. Campus ministers reported that among personal activities, *Bible* study and reconciliation stand apart from other activities as contributing to students' growth in faith. Mass, retreats, small groups [SCCs] and one-on-one mentoring are more significant than social events, catechesis and sacramental preparation, and men's and women's groups.

A majority of students do service or charitable work on at least a quarterly basis. Close to 40 percent are involved on a monthly basis in leadership development. Nearly half are involved weekly with social events or small groups [SCCs].

Students reported personal struggles over three broad categories. In the area of self-orientation, they included self-worth, mental health, lack of purpose, gender identity, divorce and blended families, and how to pray. In terms of social and moral issues, they reported living faithfully in "a hookup culture" and weighed in on such issues as pornography,

<http://cardinalsblog.adw.org/2017/06/listening-church-helping-young-people-vocational-discernment>

¹³⁰⁹ After a lot of experience we feel the more accurate word is "listening circle" – where the small community sits in a circle and takes turns sharing experiences and views.

abortion, racial and LGBTQ discrimination, sexual assault and the role of women in the church.

Pornography and mental health were the two areas where students said they were more likely to struggle a great deal. While a lower percentage of students mentioned porn, the overall percentage of those who said they struggled a great deal with it was 27 percent, highest of any issue. Male students struggle more with porn, while women struggle more in the broad categories of faith beliefs and self-orientation.¹³¹⁰

It was nice to visit St. Dominic YSCC at Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya yesterday. The YSCC members wore their orange shirts and coordinated the lively Farewell Mass say good bye to the Chaplain Father Lance Nadeau, MM. Collins Ongoma is a very active and effective leader with a good leadership team. Continuity is so important. That is why having new effective leaders of the YSCCs at KU is crucial. Also praise to Xanchez Brialawry for continuing to post the Daily Scripture Readings to the St. Dominic YSCC (Kenyatta University Catholic Community) Facebook Page.”

Slowly more and more people are realizing that young people/youth/young adults need their own small communities separate from the Adult SCCs. Nigerian layman Linus Unah writes:

But the Catholic Church is working hard to tend to young members. Father Ernest Makata pointed to the creation of what are known as known as Small Christian Communities, a movement encouraged by St. Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Africa*, his 1995 post-synodal exhortation on evangelization on the continent. The document states that these communities “should be places engaged in evangelizing themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others; they should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God’s Word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel.”

Today, a SCC is usually a small, inclusive community that comprises anywhere from eight to over 40 parishioners who gather weekly in homes or on church grounds to discuss the Sunday readings, to help each other to make connections between everyday life and faith, and to reach out to brothers and sisters who are most in need. The hope among church leaders is that these ecclesial units will provide new avenues for lay Catholics to explore spirituality, encounter Scripture and share their faith, even in the absence of a priest.

¹³¹⁰ Summarized from Mark Pattison, “Porn, Mental Health are Top Challenges Faced by Collegians,’ Catholic News Service, 10 November, 2017, Catholic Philly Website, retrieved on 12 November, 2017, <http://catholicphilly.com/2017/11/news/national-news/porn-mental-health-are-top-challenges-faced-by-collegians>

But many young Catholics do not belong to these units, Father Makata said. “Unfortunately, they are not effective because [young] people feel it is where fathers and mothers gather to discuss.”¹³¹¹



A one hour “Listening Session” with 13 college students (six men, seven women)¹³¹² took place at Loyola University in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA on 30 November, 2017.

¹³¹¹ Linus Unah, “Young Nigerians Are Connecting with Pentecostal Churches. Will They Return to Catholicism?” *America Magazine*, 16 November, 2017, retrieved on 3 January, 2018, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/11/16/young-nigerians-are-connecting-pentecostal-churches-will-they-return-catholicism>

¹³¹² It is noteworthy that five of these students belong to Christian Life Communities (CLCs) on campus.



In conjunction with the Listening Session, there was a fruitful 40-minute Zoom Video Conference Call with young people from India, Kenya and Pakistan.

The 2018 African Proverbs Calendar on the theme “Youth/Young People” is now posted on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website at:
<http://www.afriprov.org/images/afriprov/calendar/2018/2018cal-final-pub.pdf>

Design by African Proverbs Working Group (APWG):

Elias Bushiri Elie
Cephas Agbemenu
Charles Gikera
Joseph G. Healey

The calendar highlights the importance of young people in Africa as we prepare for the World Synod of Bishops on “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment” in Rome in October, 2018. The monthly African proverbs and sayings related to young people come from 13 African countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Free download at: <http://www.afriprov.org>

Healthy exchange on the SCCs Website:

We hope that this SCCs Facebook Page can be a forum for conversation, discussion, exchange and sharing, that is, we want and need your comments, posts, messages. Just clicking “Like” is really not enough.

During a discussion at Tangaza University College in Nairobi it was pointed out that our Eastern Africa name/term/expression -- “Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs)” – may be hard for folks in Europe and North American to understand. Also there was a debate on whether the term “small groups” is useful – it can refer to some many different kinds of gatherings. We brainstormed on these names/terms/expressions:

1. Small Bible Study Group for Young People.
2. Young People Peer Group Small Faith-sharing Community (one of the five choices in our online Poll for January--February, 2018 at: <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>).
3. Bible Study Group for young adults in parishes.
4. Small Faith-sharing Community of Young People.

Please give your feedback/comments. Which name do you like? Is there a better name?
Thanks.

Feedback/comments:

1. Collins Ongoma: “I can go for option No. 4 -- Small Faith-sharing Community for Young People. It gives an elaboration of what the group entails.”

2. Frans Wijzen: Basic Human Communities for Young People. In the European (most secular) and Asian (most non-Christian, except Philippines) I would prefer “Basic Human Communities” (used by some theologians in the FABC context). Instead of adding “Christian” and/or “biblical” some speak about “inter-textual” (reading *Bible* (OT & NT) and Koran together) or inter-faith.”

3. Joe Healey: “On USA college campuses when Christian students and Muslim students share together, the name used is “Small Human Communities for Young People”/“Basic Human Communities for Young People”/“Student Small Human Communities.” NOTE from Frans Wijzen: examples from Indonesia: instead of adding

“Christian” and/or “Biblical” some speak about “inter-textual” (reading the *Bible* (OT & NT) and Koran together) or “inter-faith.”

Let us reflect on:

Mark 1:38: “Jesus said to them, ‘Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also; for this purpose have I come.’”

that is very similar to

Luke 4:43: “Jesus said to them, ‘I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because for this purpose I was sent/have been sent.’”

When Ukweli Video in Nairobi, Kenya produced a DVD in 2004 on my missionary ministry in Eastern Africa called *Walking with the Eastern African Church in Mission*, I used this Gospel text to trace a chronological line of my missionary journeys or travels to other towns and places in Kenya and Tanzania: Starting in Nairobi, Kenya and traveling to Rulenge to Iramba to Makoko to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. During the Buzz Groups *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection on this passage in our SCCs Class at Tangaza University College on 5 February, 2015 I connected this passage to our daily lives and mentioned the internet towns that are not geographical but situational. I used this passage in my homily at my 50th Anniversary of Maryknoll Missionary Priesthood (Golden Jubilee) Mass at the Maryknoll Society House in Nairobi on 14 January, 2016. I shared that the new “town or place” for me is not a physical or geographical place, but a virtual or existential or situational place --the internet, social media and social networking. So mission for me means going to the “towns” of Facebook, Instagram, Skype, YouTube and WhatsApp. I mentioned that I meet and interact with Kenyan young people not outside the church after the Sunday Mass, but in the social media on the internet.

Another contemporary interpretation of “the other towns and places” is in terms of classes or groupings of people. Today’s Gospel calls us to reach out to young people and to listen to them. We want to reach out especially to you young people between the ages of 16 and 29. We encourage you to be missionary disciples to reach out to other young people who are not here today, who may not be going to a Catholic Church on Sundays, who may be searching for meaning and purpose in life.

One variety of YSCCs is the Aquinas Spring Small Groups at the Aquinas Institute that is the Catholic Chaplaincy at Princeton University, New Jersey, USA. Here is the Email Message:

“Sign Up for Aquinas Spring Small Groups! We are praying your spring semesters have started well. *Lectio Divina* is a Benedictine practice of reading, meditation, and prayer over Scripture. The Aquinas Institute began *Lectio Divina* small groups last semester and will continue throughout the spring. If you have never done *Lectio Divina*, we encourage you to try it out. It is a beautiful way to spend intimate time in the Word of God and grow in faith as a community.”

After our 8 February, 2018 SCCs Class at Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya we had an interesting discussion about Pope Francis's challenge to young people to have a "Smartphone Fast" during Lent, 2018, for example, not to use your smartphone during

the 24-hour periods of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On our SCCs Facebook Page we asked: “What do you think? Please respond.” Here are some comments:

1. “I second this suggestion since its important day for prayer. We should disconnect ourselves with our surroundings and connect our souls to God.”
2. “The pope's message focuses on discipline, an evitable concept in one's life, religion included.”
3. “Smartphones have become a 'heartbeat' to many of us. If we can honestly 'smartphone fast' during Lent then we'd have conquered phone addiction to some extent. We also have to be creative in coming up with other new activities and engagements, both spiritual and social, that will help in managing our normal smartphone time. I have personally accepted this [#SmartphoneFasting](#) challenge.”
4. “I'll take the challenge though I know it's not easy.”
5. “What if I have an emergency?”
6. “Young people do spend a lot of money on bundles daily. If we embrace the idea, I think we can make a difference to our brothers and sisters in need and that could be a good reason for a great purpose. I'm in for this idea.”
7. “I will try starting with Ash Wednesday. Knowing that other SCC members are doing the same thing is a great small community support.”
8. “I am fully supporting this great idea! Now, I have to convince my five children!”
9. “Karibu sana” (Swahili for “You are very welcome”).
10. “I think it is a wonderful idea and hope to do it. It seems that checking that the phone all the time has become an addiction for some.”
11. “Sounds good, but I'm not young!”
12. Bishop John Oballa, the Bishop of Ngong Diocese, Kenya in a talk on “Five Guidelines to Successful Life Discernment for Young People Ahead of October, 2018 Bishop's Synod said: “If you want to cultivate this listening to God, learn something about self-denial and not only during Lent. First, you will not die, it is good for your spiritual life. We become more attentive when we are just a little hungry; deny yourselves, abstain. I am proposing another very concrete way of abstinence” choose to keep away from your smartphone, one day in a week. The phone has become a new drug; it is an addiction. Put it away. Just say that this one day that I am not going to make any calls or receive any calls. It is possible. Start with an hour, go to two, go to six hours, then go to 12 and you will find that it is a very easy exercise that enables you to listen to yourself and to listen to God.”¹³¹³
13. “Hongera” (Swahili for “congratulations”).
14. “I'm with you but the next generation -- Graham and Margaret -- aren't.”
15. “Food for thought. We all understand that fasting should not be about just denying ourselves, but also sharing with our fellow humans what we gain or save from the fasting. You may want to have a look at what I say in today's *Saturday Nation* about the "oracy" and "inoracy" in our society. The time we save from the "smartphone fast" could be gainfully spent on talking to one another face-to-face, for a change. Best wishes for a fruitful Lent.”
16. “This is a good idea and I will give it a trial. Though most of our youth are addicted to their smartphones we will try to get their feedback.”
17. “I think it's a good idea, although my 16-year-old may not agree!”
18. “The money that we save in not buying bundles we can give to the poor.”

¹³¹³ John Oballa, “Five Guidelines to Successful Life Discernment for Young People Ahead of October Bishop's Synod,” *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 221, 9 February, 2018, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 11 February, 2018, <https://amecea.blogspot.co.ke/2018/02/kenya-five-guidelines-to-successful.html>

19. “As we start Lent today, we are called upon to sacrifice what we love most (i.e, minimize the use of smartphones) and be our brothers and sisters’ keepers.”

Pope Francis invited Christian and non-Christian young people from around the world to a Pre-synod Meeting in preparation for the actual Synod of Bishops on Young People in October, 2018. He said the March, 2018 meeting in Rome will be an opportunity for the church to listen to the hopes and concerns of young men and women. “Through this journey, the church wants to listen to the voices, the sensibilities, the faith as well as the doubts and criticisms of young people. We must listen to young people.”¹³¹⁴

So from 19 to 24 March 2018 the Holy Father met more than 300 young people from different continents in person in order to deliberate and come up with a document to be presented to the Synod of Bishops in October, 2018 on the theme “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment.” Thousands of others joined on Facebook.

The Pre-synod team inaugurated its Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages in multiple languages, where youth wanting to be a part of the conversation have a chance to be heard by using the official #Synod2018. To date, the Synod’s Twitter page has about 2,500 followers, more than 4,000 likes and follows on Facebook and a little over 1,200 followers on Instagram.

Kenyan college student Collins Ongoma states:

I followed the Pre-Synodal Meeting in Rome keenly through social media from 19 to 24 March 2018 and I can affirm that when young people are given a chance to speak their minds and be assured that their voices will be heard for real, they will open-up and raise issues of importance. Even though not everyone’s individual view was considered, the compilation committee produced an excellent document called “Final Document from the Pre-Synodal Meeting:”

<http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en/news/final-document-from-the-pre-synodal-meeting.html>

The document summarizes the views from answers to the “Online Questionnaire,” feedback from Facebook (roughly 15,000 young people participated online) and a report on the meeting with the pope. At first I was disappointed that the voices of young people from Kenya were not directly heard in Rome since our delegate was not present because his travelling documents got mixed up, but when I listened and read the views from young people either present in the meeting or those who shared their views through social media, I felt happy because we share common worries and problems, which if addressed, bring hope for a better church tomorrow.

¹³¹⁴ Francis in Junno Arocho Esteves, “Pope Announces Pre-Synod Meeting To Listen To Youths’ Hopes, Doubts,” *Crux*, 4 October, 2017, *Crux* Website, retrieved on 30 November, 2017, <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2017/10/04/pope-announces-pre-synod-meeting-listen-youths-hopes-doubts>

Ongoma later commented on his personal reflections on the topic “Catholic Church” on the Synod Facebook Page during the actual Pre-Synod Meeting:

We in Kenya hope that young people develop the culture of praying together because it helps them bond in a special way. I highly recommend that young people join Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) that are Small Faith-sharing Groups (<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>). Through such platforms they are able to have *Bible* Sharing that focuses on the coming Sunday’s Gospel and relates it to their day to day activities. These small communities also create a conducive environment where they can share common topics that pose challenges to them and seek their fellow peer support. If young people are denied a chance to interact in the church, they will find pleasure elsewhere.

Sharing my personal experience since I joined a Youth Small Christian Community (YSCC) on the campus of Kenyatta University in Nairobi has made me feel at home away from home. Through the YSCCs college students have learned to be one another’s keeper and also developed the spirit of self-denial in order to extend their hands to share the little they have with the needy in society. For example, during the just concluded 2018 Lenten period we agreed to have “phone fasting” in order to save some cash meant for internet bundles and calls. We used the money for gifts for a Children’s Home that turned out to be very successful.

We often use the proverb "we create the path by walking" in developing new expressions of this SCCs Model of Church. The Catholic young people in Dandora Parish, Nairobi Archdiocese are now distinguishing between:

1. Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) – ages 18 to 26.
2. Young Adult Small Christian Communities (YASCCs) – ages 27 up.

Kenyan diocesan priest Father Bonaventure Luchidio, the Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Kenya is to promote Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) at all levels starting with PMC:

1. Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC): 0-13 years old (up to Class 8 pupils)
2. Junior Youth: 14-17 years old (Secondary School): Missionary Youth Movement (MYM)
3. Senior Youth: 18-23 years old (University and other choices): Called different names in different dioceses in Kenya: Youth Serving Christ (YSC); Youth Christian Workers, Youth of Light.
4. Young Adults Catholic Association (YACA): 24-40 years old

This includes promoting Online or Virtual SCCs using Skype, Zoom, What’sApp and other social media platforms.

On the SCCs Facebook Page Ongoma started an interest discussion and dialog by asking: “After College What? There are so many young people who are very active in SCCs while in the university or college, but what happens to them after their studies and how can we get them involved in the parish and other activities of the Catholic Church, etc.?” Here are some comments on our SCCs Facebook Page:

1. “This is a crucial question that needs more research. Where are the thousands of Catholic graduates of the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University? How are they involved in their parishes and apostolic organizations?”

2.”The young adult leaders of the various types of SCCs at Dandora Parish, Nairobi Archdiocese noticed that college graduates and others in their late 20s felt left out of the Dandora Parish Young People Plan so Young Adult Small Christian Communities (YASCCs) have started. We often use the proverb "we create the path by walking" in developing new expressions of this SCCs Model of Church. The Catholic young people in Dandora are now distinguishing between:

a. Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) – ages 18 to 26.

b. Young Adult Small Christian Communities (YASCCs) – ages 27 up.

3. Kenyan diocesan priest Father Charles Kyallo, the chaplain at CUEA, states:

The situation changes for many of these young people once they leave campus life adding that the majority of them only remain passive participants in liturgical celebrations as they rarely find a suitable spiritual group to belong once they go back to their home parishes. Either they often feel too old to be in the parish youth groups or Young Christian Students (YCS) movements which often comprise high school students; at the same time, they feel too young to fit in the Small Christian Communities where their fathers and mothers belong or in the Catholic Women Association or Catholic Men Associations for that matter, because their spiritual and social needs and those of their parents are totally different.

My interaction with young people who have graduated from colleges and are back in the communities has made me realise that there is usually a big gap in matters spiritual as far as the lives of these young people are concerned. Often times these young people have a lot going on in their lives: chasing careers, trying to establish families as well as investments for a secured future; it is usually at this stage that many of them fall out from the church. It is important to establish a spiritual support group and a forum for them to continue with spiritual formation and accompaniment based on their specific needs.

It is a good thing that almost all AMECEA Countries have a Catholic University, meaning that the students from such institutions are receiving strong spiritual formation which is crucial in their integral human development. Therefore there is a great need to continue nourishing their faith. Spiritually accompanying these young people when they get out of campus is very crucial.

8. YPSCCs in the Working Document/Instrumentum Laboris of the 2018 World Synod of Bishops

The Vatican published the *Working Document (Instrumentum Laboris)* for the 3-28 October, 2018 XVth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of

Bishops, on the theme “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment,” on 19 June, 2018 with the Vatican’s official English translation, along with the other languages, a few days later.

*Working Document*¹³¹⁵ for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly. *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2018. Vatican Website.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20180508_instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html

The text takes up the themes in a “functional” way for the unfolding of the synod: “Recognizing” (five chapters), “Interpreting” (four chapters for four “reading keys”), “Choosing” (four chapters) “to help the Synod Fathers to take a stand on the directions and decisions to be taken.”

The specific names or terms “Small Christian Communities” and “Basic Ecclesial communities” are not in the *Working Document*, but similar names are used as follows:

16 times: Christian Communities
 7 times: Christian Community
 4 times: Ecclesial Community
 3 times: Ecclesial Communities
 2 times: Ecclesial Group/Groups
 1 time: Peer Groups
 1 time: Learning Communities

Commentators explain that the meaning of “Small Christian Communities” is contained within the meaning of “Ecclesial Communities.”¹³¹⁶

Some special texts:

No. 106: “The Request for Discernment:” “Many young people do not know how to intentionally go about the process of discernment; this is an opportunity for the church to accompany them” (PM 9). Pope Francis realized it too: “We must say, on this point, that many ecclesial communities do not know how to do this or they lack the capacity for discernment. It is one of the problems we have, but we should not feel scared.” **NOTE:** “This is an opening for SCCs to be a vehicle for discernment skills.

¹³¹⁵ The Vatican is still slow to “get it.” Young people have pleaded with Vatican officials to use English (or other vernacular languages) rather than Latin. Good news: The *Lineamenta* came as the *Preparatory Document*. Bad news: we are going backwards again with Latin (*Instrumentum Laboris*) used rather than English (*Working Document*) in the official document from Rome. The Daughters of St. Paul wisely shifted to English in their local publication.

It is ironical that in an African continental meeting on SCCs we went back to *Instrumentum Laboris* (known to the French speakers) rather than the English.

¹³¹⁶ As a parallel example, DRC diocesan priest Father Edouard Mombili, the Assistant Secretary General of SECAM, said that in its “2018-2019 SECAM 50th Jubilee Calendar” the term “Jubilee Around Ecclesial Communities” refers to “Small Christian Communities” and “Basic Ecclesial Communities.” Conversation with the author, Nairobi, Kenya, 16 September, 2018.

No. 165: “Peer Accompaniment:” “It is important to recognize peer groups as instruments of emancipation from family contexts, for identity consolidation and for the development of relational skills... the success of peer education initiatives and the ‘learning communities’ they give rise to. In particular, they are useful when they relate to issues on which the words of adults could sound more distant and less credible (sexuality, addiction prevention, etc.) and, therefore, less effective in bringing about behavioral changes.”

No. 185: “At the School of the Word of God:” “The pastoral experiences with the greatest evangelizing and educational impact, presented by many BC, put at the center interaction with the power of the Word of God, in relation to vocational discernment: *Lectio divina*, schools of the Word, biblical catecheses, insight into the lives of the young people found in the *Bible*, using digital instruments to facilitate access to the Word of God: these are all successful practices with the young.”

No. 203: “Associations and Movements:” “Many young people live and rediscover their faith through their determined and active membership in movements and associations that provide them with an intense fraternal life, challenging journeys of spirituality, experiences of service, adequate space for accompaniment and competent people for discernment... Their communal style and spirit of prayer, the enhancement of the Word of God and the service to the poorest, their joyful membership and the re-evaluation of the bodily and emotional spheres, their active involvement and the push towards protagonism.”

9. Learnings from God’s Quad Book Events

The presentations and discussion during a series of **Book Events God’s Quad** emphasized the importance of

10. XVth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops from 3-28 October, 2018

Before the meeting itself, the 11 Bishop Delegates of the AMECEA countries prepared “Draft Interventions.” This material can be used as an actual spoken intervention on the synod floor, handed in as a written intervention, part of the contributions to the Small Working Groups and part of interviews.

Draft Interventions from Five of the 11 Bishop Delegates of the AMECEA countries for the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment”

1. Tarsizio Ziyaye (Archbishop of Lilongwe, Malawi): “I am speaking on behalf of the Malawi Episcopal Conference and the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA). “In reference to No. 146 on “Accompaniment in Schools and Universities” we would like to emphasise the following from our experience in Malawi and the AMECEA Region:

We appeal for generous and competent chaplains to exercise this special ministry for a privileged section of our young people. It would be a bonus if this kind of pastoral accompaniment were also available for students in secondary schools. As a region, we request that conferences develop sound age-appropriate programmes, and commit to the training and appointment of chaplains. Within the chaplaincies, we appreciate the contribution of youth ministries such as the International Movement of Catholic Students, Young Christian Students, Small Christian Communities, Legion of Mary, and the Pontifical Missionary Society.”

2.Valentine Kalumba (Bishop of Livingstone, Zambia): “I am speaking on behalf of the Zambia Episcopal Conference and the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA). In reference to Numbers 11, 16 to 19, and 127 on “The Role of Families, Life Choices” and a “Family, Formative and Social Accompaniment” we would like to emphasise the following from our experience in Zambia and the AMECEA Region:

We believe that the families are the first educators for our young people, and the role of the family cannot be substituted. In alliance with families, the church as a “family of families” is well placed to be more actively involved in accompanying young people as they make their transition into adulthood, and before, during and after their marriages. In this context, we reaffirm the importance of marriage and family catechesis as emphasised by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation on the Family, *Amoris Laetitia*, No. 287.

The roles of peer support groups such as Engaged Encounter, Pre-Cana, Couples for Christ, Marriage Encounter, Christian Family Movement, and the Marriage Ministry in Small Christian Communities are to be emphasised here. We re-emphasise the importance of family, and appeal for the value and meaning of Christian marriage and family to be upheld in the face of many threats.”

3.Roberto Bergamaski (Bishop of Awasa [Hawassa], Ethiopia): “I am speaking on behalf of the Ethiopian Episcopal Conference and the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA). In reference to Number 199 on “Young People as Protagonists,” we would like to emphasise the following from our experience in Ethiopia and the AMECEA Region.

In recent years, young people have always been delegates to the AMECEA plenary sessions, and they are given a platform to express their concerns and hopes for the Local Church. In our schools and universities we provide learning environments that prepare them to be protagonists in their societies. These institutions are invariably recognised to be of a high quality at national level. Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) prepare them to take leadership in church and society. The Salesian Youth Movement aims to give young people leadership roles among other young people.”

4.Cardinal John Njue (Archbishop of Nairobi, Kenya): “I speak on behalf of the Kenyan Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) and the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA). I wish to address a topic that is not covered in the

Instrumentum Laboris, but which is nevertheless a dimension of the experience of the young people of Kenya and the AMECEA Region. This concern was raised at the Consultative Pre-Synod Meeting with the Young People of the AMECEA Region held in Lusaka (Zambia) in August 2018. We recognise the presence of fundamentalist religious tendencies within our societies on the continent. These are found in non-Christian religions, as well as among Christian denominations.

At the consultative pre-synod meeting our young people appealed for chaplains and young people pastoral leaders who can deepen in them an age-appropriate understanding of their own Christian faith.

As experienced in youth ministry in some of the AMECEA countries like Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda young people are divided into three groups: Missionary Youth Movement (MYM) – teenagers, mostly high schoolers; Youth Serving Christ (YSC) or Young Christian Students (YCS) – young people aged 18-26 years; and Young Adults Catholic Association (YACA) or Young Christian Workers (YCW) – the final pastoral structure dedicated to young people aged 27-35 years. The main reason for these youth pastoral groups is indicated in the proceedings of the “Young People Symposium” held at Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya in February, 2017 that emphasized the need to address each age group of young people by offering ongoing catechesis that makes each group feel comfortable and able to share similar experiences. This helps to create ongoing conscious awareness and increased levels of responsibility, maturity and social involvement in each age group of young people. Forming specific peer group Small Christian Communities in each age group is a priority.

5. Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel CM (Archbishop of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia): “I speak on behalf of the Ethiopian Episcopal Conference and the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA). In reference to Numbers 147-150 on the theme “Integral and Holistic Formation in Catholic Schools and Universities” we would like to emphasize the following from our experience in Ethiopia and the AMECEA Region.

In creating spaces for real research and debate we can use familiar methods and processes of analysis, evaluation and practical action such as the “See, Judge and Act Method” and the Pastoral Circle. The moral, spiritual and religious dimensions can be part of peer group Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) and Young Adult Small Christian Communities such as the Young Professional Small Christian Communities. Here they can share their faith and their spiritual journey in a safe and supportive space.

To get into the ongoing process of the synod certain documentation is helpful.

Reflections from the Four English-speaking Small Working Groups (Small Discussion Groups/Break-Out Groups)¹³¹⁷ on Part I of the "Working Document" on "Young People:"

¹³¹⁷ Those working groups technically are called *circoli minori*, or “small circles.”

1. Our communities must be sharing communities. Even material sharing, like in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Small Basic Communities are an opportunity for this mutual sharing of material and spiritual concerns.
2. Each major section of the "Apostolic Exhortation" should have some direct and open-ended questions that could help the youth in their reflections and could be used to promote personal sharing ideas in small groups. Also, at the end of each major section there might be a QR code (Bar Code) which takes young people to a special website which has a chatroom where the youth could meet and discuss the questions.
3. Christian communities can offer young people space to find meaning and purpose.
4. Friendship is yearned for by our young people. They find community through this and they find family in this way.

During the synod we posted many messages on our various Facebook Pages. Here are some examples:

- Emilie Callan is a Laywoman Auditor at the synod in Rome on "Young People." She is a producer for the Catholic television channel, Salt and Light, in her home country, Canada. She is an envoy of the Catholic movement, "Catholic Christian Outreach: Mission-Campus" at the University of Quebec. Inexhaustible when it comes to speaking about Christ, Callan describes connections made with students, Bible Study Groups that she runs with others, and on-campus evangelization.

She expects some "concrete action" from the Synod but also — and especially — a great boost of missionary enthusiasm. "Young people want to see the same fire in the bishops that they themselves have experienced." She is "rather regretful that the youth delegates at the Synod don't have voting rights and won't be part of the drafting committee of the final document."

Emilie will speak at 7 p.m., CDT on Friday, 2 November, 2018 at the University of Loyola New Orleans, Louisiana, USA at the Book Event -- "Listening to Young People Around the World: Report on the Synod and Book Release" of Ahern Kevin, and Christopher Derige Malano, (eds.), "God's Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond." Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018. Available on Amazon as an Ebook and paperback, retrieved on 15 October, 2018,

https://www.amazon.com/Gods-Quad-Communities-Campus-.../.../refvsvr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1524187932&sr=1-2&keywords=God%E2%80%99s+Quad

The Book Event will be live streamed. Go to:

RSVP: <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSfwhWmWaug1N45yA.../viewform>

Check back for online log-in details

About this website

AMAZON.COM

[God's Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond](#)

Contributors from five continents offer case studies of best practices and practical tools for creating and maintaining Christian communities for young adults, both within and beyond

academic settings. Reports from groups in East Africa, Europe, and India complement U.S. case studies including

- Why the views of African Young People and the collective voice of Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) are important:

The Synod of Bishops is seeking to discern “the signs of the times” through “the eyes of young people” in order to “respond to the calls of the Holy Spirit at this historic change of epoch which humanity is living through,” Arturo Sosa, SJ, the superior general of the Jesuits, told a Vatican press briefing on 15 October. He identified three “signs of the times”: the universal process of secularization, the digital world and the multicultural face of the globalized world. When these are looked at from the perspective of young people, he said, the synod is able “to perceive the action of the Spirit.”

- A key challenge for the "Final Document" of the Synod of Bishops October, 2018 meeting in Rome is to provide concrete, practical, pastoral solutions and recommendations concerning young people. In light of the digital world, Archbishop Anthony Mueria of Nyeri Archdiocese, Kenya proposes a digital pastoral office, where the bishop is able to interact pastorally with the individuals. This includes a digital service where young people can actually reach the bishop via WhatsApp. From time to time, his office sends a message to all those who are on the service and then each of them can respond personally to the bishop through a direct line, not a public platform.

- One interesting comment on our new book *God's Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond*: “After reading these interesting Case Studies of successful Campus Ministry Programs that involve say 2% of the Catholic students on campus, how do we reach the other 98%? While pondering this challenging question we salute 29-year-old Yadira Vieyra who is a lay auditor at the synod that is meeting from 3 to 28 October, 2018 in Rome to reflect on the theme “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment.” She is a graduate of Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Chicago, Georgetown University and the Erikson Institute in Chicago. While a student at Georgetown Yadira was very active in Campus Ministry Programs.

- A report on "Catholic Campus Ministry in the USA" took note of divergent models of campus ministry, typified by professional campus ministers on one hand, and campus ministers with missionary groups like the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) on the other hand.

Both models emphasize Mass, retreats, Small Bible Sharing Groups and Small Faith-sharing Groups, discipleship/one-on-one mentoring, leadership development and immersion trips as significant activities for students' growth in their faith.

Missionary-trained campus ministers emphasize more those activities that "promote personal holiness," while degree-educated campus ministers emphasize more the importance of social/charitable work and social justice advocacy, the report said.

- Press conference of [#synod2018](#) on 5 October: "Youth is a place, where God is taking us with a new attitude."
- The words on this picture reminds me of the pope's message about taking care of the

environment. Applying to the young people's situation: If you do not take care of the young people today you will be destroying the future church. #DoYouAgree? #Synod2018

- The current society fights for gender equity as a way of empowering women. If you give a woman a house, she will turn it into a home therefore, I support women who see the need of inclusively in our church. #Synod2018 #WomenEmpowerment
- Better accompaniment in life matters a lot because it helps one to discover his or her hidden potentials and also to try new things that bring change in one's life. Good guidance is what young people yearn to get at the end of the day. #Synod2018
- The power of listening is key in all aspects of our lives. I always hope that the feedback will be appealing to our ears. Listening is key because it will help the bishops and youth ministers to know what young people are going through before acting. If you don't listen, you may end up acting in the wrong way. #Synod2018
- This post is special to our Catholic women. Determination should be your trait. This inspiration from Sister Marie Louise should touch your heart and give you hope. #Synod2018
- Joseph from Vietnam, an auditor in #synod for the young people spoke about "getting a job and having many things. In my opinion, the challenge for the Catholic Church is to find a way to make the young people, especially the young Catholics to realize the beauty of the Church...in order to make their lives more meaningful." This truly connects with what the Holy Father said.
- This message is great to the #synod fathers. For centuries young people were silent in The church in pain and struggle. We believe that our voices will be heard and that the young people voices be made strong for the development of the church. We are able to give the best and we are rich in talents. My appeal is #LISTENTOYOUNGSTONGVOICES #SYNOD
- Indeed the #synod is the hope of young people. We believe our fathers from the AMECEA region will voice the queries and recommendations that young people gave to be in the final deliberations.
- I hope that someday those who radicalize young people in Africa and turn them into fighters in wars (child soldiers) that's not theirs will realize the importance of nurturing talent and guiding them to accordingly so that they may make their own choices. #Synod2018
- Small Christian Communities meetings for young people provide the small circles described by Cardinal Archbishop Card. Lacroix and where there's a conducive climate for prayers. #Synod2018
- Consensus emerged quickly during during the presentations of reports from the 14 linguistic discussion groups on the "Second Part" of the Synod *Working Document* on discerning and accompanying vocations. Whereas the *Working Document* emphasized personal accompaniment, the synod workshop groups without exception all insisted on the necessarily communitarian dimension of the process. "As well as highlighting the importance of families, which should be the first place for encountering Christ, we would also like to emphasize the importance of Christian communities, including parishes, basic ecclesial communities, youth movements, school and university chaplaincies," one French-speaking

group reported, drawing largely on the testimony of a young auditor from the Scout movement.

- “Go Digital or Die” is an emphasis on the use of technology in Evangelisation. This an important proposal that need to be considered. [#Synod2018](#)

- Archbishop Muheria is convinced that beyond the normal Diocesan Pastoral Office, there is need for “a Digital Pastoral Office,” where the bishop is able to interact pastorally with the individuals. We have to go out there, meet with them. I’m not saying this as a theory, but as something we have done and that’s worked.” This message is powerful, we only need our [#bishops](#) to journey with us and listen to the rich voices of the young people.

- Responses on the family issues by young people in the African context:

1. Early marriages in rural areas.
2. Delayed marriages in urban areas.
3. Inadequate discernment by the young people on the sacrament of marriage.
4. Lack of commitment to the marriages. Young people do not want life time commitment.
5. Issues raised on contraception.
6. Lack of role models from the parents.
7. Cultural diversity in families. Parents were raised in contexts that are different to the context they raise their children influenced by globalization.
8. Young people are not inheriting from their families.
9. Question raised on why one partner should be denied receiving Holy Communion after divorce and remarriage brought about the unfaithfulness of one partner.
10. Marriages break ups due to divorce and separation. Young people do not know where to belong.

- The synod has reached the crucial stage: Reports of the 14 Minor Circles on the third part of the "Instrumentum Laboris" ("Choosing" or "Practical Action"). Some highlights:

1. Active participation of youth in liturgy, in Associations, Movements, Basic Christian Communities and in all church activities, including in consultative and decision-making roles.

2. We must encourage the insertion of young people into fraternal, joyful and radiant communities in which they meet witnesses of Christ, able to trust them. These communities include Basic Communities, Parishes, Movements, etc.).

3. The ecclesial communities are first of all faith communities. This is why this welcoming of young people will give a great place to the sharing of faith experiences.

- Radio Interview on Vatican News with Emilie Callan on "Communities: the Strength of the Church:"

She believes that “communities” are the best tool the Church has to offer in order to transmit the message of the Gospel. “It’s within the community of the faith that people have the experience of Jesus as a body” she says, stressing that “young people can be encouraged especially when they see their peers or other members of the community live out the fullness of the Catholic faith.” She stressed the importance of "passing on the richness and fullness of

our Catholic faith in our parishes, in our Small Catholic Communities, wherever we find ourselves, on university campuses."

Go to: <https://www.vaticannews.va/.../synod-youth-2018-interview-you...>



About this website

VATICANNEWS.VA

[Young Canadian at Synod: Technology can be a tool but it's not everything - Vatican News](#)

Emilie Callan, a young Canadian auditor at the Synod of Bishops that young people are on social media and that the Church should be there too.

- Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster, England at the Synod in Rome said: "I was impressed by the testimony of one bishop who reported that every one or two years in his diocese they hold gatherings of thousands of young people at which they give out copies of the *Bible*, and then afterwards using social media they do a *Lectio Divina* (or prayerful reading of the scriptures) each week for all those young people, and they share their thoughts." Cardinal Nichols noted that "from a great gathering they try to build a digital network of discipleship." "I think I'd like to try that in England."

- Question for the young people in the nine countries of Eastern Africa: At a Press Briefing during the Synod of Bishops in Rome, Bishop Andrew Nkea Fuanya of Mamfe Diocese, Cameroon said, "If I come back to my country and tell 1,000 youth that we now have pastoral care for LGBTQ, they will raise their hands and ask, 'What's that?'"

What is the situation/response in your country? Kenya etc. What would you answer? What is your experience?

Some answers/comments:

1. From an older man in Kenya: "The issue still enjoys a big NO across Africa. It is still seen as foreign and quite un-African and unwelcome to Africa too." **NOTE:** "Yes, but what do young Catholic Africans say?"

2. From a university student in Kenya: "I think LGBTQ focuses on addressing Pastoral Care for Homosexual Persons. Instructions are given on how the clergy should deal with, and respond to, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. They should be accepted, but their behavior needs to be worked on (changed)."

3. From a young man in Tanzania: "In Tanzania, the term LGBTQ is not famous nor in regular use. Even though Lesbians and Gays exist here, our culture, probably too in other African societies, look down on them. This has made difficulties for them to come out into public and also gives difficulties to the Catholic Church to have ministries in our geographic area. I believe LGBTQ have a feeling of not being welcomed in the most churches around here."

4. From an older Ugandan woman: "This has been a very controversial and divisive issue in our country with much discrimination and bias."

5. From a young woman in Kenya: "I think it's a lesbian movement across the world trying to find its roots. Pastoral care for LGBTQ will help out in that teachings will be of importance whereby these people will be taught that all sexual relations are sinful."

6. From middle aged man in Kenya: "Usual statement for me! Inspired by the usual assumption! The Archbishop is very convinced he knows what the youth knows and what they don't know. Goes with the question whether the Synod was 'for' the youth, 'of' the youth, 'because' of the youth, 'with' the youth - at best none of the above."

- For those who are following the progress of the Synod of Bishops in Rome on this Facebook Page: "The Synod Fathers are currently examining and debating the 'Final Document' of the Youth Synod, tabling amendments and propositions (*modi*) to the draft which will be voted on, paragraph by paragraph, on Saturday, 27 October. The draft consists of 173 paragraphs and covers topics ranging from accompaniment and discernment to synodality and formation. Perhaps the most significant element to the final document is that it will be the first of its kind to have the weight of the papal magisterium — a crucial move towards decentralization which significantly places more power into the hands of bishops. The approved text of the 'Final Document' is expected to be made public on Saturday evening."

- Sister Lucy Muthoni Nderi, FMA is Salesian Sister from Embu, Kenya who is a psychologist and educator. She is an auditor who represents the International Union of Superiors General at the Synod of Bishops. In her intervention she said:

Young people can be co-creators of caring and fraternal local communities. With the young we can promote nurturing, safeguarding and protective local Small Christian Communities who accompany vulnerable youth and their families in their daily lives before they opt for the streets or wind up in institutions... Empowering Small Fraternal Neighborhoods within the Small Faith Communities can be avenues where the young people can have deep Christian and vocational experiences in their everyday life.

Lucy's full intervention was reprinted in full on page 343 of the 25 October, 2018 issue of *Origins* -- *CNS Documentation Service* (part of the publications of the United States

Conference of Catholic Bishops). It is so important that the people of North America and elsewhere can hear the voices of Africa, especially the voices of African women.

- Young people can discover Jesus and find guidance more easily in Small Faith-based Communities and networks, several observers said at the Synod of Bishops in Rome. Young people need these small, nurturing networks to help them discern.

- From Bishop Andrew Nkea Fuanya, Bishop of Mamfe, Cameroon (English-speaking Cameroon) and one of the three representatives of Africa to be elected a member of the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops:

Question: "What aspects do you think that the West can learn from Africa, from the Church in Africa? What can young people in the West learn from young people in Africa?"

Answer: "I think there is a very strong solidarity, a movement, in Africa. The Africans still have this attitude of going together, of community. And this is what we find lacking in the West, that individualism is growing in the West more and more. And yet, in Africa, we are still maintaining the community aspect."

NOTE: This community aspect, this strong solidarity is one of the foundations of the SCCs Pastoral Priority and the SCCs Model of Church.

- People are asking for additional information on the recently completed Synod of Bishops in Rome. The implementation and follow-up of this synod consists of three interrelated documents:

1. Final Document of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment" (October, 2018)

Consists of 3 parts, 12 chapters, 167 paragraphs, more than 30,000 words in length and 55 pages or 60 pages depending on the layout. Issued originally only in Italian. We are waiting for the English translation. One option is to use Google Translation. Various Catholic new agencies have provided good summaries and some initial interpretation.

The introduction to this final text offers an important interpretative key to reading this text. It explains that the Final Document and the Working Document, known as the *Instrumentum Laboris*, are to be seen as "complementary." They are to be read together because there is a continuous and intrinsic reference between the two. It is necessary to understand well this interpretative key because there are some things in the working document that are not found in the final document. Readers may criticize the final text for not having fully dealt with an issue, without taking into account what is also written in the Working Document. While the text seeks to be universal, it does not address in depth the issues of a given country or region. It is intended as a springboard or basis to be adapted at the national and local level in different countries.

The synod fathers emphasized that the synod did not end with the concluding mass in St. Peter's Basilica on 28 October. They envisage an important "implementation phase" in the local churches across the world in the coming months and years, and thus present the Final Document as a "map to guide the next steps that the church is called to take." The success or failure of the synod depends on this implementation phase.

2. Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document) for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly on "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment," Vatican: Liberia Editrice and Nairobi Paulines Publications Africa, 2018.

http://www.vatican.va/.../rc_synod_doc_20180508_instrumentum-...

3. "Letter from the Synod Fathers to Young People" (October 2018)

<https://zenit.org/.../letter-from-synod-fathers-to-young-peop...>

Of the sixteen bishops elected as members of the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, three represent Africa:

Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui, Central African Republic

Archbishop Gabriel Mblingi, Archbishop of Lubango, Angola

Bishop Andrew Nkea Fuanya, Bishop of Mamfe, Cameroon (English-speaking Cameroon)

11. **Ongoing Research on Catholic Campus Ministry**

During a visit to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, USA in December, 2018, I learned about the campus ministry program at the Duke Catholic Center (DCC) and had a long conversation with American Franciscan Conventual priest Father Michael Martin, OFM Conv, the Catholic Chaplain/Director.¹³¹⁸ The center has 17 Small Groups (their name for SCCs) – 13 for undergraduate students and four for graduate students. Their full name is Scripture-based Small Faith-sharing Groups. It is a key catechesis method on campus. There are 8-10 students in small group. They meet weekly and reflect on the Gospel of the following Sunday. Small Group leaders are the backbone of this ministry. Here is what the [center website](#) states:

It's Never Too Late to Join a Small Group!

Small groups are a great way to grow deeper in your relationship with God and with others who share your Catholic faith! Sometimes it's really hard to know how to live out your faith through college on an everyday basis. During small groups we explore, support, and challenge each other to grow as disciples to be the best version of ourselves.

Joining the small group was possibly the best decision I ever made during my first year at Duke. I engaged in some of the deepest discussions I have ever had about what it means to be a follower of Christ and the responsibilities and joys that go along with it.

– Thomas Palisi, T'18

¹³¹⁸ Interview with Michael Martin in Durham, North Carolina, 1 December, 2018. See his chapter No. 10 called "Small Group Journey in Discipleship: Duke Catholic Center (DCC)" in Kevin Ahern and Christopher Derige Malano, (eds.), *God's Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018 and the 15-minute CCMA Leadership Podcast (audio interview) at <https://soundcloud.com/.../fr-michael-martin-duke-catholic-ce...>

I was never super religious before Duke. But I saw small groups as a way to meet others with the same hope of deepening faith and to open my mind to new ways of seeing God and my faith.

– Emily Brown, T’15

Students have four options for signing up for small groups: at Mass; at other church services; at a DCC event; and a personal invitation by a friend. An Announcement reads: “Whether you are a committed disciple of Jesus or are still figuring out “this whole faith thing,” small groups are best way to meet other students and explore and grow in your faith. This is a definite must.”

Martin hopes that this campus ministry program will equip the students with personal and pastoral tools to grow their faith life after college and to participate in future peer group Faith-sharing. Part of the Strategic Plan is that “20-25% of Catholic seniors participate in a program that facilitates faith life post-Duke by May, 2020.”

On 30 December, 2018 during a visit to Kenyatta University, the large public university of 75,000 students in Nairobi, Kenya, my hostess, a lecturer in the Education Department, showed me some of the many grassy places on the campus. A few were actually in the shape of a quadrangle (four buildings with grass in the middle). The university students would sit in a circle on the grass to chat, eat lunch or do homework on their computers or tablets. I said “Let’s also make them ‘God’s Quad’” -- a place where the students can pray together, reflect on the *Bible* together, etc. More information can be found in our book *God’s Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018. Available on Amazon as an Ebook and paperback, retrieved on 1 January, 2019, <https://www.amazon.com/Gods-Quad-Communities-Campus.../.../ref...>

As I interview young people about voting in the SCC Poll September – October, 2019 (<https://smallchristiancommunities.org>), most choose “Sharing life experiences.” This is a learning experience for me. When they meet in small communities, many young people do not start with “Bible Sharing” or “Faith-sharing” that have a churchy/religious ring to them. They start by sharing experiences they have had since they last met -- concrete events of their daily life.

In Nairobi in September, 2019 we had a SCCs Workshop with 10 university students and their two advisors from Santa Clara University in California, USA. We discussed young people’s hunger for, and interest in, community, but realized that it means many different things to different people. The research study from the University of Notre Dame was cited on “An Analysis and Interpretation of 5,500 Different Names, Titles, Terms, Expressions, Descriptions and Meanings for and about Small Christian Communities/Basic Christian Communities in the World from Six Continents.”

We asked: “As you start your Immersion Trip in East Africa share one experience you have had of being in a small community of any kind (6-18 people).” There was a wide variety of answers ranging from the camaraderie of a college rugby team to the friendship in an extended family. It was mentioned that relatively few college students join a Small Faith Community on campus.

The challenge is to tap into college students’ felt needs and desire for “searching” and use the right language. When the Campus Ministry staff at Villanova University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA organized a workshop for college students, the notice for a

“Centering Prayer Workshop” got eight sign-ups, the notice for a “*Lectio Divina* Workshop” got eight sign-ups, but the notice for a “Mindfulness Workshop” got 50 sign-ups.

As we promote Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs), I am inspired by Greta Thunberg, the sixteen-year-old Swedish climate justice activist. The Greta Thunberg phenomenon conforms to a well-known pattern: one highly motivated individual, present at the right place and time in history, ignites a movement and becomes its public face. The kindling was ready—mounting concern about the environment and ecology, and a growing sense of the need for change—and she struck the match. The timing is what matters. I am reminded of the Gikuyu, Kenya Proverb: *You must treat the earth well, It was not given to you by your parents, It is loaned to you by your children.*

Pope Francis challenges young people to read the *Bible* on their smartphones for just two minutes every day. In a story from Transfiguration Parish in Mwanza, Tanzania, Father John Eybel, MM give a little Tanzanian girl Modesta an award for being her Small Christian Community's best young *Bible* reader.

Father Markus Wasserfuhr, a parish priest from Cologne Archdiocese, Germany who is interested in SCCs and I visited the St. Paul's Catholic University Chapel Chaplaincy and Parish in Nairobi on Tuesday, 28 January, 2020. We had informal conversations with some of the students and alumni. Here are our learnings:

1. The University of Nairobi has 10 Small Bible Study Groups of 15-20 university students that meet in the Resident Halls from 7:30 p.m. to 9: 30 p.m. on Sunday nights. Father Peter Kaigua, the Chaplain, said that they are really Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs).
2. An evening session consists of reflecting on the *Bible* Readings of that particular Sunday; reflecting on a particular topic chosen for that day (alphabetically: chastity, corruption, Marian devotions, personal relationships, prayer, service, etc.); and occasional intercultural dances.
3. One Sunday a month is Eucharistic Adoration in the chapel.
4. Some graduates return to the parish for Alumni Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs).

12. YPSCCs in the Apostolic Exhortation ADD

13. Ongoing Research with Young People

In our weekly Online YPSCCs we share our reflections on the Gospel of the following Sunday. For example on Sunday, 23 August, 2020 (21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A) the Gospel was *Matthew* 16:13-20. My mantra (special verse from the Gospel) was “who do you say that I am?” My takeaway from our Skype Online SCC was to ask young people who is Jesus Christ to them? To young people in Africa I asked to them to look at their African identity. To young people in America I said inculturation is just as important in the USA as it is in Africa or in Latin America.

Some answers:

1. Jesus is my Path Creator.
2. Jesus is My Everything...Alpha and Omega.
3. Jesus is My BEST FRIEND.
4. Jesus is the One I can communicate with about what is in my heart without fear.
5. Jesus is my Lord, my Provider and my Protector.
6. Jesus is my Brother/Sister.
7. Jesus is my All in All.¹³¹⁹

14Case Study of a Young People SCC in Eldoret, Kenya¹³²⁰

In the Mother of Apostles Matunda Catholic Church in the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret, Kenya I observed that other church associations meet, but not the youth. Since a good number of young people participate in Sunday Mass, this motivated me to meet them and have a conversation with them. After discussion we formed a Young People Small Christian Community. The first meeting was well attended. We now meet every Sunday after the 9 am Mass. The SCC has 36 members (male and female). It is a large group, but its size will be regulated with time. Their age ranges between 12 and 25. This SCC has many ethnic groups: Kalenjin, Luhya, Kikuyu, Luo and Kisii. Through this SCC, prayer and other needs of the youth will be addressed. The majority are in secondary schools and soon returning to school.

The reasons they gave for not actively participating in the existing SCCs and in the Catholic Church were:

1. Technological advancement: youth prefer to keep busy with their smartphones and TV rather than go to *Jumuyia*.
2. Being students, so often they are in school.
3. Shyness to speak in front of their elders.
4. Age: they feel SCCs are for the elderly – their time will come.
5. There are fees/levies in SCCs, yet the youth do not have money, so they keep off.
6. They just ignore the invitation. Perhaps the SCC does not interest them and they find it boring.
7. Laziness.
8. Language: they may participate using English/Sheng and the elderly will not understand. They prefer their own SCC where they can express themselves freely.
9. Feeling of shame: youth tend to compare. Hence they may see another smartly dressed young person and they are not. So they keep off.

They expressed the following needs:

1. Need to have a youth project that will be supported by the parish.
2. Would like to animate liturgy on Sundays, though one quipped saying that they the youth are never available when given this opportunity.

¹³¹⁹ My personal answer was based on meeting Jesus on the Road to Emmaus: Companion/Accompanier; Guide/Teacher; Example/Challenger. My African cultural answer was the Sukuma, Tanzania name for Jesus Christ: Eldest Brother/Chief Intercessor.

¹³²⁰ Jane Frances Mulongo in an email message to the author, 8 October, 2020.

3. The church leadership should address youth requests. The church has not been meeting their requests.
4. We agreed to have our own SCCs of the youth and give it a name. One suggested St. John Bosco (a good choice because he is the Patron Saint of Young People), but there was no consensus. We keep discussing. It is very important that the youth themselves choose the patron saint name so as to take more ownership and responsibility. This is part of the reason why SCCs are a new way of being church, a new model of church.
5. We agreed to meet every Sunday after Mass.
6. We do have take away homework.

This helpful evaluation shows the importance of the local context.

15. Maryknoll Young Adult Empowerment (YAE) Communities

Job Description of the Chaplain in the Maryknoll Young Adult Empowerment (YAE) Community in the San Francisco/Bay Area

This is a two year commitment through June, 2022 to the following activities:

1. We meet for two hours in a Zoom Call every month, for example, on Thursday, 15 October, 2020. The facilitator is Stephanie Luna, a member of the Maryknoll Young Adult Outreach Team. These young adults in their 20s and early 30s reflect on mission/service altogether and then in Small Breakout Groups. They share their faith (faith sharing) and desire/hunger for community experiences. It is an interactive experience that uses the SEE-DISCERN-ACT process. Each month I share a mission story of something that I learned from the people that I serve in Eastern Africa. This is an opportunity for the young adult community to get to know me and the Maryknoll charism. We can have good conversations from this process.
2. Sharing during the week in the Maryknoll YA Bay Area What'sApp Community. This Christmas Week we shared our "Prayer Intentions."
3. Annual online retreat.
4. We will explore an online/virtual immersion experience in East Africa.
5. We will explore Advocacy Training and the young adults' discernment about their outreach role in society.

I have prayed over, and reflected, on the overall role of the Chaplain of a Young Adult Empowerment (YAE) Community? My initial thought is that it is a "new way of being chaplain." Following on Pope Francis, it would include:

1. Listening.
2. Accompanying.
3. Guiding (the hardest to clarify).

Internet Resources

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers (Maryknoll Missionary Disciples)

<https://www.maryknoll.us>

Maryknoll Young Adults Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/MaryknollYA>

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers (Maryknoll Missionary Disciples)

<https://www.maryknoll.us>

Maryknoll Young Adults Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/MaryknollYA>

Unique: The "Unity with Kenya" action project: Partnership of the Fish Group Small Christian Communities in Kisumu, Kenya and the Maryknoll Young Adult Empowerment Communities in the USA. Early in 2021 we are planning Zoom Calls of young adults in Kenya directly with young adults in USA.

THE SEE-JUDGE/DISCERN-ACT method that underpins *Let Us Dream* has long been used by the Latin American Church and in Pope Francis' pontificate – in *Laudato Si'*, for example – to reflect the process of conversion itself. In opening up to reality, to let it speak to us, we **contemplate** our world; we **discern** by uncovering what is of God and what undermines it, choosing the first; and then we **propose bold plans and decisions** based on that discernment. Hence the three "Times" of *Let Us Dream*: To See, To Choose, and To Act.

Different words can be used for the process, for example: THE CONTEMPLATE--DISCERN-- PROPOSE BOLD PLANS AND DECISIONS method

- Please help lead us through an interactive experience which will help us go through the SEE-DISCERN-ACT process around climate justice. We think you both are particularly well suited for this conversation, since you know realities both in Kenya and the US, and know the differences and similarities.
- SEE: What are the **climate change** impacts you have witnessed? How have they impacted your communities? Why should climate justice be important for us in the US?
- DISCERN: Bring the current realities you are experiencing to

Zoom Webinar on Thursday, 19 November, 2020 at 1 PM USA Eastern time / 9 PM Kenya time on the topic "Climate Justice in Kenya."

Maryknoll Young Adult Empowerment Community is a type of Online SCC. Five SCCs located in five cities in the USA (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles (Spanish), San Francisco and Seattle). These young adults meet once a month on a Zoom Call and weekly on What's App. It is a hybrid SCC. As Chaplain I participated in the San Francisco SCC that met for two hours in a Zoom Call on Thursday, 15 October, 2020. These young adults in their 20s and early 30s reflected on mission/service altogether and then in Small Breakout Groups. They shared their faith (faith sharing) and desire/hunger for community experiences.

Thanks for sending the following donations to my Mission Account for the “Unity with Kenya” Project:

352.00 Stephanie Luna
1,200.00 Anna Clarke
1,552.00 TOTAL

We will follow up right away.

Would you like to share a story of when you learned something from the people you were/are with during mission as an example? This would be a great opportunity for the community to get to know you AND the Maryknoll charism. I think we can have great conversations just from this process! Let me know what you think.

Fine. I will share a story on our Maryknoll YAE SF/Bay Area Zoom Call tonight.

It is related to one of the choices in our SCC Poll (<https://smallchristiancommunities.org>) Seventieth Round: “The best part of my Small Christian Community is:..” The choice is: “Adapts to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.”

Have you started our What’sApp Community?

Yes, feel free to find us at the link below. I’m not sure how to add someone without having their contact.

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/DuySSUqKSSaD4mTYqNMBKs>

Thanks again for your willingness to be Chaplain of the San Francisco/Bay Area Young Adult Community. I think it would be great for you to join the call for opening prayer and introductions today at 6pm. After that, you can choose whether you stay on the call or not. We will be talking about politics, learning from each other, bringing it to Christ-wisdom in Scripture, and discerning what our roles are in the political realm. I think your wisdom and participation would be very valuable for the group, but again, it will be optional for you to stay for the discussion.

We will begin at 6pm tonight and end at 8pm. There will be a 10 minute break before beginning our discussion on politics. Let me know if you have any questions or comments. It is well planned and goes through to June 2022. I look forward to being a part of the group.

I have prayed over, and reflected, upon your question. What is the role of the Chaplain of a Young Adult Empowerment (YAE) Community? My initial thought is that it is a “new way of being chaplain.” Following on Pope Francis, it would include:

4. Listening.
5. Accompanying.
6. Guiding (the hardest to clarify).

I’m very excited to connect the two of you – Luna, Joe has agreed to be your Bay Area chaplain for your YA community! This is GREAT news! I know you’re on vacation right

now, but when you're back, please send him your schedule and the two of you can set up a time to connect by phone to talk about it!

In interviewing students who participate in university and college Small Faith Communities¹³²¹ -- most of whom are young women -- a question emerges: After college what? After a positive experience of participating in a wide variety of campus Small Faith-sharing Communities and Small *Bible Study Communities*, how can young adults find a similar experience in their parishes and other pastoral and spiritual settings? Our research indicates that a large number of graduates cannot find a good fit/a spiritual home in Catholic parishes in the USA.¹³²² Parish-based SCCs especially for young adults are few and far between. Some graduates continue in Alumni SCCs of different kinds. Some graduates connect with the various new ecclesial movements in the Catholic Church. Some graduates gravitate to Small *Bible Study Groups* in Protestant Churches.

As we read the signs of the times in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Zoom and other social media platforms offer new opportunities for online/virtual/digital faith sharing. Here are two Case Studies:

1. Katie Maransky (Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA, Class of 2019):

During our time at Georgetown, two of my friends Kevin and Mary Joy started a Small Faith Sharing Community in January, 2018. In this community, I was an active member. We read Matthew Kelly's *Choosing Happiness* together and our conversations circled around the chapters we read every week. This was a group of 10 students, all in the sophomore -- senior age range. Kevin and Mary Joy are both very involved in the Catholic community today -- Kevin works for *America Media* and Mary Joy works for Matthew Kelly.

After our first small community went from January, 2018 to May, 2018, we broke for the summer. Upon returning to Georgetown in the Fall, 2018 Kevin and Mary Joy started to grow more Catholic Faith Communities in conjunction with the Campus Ministry Program to

¹³²¹ See Joseph Healey, "What Catholic Young People Really Want to Talk About?" in Kevin Ahern and Christopher Derige Malano, (eds.), *God's Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018). The chapter can also be found online on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: http://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/what_catholic.pdf

¹³²² The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, an organization of Catholic lay and clergy leaders, is training college students to move into church leadership roles the moment that they graduate with a program called ESTEEM (Engaging Students to Enliven the Ecclesial Mission). The program is designed to keep young adults from drifting away by giving them the knowledge, confidence and skills to change and improve their churches -- right after college when they're still revved up and raring to go. ESTEEM is now a church leadership development program at a dozen public, private and Catholic colleges and universities nationwide. It is hoped that clusters of ESTEEM graduates can meet together physically. Zoom and other social media platforms offer new opportunities for online/virtual/digital faith sharing. <https://www.faithandleadership.com/esteem-prepares-catholic-college-students-church-leadership-now>

reach more young people. They asked if I was interested in leading a group starting in August, 2018. I agreed to lead with my friend Dan who was part of our first Small Faith Sharing Community. Dan and I wanted to cater our conversations to the interests of the group. We were lucky enough to have a community of ten seniors (six young women, four young men). In our first meeting our small community discussed key topics we were interested in learning more about such as: joining the corporate world and living a Christian life; evil; grace; combining discipline and happiness; and others. Dan and I typically would meet three days prior to our community session to find a reading or an article to give to the group on the topic we planned to discuss. We came up with various “prompts” we thought would spark conversation in our upcoming small community session.

Our Fall, 2018 small community continued through the Spring Semester, 2019 consisting of a similar core group of members, while gaining a few and losing a few who were lacking commitment at the time. We conducted our small community in the same manner, collecting topics of interest and diving into the topics week by week. We stopped meeting before graduation in May, 2019.

Now fast forward. We were eight Georgetown Alumnae who got together over the 2021 Lenten Season to continue our spiritual journey together online. It started when my friend Mary Joy and another Georgetown alumna Emma reached out to me to see if I was interested in joining a Zoom-based Small Faith Community. We were all in various parts of the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic so it worked well to hold a Zoom session every week. The group consisted of these young alumnae from Georgetown and one from Villanova, my roommate in New York City, where we met from 9--9:45 pm on a weekly basis (typically Mondays or Tuesdays). During this season, we followed Matthew Kelly's *Best Lent Ever Journal* as the basis for our weekly discussions. We watched his two minute videos on a daily basis that mostly focused on prayer. Through discussion we found we all were struggling to watch the videos on a daily basis and usually had to binge watch all of the videos prior to our weekly meetings in order to properly participate in the discussion. We combatted this by rotating through a daily schedule where one person would send a small reflection about the daily video and the link to the video in our Small Faith Community text box. This was a helpful way to keep up with the videos on a daily basis. We eventually concluded these gatherings of our Zoom Small Faith Community at the end of the Lenten, 2021 season.

2. Stephanie Luna (California State University, East Bay, Oakland, California, USA, Class of 2017):

This is great! I graduated about four years ago and I was so afraid of losing touch with my faith and my campus Catholic Club Community. Some of our community members were still connected locally, but most moved out of state and out of country for grad school and jobs. The pandemic gave us the opportunity to reconnect and get everyone back together virtually. We were 13 alumni (10 young women, there young men) who met once a week for about six months. At the beginning of the Zoom gathering we would give everyone the chance to check in (or touchdown) about anything that was going on in their lives. For most of us, the pandemic created a lot of anxiety and grief and we were having a hard time coping. Luckily we had this weekly commitment to lay down our crosses and share our suffering.

After the initial check-ins, our California State University Campus Minister would open up the Zoom gathering for faith discussion. She gave us the autonomy to bring up any topic. We talked about racism, political polarization and the climate crisis -- all through the

lens of our Catholic faith. A burning question now is how many Catholics, especially young adults, will return to participate in physical masses in our parishes? We still connect once a month, and it has been a great joy to come together and share a piece of ourselves and to hold each other in prayer. I'm so glad that Georgetown University alumni are also doing the same, and I hope our sharing can inspire others to build communities of loving relationship within their own university alumni.

On our Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website (<https://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>)

we have an interactive Poll (changes every two months) that states: “The best part of my Small Christian Community is ...”¹³²³ followed by six choices. In the past two years some of the choices (alphabetically) have been:

- Adapts to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.
- Alumni Online Small Christian Community.
- Digital SCC.
- Gathering online to celebrate our faith together.
- Going digital during Covid-19.
- Hybrid Small Christian Community.
- Online faith sharing.
- Online Small Christian Community Ministry.
- Virtual SCC.
- WhatsApp SCC.
- WhatsApp social media exchange.
- Young Adults Small Empowerment Community.
- Young People Small Searching Community.
- Zoom and other online platforms for Gospel Sharing and Reflection.
- Zoom Small Christian Community.

The top vote getters have been “Online faith sharing” (167 votes) and “Zoom and other online platforms for Gospel Sharing and Reflection” (140 votes).

Two other important resources on University/College Small Faith Communities are:

1. Kevin Ahern, “Young People Are Leading a New Approach To Campus Ministry,” *U.S. Catholic*, September, 2021. *U.S. Catholic* Website, retrieved on 11 September, 2021. <https://uscatholic.org/articles/202108/young-people-are-leading-a-new-approach-to-campus-ministry/> This article can jumpstart a new appreciation of our Orbis Book *God’s Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond*.

Kevin insightfully describes the challenges to campus ministry with practical examples, in particular: the explanation of the Small Faith Communities (SFCs) Model of Church; how in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, student faith groups are demonstrating a dynamic sense of resiliency; and Pope Francis’s call for synodal models in youth and young adult ministry (so relevant as the worldwide Synodal Process begins in October, 2021).

¹³²³ We could just as easily have asked: "The best part of our Small Christian Community is:..." Both statements can have different answers. Using "we" and "us" expresses better the spirit and practice of the SCCs Model of Church.

Another important book on campus ministry is Randy Young, *Catholic Campus Ministry: Fifteen Profiles in Achievement*, New Jersey, 2020. Ebook and paperback, Amazon Website, retrieved on 11 September, 2021. [Catholic Campus Ministry: Fifteen Profiles in Achievement - Kindle edition by Young, Randy. Religion & Spirituality Kindle eBooks @ Amazon.com](#). It documents a wide variety of Small Group Ministries/Small Faith Communities Ministries on college campuses such as Faith Sharing, Bible Study and Lectionary-based Reflections.

Case Study of Promoting Online Young People Seekers Small Christian Communities

Having realized that many young people are drifting away from the Catholic Church, Pope Francis has been calling on church leaders to walk the extra mile to reach out to young people where they are and not wait for them. The Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI) responded to this call by appreciating the importance of reaching out to young people by financing the Online Young People Seekers Small Christian Communities that offer young people a safe place to share their concerns and find support for the challenges they face.

This virtual community of about 15 people meet twice a month on Zoom. It's also an international and diverse group that comprises young people from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Pakistan, and the USA. They are not limited only to the above countries but they welcome young people from other parts of the world who want to journey with them. This community is committed to growing together and seeking to find its rightful place within the Catholic community.

Through our encounters, the young people have been able to speak on different issues like:

1. They feel disconnected from the church because they no longer feel welcome and are discouraged by the church because of the silence when injustices are perpetuated in front of their eyes and no one speaks against them.
2. Young people want to be included in the leadership of the church and they don't want to be mere spectators. They want to be part of the decision-makers.
3. Young people want accompaniment and help in understanding issues like: sexuality, drug and substance abuse, depression and transitions in life.
4. Injustices to the environment.
5. Some said that there is a lot of criticism in church and they avoid going to church because they don't want to be criticized.
6. The impact of social media on their lives.

In one of our encounters, Meg McCarthy from the USA highlighted how she felt disconnected from the church in one of the Synodal Gatherings that had been organized by the Albany Diocese. She said, "what stood out from the discussion is that young people feel disconnected from the church they love. For instance, I shared my feeling of being disconnected in the presence of 40 young people who had attended that session of the Synodal Process. I didn't connect at all with the young man who said that the Catholic Church has to return to being the backbone of Western civilization."

Collins Ongoma from Kenya shared about a friend who was very active in Christ the Teacher Catholic Parish in Kenyatta University in Nairobi including being an acolyte. But on

going back to her home parish she felt out of place and ended up joining a Pentecostal denomination where she felt her expectations were being met.

Staicy Wandiemba from Kenya gave a testimony on how the online encounter with other young people has transformed her life. She said, “I knew I wanted to belong. I was looking for a family, a place to call home, and people who understand me. I’m glad that I found it in my online Small Christian Community. I saw people who looked like me and had an idea of the common issues affecting us in general. There was no problem that was overlooked and everything was anchored in Christ. My faith in Christ grew, and I had the confidence to let the past go and accept God. I am looking at my life right now. Without my family, I feel I am incomplete. These are people whom I look up to and they also look up to me. We nurture each other, and we have made a lifelong friendship. Above all we let Christ be the anchor of every situation.”

Jenipher Tumuhaise from Uganda said, “some young people feel demotivated when their parents are not committed to attending mass. This also discourages them because they don’t have someone to accompany them nor have a role model. These online encounters with other young people is my new motivation because of the encouragement I get from other young people.”

They also engage in different activities that expand their understanding of the church's teachings. For example, in one of their encounters, the facilitator asked the young people to come up with an image of Jesus that comes to their mind or reflects the work that they do. Everyone was given two minutes to interpret the image and how it reflects on them. It was exciting to see the different types of images young people have about Jesus Christ. Some of the images they gave are: Jesus as a donkey, friend, safari park guide, eldest brother chief intercessor and a farmer.

In summary, our online Young People Seekers Small Christian Community meet young people where they are. They meet globally hence giving them a global view of life. Young people also get an opportunity to discuss with other young people from different parts of the world the kind of projects they are doing with their local communities.

People who want to learn more about the Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs) ministry can get free, online materials by visiting the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website [GO»](#)

In addition, two Facebook Pages offer more information:

Small Christian Communities [GO»](#)

Young People Small Christian Communities [GO»](#)

For more information and if you want to join a Online Young People Seekers Small Christian Community please contact the Facilitator:

Alloys M. Nyakundi, MPS

Kisii, Kenya

+254742309289 (Kenya)

alloysnyakundi8@gmail

Emmah’s Garden (<https://emmahsgarden.org/>)

Member of Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI)

15. How SCCs Are a New Way of Being/Becoming Church in Eastern Africa

After completing this evaluation of SCCs in the AMECEA Region, I continue to receive questions such as: What does a SCC in Eastern Africa look like? ¹³²⁴ What do you do during a SCC gathering? Exactly how are SCCs a new way of being/becoming church in Eastern Africa today?

It can be understood best through concrete, pastoral examples that show that SCCs in the AMECEA Region are not simply a parish program or project, but a way of life. They have a distinct ecclesial, pastoral and social identity. Many members' lives revolve in and around their SCCs as the "Church in the Neighborhood." ¹³²⁵

¹³²⁴ When a visitor comes to Eastern Africa and asks about our SCCs, I immediately say, "Come and see." That is, invite the visitor to participate in a typical SCC meeting or *Bible* Service. This is the best way to experience the life and activities of a SCC that is much more than a *Bible* Study Group or a weekly Prayer Group.

Alternatively, I refer him or her to: A written description of a SCC in an urban area. See the story "Visiting St. Charles Lwanga SCC" in Joseph Healey and Jeanne Hinton (eds.), *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005 and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006, p. 100. Story No. 9 in the "SCCs Stories Database," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website retrieved 27 September, 2011 [http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-stories.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=627](http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-stories.html?task=display2&cid[0]=627). **CHECK**

Or to a written description of a SCC in a rural area. See the story "Theresa's Old, Plastic Armless Crucifix" in Healey, *Once Upon a Time in Africa*, p. 118. SCCs Story No. 8 in the "SCCs Stories Database," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 27 September, 2011 [http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-stories.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=626](http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-stories.html?task=display2&cid[0]=626) and African Story No. 489 in the "African Stories Database," African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 1 January, 2014, [http://afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-database.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=196](http://afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-database.html?task=display2&cid[0]=196). The full text of these stories is also found in Appendix 13 – "Stories of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa."

¹³²⁵ At the Book Launch of this printed book at CUEA in Nairobi, Kenya on 3 September, 2012 the following question was asked: "How is this new book different from the previous books that you have written on SCCs?" The author gave two answers:

1. SCCs as "a way of life" is highlighted. They are more than just a program or project or activity in a parish.
2. The use of the "See," "Discern" and Act" method/process has changed many SCCs from being inwardly looking prayer groups to become outwardly looking groups interested in justice and peace concerns. SCCs' active participation in the annual Kenyan Lenten Campaign is a good example of this shift. Using the Pastoral Spiral to decide on new actions is a process of reaching decisions by communal discernment. God actively participates in this process as seen in the call in *Revelations 2:7*: "Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches." The "churches" are not just the ones of 2,000 years ago. SCCs are part of "the churches," especially the Local Churches, in our contemporary world today.

There are many varieties of the "See," "Judge" and "Act" method/process that is connected to the methodology of pastoral reflection and the Pastoral Spiral of reflection as pioneered by the Young Christian Workers (YCW), the Young Christian Students (YCS) and the Christian Family Movement (CFM).

1. The International Young Catholic Students (IYCS) use "Recognize," "Interpret" and "Choose."
2. The Salesians Religious Congregation in Africa call this method/process "Community Discernment" that is carried out in three steps: "Listening," "Interpreting" and "Way Forward." "Interpreting" ("discern" or "test" or "analyse" or "evaluate" or "assess") is preferred by some because the English word "judge" is associated with the words "judgement" and "judgemental" that reflect criticism of others.
3. The Holy Cross Sisters, an international congregation of religious sisters, who serve in Fort Diocese, Uganda call the process ERCA: "Experience," "Reflection," "Choice" and "Action."
4. Formation houses in Eastern Africa use the reflection method of "Inform," "Form" and "Transform."
5. The Maryknoll missionaries in Latin America use "Listen," "Learn" and "Announce."
6. The Loyola Institute of Ministry at Loyola University in New Orleans, Louisiana uses "Identify" rather than "See" as the first step and "Test" rather than "Judge" as the second step.
7. College immersion programs in the USA use "Witness," "Reflect" and "Respond."

The text of the Working Document (*Instrumentum Laboris*) for the Synod on Young People from 3-28 October, 2018 takes up the themes in a "functional" way in three parts:

1. "Recognize" (five chapters),
2. "Interpret" (four chapters for four "reading keys"),
3. "Choose" (four chapters "to help the Synod Fathers to take a stand on the directions and decisions to be taken").

American San Diego Diocese Bishop Robert McElroy reminds us that the organizing principles — see, judge and act — that have inspired Catholic action groups around the world are "a powerful pathway for those who seek to renew the temporal order in the light of the Gospel and justice." The bywords for today's Catholic community must be "see," "judge" and "act." They will give us direction for the journey. If adverbs are attached, we would suggest "see clearly," "discern compassionately" and "act together."

NCR Editorial Staff, "See, Judge and Act: Direction for Catholics," National Catholic Reporter (NCR), 1 November, 2017, NCR Website, retrieved 2 November, 2017, https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/see-judge-and-act-direction-catholics?utm_source=NOV_1_D%27ANTONIO_EDITORIAL&utm_campaign=cc_110117&utm_medium=email

Catholic Charities USA explains how ministry responds through the theological methodology of "seeing, judging and acting": in other words, considering the social context

The SCC way of life is seen in the context of Irish Theologian Father Brian Hearne, CSSp (who died in 1996) writing that “SCCs are essentially a spirituality.” This is developed by George Gichuhu in *The Spirituality of SCCs in Eastern Africa*.¹³²⁶ He treats the African value of community expressed in the conviction of the fundamental African proverb *I am because we are; we are because I am*. So SCCs can be described as “Truly African, Truly Christian.” The spirituality of SCCs is rooted in Jesus Christ’s new commandment of love and service. SCC members live out their African Christian spirituality by reaching out to others, especially the poor and needy. In this service to the community African SCCs integrate African values with gospel values. This spirituality of African SCCs can be reflected on in the context of Benedict XVI’s words at the Opening Mass of the 2009 Second Africa Synod: “Africa constitutes an immense spiritual ‘lung’ for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope.”¹³²⁷

Yet Magesa raises this challenge:

Can they, in their present state in many dioceses, be described as a truly “new way of being church,” incorporating within them in practice the facets and characteristics of the early apostolic communities in terms of organization, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the growth of focused ministries? There is still a long way to go on this path, to realize the church as truly “a community of believers” through SCCs. What the Australian bishop, John Heaps, has written captures some important elements of what as yet still needs to be done to realize the deep theological and pastoral implications of SCCs:

“To make this truly the church, the bishop would approve these communities, accept their leaders and ordain their priests. All this would be done in consultation with the community. Leaders would emerge, candidates for ordination and the non-ordained ministries would present themselves for acceptance by the community and ordination or induction by the bishop. Some would need to undertake further studies, many of which would be part time

of the particular historical moment, discerning the meaning with the guidance offers by Catholic Church teaching and deciding on the appropriate response.

Some add the words “Review” and “Readjust” as a fourth step.

¹³²⁶ *Spearhead* No. 60 (February, 1985).

¹³²⁷ Benedict XVI, *Homily Of His Holiness Benedict XVI*, Eucharistic Celebration for the Opening of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, 4 October 2009, Vatican Website, retrieved on 13 August, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20091004_sinodo-africa_en.html

in the same way that many people undertake part-time studies...Members of the communities that make up the diocese would be very much involved in the consultation process leading up to the choice of their bishop.”^{1328 1329}

The SCCs’ “ecclesial identity” is very important. This is a relatively new term in our church vocabulary in Africa. Orobator distinguishes “being” and becoming” stating that today’s challenge is to develop “a distinctively African model of Small Christian Communities as a new way of *becoming* church.”¹³³⁰ SCCs are always evolving, in process.

This also focuses on the important ecclesial status and centrality of SCCs in their self-understanding as Local Churches, as “the Church in the Neighborhood.” Orobator explains:

SCCs have become the *loci* of ecclesial mission and identity. The gathering of Christians in the neighborhood¹³³¹ is not only in the name of the church but *is* church. In their localization and specificity, SCCs actualize the mission of the church as both “sign and agent of the kingdom of God”; in other words, “these small ‘churches’ empower Christian existence in active, Christian subjects, and this manifests itself in concrete ways.” In this way, at their best, SCCs internalize, embody and exemplify the radical meaning of the theological insight that the church is a community of the people, for the people and by the people.¹³³²

¹³²⁸ John Heaps, *A Love That Dares to Question: A Bishop Challenges His Church*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans 1998.

¹³²⁹ Laurenti Magesa, “Expanding Horizons, p. 39.

¹³³⁰ Emmanuel Orobator, “Small Christian Communities as a New Way, p. 125.

¹³³¹ As SCC members focus more on the gatherings in their homes in their geographical neighborhoods rather than at the physical parish church compound, there are some interesting parallels to other Christian Churches in Africa. Mwaura states:

In all African Instituted Churches (AICs) the concept of church as an assembly of believers, as was the case in the early church, is very real. The church as a physical structure is alien to most AICs, hence their ability to worship God freely in any place, whether in homes or in open-air spaces. The “home churches” are communities where the spiritual and existential needs of members are met...Together the members address their problems and find themselves integrated into the households of AICs where they participate in the life of families. The homes of adherents – and particularly of leaders – are “havens of belonging” open to those in need.

Philomena Mwaura, “African Instituted Churches as Expressions of African Christianity,” in Jesse Mugambi and Evaristi Magoti (eds.), *Endless Quest: The Vocation of an African Christian Theologian*, a *Festschrift* for Professor Laurenti Magesa, Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2014, pps. 263-264.

¹³³² *Ibid*, pp. 123-124.

A Case Study is Youth SCCs, or YSCC for short. In a typical parish in Eastern Africa there are many types of apostolic youth groups and youth involvement. First, there is the Parish Youth Group. Any youth can join and participate in a wide variety of social, recreational, religious and pastoral activities. Very common are sports and music/dancing. Then there are a variety of specific apostolic youth groups, each with their own constitution, goals and activities: Altar Servers, International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS), Magis, Vocations, Young Christian Students (YCS) and Young Christian Workers (YCW). Then there are general apostolic organizations or associations in the parish that youth join and participate in: Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Choir, Junior Legion of Mary, Justice and Peace, Neocatechumenal Way, Pioneers, Pro-Life, Vincent de Paul. All these groups are voluntary depending on one's time, talents and interests.

But Youth SCCs are for all young men and women because this is their core ecclesial identity in itself -- intrinsically as members of the Catholic Church. Peter Kyalo, a former Kenyan youth leader at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, explains: "SCCs are the foundation of the church. They are the building blocks. They drive the church. They are the priority. When Youth SCCs meet, no other youth apostolic groups should meet."¹³³³ This is confirmed in parishes where the apostolic groups meet on Sunday morning and Youth SCCs meet on Sunday afternoon.

Specific youth events and activities strengthen their ecclesial identity and ecclesial life. A National Youth SCCs Workshop on the theme "Youth SCCs Embrace the Word of God" took place in Lusaka, Zambia from 2-6 December, 2013. There were 36 participants including the youth chaplains and youth representatives from the dioceses in the country. The workshop is described in the article "Zambia Hosts National Youth SCCs Workshop on the Theme '[Youth SCCs Embrace the Word of God](#)'".

Our understanding of the meaning of "a new way of being/becoming church" develops/evolves in new situations, contexts and time periods. English Dominican theologian and writer Timothy Radcliff, OP summarizes Pope Francis' interpretation in an essay entitled "Pope Francis Encourages Us to Be Comfortable with Uncertainty."

Pope Francis says that "the structural and organizational reforms are secondary—that is, they come afterwards. The first reform must be the attitude." Structural change to the government of the church is vital, but it must follow from a new way of *being* church, in which we get out of the sacristy, engage with people, know their suffering and their puzzlement from within. At this stage, the pope is showing the way forward by what he does. He has a capacity to make expansive gestures that open up new perspectives. His first trip outside Rome was a visit to Lampedusa, where so many immigrants have died trying to enter Europe. Or think of his visit to the *favella* in Rio de Janeiro. Christianity is a religion of sacramental gestures, the pouring of water and the breaking of bread, and Francis' gestures are powerful in opening up the future.

This new way of being church will eventually have to find structural form. Pope Francis says: "The dicasteries of the Roman Curia are at the service of the pope and the bishops" ...So this papacy could mark the most

¹³³³ Peter Kyalo in a conversation with the author in Nairobi, Kenya on 13 March, 2012.

fundamental change in the governance of the church in centuries, from monarchy to collegiality. Much of Pope Emeritus Benedict's theology of the church implied shift. Francis wishes to *do* it. He insists on the return to models of synodal government and on real consultation. Lay people will have a voice, as they often did in the early church. We must have patience as the form of this new structure and dynamic unfolds.¹³³⁴

Orobator adds:

For Francis synodality is the way of being church, that is, a collaborative search or discernment of the divine path for God's people, by God's people. Thus, "a synodal church is a church that listens, that realizes that listening is more than simple hearing. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn."¹³³⁵

¹³³⁴ Timothy Radcliff, "A New Way of Being Church: Pope Francis Encourages Us to Be Comfortable with Uncertainty," *America Magazine*, 30 September, 2016, America Website, retrieved 21 July, 2016, <http://americamagazine.org/new-way-being-church>. Reprinted in *A Big Heart Open to God: A Conversation with Pope Francis*, America Press and HarperOne, 2013.

¹³³⁵ Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E. (ed.), *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2016, p. xvi.

16. How SCCs Are a New Pastoral Ecclesial Model of Church in Eastern Africa

Other questions are: Exactly how are SCCs a new pastoral ecclesial model of church in Eastern Africa today?¹³³⁶ How and why is the AMECEA Key Pastoral Priority different? How are our Eastern Africa SCCs different from SCCs in other parts of the world?

A starting point is to distinguish five different pastoral ecclesial models¹³³⁷ of church in the Catholic Church today especially from an African and from a small community perspective. It is presumed that the celebration of the sacraments is an important part of all five pastoral ecclesial models:

1. Small Christian Communities Model of Church. This has a very specific meaning and context in Eastern Africa. Although the term “Small Christian Communities” is used in many different ways,¹³³⁸ as a “new pastoral ecclesial model of church” it specifically refers to pastoral, parish-based SCCs (usually small neighborhood communities) being part of the official structure, leadership, ministry and life of the parish. SCCs are a pastoral, parish-based model that helps to build the parish structure. The parish is a communion or network of SCCs within a “communion of communities” ecclesiology. SCCs are the central “place” of ecclesial identity, ecclesial life, ministry and mission. In recent years a shift has occurred in Eastern Africa where much more of the ecclesial life takes place in the SCC not in the outstation church or in the parish church, for example, the celebration of the sacraments, religious education, catechesis and other ministerial and service activities.

Tanzanian diocesan priest, Anthony Makunde, Secretary General of AMECEA, states:

¹³³⁶ This has led me to put the following question on some of my examinations for the SCCs Courses and Seminars: “Required question to be answered in two parts:

- a. How are SCCs a new or different **way** of being/becoming church in Eastern Africa today? This refers to the life of the SCC and its members. Give five concrete, specific examples or references.
- b. How are SCCs a new or different **model** of church in Eastern Africa today? This refers to the pastoral or ecclesiological structure/paradigm. Give five concrete, specific examples or references.”

Clearly understanding the difference between these two questions and their relationship helps a person get into the deeper meaning and importance of SCCs.

¹³³⁷ This is an ecclesiological model as distinguished from a sociological or theoretical structural model. This a pastoral model as distinguished from a theological model (see Avery Dulles’ models).

¹³³⁸ Described at length with many examples in Joseph Healey, “Evolving A World Church From the Bottom Up: An Analysis and Interpretation of 3,500 Different Names, Titles, Terms, Expressions, Descriptions and Meanings for and about Small Christian Communities/Basic Christian Communities in the World with 11 Case Studies From Six Continents,” Background Paper for the International Consultation on "Rediscovering Community -- International Perspectives," University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, USA, 8-12 December, 1991.

As AMECEA reflects on ways to revitalize, strengthen and cultivate the spirit of solidarity, collegiality and synodality, the Small Christian Communities has become an Ecclesial Model in Eastern Africa that people from other regions and continents are borrowing heavily from AMECEA, people from other continents are coming to AMECEA to learn about this Ecclesial Model. “India has borrowed a lot from us to build their Small Christian Communities, and today Europe, which evangelized Africa, is also coming to learn from us. Those from Tanzania will remember that three or four years ago, a group from Germany came to Bagamoyo to learn about Small Christian Communities. In Kenya people from Europe have come several times and even stayed in parishes to learn about the model. Currently the Coordinator of the AMECEA Pastoral Department is organizing another trip for a group of Germans who will be coming to Kenya in February, 2020 to stay for almost a month for the same purpose.¹³³⁹

Central to this SCCs model are weekly lectionary-based Faith-sharing and regular practical action and outreach.

2. Small Apostolic Group Model of Church. “Apostolic” is added to distinguish this model from the very different Small Groups Model of Church that is not treated here. Many parishes have a rich variety of Small Apostolic Groups that are listed in other parts of this book. These groups are pastorally part of the parish, but are not normally directly and fully integrated into the structure and leadership of the parish. Often they are voluntary apostolic programs, services and activities in the parish. They are represented on the Parish Pastoral Council.

3. Ministries/Services/Activities/Outreaches Model of Church. This is a different model where the ministry or services or activities or outreaches groups in the parish can be large groups of 100 people or more: the Youth Group, the Catholic Charismatic Group, the Catholic Women’s Group, the Catholic Men’s Group, etc. These larger groups are pastorally part of the parish, but are not normally directly and fully integrated into the structure and leadership of the parish. Often they are voluntary programs, services and activities in the parish. Some of the services or activities are not specifically apostolic or pastoral.¹³⁴⁰ They are represented on the Parish Pastoral Council.

4. Devotions Model of Church. Arising out of popular religiosity this model focuses on popular devotions such as Eucharistic Adoration, novenas, rosary, singing songs and Stations of the Cross. Here the traditional lay Pious Associations/Christian Associations/

¹³³⁹ Anthony Makunde, *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, 7 June, 2019, (<https://amecea.blogspot.com/.../kenya-ameceas-ecclesial-model>)

¹³⁴⁰ In USA I meet parishes that have as many as 150 “so called” ministries including a whole variety of social services, activities and clubs such as aerobics, book club, bowling, bridge club, cooking club, discussion group, gardening club, knitting club, etc. that could also be provided by a local Community Center, Senior Citizens Center and Retirement Home. They are part of what is called “the busy (or ‘humming’) parish plant.”

Sodalities/Guilds/Devotional Groups/Societies/Clubs are the main Model of Church in the parish. Some examples: Christian Mothers Association (CMA), Daughters of St. Ann, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Knights of the Altar, Knights of St. John, Ladies Auxiliary of St. John, Ladies of Charity, Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sodality of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sodality of Our Lady, Sodality of St. Ann, Sodality of St. Peter Claver, St Anna's Sodality, St. Monica Association, other associations of Knights and Dames and various Small Prayer Groups. Members often have a special identity like a uniform. They are represented on the Parish Pastoral Council. Saying the Rosary and devotional prayers are very important.

This Small Christian Associations Model of Church is particularly strong in Nigeria and Ghana and a main reason that SCCs have not developed in these two countries.¹³⁴¹

In a very interesting conversation in Nairobi, Kenya on 16 September, 2018 with two leading pastoral specialists from the Democratic Republic of the Congo -- Sister Josée Ngalula and diocesan priest Father Edouard Mombili -- they emphasized that the spirituality of the Small Christian Community Model of Church is communion, sharing and solidarity in the Local Church. But the various Pious Associations/Christian Associations/Sodalities/Guilds/Devotional Groups have a different spirituality based on the charism of their associations. It was pointed out that one reason that SCCs never developed in the 1960s to 1990s in English-speaking West Africa was historical: the expatriate Irish missionaries introduced a strong **Devotions Model of Church** into countries like Nigeria and Ghana that became the operative pastoral style in parishes.

5. New Ecclesial Movements Model of Church. A phenomenon of the past 75 years is the new ecclesial movements that have seen rapid growth and influence worldwide. Some examples (alphabetically): Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Communion and Liberation, Focolare, Neo-catechumenal Way, Opus Dei, Sant'Egidio and Schönstatt. They have energized many dying and inactive parishes, pastoral situations and Christian communities. They have successfully taken responsibility for running parishes (especially in Europe). Many of these movements use a "controlled" small group formation and reflection model.

But in certain situations they have become divisive in the local parish community. In other situations they have taken energy away from the parish rather than feeding energy into it. The great challenge is to coordinate these new ecclesial movements with, and within, parish life. Other features of these new ecclesial movements: They appeal more to elite Catholics in terms of wealth and education. They have a more top-down, inductive style, style of leadership and formation. They do not see social action and social justice as a priority.¹³⁴²

Many parishes are a combination of these five models or at least some of them.

¹³⁴¹ See Emmanuel Dassah, Ghanain theologian and lay minister, in a conversation with the author in Nairobi, Kenya, 22 July, 2022.

¹³⁴² Some of these ideas developed in a very interesting conversation with Father Marcos Muino, SJ, an Argentinian Jesuit priest who is presently doing research on SCCs in Eastern Africa. Nairobi, Kenya, 10 January, 2017.

This new **Small Christian Communities Pastoral Ecclesial Model of Church** has a “newness” and a “differentness” from the other four models explained above. The terms “new way of being church” (also called “new way of becoming church”) and “new model (or paradigm) of church”¹³⁴³ are frequently used in many different contexts. The Eastern African meaning is closely connected to the “Church as Family of God Model of Church” (SCCs connected to families are Africa’s strength) and the “Communion of Communities Model of Church

Four concrete, pastoral examples of the “newness” and the “differentness” of the New **Small Christian Communities New Pastoral Ecclesial Model of Church** are:

1. **Leadership Structures.**¹³⁴⁴ In this model of neighborhood, parish-based SCCs, the SCCs officially participate in the parish leadership structures. The SCC is an official pastoral ecclesial structure in the parish. This is key. Each SCC (or a group of SCCs) has a representative on the Outstation, Subparish or Parish Council/Parish Pastoral Council. Elections start at the level of SCCs and move upwards. This insures that the parish pastoral council leaders are chosen from those lay people who are already leaders in their SCCs – thus true representation from below.¹³⁴⁵

A Case Study is Lilongwe Archdiocese, Malawi. Through Kalilombe it was the pioneering diocese for SCCs in Eastern Africa in the early 1970s. Building on this strong foundation, Malawian Bishop Felix Mkhori (who died in 2012) facilitated a Second Diocesan Synod in 2004-2006. The resolution on “Church Structures” stated:

The Small Christian Community is paramount. All other groups, organizations and movements are under the Small Christian Community. Leaders of Small Christian Communities must be well trained to know their

¹³⁴³ There are many models of church. Each has its own identity and validity. Some Catholic Parishes and many Evangelical Churches have a more top-down style where the subject matter/contents of the weekly small group meetings are provided by the pastor’s weekly sermon or a workbook or a fixed program. So you have the expression “Sermon-based Small Groups.” “Many small group programs are meticulously organized by denominational bureaucracies. Official discussion booklets, detailed meeting outlines and formation selection and training processes for group leaders may militate against the formation of true communion –or community – in Small Faith Sharing Groups.” Wittberg, *Building Strong Church Communities*, page 34.

¹³⁴⁴ Laurenti Magesa’s comment that “structurally, Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are capable of manifesting the sense of being church in Africa in many of its dimensions” is explained on page 113.

¹³⁴⁵ When American theologian Father Bernard Lee, SM visited Kenya he said that this systematic pastoral plan and leadership structure from below was the most significant feature of SCCs in Eastern Africa. SCCs as an official pastoral ecclesial structure in the parish was the central point in a briefing for German theologians from Missio, Aachen and the University of Münster at Tangaza University College on 7 March, 2014.

rights and obligations. Members of the Small Christian Community must be united in mind and activities.¹³⁴⁶

This resolution also states: “New arrivals in the diocese (priests, sisters and laity) need some orientation with regard to Small Christian Communities.”

Lilongwe Archdiocese and other dioceses in Malawi have a creative structural plan at the parish level. All the apostolic groups (large and small) of lay people are under the Parish Laity Council that has a fixed number of representatives on the Parish Pastoral Council. All the apostolic groups (large and small) of youth are under the Parish Youth Council that has a fixed number of representatives on the Parish Pastoral Council. But the majority of members of the Parish Pastoral Council are representatives of the SCCs. This covers SCCs in both urban and rural areas.

In evaluating the successes of SCCs in Tanzania Ishengoma states:

SCCs are a powerful force of renewal of the parish structures. They touch lay participation in the life of the Local Church through the parish council where the leaders are chosen from those who are already leaders in their SCCs. The parish is now a network of SCCs that can be reached easily.¹³⁴⁷

The AMECEA pastoral priority of SCCs is a pastoral model of church integrally connected to the structures, ministries and activities of the parish. This helps local Catholics feel that “they are the church” and more responsible (“ownership”) for church life and decision making. This is dramatized in a true story:

In the early 1980s the Iramba Subparish Council in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania was formed by electing representatives from the total Catholic population in the subparish. These were good, dependable Catholics irrespective of where they lived. Often most of the members would come from only the main, central section of the subparish/village. It so happened that the Iramba Subparish Council members had to investigate a marriage case in a distant geographical section of the village where none of them lived. In fact, they were not familiar with the families and the local situation in that section. They were completely deceived by a boy who wanted to marry a Catholic girl from one of the outstanding local families. They later learned that the boy already had a "second" wife in another village.

From then on the leaders of the Iramba Subparish Council said they needed a representative from each local geographical section following the SCC plan. This SCC-elected member would be more familiar with the pastoral situation such as marriages in his or her local geographical section. This was a *critical incident* in the pastoral life of the Iramba Subparish Council that led to

¹³⁴⁶ Felix Mkhori, *My 7 Years in the Diocese of Lilongwe 2001-2007*, Balaka, Malawi: Montfort Media, 2007.

¹³⁴⁷ Rita Ishengoma, Email File Attachment to the author dated 29 January, 2014.

a new praxis¹³⁴⁸ of having the geographically-based SCC representatives form the council.¹³⁴⁹

Over the years parishes and dioceses in Eastern Africa have struggled with how to practically express SCCs as a new model of church. A number of parishes have “Membership Registration Forms” for new Catholics joining the parish. The form lists a whole variety of parish groups with instructions such as: “Mark x if you would like to join the group or mark a tick if you are already a member.” If SCCs are listed alongside all the other parish associations, organizations, sodalities and groups, it shows that SCCs are not understood as unique and different from all these other optional parish groups. The statistical forms that dioceses fill out for Vatican offices have traditionally not had a place to indicate the number of SCCs in a parish and the numbers of SCC leaders under the types of lay ministries. Now this has changed to include the SCCs information.

In August 2011 I visited a parish in Nairobi Archdiocese that has a large colorful chart of the parish structure on the wall. Each major commission/committee has its own box and links to the overall diagram such as the Liturgy Commission and the Justice and Peace Commission. The same with the parish associations, organizations or sodalities such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Charismatic Renewal Group. I was surprised that one box was marked “SCCs -- Legion of Mary.” By linking SCCs with a popular parish association or sodality, the local parish leaders mixed two models of church and missed the newness of SCCs: how they are the basic unit/basic foundation of the Local Church to which every Catholic should belong and so are structurally different from voluntary parish associations, organizations or sodalities.

SCCs in Eastern Africa are often referred to as a “New Way of Being Local Church.” This calls for a new way of thinking, a new type of leadership, a new style of pastoral ministry, a new structure and a new language and terminology. So we have expressions such as “New Vision of Church,” “New Mentality of Church,” “New Thinking of Church” and “New Meaning of Church.”¹³⁵⁰ This “newness,” of course, applies to the SCC to the outstation, to the subparish, to the parish and to the diocese. Ndingi says: “We are trying to awaken a new mentality rather than just setting up structures...When a parish is built on SCCs, there are no spectators. All are players.”¹³⁵¹

¹³⁴⁸ Many times a new praxis evolves out of evaluation. American Maryknoll missionary priest John Casey, MM pointed out that the SCCs in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania were labor-intensive, that is, they needed a lot of time, support and help from the priests and other pastoral workers. He joked that the Pius Associations and Sodalities like the Sacred Heart ran on their own, while the SCCs always seemed to need blood transfusions.

¹³⁴⁹ Radoli, *How Local is the Local Church*, p. 64 and Healey, *Towards an African*, p. 144.

¹³⁵⁰ American lay theologian Lisa Cahill comments: “The primary meaning of ‘church’ is not the Vatican, ecclesial structures or a body of teaching and doctrine, but the community in which the Risen Christ lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.” “Concluding Remarks: AIDs, Evil and Salvation: African Light on Faith in Jesus Christ” in Azetsop, Jacquineau (ed.), *HIV & AIDs in Africa: Christian Reflection, Public Health, Social Transformation*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016.

¹³⁵¹ Raphael Ndingi Mwana a’Nzeki, “Talk at the Book Launch of *Small Christian*

This can be illustrated in these two stories:

1. In February, 1999 I participated in a "Seminar on Missionary Awareness" at the Spiritan Missionary Seminary outside of Arusha, Tanzania. One speaker explained how the pope is the main person responsible for mission in the universal church, the bishop the main person responsible for mission in the diocese, the pastor the main person responsible for mission in the parish and the chairperson the main person responsible for mission in the Small Christian Community (SCC). At this point I politely disagreed, saying that this pyramid or vertical style of authority, responsibility and decision making is just the opposite of how the SCCs are a new model of church from the bottom up. It is not the chairperson but all the SCC members together who are jointly responsible for mission and different forms of outreach.¹³⁵²
2. Traveling around the world I'm sure that I surprise many priests, deacons and catechists (and parishioners alike) when I say that in Eastern Africa we find it "easy" to preach on Sunday if we use the "SCC process or method" in preparing homilies. During the week the priest (or any homilist/teacher on Sunday) participates in various SCC meetings of lay people in his parish that read and reflect on, the Gospel of the following Sunday.

Then the Sunday Parish Eucharist or "Sunday Service Without a Priest" becomes the "communion of the SCCs." During his homily the priest (or homilist/teacher) reflects back the experiences, insights and applications that he or she has learned from the *Bible* reflections that have taken place in the individual SCC meetings. Much of the content of his or her homily come from the life experiences and *Bible*-life connections of SCC members that members of the Sunday congregation can easily relate to and feel are relevant to their lives.^{1353 1354}

Communities: Capturing the New Moment," Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 2007, p. 1.

¹³⁵² "SCCs as a New Way of Being Local Church," African Story No. 357 in the "African Stories Database", African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 21 July 2011, [http://afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-database.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=588](http://afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-database.html?task=display2&cid[0]=588)

¹³⁵³ Reflection on "The Small Christian Communities Way of Being Church in Preaching" adapted from Joseph Healey, "Small is Beautiful," *Tablet*, 4 November, 2004.

¹³⁵⁴ The Sunday Eucharist at St. Thomas More, the Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, USA incorporates suggestions from the 14 Small Church Communities of students and staff that meet during the previous week and reflect on the First Reading (*Old Testament*) and the Gospel and try to apply the Word of God to our daily lives. Guidelines for the SCC Facilitators state: "The facilitator summarizes the discussion for possible inclusion in the Sunday liturgy on the back of the attendance sheet and leaves it in a box at the reception desk."

There are concrete examples of this approach. One priest in Bariadi Parish in Shinyanga Diocese, Tanzania tried to visit three SCCs during the middle of the week. By listening carefully to the SCC members' reflections on the Scripture readings he found that over half of his Sunday homily was already "written" for him. The priests in St. Theresa's Parish, Eastleigh in Nairobi Archdiocese joined with lay members of the parish to use the Lumko "Group Response Method" of Gospel Sharing (pioneered by Lumko, South Africa) to prepare their Sunday homilies together.¹³⁵⁵ A deacon in Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, South B in Nairobi Archdiocese said that he "decided to join St. Clara SCC in Hazina Estate in order to prepare my homilies based on the sharing of life experiences of the people."^{1356 1357}

¹³⁵⁵ In traveling in the USA I hear feedback on Sunday homilies that are sometimes very good and sometimes very bad. The "bad" homilies result from the preacher being too academic, being too aloof/distant from the parishioners, too focused on the Scripture readings alone, not connecting the Sunday Readings to daily life, having a foreign accent that is hard to understand, etc. Much of this could be avoided if American preachers followed the participatory styles/approaches used in Eastern Africa, what I call the "SCC process or method" in preparing homilies.

¹³⁵⁶ Ghanaian Missionary of Africa Deacon Damana Fidelis Kpeenbata, MAfr, "An Insertion Experience of Weekly *Bible* Sharing and Prayer in St. Clara Small Christian Community in Hazina, South B," Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, March, 2013, p. 1.

¹³⁵⁷ Some USA examples:

1. An American diocesan parish priest in Hartford Archdiocese, Connecticut, USA states:

I began meeting every Saturday morning with five Catholic laymen from 6:30 a.m. -- 8:00 a.m. to reflect upon the gospel of the upcoming Sunday and to connect it with our daily lives. We have been meeting now for over three months and are ready to open the group to any man in our parish. To a man we have all found it very enriching. We talk with each other about the concrete experiences of our lives and about what our faith has to do with them. A bond of trust is growing within the group and we are eager to draw other men into it. On a personal note, let me say, I have always guarded my Saturday mornings as a special time to prepare my homily for the weekend, reading commentaries and praying with the Scriptures. So, at first, I hesitated to make the commitment on Saturdays. However, it is the best homily preparation I have ever found in my 44 years of priestly ministry. The shared faith of these men has enriched my preaching significantly.

Joseph Donnelly, "Men of All Ages Need to Talk about God, *Gatherings*, Fall, 2015 (Vol. 27, No. 2), pps. 5-7.

2. An American diocesan priest in Paterson Diocese, USA uses a different method. From time to time he invites a Catholic couple that he knows well to invite six or seven other couples that he does not know well to a roundtable discussion and dialog in the parish rectory living room. As they reflect on their daily lives in the parish – their hopes, the dreams, their

Kenyan Mariannahill seminarian Benedict Kimutai reports:

The Small Christian Communities can use WhatsApp to pass information and engage themselves. For example, in St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish in Kericho, Kenya Father John Paul Cheruiyot has empowered the Christians to interact through WhatsApp and Twitter. Every week in the

challenges, their problems – the priest learns a lot and gets valuable ideas, examples and stories that he can use in his weekly Sunday homilies.

3. An American diocesan priest in Boston Archdiocese, Boston, USA meets with a Men's Spirituality Group on Saturday mornings. As they read and reflect on the Gospel of the following Sunday he suggests that the laymen ask themselves three questions. What does the reading mean to you personally? What does the reading mean to you in your family as a husband and father? What does the reading mean to you in evangelizing the world? The answers help the priest with ideas for his homily the following day.

John in a conversation with the author in Boston, 19 November, 2015.

4. American laywoman Kerry Robinson gives three examples:

a. A few of my favorite diocesan pastors formed a priest support group shortly after they were ordained. They meet faithfully throughout the year and always dedicate some time to a prayerful discussion of the coming Sunday's readings and ways to apply the Gospel to current concerns weighing on their parishioners' hearts and minds.

b. One of these pastors established "homily duty" in his parish. Modeled after jury duty, it was understood as a civic responsibility conferred upon all registered members of the parish. Juries consist of 12 parishioners who meet with the pastor to discuss the readings and offer insight connecting the passages with the concerns and topics of the day. One's obligation does not end with that, however. The group meets with the pastor once more, the following week, to critique the homily including delivery, intonation, word choice, quality of exegesis, length and acuity.

c. Another pastor introduced a Small Church Community structure within the wider parish assembly, encouraging small groups of parishioners to meet weekly to pray, be challenged by the readings, and enter more deeply into Christian life. Commentaries and historical background on the readings are provided and members of the Small Church Communities are encouraged to discuss the readings in the context of their lives. Key perceptions as well as unresolved questions are recorded and when the pastor prepares his homily, he takes cues and inspiration from these accounts. As he notes, the quality of the liturgy is significantly enhanced when a sizeable percentage of the community has already read, prayed with and wrestled with the readings. They are eager to learn more and often hear their own insights woven into the homily.

Kerry Robinson, *Chicago Catholic*, 22 November, 2017, *Chicago Catholic Website*, retrieved on 12 December, 2017, <https://www.chicagocatholic.com/kerry-robinson/-/article/2017/11/22/the-ineestimable-blessing-of-excellent-preaching>

SCCs WhatsApp Groups he poses a question for the Christians to reflect on. On Saturday evening he concludes with his contribution and the topic forms the basis of his homily on Sunday.

And what of the content of the Sunday Homily. It is basically the same as the midweek *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection/Bible—Life Connections Service of Small Christian Communities (SCCs)*: to connect or link the Sunday Readings to our daily lives.¹³⁵⁸ A good preparation for the Sunday Eucharist is to reflect on the readings ahead of time especially in the SCC Meetings that takes place in the middle of the week.

A good Case Study is the Gospel of *John 10: 27-30* for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year C. A priest in Meru Diocese, Kenya participated in the *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* of a SCC deanery group during a SCCs Workshop on a Tuesday afternoon. Then he participated in the *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* of Blessed Joseph Allamano SCC in St. Massimo Parish on Wednesday afternoon. Both SCCs reflected on the exact same scripture verse: “My sheep hear my voice” (*John 10: 27*). The SCC members’ comments were exactly the same. On Sunday mornings instead of going to church to “hear” Jesus’ voice, Catholics follow other voices: women (shopping), men (going to bars) and youth (social media on their smartphones). In rural areas some people go to their farms especially during the planting and harvest seasons. Drawing on these comments the title of the priest’s Sunday Homily became “Whose Voice Do You Hear on Sunday Morning?”¹³⁵⁹

The SCC leaders have special names or terms in the spirit of servant leadership. Various SCCs in Eastern Africa used “coordinator.” When Mwoleka helped found SCCs in Tanzania in the 1970s, he urged dropping government-related and church-related hierarchical names connected with power, rank and prestige such as “chairperson.” He recommended *mkolezaji* that is the Swahili translation of animator from *kukolea* – to stir (a cooking term). Similarly, in Zambia SCCs use the Bemba (the largest ethnic group in the country) name or term meaning animator. Some SCCs in Kenya prefer *mtumishi* (one who serves others) or *mhudumu* (one who ministers to others). Each ministry emphasizes service to the community and the overall leader is the “servant of the servants.” This leads to team ministry and community ministry. Consolata Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya uses the name or term “convenor.” The various convenors are part of the Apostolate Committee of the Parish.

¹³⁵⁸ “Evelyn, a lay parishioner on Kenya, said: ‘When I go to the Catholic Church on Sunday I expect the priest to help me connect my Sunday prayer to the rest of my week at work.’ Canadian Quebec Missionary Father Roland Laneuville, PME explains: ‘If the *Bible* readings are to be relevant today, they must shed light on what has been lived during the week and encourage the faithful to act during the coming week. To make the link between the Word of God and the ‘today’ reality – as Jesus did—is what Evelyn is looking for; this is the purpose of a good homily.’” Roland Laneuville, “Where the *Bible* and the Media Meet,” *National Mirror* (September, 2013), p. 12.

¹³⁵⁹ A similar homily could be given in the USA where on Sunday mornings Catholics sleep in, read the Sunday newspapers, go to the mall, play golf, drive to children’s sports activities and even watch sports on TV (with the time difference many European soccer games start on Sunday morning).

Many parishes in Kenya now use the name or term “Moderator” for the leader of the SCC. In Nairobi Archdiocese it was decided that the Parish Priest should be the Chairperson of all the SCCs in the parish. Only he should use this name. He should be above, or in charge of, all the individual leaders of the neighborhood SCCs who are called Moderators. He is called *Baba Paroko* that means Father Parish Priest/Father Pastor. Unfortunately both in titles and structures the clerical, patriarchal, hierarchical, exclusive Catholic Church is dying very slowly in Africa.

An expression of this new type of leadership is how decisions are made from below through the SCC rather than from the top through the priest and parish structure. If someone dies the news goes first to the SCC leaders who then go to the priest or appropriate parish office and the appropriate funeral service is arranged. The same for requests for financial help. If someone has a request for medicine for a sick person, school fees, a special need, a loan for any emergency, etc. the request is first discussed in the SCC. If the SCC treasury can be used, all the better. Otherwise the needy person takes a recommendation letter written by the SCC leaders to the priest or appropriate parish office. Requests that go directly to the priest or parish office are sent back for consultation first in the SCC.¹³⁶⁰ This results in a great saving of the priest, catechist and parish secretary’s time and energy. Another example of this leadership from below style is the plan for African youth to participate in the periodic World Youth Days around the world. Before applying to his or her diocese for approval, first the youth have to get a recommendation letter from their SCC.

Another example of SCCs responding to the contemporary signs of the times in Eastern Africa is the increasing role of women in leadership. This is also reflected in civil society where women have a certain percentage of seats in Parliament in various African governments. Paul Njuki presents this interesting 2013 Case Study:

Today I assisted in presiding over the elections of new officials at St. Anthony Abbot Small Christian Community in Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Nairobi. The elections of the officials were mainly unanimous, with the top leadership (Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer) going to women while the men took up assistant positions. It is interesting how the basic church in the neighborhood continues to take shape with women at the center stage of leadership. The policy guidelines for Parish Pastoral Council Elections at Our Lady of Guadalupe are explicit on the election criteria on gender representation at the ratio of 2/3. This means that out of the executive committee of five, men and women should be represented at the ratio of 2 to 3. If men are two, women are three. If women are three, men are two.¹³⁶¹

2. Sacraments. Ideally the Sunday Eucharist in the outstation, subparish or parish is a communion of small communities that have met during the middle of the week to reflect on the readings of the following Sunday. SCCs have the responsibility

¹³⁶⁰ Priests and other pastoral workers in Africa can be overwhelmed by requests for financial help (medicine, school fees, bus fares, burial expenses, etc.). One has to deal creatively, yet compassionately, with the “maombi mentality” (the Swahili saying *kuomba siyo vibaya – to ask is not bad*). One solution is that all requests from everyone pass through the SCC first.

¹³⁶¹ Paul Njuki, Small Christian Communities Facebook Page, retrieved 17 April, 2013. <https://www.face-book.com/pages/Small-Christian-Communities/279921983315>

to recommend its members to receive the sacraments. Catholic parents wanting their child to be baptized need a letter of recommendation from their SCC. Some of the preparation for the sacraments takes place in the SCC itself, for example, preparing children for First Communion. The SCCs in Moshi Diocese, Tanzania are known for reconciling married couples who have disputes.

In some parishes in Tanzania adults interested in becoming Catholics (called "Inquirers") first pass through the SCC in their neighborhood/geographical area that submits the request forms for the Baptism of adults to the parish office. Some SCCs have started the Ministry of Pastoral Accompaniment in the Adult Catechumenate or the Adult Catechumenate Accompanier. A catechumen chooses a SCC member to "accompany" him or her through the stages (steps and rites) of the RCIA. The catechumen is invited to participate in all the activities of the SCC. Personal relationships and friendships are an important part of helping people who are preparing for Baptism to feel "at home" in their local Christian community. Growth in faith is an experience of living in a believing community. In Rulenge Diocese Mwoleka emphasized the saying that *the faith is caught more than taught* meaning that regular participation in SCC gatherings and activities especially sharing the life of the SCCs is more important than formal instruction classes. Sometimes the whole SCC accompanies "its" catechumens – an example of community ministry. Here all the SCC members are responsible for the spiritual and pastoral life of their own small community. This approach is closely related to the African values of community, joint responsibility, togetherness and sharing.¹³⁶²

“Paul’s Two-Year Spiritual Journey” is a real life story adapted to illustrate practical evangelization. This story took place in Iramba Parish in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania. It tells the story of Maro, a 79-year old Mgorome elder who decides to become a Catholic. He joins the two-year Adult Catechumenate. Part of the story goes:

Maro never missed the weekly meeting of the Small Christian Community in Kenyamonta Town. He chose Petro Mosi, an old Catholic friend in the SCC, to be his companion and helper during the two-year Adult Catechumenate. The way the Christians shared together in the SCC Maro agreed that the Catholic faith was "caught more than taught. The official "Rite of Initiation into the Catechumenate" took place the following March. At this time Maro formally chose his new name Paul. He told everyone how proud he was to be preparing to become a Christian.

Paul started the second year of the adult catechumenate along with 44 other people in the parish. The twice-weekly catechism classes continued and he learned a lot about the *New Testament* and the mass. He particularly liked the stories of Jesus Christ's miracles and parables. Paul's eyes were too bad for regular reading but he enjoyed the weekly *Bible* Sharing in his Kenyamonta Town SCC.

All together 38 catechumens prepared to be baptized during the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night ranging from 81-year-old Paul Maro to 15-year-old

¹³⁶² “Faith ‘Caught’ Rather Than Taught,” Story No. 114 in the “African Stories Database”, African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 21 July 2011, [http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-database.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=64](http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-database.html?task=display2&cid[0]=64)

Pamela Owino. Everyone praised Paul for persevering during his two-year spiritual journey. As the water was poured over his head Paul smiled and said to himself, "Yes, now I am a Christian too." After the adult Baptisms his wife Theresa came up for the blessing of their marriage. As the two of them received communion together for the first time the beaming faces of all of Paul's children and grandchildren were wet with happy tears.¹³⁶³

More and of the sacraments are celebrated in the SCC itself especially the Eucharist, the Reconciliation, Baptism, Sacrament of the Sick and Matrimony. Thus the SCC is the increasing place (*locus*) of ecclesial identity, ecclesial life and activity. Here is a description by a Malawian seminarian of the celebration of marriage at the SCC level in Namitembo Parish in Zomba Diocese, Malawi:

During my parish pastoral experience in 2005 I attended the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony in a SCC. As a way of implementing the vision of this new way of being church, the parish priest of Namitembo gave a provision that those wishing to wed can choose to do so either in the parish church as had been the practice or in their respective SCCs. When a member of a particular SCC intends to marry, registration takes place in that SCC and the marriage counseling sessions are done there. The parish Marriage Counselors work together with the counselors of that particular SCC. The announcement of the marriage bands is done both at the parish and at that SCC every week they meet.

On the actual day that the sacrament is celebrated, the mass takes place at the house of the bride since the local ethnic group society is matrilineal. It is a mass just like at any other SCC meeting. During the sharing of the Word of God, the members emphasize sharing their life experiences in their families with the view of advising the ones to marry of the challenges of the commitment they are about to make. The priest also shares the Word of God from his perspective. When it is time to exchange marital vows, the priest invites members from each side of the couple to stand behind their relative. Parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and all who are related to them stand behind them to witness and give their assent to the event.

This practice restores the communitarian aspect of the African family that is vital. By registering the marriage at that SCC, involving counselors of that SCC, announcing marriage bands at that SCC and celebrating the sacrament itself at that SCC, the local community is involved. There is greater participation of relatives and this makes them feel part and parcel of the process. Advice given during the sharing of the Word of God is based on their personal experiences and this carries more value. Since the SCC knows the strengths and weakness of the new couple, they are at a better position to give

¹³⁶³ The full story is printed in Joseph Healey, *What Language Does God Speak*, pp. 53-57, Healey and Sybertz, *Towards An African Narrative Theology*, pp. 368-371 and in "African Lenten and Easter Stories" on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 18 August 2014, <http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-by-season/12-easter-stories/44-pauls-two-year-spiritual-journey.html>

relevant advice. The local community is no longer passive witnesses or spectators but active players.¹³⁶⁴

The whole process of marriage can be celebrated in the SCC, not just the official sacrament itself. There can be liturgical and para-liturgical services at various stages like the offering and receiving of the dowry or bridewealth, the ceremonial meal of the two families, the farewell at the bride's home, the accompaniment of the bridal party and the welcoming of the bride and groom.

Davies emphasizes:

In terms of inculturation the SCC is an excellent venue for celebrating the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Marriage where many African customs can so easily complement and express the Catholic value of community. In rural areas, having the sacrament celebrated in the home, in the same place as the traditional wedding feast. is a possibility which would also solve the practical and disrupting difficulty of moving the community from church to home...If the religious dimension of Christian marriage is safeguarded, it would be advantageous to have the religious and the community celebration in the same place and at the same time.¹³⁶⁵

SCC members participate in the Ordinations and Final Vows ceremonies that take place in parishes and religious houses of priests, brothers and sisters who with their families belong to these small communities. Sometimes the SCC accompanies the person in the ceremony along with the parents and other family members. Sometimes the SCC has a celebration for the person who is honored.

A Case Study is the Priestly Ordination of Father Michael Mungai Ndung'u, SJ in St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Kangemi in Nairobi Archdiocese on 31 July, 2011. Originally from Gatundu Parish, Ndung'u spent four months doing pastoral work as a deacon in Kangemi. He became familiar with the 28 SCCs in the parish. So these SCCs were an important part of the ordination ceremony presided over by Bishop Rodrigo Mejia (originally from Colombia in South America and formerly the Bishop of Soddo, Ethiopia) who himself helped to start many of these SCCs when he worked in the parish in the 1980s.

During the ceremony SCC members read the First and Second Readings. At the end of the mass the bishop gave the leader of each of the 28 SCCs a candle. Then representatives of these SCCs spoke briefly at the reception. They mentioned how much they appreciated that the newly ordained priest had worked with the SCCs during his pastoral work in the parish. These SCC representatives also expressed great joy that Mejia who had founded some of these SCCs when he was a priest has now returned to lead this ordination celebration.

¹³⁶⁴ Samuel Satiele, SMM, "Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage at the Small Christian Community (SCC) Level in Malawi," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 21 July, 2011, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/malawi/55-malawi.html>

¹³⁶⁵ Colon Davies, *From Pilot to Pastoral Bishop*, p. 113.

3. Other Liturgical Rites. In addition to the sacraments in the SCCs, another important part of the holistic African experience is the whole area of paraliturgies, paraliturgical services, morning and night prayers, rosary in community, novenas, special blessings, prayers for concrete needs and sacramentals in the SCCs. Here we see the ecclesial identity and ecclesial life taking place in the SCCs themselves. Such expressions as “SCCs are a way of life, not just a program or a project” and “the church in the neighborhood” become real. Lay people are mainly responsible and practically demonstrate that “we are the church.” One female SCC leader in Uganda said, “After joining an SCC, I learned that the church belongs to me, not the priest.”¹³⁶⁶

This priority is rooted in African society and often follows the customs and traditions of the local ethnic groups. This is part of popular religiosity in Africa. Pastoral inculturation take place in SCC events such as praying over the sick (see the ministry of healing mentioned earlier) and the traditional African rites of passage including the *Naming Ceremony*, *Circumcision Ceremony*, *Bereavement Ceremonies* and *Burial Rite*.

The two most common special services/gatherings in SCCs in Eastern Africa are to pray for sick members of the SCC and to pray for recently deceased members (and members of their families) of the SCC. A popular liturgical ceremony is the blessing of a home and the people who live in it. Accompanied by the SCC leaders, a new pastor or priest in the parish might visit all the SCC members in a particular SCC and bless the houses along the way. During the year SCC member participate in various rituals such as blessing of the fields, the harvest, the instruments of work, even the animals. Reconciliation services have been particularly effective in SCCs in Kenya and Uganda to heal the divisions of tribalism and negative ethnicity.

Special *Bible* readings and prayers are used during the SCC *Bible Services* and SCC Prayer Services mentioned above. Africans love sacramentals such as blessings and the laying on of hands. These graced moments can be emphasized more by using holy water, incense and other symbols.

Segeja summarizes:

Due concern is given in the SCCs to the different liturgical and paraliturgical services at which ordained ministers are not present: like praying and meditating on the Word of God in the SCC, praying in families, service to the sick, various stages of the marriage process (offering and receiving of the dowry or bridewealth, the farewell, accompaniment and welcoming the bride and groom), the various penance services, First Communion and Confirmation.¹³⁶⁷

Togolese Society of the Divine Word Deacon Koutandji Wayéname, SVD reports on a specific example in St. Theresa of the Child Jesus SCC in Kenya Technical Teachers College (KTTC) in Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya:

¹³⁶⁶ J. J. Carney, interview with SCC leaders, Our Lady of Fatima Queen of Peace Cathedral Parish, Diocese of Kasana-Luweero, Uganda, January, 2013.

¹³⁶⁷ Segeja, “Small Christian Community A Vital Icon,” p. 32.

The second thing on the agenda was to find out how many [SCC members] were to go with Agneta when her husband was to go to her home town of Machakos for dowry payment on Saturday, 17 January, 2015. She wanted to associate the small community to that event in her life...Some of the SCC officials were asked to make arrangements for the car for the members who were to attend the dowry business of Agneta in Machakos the following week and the time of departure.¹³⁶⁸

Among the Kamba Ethnic Group in Machakos Diocese there is a mass at the beginning of the official dowry ceremony. Participants are the whole family, friends, SCC members and neighbors (the local community). Some SCC members help in the dowry negotiations. Others help in the cooking during these events and the celebrations of the two wedding families.

It is unfortunate that the Catholic system of seven official sacraments is almost a “frozen” system, not subject to permanent change and additions. Creative, inculturated para-liturgical services seem to come and go, often based on the interest of the changing local leadership.¹³⁶⁹ These services do not become a part of the official diocesan and parish pastoral plans.

4. Finances. Most SCCs take responsibility for their own finances. Many have a treasury that is augmented by regular contributions from SCC members. Some wealthier SCC members contribute as much as \$12 a week, other poorer SCCs as little as \$0.10 a week. But the spirit and the regularity is what is important.

Many SCCs have income-generating projects and fund raising projects (called *harambee* in Swahili). The money is used to help needy people, special activities, celebrations in the SCCs (for example, ordination of an African priest from the parish, jubilee events), and parish collections (for example, diocesan assessment/contribution, a building project, seminary fund, new priest, retirement of the catechist). One creative approach is that SCCs members contribute to “buy a brick” fund raisers for parish building projects.

The first priority should be to help needy people in the SCC and wider community. This takes precedence over all the other uses of the treasury of the SCC. This underlies the heart and meaning of the life and activities of an African SCC. The ministry of the Good Neighbor/Good Samaritan/Servant of the Poor in the SCC is very important.

There are many examples of needy people: aged, children without school fees, people with disabilities, isolated widows, sick especially people with cancer, single mothers, unemployed and very economically poor people. Members of St. Martin de Porres SCC in Our Lady Queen Parish, Karen in Nairobi Archdiocese provide lunch money for poor children who have a long walk every day to a rural primary school in neighboring Ngong

¹³⁶⁸ Koutandji Wayéname, “SCCs Course Paper No. 1,” Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 2015, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁶⁹ See views of Michael Kirwen on his pastoral and missionary examples and experiences in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania.

Diocese.¹³⁷⁰ Members of St. Francis Assisi SCC in St. Francis Assisi Parish, Kawangware in Nairobi Archdiocese raised money for the funeral and burial of the 17-year-old daughter of a SCC member who was mugged and killed in a rough neighborhood in the city. Members of St. Kizito SCC in St. Francis Assisi Parish, Kawangware in Nairobi Archdiocese raised money to help relocate a poor widow and her eight children to her home area. Members of St. Veronica Small Community in St. Catherine Catholic Church in Nyahururu Diocese helped a young girl who needed an operation for a cancerous growth on her neck.

There is a wide variety of help. A wheelchair for a person with a disability. A wheelchair for an old man who was attacked by lion and broke his leg and became paralyzed on his left side. Contribution to an air ticket of a delegate going to the World Congress of the Family in Philadelphia. A guitar for the choir of a SCC. A small grant to a widow to start a home-based African handicraft business to support herself. A small grant to finish building a parish library. Help to build Computer Center and School for youth. A small grant to help a self-help poultry project. Musical instruments for the SCC Band/Choir. Navigation sticks/canes and sunglasses for blind members of a SCC. Hospital care for SCC member who got burnt by cooking oil while on her daily business of selling mandazi and chapati. Help for a SCC member in Kariobangi whose one son died and the other son got in a broken leg when their flat was destroyed when the building in Huruma, Nairobi collapsed. The family is now homeless. Food for a very poor family. Medical expenses for a teenage boy whose leg was amputated after been bitten by a poisonous snake.

This request from Garissa Diocese is especially moving:

“Kindly receive greetings from St. Joseph Small Christian Community of St. Jude Catholic Parish, Garissa Diocese. We are appealing to the AMECEASmall Christian Communities Training Team to support us purchase a wheelchair for one of our members who was shot [during the terrorist attack on Garissa University] and had to have one of his legs amputated.

Kshs 93,500/= is required to buy the wheelchair. We have so far managed to raise the following amount:

St. Joseph SCC contribution 28,000
 St. Jude Catholic Parish 18,000
 Garissa Diocese 14,000
 Eight other SCCs contributed 17,000
 Total amount collected 77,000
 Balance required 16,500

Any contribution extended to us will be very much highly appreciated. Thank you. Yours in Christ. Cornelius Mutuka.”

For SCCs requesting specific financial help we have a process following specific “Guidelines.” A common plan is for the SCC members first to take up a collection among themselves. Each contribution is carefully written down. Then the special fund in the parish to help the needy and/or the parish priest himself makes a small contribution. Then the other SCCs in the parish contribute. Perhaps the diocese will contribute too. Then a special fund

¹³⁷⁰ Joseph Ngala in a conversation with the author in Nairobi, Kenya, 9 April, 2013.

(*Mfuko wa Jumuiya* in Swahili) started by members of the AMECEA SCCs Training Team makes a small contribution. We try to make this collaboration, teamwork and mutual help “teaching moments.” We use the Ugandan proverb *one hand washes the other*.

Often this process includes an official request for help that is posted on the SCCs Facebook Page. Various announcements and information updates are posted on the page, for example, when the *Mfuko wa Jumuiya* is active or inactive. Also the SCC leader votes in the Poll on SCC Website. A new challenge is that the traditional SCCs (often composed only of adults) have to encourage young people to join the SCCs who are conversant with the internet and posting messages. These young people can help with the online communications.

Another challenge is that needy SCC members in rural areas or in the slums may not have the access to the internet to post their requests. This reflects the gap between the economically richer and the poorer SCCs members as well.

Then follows a lengthy phone conversation about the life and needs of the SCC that is requesting help that is the first “teaching moment.” For me this is a unique opportunity to “smell the sheep” in the now famous words of Pope Francis. I discover who are some of the wounded people and those on the margins/peripheries. During this time we sometimes consult the SCCs Coordinator in the diocese that the request is coming from and get his/her recommendation. This insures that the financial contribution is coordinated within the diocesan and parish pastoral plan.

When a SCC representative comes to receive the small contribution from the special SCCs Fund (*Mfuko wa Jumuiya* in Swahili), we have a lengthy conversation that is a second “teaching moment” about the purpose and activities of the SCC. Part of the “Guidelines” is that this representative is an active member of the SCC, not just a young person who happens to be doing private business in Nairobi on that day. This is a time for prayer and a discussion on the meaning of SCCs, the activities of SCCs, helping the needy and self-reliance. The list of contributors from the SCC itself is examined and discussed.¹³⁷¹ The life of the Patron Saint of the SCC, the importance of *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection*, understanding the liturgical year, etc. are discussed. We use the principal in the famous proverb, *give a person a fish and you feed the person for a day; teach a person to fish and you feed the person for a lifetime*.

Especially the SCC leaders learn skills and acquire information that they can pass on to the other SCCs members. We look up information using the Google Search feature on a smartphone. Another example: A SCC leader did not know the Feast Day of the Patron Saint of her SCC. Rather than giving her the answer, I lent her the *Daily Missal* and after 15 minutes of searching she found the date herself. Another SCC leader found the date in the Catholic Church *Ordo* for the Liturgical Year.

Sometimes we use the speaker on my smartphone for a live conversation between myself, the SCC member who has come to collect the money and the chairperson of that particular SCC. The chairperson “teaches” the member basic information about the Catholic Church and their SCC.

The discussion on financial help is situated in the context of the diocesan and parish pastoral plans for developing SCCs and how SCC members collaborate together. The idea not

¹³⁷¹ Sometimes this list is scanned and sent by email.

just a small grant for a needy cause, but developing the overall life and activities of outreaching and mission service SCCs.

The SCCs are encouraged to send a thank you message as a text message or a comment on our SCCs Facebook Page. A recent development is that the SCC leader reports on the use of the money by posting a message on the SCCs Facebook Page or by a phone call.

We have expanded the use of this *Mfuko wa Jumuiya* fund to include:

1. Family and marriage issues. 15,000/= Kenyan Shillings to the cost of the dowry of a couple in St. Kizito SCC, Nairobi Archdiocese on a quasi-matching basis.
2. Books: 5,000/= Kenyan Shillings worth of SCCs books to a parish library run by a SCC in Maralal Diocese.
3. Books and DVDs for the Meru Diocese SCCs Library.
4. Production of six copies of theses and long essays on SCCs for libraries in Nairobi.
5. Travel expenses for journalists writing on SCCs.
6. Repair of houses of SCCs members burnt down by thieves.
7. Help a needy SCC member to build a house.
8. Help to buy county council shoe shining stalls as a self-reliance project for SCCs handicapped members rather than their begging in the streets.
9. Buying a keyboard for a SCC Choir.
10. Build an outdoor toilet for a needy SCC member.
11. Buy a wheel chair for a Kenyan soldier was fighting in the Peacekeeping Force in South Somalia, was injured and had his two legs amputated.
12. Hospital bill for a burn victim.
13. Towards expenses of printing *SCCs Formation Manual* for Meru Diocese, Kenya.
14. Producing radio programs on SCCs for Kenyatta University KU FM.
15. Recovery of two members attacked by bandits and seriously injured and their livestock taken in Isiolo, a drought area in Northern Kenya.
16. Food, water and other basic necessities in Marsabit, a drought area in Northern Kenya.
17. T Shirts for the Reigniters of YSCCs Team at Kenyatta University.
18. Grinding Machine (*posho* mill) in drought area of Lodwar Diocese.
19. Assistance to over 100 displaced people living in the compound at St. Vincent Catholic Church Parish in Baringo County in Eldoret Diocese after the local cattle rustling and tribal fighting.
20. Assistance to Kenyan refugees in Moroto Diocese, Uganda who have fled from their homes in Baringo County due to cattle rustling.
21. Assistance to a Ugandan woman in Nairobi with a spinal disability. Now a widow and with no money for rent, we are giving travel expenses for her and her five children to return to their original home in Uganda. This is in the practice of almsgiving during this Lenten season.
22. Contribute to the outstanding bill of a SCC member who is patient in a hospital and waiting to be discharged.
23. Contribute to the outstanding hospital bill of a SCC member (father of 6 children) who was shot in the stomach by a stray bullet during the post-election violence in August, 2017.
24. Contribute to the outstanding hospital bill of a SCC member who was knocked down by a vehicle and broken her leg while she tried to run away from tear gas during the 2017 post-election violence in the city center in Nairobi.
25. Help refugees from the neighboring country of South Sudan who are pouring into Northern Uganda.
26. Support a poultry project for 30 widows in Moroto, Uganda to curb out poverty among them

- and provide self-employment for their members.
27. Help one of the refugees from the neighboring country of South Sudan who has to undergo an urgent medical operation in Kotido, Uganda remove a bullet in her body after local violence.
 28. Help women with fistula problems and albino girls who have fled their homes for fear of being sacrificed and their body parts used for rituals.
 29. Help SCC members in the Kawangware Area of Nairobi, Kenya whose houses were set on fire in the riots between Jubilee and NASA supporters in the post-election violence in October, 2017.
 30. Help a SCC youth leader to help pay the bail to release his father from jail.
 31. Ongoing help for “the neediest cases” – people who have one bad incident after another such as sickness, injury, robbery, unemployment, etc.
 32. Help St. Charles Lwanga SCC in St John the Baptist Catholic Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese to contribute \$100 to a Rwandese widow with two grandchildren who is an illegal refugee in Kenya and is being deported back to her home country and wants to buy iron sheets for her new house in Rwanda.
 33. Help St. Monica SCC in Nakuru Diocese to contribute \$100 to an elderly homeless Ugandan refugee/widower to build a shelter.
 34. Assist the Young Adult SCC at Dandora Parish to prepared lunch for visitors from the Fifth Missio-sponsored Network Small Christian Communities Africa Workshop.
 35. Assist the treasury of Pax Romana Kenya that goes by the name Kenya Movement of Catholic Professionals.
 36. Assist long time SCC member with school fees for her granddaughter.
 37. Assist SCC member with research grant for his Diploma Paper on “Lack of Young People in SCCs.”
 38. Buying 35 plastic chairs for a weekly Alcoholic Anonymous Meeting in a parish in Nairobi.
 39. Rebuild homes destroyed in a fire in Nairobi.
 40. Help buy a computer to spread teachings on SCCs and Pontifical Missionary Childhood in Uganda.
 41. Complete building a library to enable our members of our parish, especially the youth, to access reading materials as a way of evangelization in Muranga Diocese.
 42. Build house for retired widower in Moroto, Uganda.
 43. A Fish Breeding Project in Lodwar Diocese, Kenya.
 44. Mosquito nets to combat the terrible disease of malaria in Homa Bay Diocese, Kenya.
- NOTE:** On 15 September, 2019 the Kenya Government launched the test malaria vaccine called RTS,S or Mosquirix in Homa Bay, Kenya. It is being administered on children at the ages of six, seven, nine and 24 months. The vaccine, the first of its type, is also being used in Ghana and Malawi.
45. Relocate families whose homes we destroyed in the mud slides due to heavy rains in Kahuhoine, Muranga Diocese, Kenya in November, 2019.
 46. Assist a four-year-old girl sexually abused by her Father in Nairobi to relocate to her grandparents’ home in Kakamega.
 47. Assist the volunteer catechist serving four Small Christian Communities of South Sudanese refugees living in Nairobi.
 48. Help a little girl with a kidney infection to vacate Mbagathi County Hospital in Nairobi before it is turned into a hospital exclusively for patients with coronavirus.
 49. Money to help a student at Tangaza for internet bundles to do online research for a paper on “Online Small Christian Communities.”
 50. Money to help a YPSCC animator for internet bundles to post the daily Scripture readings on different SCC Facebook Pages.
 51. Money for internet bundles to coordinate “Online Small Christian Communities” during the pandemic.

52. Ecumenical outreach: helping a member of a Pentecostal Church in Karen with many debts and family problems.
53. During the lockdown sending money to needy families in Lugazi Diocese, Uganda through mobile money vendors.
54. During the pandemic helping starving people in Malindi Diocese.
55. During the pandemic paying the rent of a poor refugee catechist from South Sudan living in Nairobi.
56. Used clothes to the refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya.
57. Diabetic medicine for diabetic Suzanna in Tanzania.

As an example during the months of August and September, 2015 the *Mfuko wa Jumuiya* helped (in chronological order) all 26 Kenyan dioceses of Nairobi (Kiambu), Kitale, Nakuru (Navaisha), Machakos, Murang'a, Embu, Kisumu, Ngong, Nyeri, Kisii, Kitui, Nyahururu, Bungoma, Eldoret, Kakamega, Maralal, Kericho, Meru, Homa Bay, Mombasa, Malindi, Isiolo, Lodwar, Marsabit, Garissa and Military Ordinariate.

The dioceses are helped on a strict rotational basis without favoritism and discrimination. After a complete round of all the dioceses, we start a second round. When there are multiple requests from the same diocese we follow the principle of *first come, first serve*. A second or third request from the same diocese is put on the waiting list.

In February, 2016 the *Mfuko wa Jumuiya* helped the Kenyan dioceses of Nairobi, Kitale, Nakuru, Machakos, Murang'a, Embu, Kisumu (twice), Ngong (three times), Nyeri, Kisii, Kitui, Nyahururu, Bungoma, Eldoret, Kakamega, Maralal, Kericho, Meru, Homa Bay, Mombasa, Malindi, Isiolo, Lodwar, Marsabit, Garissa and Military Ordinariate (total of 26) SCCs in Uganda (Lugazi, Masaka and Soroti) and Tanzania (Same) have also been helped. A particular touching example is the financial help to Joseph Ssentonga, a member of St. Matthew Small Christian Community in St. Jude Catholic Church in Masaka Diocese, Uganda. During the presidential election violence that took place in Uganda on 18 February, 2016 he was shot in the shoulder. He needed an urgent medical operation to remove the bullet to save his life.

In September and October, 2017 the *Mfuko wa Jumuiya* helped 77 specific SCCs in Catholic dioceses in Eastern Africa as follows:

Kenyan dioceses of **Bungoma, Eldoret, Embu, Garissa, Homa Bay, Isiolo, Kakamega, Kericho, Kisumu, Kitale, Kisii, Kitui, Lodwar, Machakos, Malindi, Maralal, Marsabit, Meru, Military Ordinand, Mombasa, Muranga, Nairobi (3 -- St. John the Baptist, Riruta (2), St. Peter Claver), Nakuru, Ngong (2), Nyahururu and Nyeri.**

26/29

Ugandan dioceses of **Arua, Fort Portal, Gulu, Hoima, Jinja, Kabale, Kampala, Kasana-Luwero, Kotido, Kyinda-Mityana, Lira, Lugazi, Moroto, Nebbi, Soroti, Tororo** 16 19 missing Kasese, Masaka, Mbarara

Tanzanian dioceses of **Arusha, Bukoba, Bunda, Dar es Saalam, Dodoma, Geita, Ifakara, Iringa, Kahama, Kayanga** (separately a special dam project), **Kigoma, Lindi, Mahenge, Mbeya**, Mbinga (special cattle dip project), **Mbulu**, Morogoro, Moshi, **Mpanda**, Mtwara, **Musoma** (bado:10 fistula women and four albino girls), **Mwanza, Njombe, Rulenge-Ngara, Same, Shinyanga, Singida, Sumbawanga, Tabora, Tanga, Tunduru Masasi** 27 32

South Sudan dioceses of **Rumbek** 1 1

Rwandese dioceses of **Butare, Gikongoro, Kabganyi, Kibungo** Ruhengeri (parish hall) 4 5

During 2016 the focus was on the corporal works of mercy especially helping the sick. In the plan of the Eastern Africa SCCs Training Team the Fund (*Mfuko wa Jumuiya*) rotates with SCC Training Sessions.

Many SCCs have self-reliant and self-help projects that take many forms. Sometimes this begins from the desire and felt need to avoid constant financial contributions and collections from the SCC members. Money is raised from such activities such as:

- bookshop.
- buying food at a low price, storing it and later selling it at a higher price.
- cake sale.
- catering service.
- community uniform sale.
- dairy farming.
- fish pond.
- gift exchange sale.
- green house (for vegetables).
- making and selling African handicraft.
- making and selling soap.
- Mpesa Shop.
- owning a small bus as a commercial venture.
- poultry.
- raffle.
- raising and selling chickens/goats/pigs.
- renting cooking utensils.
- renting musical instruments.
- sewing club.
- special financial collection as a means of raising money.
- small farm to raise cotton, corn, rice, sorghum, millet, etc.
- small shop (*duka* in Swahili).
- tailoring shop.
- vegetable garden on the compound of a SCC member.

The profit is used for the many needs and self-help projects of the SCC. This includes starting cooperatives, credit unions, microcredit projects, etc. of the SCC members.

- Gift to needy people in general (the most common).
- Gift to a very poor SCC member.
- Gift to an unemployed SCC member to start his or her own small business.
- Loan to help members that are unemployed to start a small business.
- Loan in a cooperative or credit union.
- Many needs in the SCC, parish, local community and diocese.

Kenyan layman Michael Kyenze reports from Kitui, Kenya:

SCCs in Kitui have engaged themselves in activities which sustain them economically but guided by the Gospel values. For example, they have started sustainable income generating activities to keep themselves going. Some SCCs in the northern part of Kitui have started planting drought resistance crops like sorghum, millet, pigeon pea, cassava in their demonstration farms and call upon all the SCCs to do the same.

On issues of climate change we are all called to keep the environment better than the way we found it. SCCs in Kitui have started to construct energy saving cooking stoves at the family level. This enable them to place their pots in the *jiko* (Swahili for stove). Then they attend SCC prayer sessions only to come back home and find that the food is already cooked!!!¹³⁷²

If the annual church tax (called *zaka* in Swahili) is collected directly through the SCCs rather than through the parish office the returns are much higher.¹³⁷³ Information about the parish, subparish and outstation finances is communicated through the SCCs. Open discussion in the SCCs lead to more accountability, transparency and participation in the parish finances.

More and more bishops, priests and other pastoral agents are promoting creative ways of developing a self-reliant church through SCCs. In some parishes SCC members use the tithing plan such as contributing 10% of one's annual income to the Catholic Church. This helps to solve the problem of endless collections (*Michango* Church) in the SCCs that many SCC members complain about.

A Case Study is St. John the Evangelist Small Christian Community (SCC) in St. John the Baptist Parish, Riruta, Nairobi Archdiocese. The Sunday collection is carried out in the normal way. Tithing envelopes (10%) from SCC members are handed in during a special collection at the end of mass once a month. This replaces the special collections in the parish and in the SCCs to cover the cost of the seemingly endless extra collections and *harambee* (Swahili word for "Let us pull together") collections for the priest's new car, the water tank near the church, parish celebrations, etc. This dramatically reduces the amount of time spent on discussing money matters in the meetings of St. John the Evangelist SCC (and the other SCCs in the parish).

A similar Case Study is Holy Family Basilica, Nairobi Archdiocese. The tithing plan provides the revenue for all parish-wide collections including the annual Family Day Contribution to Nairobi Archdiocese, the parish building projects, etc. without having to pass through the SCCs and the apostolic groups/parish associations/devotional groups for special collections. This takes a big burden off SCC members and allows their weekly meetings to be focused on prayer and reflection, not business meetings about money.

¹³⁷² Michael Kyenze, Small Christian Communities Facebook Page, 15 May, 2013.

¹³⁷³ In Buza Parish, Dar es Salaam 3 million shillings (= \$1,870) per year for the annual church tax was normally collected through the parish office. Now 15 million Tanzanian shillings (= \$9,355) or five times the amount is collected through the SCCs. Conversation with John Waldrep, Nairobi, Kenya, 14 January, 2013.

The tithing plan also directly involves the 80% of the Catholics in the parish who do not belong to SCCs and the apostolic groups/parish associations/devotional groups. Financial responsibility is shared by all Catholics in the parish, not just SCC members.

Other parishes have started tithing such as St. John the Evangelist Parish, Langata, Nairobi Archdiocese.

A study is underway to use tithing in Tabora Archdiocese, Tanzania. Makusanya writes:

The archdiocese should help the parishioners to understand their responsibility to pay tithes. *Tithing* has a biblical foundation in which Christians have to contribute 10% of their monthly income to the church in support of services offered. This can be done monthly or quarterly. Here the recommendation given is monthly to avoid the temptation to parishioners of using the money that is supposed to pay tithes [for other things]. Nevertheless a system has to be laid out to insure that it is done. It is suggested that it is conducted on the second Sunday of every month. Parishioners who are not able to give cash should be allowed to contribute in kind.¹³⁷⁴

Makusanya report that tithing is already used in Arusha Archdiocese, Bukoba Diocese and Dar es Salaam Archdiocese in Tanzania.¹³⁷⁵

In some dioceses that have an annual Lenten Campaign the collection is higher when the money is contributed through the SCCs. Kenya uses little cardboard boxes with the designation “Lent Box.” The side of the box has place for the names of the specific family, SCC and parish.

More and more national collections for different purposes are passing through SCCs. Father Vincent Mwakhwawa, the National Director of the Pontifical Missionary Societies (PMS), an arm of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) reports:

On this Vocations Sunday [11 May, 2014], the money collection in all the Catholic prayer-gatherings is meant to help in the training of future priests, sisters, and brothers in the whole world. The money will be collected from all outstations, Small Christian Communities or prayer houses in all parishes and

¹³⁷⁴ Edwin Makusanya, *Efficient Financial Management*, p. 118.

¹³⁷⁵ Edwin Makusanya in a conversation with the author in Nairobi, Kenya on 13 May, 2014.

then sent to the dioceses.¹³⁷⁶

Makusanya's study also raises the question of how much time and energy SCCs members should spend on money matters. How should SCCs get involved in various finance projects especially income generating projects? The goal of a self-reliant Local Church in the AMECEA Region is clear. SCCs have a major role in this process. But there is a danger of SCCs becoming too involved in efficient financial management. Mulinya states that there is a danger of turning the SCCs activities into fundraising enterprises and that "money can ruin the SCC."

The newness of SCCs in Eastern Africa can be found in the process as well as the content of church life. A Case Study was the Diocesan Synod taking place in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania. Diocesan Synods are frequent in Africa today and are highly encouraged by Pope Francis. The Motto of the 2013-2014 Musoma Diocesan Synod is "Faith and Action." The theme of the fourth and last session was "Development and Self Reliance" that take place from 4 to 8 August, 2014. The official closing was be from 3 to 5 October, 2014. A five page questionnaire was circulated to all the parishes. Historically such a questionnaire would be answered by the priest and religious, the catechists, the Parish Pastoral Council, etc. But taking Kowak Parish as an example, the questionnaire passed through the 30 SCCs in the parish. The SCC members discussed the questions and gave joint answers for their small community. Then Father Augustino Mapambano, the Assistant Parish Priest, collated the answers, added other comments and sent the overall parish results to the diocesan synod secretariat. In this way the voice of the laity is being heard from the grassroots up.¹³⁷⁷

At the same time our critical evaluation and assessment has to look at the "shadows" that Mejia and Kalilombe referred to earlier. SCCs can successfully become a new model of church only in the context of the wider church being less hierarchical and less clerical. A top-down, even dictatorial style of decision-making especially by bishops and priests defeat the

¹³⁷⁶ "MALAWI: Catholics Celebrates World Day of Prayer for Vocations Today," *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, Issue 047, 09 May 2014, AMECEA Website, retrieved 9 May, 2014, [http://amecea.blogspot.com/2014/05/malawi-catholics-celebrates-world-day.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=5a04b00e63-AMECEA Online Newsletter 6 5 2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-5a04b00e63-6746297](http://amecea.blogspot.com/2014/05/malawi-catholics-celebrates-world-day.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=5a04b00e63-AMECEA+Online+Newsletter+6+5+2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-5a04b00e63-6746297)

¹³⁷⁷ Based on a conversation with Tanzanian diocesan priest Father Augustino Mapambano at Kowak parish on 9 July, 2014.

communitarian, consensus style of SCCs from the grassroots up. Lay people through their SCCs need to be given the freedom to experiment in their local situations to discover new forms of ministry and service. This means following the principle that the Catholic Church's needs should determine ministries and not the ministries the church's needs. Otherwise it is just pastoral business as usual.

17. The Role of SCCs in the Synodal Church in Africa

The 2021 – 2024 Synodal Process in the Catholic Church introduced a new chapter in the history of SCCs in Eastern Africa.

Synodality: Pope Francis emphasizes the theme of synodality that is embodied in the SCCs. He has given impetus to the synodality that was introduced in Vatican II -- the entire Catholic Church walking, discerning and evangelizing together. This is an on-going process of listening, discussion, dialog, debate, discernment and proposed pastoral responses that builds on collegiality and subsidiarity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The pope likes to call this process a journey or a path -- in the spirit of the meaning of the word “synod.” “Synodality is the path of the Catholic Church.” This process of synodality is a journeying together. There are many relevant metaphors. One is the process in the Story of “The Road to Emmaus” in *Luke 24*. Another is the famous African proverb: *If you want to walk fast walk alone. If you want to walk far walk together*. SCC members participate in this journeying together through the use of the “See,” “Discern” and “Act” method or process and various forms of pastoral theological reflection and decision-making that start with our life experiences.

Some synodal moments in the *New Testament*:

1. The two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus.

Council of Jerusalem: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements,” *Acts 15:28*

“The community of believers was of one mind and heart” (*Acts of the Apostles 4:32*)

Seven Steps in a Synodal Process Gathering

One hour if there are ten participants. **NOTE:** If participants share for less than three minutes/two minutes each, the total time will be less.

1. Opening Prayer: “We stand before you, Holy Spirit.”
2. The facilitator gives some background to the Synodal Process. Then the facilitator invites participants during this gathering to speak about/reflect on the theme or topic of _____ . Share your personal response and a community response. What have you encountered in journeying together/walking together?
3. Participants reflect silently for three minutes preparing their input. Open oneself to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is one reason why the synodal process is different and can be very creative.
4. Each person speaks for a maximum of three minutes. There is no cross talk.
5. Three more minutes of silent reflection. Each person takes private notes.
6. After re-reading their notes, each person shares for a further two minutes whatever has enlightened or resonated with them from the sharing of the other members. The participants are invited to consider what the Holy Spirit seemed to be calling them to, what paths are being opened.
7. Free-form time for “discerning and elaborating the synthesis.”

18. Future Challenges, Priorities and Actions for SCCs in the AMECEA Region

That SCCs are very important in the future of the AMECEA Region is clear. The main goals of the “Mission of AMECEA” include “revitalizing and continued emphasis on the role of the Small Christian Communities in evangelization.”¹³⁷⁸ SCCs continue to be the church on the move, the church from below. For the whole of Africa Orobator points out: “Small Christian Communities represent a way of *becoming* church; they are not a finished product or prefabricated ecclesial reality. In this sense, *process* takes precedence over *event* as key markers of the ecclesiological comprehension of Small Christian Communities.”¹³⁷⁹

Here are 21 future challenges, priorities¹³⁸⁰ and actions for SCCs in Eastern Africa based on our in-depth critical evaluation/assessment, ongoing research/surveys and a reading of the contemporary signs of the times in Africa. They are part of the “Action/Pastoral Planning Step” of the Pastoral Spiral. Choose good leaders in SCCs in Eastern Africa.^{1381 1382}

¹³⁷⁸ “Mission of AMECEA,” AMECEA Website, retrieved on 11 March, 2012, <http://www.amecea.org/index.php/component/content/article/2-amecea/2-vision>

¹³⁷⁹ Orobator, “Small Christian Communities as a New Way,” p. 125.

¹³⁸⁰ These are closely linked. A challenge becomes a priority for concrete action. A challenge or problem or difficulty can also become a new opportunity. Pope Francis specifically says, “if you have a problem turn it into a challenge and then turn that challenge into an opportunity.”

¹³⁸¹ These first three challenges and priorities were confirmed in a “One-day SCCs Workshop” that took place at the Mitume Pastoral and Catechetical Center in Kitale Diocese, Kenya on 8 October, 2011. The 47 participants including catechists and SCC leaders identified 19 main obstacles to the growth of SCCs in Kenya and then voted for their top six choices. The top vote getter was “Lack of Leadership” and the fourth was “More Understanding of the Meaning of SCCs.” The workshop emphasized the “Importance of Training and Education” including Training of Trainers (TOT) SCCs Workshops. It was estimated that there are about 3,000 SCCs in Kitale Diocese.

This was further confirmed in a meeting of 31 SCCs leaders (18 woman and 11 men) in Kachebere Parish, Lilongwe, Malawi on 12 December, 2013. They pointed out the lack of commitment of many SCC members to leadership roles and regular SCCs meetings.

Patrick Kalilombe says that “the evident thing is to make sure that these Local Churches do have the appropriate leadership and organization capable of adequately structuring them and providing the required leadership and animation. What is needed here is first of all a good choice of leaders.” Patrick Kalilombe, *Doing Theology at the Grassroots: Theological Essays from Malawi*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999), 70.

¹³⁸² As I traveled around Eastern Africa doing research, it was lay people (99% of the SCC members) who especially complained about bad leaders. The topic of “How to choose good leaders in SCCs” is discussed and discerned regularly. Some challenging questions:

This is within the context of committed, ongoing leadership of priests, religious and laypeople within a pastoral plan.

1. Form SCC leaders/animators/facilitators/coordinators in a deeper evangelization that integrates African values and Christian values (“Truly African, Truly Christian”) as part of an overall pastoral strategy of forming and training lay pastoral agents as part of lay ecclesial ministry.¹³⁸³

1. “Do we choose charismatic leaders (good talkers, good presenters, showy people), who then do nothing?”

2. Do we favor men over women?

3. Do we choose a leader because of his or her finances?

4. Do we choose a leader because of his or her ethnicity. Ugandan Comboni missionary priest Father Raphael Wokorach, MCCJ puts it bluntly: “Many SCCs are dysfunctional due to poor leadership because of tribalism.” Conversation with the author, Nairobi, Kenya, 14 April, 2018.

5. How seriously are a candidate’s personal qualities considered?

6. Can Christians who cannot receive communion be elected leaders?

¹³⁸³ This remains an ongoing challenge. The New Religious Movements have better formation programs for their lay members, for example, Leadership Training, Retreat in Life and *Bible* Study/Faith Formation, than what is offered to Catholic lay people in parishes and dioceses such as SCC Leaders. The Zaidi Centre for Ignatian Spirituality, started in July, 2000 in Nairobi as a means of ministering to Christians through workshops, presentations, recollections and retreats on aspects of our Christian life, offers excellent formation programs for parishes.

Although academic formation is indispensable to lay ecclesial ministry formation, human, spiritual and pastoral formation are also essential components of formation for ministry.

2. Train SCC leaders¹³⁸⁴/animators/facilitators/coordinators in animation, facilitation¹³⁸⁵ and coordination skills including collaborative ministry.¹³⁸⁶ Set up Mobile SCC

¹³⁸⁴ Many online resources are available to train small-group leaders such as *SmallGroups.com* that offers a diverse set of adaptable training tools for all small-group models that can be customized to a church's unique needs,
https://w1.buysub.com/pubs/L2/A09/smallgroups_lead_gen_0414.jsp?cds_page_id=162549&cds_mag_code=A09&id=1398547162866&lsid=41161619228034489&vid=1&cds_trackin_g_code=SG4DEBT001

and *Creative Leader Training*,

http://www.smallgroups.com/downloads/training/practicalministryskills/bsg93.html?tCode=F21CA9D41A&dCode=E54591F76F&utm_source=buildingsmallgroups-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=9077722&utm_content=265397734&utm_campaign=2013

¹³⁸⁵ Two concrete examples of Life Experiences or Case Studies of facilitation skills in SCCs:

1. Every year on the Saturday before Ash Wednesday representatives of the 74 SCCs in Holy Trinity Parish in Kariobangi North, Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya have an all day SCCs Facilitation Skills Workshop to learn how to use the booklet in the annual Kenya Lenten Campaign coordinated by the KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. For their weekly meetings of the SCCs during five weeks of Lent these representatives develop skills in facilitating the three step reflection process or method of: “See” (concrete story); “Judge” (situational analysis including the Sunday scripture readings); and “Act” (reflection questions). These SCC meetings during Lent start with daily life and then go to the *Bible*.

2. Priests, seminarians, religious, catechists and lay leaders learn facilitation skills to conduct the elections of new leaders in the SCCs in Eastern Africa that occur every three years. Using prayer, a review of the leadership history in the SCC, a discussion of the different gifts of leadership and a democratic process, SCC members elect a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer as well as the leaders of specialized lay ministries. Attention is given to gender balance, leaders from different ethnic groups and rotational leadership. This is not like a political election, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

¹³⁸⁶ This is an on-going process. Those who facilitate the *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* Services need regular updating and renewal. Also new people need to be trained to facilitate groups. Our research shows that bad habits can creep in and the sharing and reflection can change into a teaching mode (where one person takes over) or into a discussion mode. Thus training SCC leaders in group dynamic skills is important. For example, small group “hijackers” can do a great deal of harm. There are training resources on the four different hijacker personalities and how to deal with them: the Talking Hijacker, Emotional Hijacker, Leader Hijacker and Late Hijacker. See *Help! My Small Group Has Been Hijacked! Four common hijackers and ways to respond* by Margaret Feinberg, SmallGroups.com Website, retrieved on 19 July 2012,
http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2012/smallgrouphijacked.html?utm_source=buildingsmallgroups-allgroups-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=9077722&utm_content=130918751&utm_campaign=2012

Training Teams on the Eastern Africa, national, diocesan, deanery, parish and outstation levels.¹³⁸⁷ Use the mass media and the social media like the internet, radio,¹³⁸⁸ and TV for these SCCs training programs.

3. A newer priority is training of SCC members in computer and internet skills for evangelization that includes: writing for the internet;¹³⁸⁹ preparing Powerpoint Presentations on SCCs; the use of online “Search” features especially Google and searching within documents;¹³⁹⁰ and the use of social media. “Go digital or die” is a popular universal saying. How is this influencing our SCCs ministry and evangelization?
4. Ongoing formation and training of all SCC members with special focus on the meaning and importance of SCC, theological formation and pastoral formation on the specific SCC Model of Church, collaborative ministry, *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection*, family catechesis, justice and peace, social awareness, inclusiveness and equality, Jesus Christ’s methods of evangelizing¹³⁹¹ and mission outreach.
5. Encourage more courses and workshops on SCCs in the normal curriculum of the major seminaries, theological institutes,¹³⁹² universities¹³⁹³ and houses of formation of

¹³⁸⁷ Richard Baawobr states: “An important service that AMECEA could offer concerns the formation of pastoral workers that cannot always be done at diocesan or even national level. Institutions like CUEA, Nyegezi, Gaba offer something, but it might be helpful to organize short courses (few weeks) for different ministries at diocesan level who in turn, could help form ministers in Small Christian Communities.” *AMECEA 50 Years*, p.112.

¹³⁸⁸ SCCs courses on the radio are being planned. One example is a series on programs on Radio Waumini in Kenya on topics such as: “The Importance of the *Bible* in SCCs,” “The Seven-Step Gospel Sharing of Lumko (South Africa)” and “The Group Response Method/Bible-Mirror Method of Lumko (South Africa).”

¹³⁸⁹ This includes basic writing, editing and proofreading skills.

¹³⁹⁰ Many people do not know basic Search methods and techniques such as CTRL + F for finding data.

¹³⁹¹ In talks, homilies, sermons, etc. we emphasize that Jesus Christ first calls us to be his disciples/followers and then sends us to be his apostles/missionaries/evangelizers. Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, USA and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)’s intervention at the World Synod of Bishops in Rome on 9 October, 2012 started with these words: “The great American evangelist, the venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, commented, “The first word of Jesus in the Gospel was ‘come’; the last word of Jesus was ‘go’.” <http://www.zenit.org/article-35689?l=english>

¹³⁹² Sister Josée Ngalula, RSA teaches dogmatic/systematic theology at Le Théologat Institut Saint Eugen de Nazenod in Kinshasa, DRC. Of the 44 hours in her course on Ecclesology, eight hours (four two hour periods) are on SCCs.

¹³⁹³ There are an increasing number of online courses such as the postgraduate “Diploma In Forming Small Christian Communities (SCCs)” offered by the distance learning Society of

both men and women that include some kind of planned practical action and social outreach.¹³⁹⁴ There should be a focus on Pastoral Theology.¹³⁹⁵ While most of the major seminaries and theological institutes in Eastern Africa are affiliated with universities in Rome and thus subject to tight curriculum requirements, Bishop Kihara, a long-time member of the Kenyan Catholic Bishops Seminary Episcopal Commission, points out that the Vatican should recognize the SCCs pastoral priority in Eastern Africa and allow it to be included in the seminary curriculum.¹³⁹⁶

A new strategy is proposed for courses in the Pastoral (Practical) Theology Department. These courses can be Cycle Courses that are offered every two years¹³⁹⁷ or every four years. There are four possibilities:

- a. Some can be full semester, required, core courses (every theological student/ seminarian takes this course during his or her training).
- b. Some can be elective courses that are in the Lecture or Seminar¹³⁹⁸ style.
- c. Some can be an intensive one week module in which three double periods are given each day to quality as a full semester course.¹³⁹⁹

St. Peter and Paul (SSPP) Seminary Website, retrieved on 24 August, 2012,
http://societyofstpeterandpaulseminary.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&Itemid=74

¹³⁹⁴ Sometimes the starting point is a single talk or presentation to get the process started.

¹³⁹⁵ Pope Francis stresses the importance of Pastoral Theology. He maintains that theology without a pastoral dimension becomes an abstract ideology. Therefore dogmatic theology and pastoral theology should be interrelated; they need each other. All of them drive towards mercy and forgiveness.

¹³⁹⁶ Peter Kihara, comments during the Pontifical Mission Societies Missionary Awareness Animation Team Visit to St Joseph's (Meru) Seminary in Nairobi, Kenya on 28 April, 2013.

¹³⁹⁷ The SCCs Course at Don Bosco Utume Salesian Theological College in Nairobi, Kenya is offered every two years in the Biennial Program (Second and Third Theology students together). In response to the Salesian charism of Youth Ministry the course title has been changed to "Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today with Special Focus on Youth SCCs" (PET190).

¹³⁹⁸ As an example, Hekima University College had a Seminar from January to April 2013 on "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Today." Its aim was to examine how Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are a New Model of Church and a New Way of Being Church in promoting justice, reconciliation and peace in Africa today. This is part of the implementation of the Second African Synod.

¹³⁹⁹ The Institute of Social Ministry, Tangaza University College in Nairobi offers a "5 Days Workshop Elective (2 credits)" every August on "Training for Faith Based Organizations and Community Ministries (Lumko). Its purpose is to build up SCCs, develop parish groups, improve collaborative ministry and empower groups for action.

- d. Some can be two, three or four day workshops: a single workshop¹⁴⁰⁰ or a series of workshops.¹⁴⁰¹
- e. Some can be one day sessions spread over a semester or a year.

All these courses are pastoral ministry courses with a practical component (practicum). The ideal is No. a above where every student (including every future priest¹⁴⁰²) has a full course in the theology and practice of SCCs. This would include an emphasis on “The Role of the Priest in the Formation and Animation of SCCs.”¹⁴⁰³

¹⁴⁰⁰ A good model of a short workshop is "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as a New Model of Church in Africa Today," Apostles of Jesus Theologicum Workshop, Nairobi, Kenya, 21-22 February, 2008. The program and report were published in the Urbaniana University Magazine in Rome. In different forms it has been offered in the Emmaus Program for Diocesan Priests Workshop at Tangaza University College in May, 2008, the Blessed Bakanja AMECEA College (BBAC) SCCs Workshop in February, 2009, the Emmaus Program for Diocesan Priests Workshop at the Mary Ward Center in October, 2009, the St. Thomas Aquinas Senior Seminary SCCs Workshop in April, 2010 and again at the Apostles of Jesus Theologicum in February, 2012.

¹⁴⁰¹ SCCs Workshops are designed to be full time experience incorporating all the prayer time and other activities of the day. DVDs on SCCs are shown in the evening as an official part of the workshop. Particularly valuable is the 43-minute instructional video *The Church in the Neighborhood: Small Christian Communities* (with Swahili and Arabic versions). Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1995. Segment One is “The Life of the Small Christian Communities” and Segment Two is “Services [Ministries] in the Small Christian Communities.” Another helpful DVD is the 57-minute instructional video *Njia Mpya ya Kuishi na Kueneza Injili: Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kristo* (Swahili for *A New Way of Living and Proclaiming the Church: Small Christian Communities*). Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1985. It presents 12 SCCs in action in Kenya and Tanzania.

¹⁴⁰² In interviews and conversations in 2011, 2012 and 2013, bishops in the AMECEA countries have stated that seminarians should have a full, semester-long required course on SCCs during their seminary training and practical experience with SCCs when they do pastoral ministry in parishes during their holidays and during their Pastoral Year. They emphasize that it is too late to wait until they are ordained priests and serving in parishes to introduce them to this key pastoral priority.

¹⁴⁰³ At CUEA there is a two credit course on “Small Christian Communities” in the First Cycle (BA in Theology). “Ecclesial Communities in Vatican II and Post Conciliar Documents” is the SCC Course in the Second Cycle. It is a Core Course for MA/Licentiate students in the Pastoral Theology Department and a Seminar or Elective for MA students in the other departments in the Faculty of Theology. CUEA’s Pastoral Theology M.A. Program’s oral comprehensive exam includes the question: “The SCCs, its theology and in a parish, as a pastoral methodology approach in AMECEA region. Discuss.” At the Eldoret Campus a Diploma is offered in the area of specialization of “Small Christian Communities for New Evangelization.” This is the first academic program on SCCs of its kind in Africa.

“[Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today](#)” (PTC418) is a Core Course as part of the STB and BATH (CUEA) Degrees (Eighth Semester) and the MA

6. Encourage more support and commitment from bishops and other ecclesial leadership across the board.
7. Encourage more quality participation of priests in animating, facilitating and coordinating SCCs.
8. Promote the use of the “See,” “Judge” and “Act” (Pastoral Spiral) process/ methodology in SCCs (including Bible sharing/Bible reflection and social/cultural analysis) to reflect on the deeper issues of reconciliation, justice and peace in Africa leading to concrete action so that this process becomes a central part of the life and ministry of SCCs. A key part is implementing the recommendations of *Africa’s Commitment*, the Apostolic Exhortation on the Second African Synod. This includes increasing the involvement (responsibility and duty) of SCC coordinators/ animators/leaders in issues of civic education,¹⁴⁰⁴ advocacy and good governance. This also includes specifically and concretely to connect, relate and apply the *Bible* (Gospel) to our daily lives and experience in Africa.

Degree in Pastoral Ministry in the Pastoral Theology Department of the School of Theology at Tangaza University College, a Constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya. The course is online on Moodle. In 2012 the thesis question for the oral comprehensive exam in the Pastoral Theology M.A. Program at Tangaza University College was: “How can Small Christian Communities (SCCs) promote justice, reconciliation, peace in Kenya or another African country today?” The four reference books used were:

1. Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Africa’s Commitment (Africae Munus)*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2011.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus_en.html
<http://www.zenit.org/article-33862?l=english>
2. Second African Synod: *Message of the Bishops of Africa to the People of God and Final List of [57] Propositions* taken from “Timeline in the History and Development of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Especially Eastern Africa” on the SCCs Website <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/107-timeline-in-the-history-and-development-of-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-africa-especially-eastern-africa.html>.
3. Booklet of the *Kenya Lenten Campaign 2012* on the theme “Towards a Transformed Kenya: Let Light Shine Out of Darkness.
4. Chapter 14 (pages 99-105) on “Pastoral Involvement of Parish-based SCCs in Dar es Salaam” by Christopher Cieslikiewicz in *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment* (Edited by Joseph Healey and Jeanne Hinton).

¹⁴⁰⁴ Eastern Africa SCCs can learn from our neighbors. In Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2008 there was a workshop in French on “Le rôle des CEVB dans l’éducation civique dans RD Congo” (“The Role of Basic Living Ecclesial Communities [SCCs] in Civic Education in DRC”).

9. Challenge SCC members on the grassroots to face the “diseases” of tribalism, negative ethnicity, nepotism, excessive nationalism, classism (prejudice or discrimination on the basis of social class), sexism and excessive individualism/privacy in their SCCs. This includes facilitating healing and reconciliation services, rituals and ceremonies that are integrated into SCC masses, *Bible Services* and meetings.
10. Encourage young adults, youth (including college and high school students) and children to form their own inculturated SCCs. This is closely connected to pastoral youth ministry.¹⁴⁰⁵
11. Promote strategies of self-reliance and sustainability in SCCs. This includes financial support of SCC activities and parish activities and developing self-reliance projects.
12. Encourage SCC members to be more active in the New Evangelization and deeper-evangelization following the contemporary signs of the times in Africa.
13. Use the social media/new media more to promote SCCs especially in involving youth. Encourage SCC members to use the social media/new media more in pastoral and missionary activities. Continue to use the mass media like radio and TV for formation, information and training. “Go digital or die” is a popular universal saying. How is this influencing our SCCs ministry and evangelization?
14. Continue to explore in depth how the praxis and theology of SCCs are an integral part of a relevant and credible African Ecclesiology based on the Church as Family of God. This is within the context of the AMECEA priority of developing a theological framework of addressing key issues and challenges of ‘New Evangelization in Solidarity in the AMECEA countries.’”
15. Produce and circulate more relevant, African-related resource materials (print, audio-visual and online)¹⁴⁰⁶ for SCC members including simple booklets and leaflets on the

¹⁴⁰⁵ The AMECEA Region has a population of 200 million people of whom 60 million are Catholics of which two thirds are youth and children. Youth and children need to be helped to appreciate their unique ecclesial identity and their participation in the model of the Church as Family built around the SCCs. Research suggests five “target” groups: Married Young Adults with children (ages 27 to 35 years old). Unmarried Young Adults (ages 27 to 35 years old). Senior Youth (ages 21 to 26 years old). Intermediate Youth or Junior Youth (ages 15 to 20 years old). Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC) (ages six to 14 years old). This includes SCCs of youth in colleges and high schools (YSCCs).

¹⁴⁰⁶ Vincent Mwachwawa describes the resource books used in Westminster Archdiocese, England as a model for Africa and recommends: “The Archdiocese of Lilongwe should study the resource books of Westminster Archdiocese and make an effort to produce a SCC resource book relevant to the situation of Lilongwe that should be used in all SCCs of the Archdiocese of Lilongwe.” See Vincent Mwachwawa, “Learning More about Small Christian Communities in Westminster Archdiocese, London, England,” SCCs Website, retrieved on 14 August, 2012, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/europe/england/206-learning-more-about-small-christian-communities-in-westminster-archdiocese-london-england.html>

Bible (including lectionary-based Faith-sharing/faith reflection resources¹⁴⁰⁷), Small Apostolic Group Faith-sharing/faith reflection, the Catholic Church's social teaching and new ministries. These materials should be produced in Swahili¹⁴⁰⁸ and other local languages in Eastern Africa.¹⁴⁰⁹

16. Promote better communications and sharing of SCC experiences, information and resources within the AMECEA Region, that is, within the nine countries in Eastern Africa.¹⁴¹⁰

The England and Wales Catholic Bishops' Conference Spirituality Committee has prepared a pastoral document, *Do You Love Me?* This handbook that can be used by individuals or small groups recommends: “**DISCOVER** the power of praying together and reflecting on Scripture in small groups in your parish...Parish bookshops could promote *Do You Love Me?* as a resource for small groups meeting in people's homes or after weekday Masses.” See Kathryn Turner, “Guide for the Seekers,” *Tablet*, Vol. 269 No. 9081 (3 January 2015), p. 22., Tablet Website, retrieved on 3 December, 2014, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/downloadpdf/030115issue.pdf>

¹⁴⁰⁷ Other useful resources are *Quest: A Reflection Booklet for Small Christian Communities; At Home with the Word; Little Rock Scripture Study; York Courses, Seasonal Resources and Monthly Resources* (Agency for Evangelization, Westminster Archdiocese, England); *Give Us This Day: Daily Prayer for Today's Catholic; Magnificat; Living with Christ; Sunday By Sunday; Celebration; Faith Circles*, *Explore, PrayerTime* and *The Word Among Us*, – as well as the weekly Catholic magazines and newspapers that have a commentary on the scripture readings of the following Sunday -- and many special resources for the Advent and Lent seasons. Research indicates that these printed liturgical resources, as well as the online liturgical resources and apps like *The Daily Gospel Online (DGO)*, *FaithND*, *Laudate* and *EBreviary* help Catholics read the Scriptures of the following Sunday, as well as the daily readings, more regularly and more faithfully. Some of these resources can be downloaded and read offline.

A trend in the USA is organizations like the [North American Forum for Small Christian Communities \(NAFSCC\)](#) whose website provides SCC resources, training, webinars and a forum for the exchange of ideas to support and promote SCCs in all of the ministries of parish and diocesan life.

¹⁴⁰⁸ In production is a simple, how to-do SCC booklet tentatively called *Mwongozo wa Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo*.

¹⁴⁰⁹ A useful resource book for Africa is: Richard Baawobr, *God's Word for Christian Communities: Guidelines for Facilitators*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2013. This book offers help to facilitators of Small Christian Communities, *Bible Sharing Groups* and *Bible Study Groups*. The first part explores in simple terms the person and role of the facilitator in a Small Christian Community alongside the usefulness of Small Christian Communities and *Bible Sharing Groups* for living our faith as the Church Family of God in Africa. The second part proposes five *Bible Sharing/Bible Study* methods.

¹⁴¹⁰ At the AMECEA Plenary Assembly in Nairobi in July, 2011, Pengo pointed out that one of the drawbacks for the solidarity of the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa is that many Catholics on the grassroots do not easily see the link between AMECEA (that comes across as a big organization of Catholic bishops at the top) and their SCCs on the local level. He

17. Promote better communications and sharing of SCC experiences, information and resources¹⁴¹¹ between the AMECEA Region and the IMBISA (Southern Africa) Region, English-speaking West Africa, and French-speaking Africa (both Central Africa such as DRC and West Africa).
18. Support and contribute to SECAM: the SECAM-MISSIO Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Networking Team; the SCCs Networking Page under the Commission of Evangelization on the SECAM Website; and the SCCs Networking Library in the SECAM Office in Accra, Ghana.
19. Support and contribute to international Small Christian Communities meetings. After national meetings in the USA in 2002 and 2007 encourage another National Joint Convocation on Small Christian Communities in 2017 or 2018 to bring people together, share their SCCs experiences and improve networks.
20. Emphasize ongoing evaluation and revitalization¹⁴¹² of the life and activities of SCCs that includes realistic assessment, honest self-criticism, critical reflection and openness

said: “In five years to come, I would like that AMECEA gets known to the faithful and that they realize it is their responsibility, and not an institution of the bishops.” *Seed* 23: 8-9 (August-September 2011), p. 9.

¹⁴¹¹ It has been pointed out that there is little communications and exchange of resources on SCCs between English-speaking and French-speaking Africa. [Mikado](#), the online Mission Library and Catholic Documentation Center of the Internationales Katholisches Missionswerk Missio, the Institute of Missiology Missio and the Mission Library of the Jesuits in Aachen, Germany, helps to bridge this gap. Here are the results in a search on 5 March, 2013: In the “Topical Headings” literature for “Basic Christian Communities” (that includes Base Christian Communities, Basic Ecclesial Communities and Small Christian Communities) was found in 1653 documents. In the “Quick Search” literature on “Small Christian Communities” was found in 173 documents and literature on “Basic Christian Communities” was found in 1716 documents.

¹⁴¹² Missio in Aachen, Germany is conducting an evaluation of SCCs through a questionnaire entitled “Questionnaire on Small Christian Communities (SCCs)” and described as follows: “Small Christian Communities offer an appealing and forward-looking way of leading a Christian life. People gather around the Word of God and, having read and studied it together, they feel inspired by the Gospel spirit to become actively involved in the work of the Church and society at large. We would like engage in a discussion with you about Small Christian Communities. Alongside its partners in Africa, Asia and Oceania, *Missio* regards itself as a point of contact for local churches in Germany, offering them an opportunity to take up and jointly develop the ideas and stimuli that have arisen within the universal Church. We are therefore sending you a questionnaire (see enclosure), which we kindly ask you to fill in. The questionnaire will help us to begin a debate with you and other people in positions of responsibility in the Small Christian Communities and enable us to network with each other. This exchange of experience will be to our mutual benefit.” See email message and File Attachment of Michael Meyer dated 25 April, 2013.

The Pastoral Department of AMECEA coordinated seven National SCCs Workshops in Eastern Africa in 2013 (Zambia and Malawi), 2014 (Ethiopia and Tanzania) and 2015 Kenya,

to new actions especially in applying the last step (“Pastoral Planning”) of the Pastoral Spiral. This is linked to the implementation/follow-up/follow down.

Finally Orobator states:

Thus, in assessing the fulfillment of the promise of SCCs, it is important to take a long view and affirm with Leonardo Boff that “this is still just beginning, still in process. It is not accomplished reality.”¹⁴¹³ Small Christian Communities represent a way of *becoming* church; they are not a finished product or prefabricated ecclesial reality. In this sense, *process* takes precedence over *event* as key markers of the ecclesiological comprehension of Small Christian Communities.¹⁴¹⁴

Orobator describes the future development of SCCs in Africa as follows:

The significant factors of the future development of SCCs include the level and nature of interest from ecclesiastical leadership, the commitment to the formation and empowerment of the lay faithful and the relative strength of negative socio-economic and cultural factors, some of which have been outlined above. Along with the need for ongoing critical reflection on the present organization and practices of SCCs, much still needs to be done to develop the theology of Small Christian Communities as church in the neighborhood. This theology ought to facilitate the expansion of the missionary focus of SCCs to include attention to socio-political, ecological and economic conditions of their context. In this vein, SCCs in Africa would have much to learn from the history and praxis of the Latin American model,¹⁴¹⁵ while, at the same time, developing a distinctively African model of Small Christian Communities as a new way of becoming church.¹⁴¹⁶

South Sudan and Uganda). Pikiti states: “The initiative of building the local Church around SCCs was started by the bishops in Eastern Africa. Promoting the theology of this ecclesiology in collaboration with many Africa priests and laity has been a very great success. But it is also important to review and see how we can still maintain this motivation within the fast changing life style of the people, urbanization, work culture, etc. So this SCCs training will be helpful to reach to some of the leaders and together rethink the way forward.” Email to the author dated 11 June, 2013.

¹⁴¹³ Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* (Maryknoll, N. Y. Orbis Books, 1986), p. 2.

¹⁴¹⁴ Orobator, “Small Christian Communities as a New Way, pp. 124-125.

¹⁴¹⁵ See Fritz Lobinger, “What SCCs and CEBs,” p. 287-297.

¹⁴¹⁶ Orobator, “Small Christian Communities as a New Way,” p. 125.

19. General Conclusions: The Way Forward

Certainly the growth and influence of Small Christian Communities has been one of the milestones and highlights of the first 61 years of AMECEA (1961-2022). Let us say “thank you” to the past and “yes” to the future. “Thank you” to the founders and visionaries who created the AMECEA Small Christian Communities Key Pastoral Priority especially the first generation pioneer bishops such as Kalilombe and Mwoleka. “Thank you” to the faithfulness and commitment of millions of lay Christians in Eastern Africa who have actively participated in SCCs over the years. “Yes” to the commitment to be truly African and truly Christian in further developing this new way of being/becoming church. “Yes” to being open to the Holy Spirit guiding us in the future.

This book began with a long historical journey in the AMECEA Region. At the end of this year 2022 we continue to celebrate the 60-year Anniversary of opening of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). We recall the historical foundations of SCCs in the People of God Model of Church and in the Communion Ecclesiology of Vatican II. We saw the development of SCCs against the background of the independence movements in Africa and the terrific expansion of Christianity on the continent. This book has analyzed and reflected on many aspects of SCCs that are not a movement in the Catholic Church, but the church on the move. We are preparing to celebrate the Golden Jubilee (1973-2023) of SCCs in AMECEA Region in December, 2023.

Some highlights: Moving from inwardly looking prayer groups to authentic SCCs that are outwardly looking. Eastern Africa SCCs that are a pastoral, ecclesial parish-based model. The importance of *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* and practical action in the life and ministry of SCCs. The active involvement and participation of lay people in this new model of church that emerges from the grassroots up. The growth of specific Youth SCCs (YSCCs) and Young People SCCs (YPSCCs). Using the Pastoral Spiral (“See,” “Discern” and “Act”) as a new paradigm for promoting justice and peace in Africa today.

The sections on SCCs in the documents of the First and Second African Synods break new ground. The documents of the First African Synod have helped Eastern Africa SCCs develop a more contextualized, inculturated model that is deeply involved in evangelization. A key challenge is the question “What are the different human problems in Africa that we should reflect on in our SCC meetings in the light of the Gospel?” based on No. 89 of St. John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Africa*. Now it is no longer just the Catholic Church scrutinizing the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel. It is also the signs of the times scrutinizing the Catholic Church in the light of the Gospel.

In the documents of the Second African Synod SCCs themselves are described as “paths” to achieving reconciliation, justice, and peace and “places” for concretely living out reconciliation, justice, and peace on the local level. SCC members are challenged to be active “agents” of reconciliation not just subjects. This is a loud and clear call for SCCs in Africa to continue to be a new way of becoming and being church on the grassroots level. As a new pastoral model of church, SCCs can emphasize deeper biblical reflection and more regular use of the Pastoral Spiral to engage effectively in the pastoral and social life around them. As facilitators of reconciliation, justice, and peace, SCC members can be very important in the transformation of the Catholic Church in Africa and in the transformation of the social, cultural, political and economic life of African society.

Participating in the New Evangelization emerged as a new priority of SCCs

in Eastern Africa. This included focusing on the 2012-2013 Year of Faith. One of the foci of 2014-2016 period was the grassroots participation of SCCs in Eastern Africa in the pastoral topics of the two World Synods of Bishops on "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization" and "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World." Two newer priorities were participating in the continent-wide 2015-2016 African Year of Reconciliation (ATR) and the 2015-2016 Jubilee Year of Mercy. A recent priority is participating in the 2018 Synod of Bishops on Young People and its follow-up.

SCCs constantly read the "signs of the times" and respond according.¹⁴¹⁷ So SCCs in Africa evolved during the Cov-19 pandemic from March, 2020 to the present. 1000s of online/virtual/digital SCCs began using Zoom, WhatsApp, Skype, Google Meet and other social media platforms. Now hybrid SCCs are more common. SCCs involvement in digital evangelization include online/virtual/digital meetings, seminars, workshops and webinars using Zoom and other social media platforms.

Now our SCCs are involved in Synodality and the Synodal Church in Africa from 2021 to 2024. "Synod" is from Greek word meaning "assembly." In the Catholic Church today it refers to a series of gatherings of bishops that have been extended to all the People of God (including laywomen and laymen). Pope Francis describes it a "walking together, a journeying together." Everyone participates – young and old, women and men, lay people, priests, Sisters, Brothers, Bishops. Everyone has a voice. The theme of these meetings is "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission." The purpose is to listen to peoples' concerns, questions and recommendations for changes and then to renew and reinvigorate the Catholic Church around the world.

We are now celebrating the Golden Jubilee (1973-2023) of SCCs in the AMECEA Region. Officially it is December, 2023.

¹⁴¹⁷ This is documented in our online SCC Poll whose "Introduction" states:

Welcome to a popular section of our website — SCC POLLS — that encourages participation and interaction. We have done careful research on, and analyzed feedback from surveys, questionnaires, workshops, courses, interviews, personal conversations, articles, books, email messages, Facebook Pages, Zoom Faith Sharing and Gospel Sharing, visits to SCCs and conferences on SCCs. We have studied carefully the contemporary signs of the times such as the Covid-19 pandemic and pastoral changes in our parishes and dioceses such as the 2021-2024 Synodal Process. We have identified 1635 important characteristics or features of SCCs around the world mainly provided by Small Christian Community (SCCs) members themselves: 809 on the dynamics/process/principles/classifications of SCCs and 826 on the activities/content/outreach/practical action of SCCs. The poll uses the statement — "The best part of my Small Christian Community is..." followed by six choices that are taken from these 1635 important characteristics or features of SCCs. These six choices reflect both the inner life and the public life of our SCC Model of Church. We change the poll every two months.

As we move into the future we continue to create the path by walking. The way forward is open-ended and exciting. New priorities will emerge. Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel, the Archbishop of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and former Chairman of AMECEA, describes Africa as a continent with “a great future and a great responsibility, not only for Africans but to the whole world... There is still a need of re-evangelization to make the Gospel planted in the various cultures, to educate the youth in their faith, to prepare Christian Leadership on the level of families, Small Christian Communities, outstations/mission stations, parishes, deaneries, dioceses, and on the national level.”¹⁴¹⁸ With the help of the Holy Spirit let us response boldly and creatively.

“Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo, oyee!” “Small Christian Communities, hurray!”

¹⁴¹⁸ “Church’s Presence at the African Union among Priorities of Ethiopia’s Cardinal-Designate,” CANAA Website, 8 January, 2015, retrieved on 9 January, 2015, <http://www.canaafrica.org/index.php/home/16-latestnews/148-church-presence-at-theafrican-union-among-priorities-of-ethio-cardinal-designate>

APPENDIX: 28 Online E-Resource Materials¹⁴¹⁹ on the On-going Formation and Training of Small Christian Community (SCC) Leaders and Members

Since our overall priority in the AMECEA Region is the on-going formation and training of Small Christian Community (SCC) leaders and members in Eastern Africa, these are 28 basic printed SCCs E-Resource materials that are available free online on the SCCs Website:

1. **Checklist of 16 Common Activities in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Today**
2. **31 Criteria to Evaluate a Typical Small Christian Community (SCC) in Eastern Africa**
3. **Lay Ecclesial Ministries in Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa**
4. **13 Steps in the Weekly Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection/Bible—Life Connections Service of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa**
5. **Utaratibu wa Hatua Kumi na Tatu katika Vikao vya Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo (Swahili Version)**
6. **Seven-Step Gospel Sharing (Lumko, South Africa)**
7. **Hatua Saba: Njia za Kutafakari Masoma ya Biblia (Lumko, South Africa) (Swahili Version)**
8. **Group Response Method/Bible -- Mirror Method (Lumko, South Africa)**
9. **Five Steps of the Amos Program (Lumko, South Africa)**
10. **The Process of *Lectio Divina***
11. **Reading Guide for Understanding the Bible**
12. **Sample of Bible Lessons: Bible Month, September, 2013 Book III (Lilongwe, Malawi)**
13. **Stories of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa**
14. **Alphabetical Summary of the Choices in the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) POLL on our SCCs Website**
15. **Examples of Demonstrations, Role Plays, Questions and Exercises on the Meaning and Importance of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa**
16. **Using the “See,” “Discern,” and “Act” Method/ Process as Part of the Pastoral Spiral**
17. **Small Christian Community (SCC) Reflection on Adoptive Parent Families**
18. **Questionnaire on Fidei Donum Priests Animating the Small Christian Communities**
19. **Questionnaire on Evaluating the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Priority in a Parish or Diocese in Eastern Africa**
20. **Sample of the Program/Timetable of a Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Workshop: National Youth SCCs Workshop on the Theme “Youth SCCs Embrace the Word of God” (Lusaka, Zambia)**
21. **Sample of an African Inculturated Small Christian Community (SCCs) Mass -- Jumuiya Mass (Nairobi, Kenya)**

¹⁴¹⁹ Training in how to use online resources is very important. Thus the value of workshops and seminars such as “Using Information Communications Technology (ICT) and Online Resources to Facilitate and Promote Students’ Learning” at Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya.

22. **African Proverbs and Sayings Related to Small Christian Communities (SCCs)**
23. **African Proverbs and Sayings Related to Family and Marriage**
24. **Constitution of St. John the Evangelist Small Christian Community (Nairobi, Kenya)**
25. **Constitution of St. Joseph Small Christian Community (Nairobi, Kenya)**
26. **Facilitation Skills in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) (to be added)**
27. **Leadership Skills in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) (to be added)**
28. **We Create the Path by Walking: Online Spiritual Retreat for Young Adult Seekers on "Go Apart with Jesus Christ"**

1. Checklist of 16 Common Activities in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Today

A key factor is that Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa are not just a program or a project, but a way of life. In Swahili we have the dynamic expression *jumuiya ni maisha, siyo kazi*. Based on new experiences and data we continue to update this "Checklist List of 16 Common Activities in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Today." In SCC meetings, courses, workshops and seminars we ask: How many of the following activities¹⁴²⁰ are part of the **life** of your SCC? How many of these activities have you actually participated in?

1. Informal gathering/meeting of a SCC. The social aspects in an African context are very important. The SCC promotes friendships and relationships. It is the place of social activities. It can be a significant support group.
2. SCC as a Prayer Group only (without the *Bible* being used). This may include the Morning and Evening Prayers, Eucharistic Adoration, Contemplative Prayer, the Rosary, Novenas, Stations of the Cross, Prayers for the Sick and Deceased and other devotional prayers and practices. Includes blessings of homes and families.
3. SCC as a *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection/*Bible*-Daily Life Connections Group.¹⁴²¹ Starting with the *Bible*. Can be part of a physical meeting of a SCC or an online SCC or a hybrid gathering.¹⁴²² Normally it is weekly lectionary-based faith-sharing that connects the Gospel to daily life.
4. SCC as a Daily Life-*Bible* Connections Group. Starting with special themes and topics as well as our experiences and events of daily life. Using the Three Steps of the Pastoral Circle/Cycle/Spiral: "See," "Discern" and "Act."
5. SCC as a Special Group for Faith-sharing, Formation, Pastoral Theological Reflection (PTR), Study (*Bible*, Creed, the Sacraments, Mysteries of the Rosary,¹⁴²³ a Catholic

¹⁴²⁰ Mondo emphasizes the importance of variety in long-lasting SCCs: "Alternating the format occasionally keeps gatherings fresh. Some ideas include: review a film/movie together, have a guest speaker, visit and walk in new places, study a book, try a new Faith-sharing guide, visit the sick and poor, write letters to prisoners and send greetings to other Small Christian Communities." Paulino Mondo, *Small Christian Communities*, p. 9.

¹⁴²¹ This process is described as "Scripture-based Faith-sharing Connected to/Linked to Daily Life." The challenge is to encourage quality reflections that often connect to the previous reflections.

¹⁴²² Some SCCs have the Enthronement of the *Bible*. This service can take place in the home of one the members of the SCC or during a specific event: a retreat, a Recollection Day, a workshop.

¹⁴²³ In some SCCs the Religious Education Animator/Catechesis Animator teaches the meaning of the 20 mysteries of the rosary (the five JOYFUL MYSTERIES, the five

Church Document, *Constitutions of a Religious Community*, Religious Book, Film/Movie, DVD, Video, Audio Tape, etc.),¹⁴²⁴ Counseling, etc.

6. Pastoral or Business Meeting of a SCC.
7. Practical action (*tendo la wiki* in Swahili), service and social, pastoral and mission outreach. Includes pastoral care, justice and peace actions, different types of evangelization (first or primary evangelization, new evangelization, deeper evangelization) and the mission focus of a SCC. Or the opposite: actions and situations of alienation, corruption, discrimination, division, effects of illiteracy, exclusion, favoritism, inequality, injustice, marginalization, negative ethnicity and tribalism.¹⁴²⁵
8. Projects of a SCC such as self-reliance projects (self-generating activities)¹⁴²⁶ and fund-raisers.
9. The SCC is responsible for assisting (called “animating”) in the Sunday Mass in the parish, subparish or outstation on a rotation basis. Cleaning the church, supplying the readers, taking the collection, bringing up the gifts at the Offertory including a special collection/donation from the SCC members for the self-reliance of the parish including material goods for the rectory (priests’ house) and for the poor and needy. Sometimes the SCC members sit together in church. Depending on the specific place and context SCC members can have other responsibilities: Specific SCCs (sometimes with their own SCC choirs) are responsible for the music, songs and liturgical dancing. Specific SCCs are responsible for the “Prayer of the Faithful” (“Petitions or “General

LUMINOUS MYSTERIES, the five SORROWFUL MYSTERIES, and the five GLORIOUS MYSTERIES) especially during the months of May and October.

¹⁴²⁴ 20% of the meetings of John Paul I SCC in St. Ignatius Parish, Lusaka Archdiocese, Zambia are devoted to talks on: Liturgical Year (Lent, Advent); Medical Issues (hypertension, diabetes, cancer); and Legal Issues (*Constitution*, “How to Write a Will”). A talk on cancer led to the screening of cervical cancer among the women in the SCC. Kelvin Lubinda Yeta, *The Involvement/Participation of Women*, p. 62.

¹⁴²⁵ One student at Tangaza University College in Nairobi wrote his 2017 SCCs Practicum and Course Paper on “Negative Ethnicity in St. Albert the Great SCC, Matunda Parish, Kakamega Diocese, Kenya. He applied the three steps of “See,” “Judge” and “Act” to the fighting between the members of the Nandi and Kikuyu Ethnic Groups in the SCC after the 2008 Post-Election Violence and their reconciliation through table fellowship.

¹⁴²⁶ St. Joseph SCC of the Holy Family Basilica, Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya has a Catering Service Project that both provides a service to the local community and raises money for the SCC’s treasury. “The monies we generate from these services assist us in the group to participate in various events within the church without going back into our pockets e.g. retreats and recollection, harvest for the church, animation in the church, visiting homes for the less fortunate and also our own members who have a life event such as death, sickness, arrival of a new baby or even wedding.” Email from the SCC’s secretary Naomi Idah Anyango dated 27 March, 2013.

Intercessions” or “Bidding Prayers” or “Universal Prayers”).¹⁴²⁷ Specific SCCs encourage the youth participate in the small plays or dramas/role plays that take place during mass. Representatives of specific SCCs count the Sunday collection and even deposit the money in the bank on Mondays or Tuesdays.

10. Sacraments such as Eucharist¹⁴²⁸ (including first Communion), Baptism, Reconciliation, Marriage and Anointing of the Sick celebrated in a SCC. The SCC Mass (*Jumuiya* Mass)¹⁴²⁹ includes a Shared Homily.¹⁴³⁰ Sometimes the *Jumuiya* members write out the petitions in advance and read them out loud. Communion (a designated Eucharist Minister covers a group of SCCs) is brought to sick members in the SCC. In dioceses like Moshi, Tanzania the SCCs are deeply involved in the bereavement rites and funerals of SCC members.

¹⁴²⁷ Zambian diocesan priest Father Febian Pikiti reports that in Kasama Archdiocese and other dioceses in Zambia it is common for SCCs to have their own choirs and to be responsible for the music and the songs of the Sunday Masses. Conversation with Febian Pikiti in Nairobi, Kenya on 14 August, 2012. SCC Choirs are common in other parts of Eastern Africa such as Shinyanga Diocese, Tanzania.

¹⁴²⁸ “Eucharist” is a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving” or “gratitude.” Daily Mass (and especially Sunday Mass – “the Lord’s Day”) is a “Thanksgiving Memorial” of Jesus Christ instituting the sacrament of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Catholics thank God for what has been done for them in Christ, God's saving activity. Research indicates that 95 % of the Catholics in Eastern Africa do not know the meaning of “Eucharist.”

There is a story called *I'll Never Forget Again*. In a mass at the Daughters of St. Paul in Nairobi, Kenya, I explained the meaning of “Eucharist” and stressed that only 5% know this. After Mass, a devout Indian Catholic woman came up to me and said, “Father, all my life I have been in the 95%. Starting today I am in the 5%. I'll Never Forget Again.”

¹⁴²⁹ A distinction is made between a normal mass that happens to take place in a SCC (such as in a home) and a genuine *Jumuiya* Mass with its unique characteristics and style.

¹⁴³⁰ The ideal in an interactive Shared Homily is not that each person just gives his or her personal reflection in turn. Rather, in the whole interactive experience, there is a genuine sharing and ongoing enrichment where each new reflection builds on and deepens the earlier reflections. This is part of the Synodal Process.

Another style is the Dialog Homily when the homilist/ animator/facilitator promotes interaction with the congregation participants. He or she invites them to make comments on the Scripture readings and uses questions, proverbs and sayings (first and second parts) and open discussion. This is a conversational style, not a strict preaching style.

Sometimes the dialog involves silence. In a homily on “The Importance of the Catholic Saints in Our Lives,” the homilist can mention different types of saints and leave a minute of silence for the congregation/participants to silently reflect on their own examples: Saint of one’s birthday; name saint, patron or patroness of one’s SCC or apostolic association or parish church; patron saint and patroness saint of mission; patron saint or patroness saint/founder of a religious congregation or society.

11. Celebrations in a SCC (food and drink, meals, entertainment, singing, dancing, storytelling, plays and other cultural activities, etc.). Some parishes and individual have an Annual SCCs Day. Some have festivals centered around a specific theme like the “Year of Mercy.”
12. Regular meetings of SCC leaders, coordinators and animators.¹⁴³¹
13. Ongoing formation and training workshops/seminars of SCC leaders, animators, facilitators and members.¹⁴³²
14. Retreats/Recollection Days¹⁴³³/Spiritual Renewal Formation Days/Pilgrimages of a SCC.
15. Elections in the SCC. Elections of the five top official posts (Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Vice-secretary, Treasurer) take place every three years and are supervised by representatives of the parish. At the same time there are elections of the different lay ecclesial ministers according to the priorities of the SCC. According to need (for example, the replacement of a SCC lay ecclesial minister who moves away) other elections can take place any time during the three years. Guidelines vary from country to country and diocese to diocese, there is a concern for gender balance (mixture of men and women), age balance (old and young), ethnic group balance (different ethnic groups), economic balance (rich and poor), etc.
16. Installation or induction of new leaders. Done in a variety of ways. These leaders are usually installed or commissioned in an official church ceremony presided over by the pastor or the bishop. Sometimes a letter from the bishop is read.

More information is available on the:

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and “SCCs Facebook Page”
www.smallchristiancommunities.org

Updated: 16 July, 2024

¹⁴³¹ Many parishes have monthly meetings of SCC leaders, coordinators and animators.

¹⁴³² Many dioceses and parishes in Eastern Africa systematically elect new leaders in the SCCs every three years. Some dioceses and parishes organize formation and training workshops for the new SCC leaders.

¹⁴³³ There is a “SCC way” of having a Recollection Day. The emphasis is on praying, listening, reflecting and sharing together in a small community context or setting. Ideally there should be *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* (for example, the Gospel of the following Sunday) in small communities. The priest should not preach/give a homily during mass, but inviting Faith-sharing from the participants. This is the difference between a teaching church and a listening church.

2. 31 Criteria to Evaluate a Typical Small Christian Community (SCC) in Eastern Africa

Our SCCs Research Team has established 31 criteria (equal to “characteristics”) for evaluating a typical neighborhood, parish-based Small Christian Community (SCC) in an urban, urban-rural (called peri-urban in Zambia), rural-urban or rural area in Eastern Africa or a specialized SCC. These criteria are drawn from official AMECEA (Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa) documents as far back as the 1973, 1976 and 1979 AMECEA Plenary Study Conferences, the First African Synod in 1994, the Second African Synod in 2009, recent papal documents, practical pastoral decisions based on experience during this 1973-2022 period, and an evolving vision, theology, and praxis of SCCs. NOTE: AMECEA is an acronym for "Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa." It is a service organization for the National Episcopal Conferences of the nine countries of Eastern Africa, namely Eritrea (1993), Ethiopia (1979), Kenya (1961), Malawi (1961), South Sudan (2011), Sudan (1973), Tanzania (1961), Uganda (1961) and Zambia (1961). Somalia (1995) and Djibouti (2002) are Affiliate Members.

1. The SCC is small -- usually not more than 15 or 20 regularly attending adults (with a varying number of children) at the weekly physical gatherings.¹⁴³⁴ Some SCCs are larger depending on whether they are located in the rural or urban centers. The Online SCCs can have more members.
2. The SCC usually meets every week.¹⁴³⁵ Some SCCs meet every two weeks.
3. The SCC meets during the week outside of the Sunday Eucharist/”Sunday Service Without a Priest.”

¹⁴³⁴ Mwoleka describes SCCs as “communities with a human face,” that is, members sit around in a small enough circle that they can see one another and share together.

Our research has found that determining the right size based on the number of families alone is not that helpful. The number of members from one family (that can be a nuclear family or an extended family/multigenerational family) can vary a lot and throw off the total desired number. But at the same time Lee’s insight has to be appreciated:

“In the past year I visited Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa. At a parish meeting of the pastoral leaders of 24 Small Christian Communities, I know people in the USA would have counted the number of individuals and given an answer. But every one of the 24 community leaders said how many families are in the community, for family, not the individual person, is the basic social unit.”

Bernard Lee, *The Beating of Great Wings: A Worldly Spirituality for Active, Apostolic Communities*, Mystic: Twenty-third Publications, 2004, p. 116.

¹⁴³⁵ This calls for creativity and flexibility. In rural areas during the planting season (rainy season) SCCs members meet less frequently. Equally it is better to organize SCCs workshops during the dry season after the harvest when people have more time.

4. The SCC meets in the home of one of its members usually on a rotation basis.
5. The catechist is not the leader. A variety of leaders/ministers are chosen from within the SCC. They are animators, not bosses.
6. The SCC chooses a Patron/Patroness Saint and is called by his or her name. This gives a specific Christian identity to the SCC beyond its geographical place name. The specific saint chosen serves as a model for the SCC members' lives and work. For example, a SCC may choose one of the apostles to indicate its apostolic/pastoral focus or one of the Ugandan Martyrs to show its African identity or a youthful saint if it is mainly composed of young people. The SCC celebrates the annual Feast Day of its Patron/Patroness Saint. Each SCC tries "to live into" the name and meaning of its Patron/Patroness Saint.
7. The SCC is the felt need of its members on the local level without depending on the priest or pastoral agent/worker.
8. The SCC emphasizes friendships, personal relationships, family bonds, solidarity, and Christian belonging --sharing together, working together, and celebrating together (including social activities, meals and entertainment) in the context of African values and customs. It can be a significant support group.¹⁴³⁶ Developing SCCs is a concrete expression of, and realization of, the Church as family Model of Church (First African Synod in 1994 and Second African Synod in 2009).
9. The SCC is an Inculturation/Contextualization Model of Church that tries to evolve from the grassroots up out of the daily life and experiences of the people themselves.
10. The SCC has some kind of *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection/Bible—Life Connections* on a regular basis. Usually the Gospel of the following Sunday¹⁴³⁷ is chosen (becoming a

¹⁴³⁶ Some SCCs have a special community uniform to express their unique identity and solidarity. This is especially true of the SCCs in Zambia. See the example of John Paul I SCC in Lusaka Archdiocese and the SCCs in St. Leopold Parish in Livingstone Diocese.

¹⁴³⁷ Perhaps 80% of the SCCs in Eastern Africa use this method.

Sometimes the Gospel of the previous Sunday is read. There is a value here since there is no one way to do the weekly *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection*. Some SCCs like to deepen the meaning and application of the previous Sunday's readings and homily by using them during the following week. Many applications to daily life can be found and discussed in a midweek SCC meeting after hearing the readings and summary of the homily on the previous Sunday. A Case Study is when *Luke 15:1-32* is used (for example, the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C): The three parables of "The Lost Sheep," "The Lost Coin" and "The Prodigal Son" (also called "The Lost Son" and "The Prodigal Father"). These three parables have many rich themes in alphabetical order: celebration, clemency, forgiveness, friendship, mercy, rejoicing, relationship, repentance and sorrow.

We emphasize that in our weekly Lectionary-based Faith Sharing in our Small Christian Communities (SCCs) we connect/relate/apply the Gospel to our daily lives. A perfect example is the "Parable of the Lost Coin" (*Luke 15*) that was the Gospel (15

lectionary-based Faith-sharing SCC) with a clear step by step plan. Members try to integrate faith and life, the *Bible* and everyday experience. Sometimes the SCC has Daily Life-*Bible* Connections. Start with special themes and topics as well as our experiences and events of daily life and then go to the *Bible*. Use the "See," "Judge" and "Act" process of the Pastoral Spiral/Circle/Cycle. This is an experience of Faith-sharing.

11. Regularly there is the Prayer of the Faithful (General Intercessions).
12. Silence after the *Bible* reading to listen to what God is saying/what God wants to tell us.
13. The SCC has pastoral and business meetings on a regular basis.
14. The SCC has some kind of planned practical action, service and pastoral, social and mission outreach. Ideally this is a communal response where the SCC members carry out the practical action as a group. Ideally it is connected to/flows from the Gospel text of the weekly *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection and is closely related to the pastoral priorities and activities of the parish. This service and outreach responds to local challenges and problems such as lax Catholics in the neighborhood, family and marriage difficulties, problems, bereavement,¹⁴³⁸ sick people, needy and poor people, people with HIV AND AIDS, street children, internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees, and people with dependency on alcohol, drugs, gambling and other addictions, local tensions over

September, 2019 -- 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C) and this true story. A mother in Detroit, Michigan, USA had 10 children -- girls and boys -- who had finished school and lived on their own. Her husband died. The widow keep the tradition alive of once a year having a big family reunion when all 10 children would return to the family home for a festive meal. One daughter drifted away from the family and stopped communicating. So only nine children came back home for their yearly family reunion. Years passed. Then two days before their annual reunion the mother gets a phone call from her "lost" daughter. "I am coming home tomorrow, Mom," she says. The mother is overjoyed and says, "We have found our lost daughter (parallel to finding the lost coin). Let us rejoice and celebrate."

Some SCCs begin their weekly meeting by summarizing the reflections on the previous Sunday and end their meeting by reflecting on the following Sunday.

Some SCCs use the Gospel of the day.

Some SCCs take one book of the *Bible* like *St. Luke's* Gospel or the *Acts of the Apostles* and reflect on one chapter per week.

Perhaps 20% of the SCCs in Eastern Africa uses one of these last methods.

¹⁴³⁸ Members of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) follow the bereavement customs of their different ethnic groups in Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya. The younger brother of the Chairperson of my own St. Kizito SCC in St. Austin's Parish died. We had special prayers and a collection (*sadaka ya rambirambi* in Swahili). But it was the eldest brother (firstborn) and the head of the family who led the bereavement customs and plans of the Luyia Ethnic Group including transporting the body of the deceased back to their ancestral home in Kakamega.

tribalism/negative ethnicity, concern about ecology and the environment and so on.

15. The SCC usually has a treasury (fund) with a regular collection taken during its gatherings. The money is used for the activities of the SCC such as celebrations (meals, entertainment, etc.), bereavement of members and their families (the collection is called *sadaka ya rambirambi* in Swahili) and to help needy people.
 16. The SCC has self-reliance projects (self-generating activities) and fund-raisers.
 17. The SCC members participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy as a community celebration of life (whether the parish/outstation Sunday Eucharistic Celebration or an occasional Eucharistic Celebration in the SCC itself that is called a *Jumuiya* (Swahili for “Community”) Mass. This reflects the “communion of communities” (or “communities of communities”) model of church. There are opportunities for celebrating other sacraments in the small community such as Baptism, Reconciliation, Marriage and Anointing of the Sick.
- The SCC is responsible for assisting in the Sunday Mass in the parish, subparish or outstation on a rotation basis.¹⁴³⁹ Cleaning the church, supplying the readers, taking the collection, bringing up the gifts at the Offertory including a special collection/donation from the SCC members. Depending on the specific place and context SCC members can have other responsibilities: Specific SCCs (sometimes with their own SCC choirs) are responsible for the music, songs and liturgical dancing. Specific SCCs are responsible for the “Prayer of the Faithful” (“General Intercessions”).¹⁴⁴⁰ Specific SCCs encourage the youth participate in the small plays or dramas/role plays that take place during mass.
18. The SCC has various pastoral responsibilities, decisions, and activities in the parish and in the SCC especially related to its members’ religious education and preparation for receiving the sacraments.
 19. The SCC analyzes justice and peace issues with concrete follow-up on the SCC, parish, deanery and diocesan levels.
 20. The SCC has opportunities for Special Study/Instruction (on the *Bible*, the Creed, the Sacraments, Mysteries of the Rosary, a Catholic Church Document, a Religious Book, a Devotional Book, etc.), Counseling, etc.
 21. The SCC has opportunities for Retreats/Spiritual Renewal and Recollection Days/Pilgrimages.
 22. There is an annual SCC Day on the parish, sub parish or outstation levels. This includes

¹⁴³⁹ In parishes in Malawi this is called the “Week of Service” and covers all the masses and responsibilities of the week.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Zambian diocesan priest Father Febian Pikiti reports that in Kasama Archdiocese and other dioceses in Zambia it is common for SCCs to have their own choirs and to be responsible for the music and the songs of the Sunday Masses. SCC Choirs are common in other parts of Eastern Africa such as Shinyanga Diocese, Tanzania. Some SCCs lead the “Prayer of the Faithful” (“General Intercessions”) and even write out the intentions ahead of time. Conversation with Febian Pikiti in Nairobi, Kenya on 14 August, 2012.

the Eucharist, a meal and sharing SCC activities.

23. The SCC help to promote and nurture vocations and ministries at various levels of the life of the church.
24. The SCC elects its own leaders in a democratic process of the church from below.
25. These leaders are installed or commissioned in an official church ceremony presided over by the pastor or the bishop. Sometimes a letter from the bishop is read.
26. The SCC officially participates in the parish structures as a “communion of communities” (or “community of communities” or “network of communities”) pastoral, ecclesial model of church. For example, the SCC (or a group of SCCs) has a representative on the Outstation or Subparish or Parish Council/Parish Pastoral Council. Leadership starts from below.
27. There are regular meetings of the SCC leaders to coordinate and animate SCC activities.
28. There are ongoing formation and training sessions (workshops and seminars) of the SCC leaders animators and facilitators, and sometimes of all the SCCs members.
29. There is some kind of coordination and networking of the different SCCs on the parish, deanery, and diocesan levels.
30. The pastoral priority of SCCs is an integral part of the Parish and Diocesan Pastoral Plans.
31. The SCC has a missionary spirit with a specific evangelization (first or primary evangelization, new evangelization, re-evangelization and deeper evangelization) and a mission focus.

More information is available on the:

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and “Facebook Page”
www.smallchristiancommunities.org

Updated: 16 July, 2024

3. Lay Ecclesial Ministries in Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa

Over the years lay ecclesial ministries in SCCs in Eastern Africa have evolved in responding to the contemporary signs of the times. After Vatican II for many years in the Catholic Church there was a lively debate about the use and meaning of the word “ministry.” Certain people did not want to use the name “minister” for a lay person, but it is widely accepted now. The popular usage today includes the legitimacy and importance of non-ordained lay ecclesial ministries officially recognized by the Catholic Church. In some cases there is an official installation or induction.

There are various leadership models, types and styles of lay ministry. In the spirit of being a new way of being and becoming church, the emphasis is on service rather than authority, especially servant leadership. A lay minister is a servant of the servants. A lay minister is not a boss. There are two distinct roles. Sometimes this lay ministry is to animate, facilitate and coordinate activities within the SCC. Sometimes this lay ministry represents the SCC at the outstation, sub-parish and parish levels.

It is common for a SCC to have a Chairperson,¹⁴⁴¹ Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer (including stewardship) and Assistant Treasurer. The Executive Committee consists of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. Often the Chairperson and Secretary represent the SCC on the Parish Pastoral Council. To have all six positions in one SCC can be overly bureaucratic.

Specific lay ecclesial ministries go by many different names, types and responsibilities.¹⁴⁴² One SCC member may be responsible for more than one ministry. They cover the following:

1. Liturgy or Liturgical Animator/Leader or Prayer Animator/Leader with specific responsibility for leading, facilitating and animating the weekly *Bible Service* and various prayers. Also called the “Teacher of the Word” (*Mwalimu wa Neno* in Swahili), “*Bible Animator*,” “*Bible Leader*” and the “*Bible Coordinator*.”¹⁴⁴³
2. Lector (Reader).
3. Acolyte.
4. Catechist/Catechesis Animator.
5. Religious Education Teacher/Animator.
6. Family Life Animator.
7. Family Mentor. **NOTE:** The SCC should identify a mentor family that journeys with families facing challenges.

¹⁴⁴¹ Called by many names as explained throughout this book. Some examples: Servant of the Servants (*Mhudumu wa Wahudumu*).

¹⁴⁴² Particular countries and dioceses have particular ministries in the SCCs.

¹⁴⁴³ Many of these Liturgy or Liturgical Animator/Prayer Animators do not realize that their important ministry of animating the weekly *Bible Service* includes introducing the theme of the Gospel in the context of the liturgical season.

8. Adult Catechumenate (RCIA) Pastoral Accompanier.
9. Song/Music. Also called the Choir Animator and Choir Master.
10. Justice and Peace Animator.
11. Marriage Ministers¹⁴⁴⁴ that goes by many names. Ideally includes a committed, experienced Catholic couple:
 1. Single Mother Pastoral Accompanier.
 2. Marriage Animators (before and after marriage like a Formation Animator). Includes Marriage Pastoral Accompaniers (before and after marriage).¹⁴⁴⁵ Also referred to as Marriage Mentors after marriage.¹⁴⁴⁶
 3. Marriage Counselor¹⁴⁴⁷ (after marriage).
12. Children Animator/Coordinator/Guardian.
13. Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC) Coordinator (with focus on PMC SCCs).
14. Child Protection and Child Safeguarding Coordinator.
15. Young People (Youth/Young Adult) Animator/Facilitator. Ideally two people: A young adult and an older mentor.¹⁴⁴⁸
16. Matron and Patron of the YPSCCs/YSCCs/YASCCs and Children SCCs – adults from the Adult or Parent SCC (or *Mama Jumuyia*) who serve as the link persons, mentors and advisors to the young people small communities and children small communities.
17. University/College/Institute/High School Campus Minister Responsible for SCCs. Both chaplains and young people leaders.
18. Catholic Women’s Association (CWA) Representative.
19. Catholic Men’s Association (CMA) Representative.
20. Good Neighbor/Good Samaritan/Promoter of Community Spirit.¹⁴⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴⁴ This person works closely with movements and organizations such as (alphabetically) Couples for Christ, Family Enrichment Clubs, Marriage Encounter, Project Rachel and True Love Waits.

¹⁴⁴⁵ In documents and talks Pope Francis recommends Marriage Pastoral Accompaniers especially in the first five years of marriage.

¹⁴⁴⁶ The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)’s “Results of the Consultation in Kenya on the 46 Questions in the *Lineamenta* on *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World* has a very good section explaining how a happily married couple can “mentor” (serve as “mentors”) for a newly married couple.

¹⁴⁴⁷ “Counselor” or Counseling” is a tricky word because for many it is interpreted as “problem-centered.” Research surveys in Kenya indicate that many couples faced by marital problems do not seek real counseling. Only 1.8% seek professional psychological counseling. Men in particular resist counseling and deny that they have a “problem” with fidelity, alcohol, spending money, etc. Perhaps “marriage guidance” is a better term.

¹⁴⁴⁸ The Church of the Nativity in the Lutherville, Maryland, USA has Confirmation Mentors – adult ministers who are like Pastoral Accompaniers of the teenagers during the entire Confirmation preparation process. It is hoped that the official sponsors continue this accompaniment after the reception of the sacrament.

¹⁴⁴⁹ This neighborhood ministry has many services: welcoming new people into the SCCs; reporting about members who may be sick (such as those with HIV/AIDS), traveling, etc.;

21. Servant of the Poor/Helper of the Needy/Coordinator of Charitable Works/CARITAS Representative/ St. Vincent de Paul Coordinator.
22. Health Servant/Volunteer Community Healthcare (CHC) Worker or Minister.¹⁴⁵⁰
23. Pro-Life Coordinator.
24. Projects/Development Coordinator.
25. Eucharistic Minister.¹⁴⁵¹
26. Healing Minister.¹⁴⁵²
27. Usher.
28. Greeter. This is a newer ministry. The SCC Representative helps to welcome parishioners and visitors at religious services at the parish, sub-parish and outstation levels. This person can be part of the Parish, Sub-parish and Outstation Hospitality Team.
29. Representative on the Web Team.
30. Representative(s) on the Parish Pastoral Council.
31. Overall SCC Animator/Coordinator. In a few places still called Chairperson. Newer name is Moderator. Active SCC member chosen to represent the SCC on the Outstation, Sub-parish and Parish Coordination (and Training) Teams.

As part of the ongoing Synodal Process new ministries are being discerned, for example, Preacher/Homilist. This person – laywoman or layman -- would undergo two years of training and then be able to preach the homily at Sunday Masses. Already for many years the catechist or religious education teacher or another leader preaches at the “Sunday Services Without the Priest.”

Most of the attention is on the election of the new chairperson of the SCC, but the election of the leaders of the other lay ecclesial ministries is important too. A special challenge is that the leadership pool can be small (those who are married in church and can receive communion). The pastor of Kiserian Parish in Ngong Diocese, Kenya points out that Catholics who have not been married sacramentally can still be chosen for certain SCCs leadership positions such as:

helping a member in need; promoting brotherhood and sisterhood and the common good; and encouraging joint activities. For example, in Dar es Salaam the SCCs members clean the street where they live, enjoy watching a big football (soccer) game together, having a street party with food, drinks, etc.

¹⁴⁵⁰ This ministry is described at length in “Case Study of Volunteer Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) in the SCCs in Kenya” in Joseph Healey, “Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as Agents of Change in the Fight against HIV AND AIDS in Eastern Africa.” African Jesuit AIDS Network. Nairobi, Kenya. January, 2015. Published in a book on *HIV & AIDS in Africa: Theological Reflection, Public Health, and Social Transformation*. 2016. These volunteer CHC Workers are trained at the Community Health Training Center at St. Theresa’s Parish, Eastleigh in Nairobi.

¹⁴⁵¹ Although not common, in some parishes a group of neighboring SCCs choose one designated person who is commissioned to bring communion to the sick, etc.

¹⁴⁵² Although not common, some SCCs choose one designated person to pray over and lay hands on the sick, etc.

- Justice and Peace Animator
- Good Neighbor/Good Samaritan/Promoter of Community Spirit
- Servant of the Poor/Helper of the Needy/Coordinator of Charitable Works/CARITAS Representative
- Health Servant/Volunteer Community Healthcare Worker (CHW) or Minister
- Projects/Development Coordinator

The ideal is to have ongoing formation and training of each type of lay ecclesial minister on a regular basis. This remains a huge challenge and task. From 1977 to 1983 Mwoleka, the founder of SCCs in Tanzania, began a “Seven-Year Plan to Train Leaders of the Small Christian Communities.” Through workshops, seminars and meetings in Rulenge Diocese he and his diocesan training team trained seven types of lay ministers – one ministry per year.¹⁴⁵³ Such training remains arduous, but crucial, work even up to today.

In choosing lay ecclesial ministers Bishop Christopher Mwoleka, the bishop founder of SCCs in Tanzania, established the principle that a Catholic has to receive communion in the church (this assumes that the person is sacramentally married in the church) to qualify for the official church-related leadership positions such as Chairperson, Liturgy or Liturgical Animator/ Leader or Prayer Animator, Catechist, Religious Education Animator, Catechesis Animator, Marriage Minister and Eucharistic Minister. But for other general positions such as Treasurer, Projects/Development Coordinator, Health Servant/Volunteer Community Healthcare (CHC) Worker or Minister and Justice and Peace Animator any interested person can be chosen – even if that person cannot receive communion because he/she has not married sacramentally, has a second wife, etc.

Updated: 6 August, 2024

¹⁴⁵³ See “The Bishop’s Seven-Year Dream” in Joseph Healey, *A Fifth Gospel: The Experience of Black Christian Values*. Joseph G. Healey. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981 and London: SCM Press, 1981, pp. 108-117. Also available in Swahili and German.

**4. 13 Steps in the
Weekly Bible
Sharing/Bible
Reflection/Bible—
Daily Life
Connections
Service¹⁴⁵⁴ of Small
Christian
Communities
(SCCs) in Africa¹⁴⁵⁵**

NOTE: SCC members in Africa normally meet every week in one of their homes ¹⁴⁵⁶ as part of the church in the neighborhood (neighborhood church).¹⁴⁵⁷ Usually it is a *Bible Service*. Ideally this prayer experience is lectionary-based, faith-sharing/gospel-based that connects the Gospel of the following Sunday to our daily lives. It is family-based gathering/meeting. Sometimes food and drink is served. Occasionally there is a pastoral/business meeting. It is not necessary that all these steps be used in each gathering/meeting. The number and order of the steps should be creatively adapted to the local context and situation.¹⁴⁵⁸ The Seven Steps of Gospel Sharing of Lumko (South Africa)

¹⁴⁵⁴ We have discovered that we need an “Explanation of Terms” for each local context/situation.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Numbers 3-10 give various methods of *Bible Reflection*. There are many more methods. For example, the Emmaus Walk based on *Luke 24:13-35*. In either the whole SCC or in groups of two people, this powerful story of the two disciples meeting Jesus on the road and recognizing him in the breaking of the bread can be retold in the context of our own lives today as SCCs members answer Jesus’ question “What things?”

¹⁴⁵⁶ There are many other models. For example, campus-based YPSCCs meet in their residence halls or dormitories.

¹⁴⁵⁷ One practical suggestion comes from the Small Church Communities at St. Thomas More, the Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. They suggest the following: “Prepare for each weekly session in a prayerful way. Pause for three minutes and offer a prayer of openness and gratitude before leaving a place and going to your SCC. Approach your SCC reverently and not just as the next activity to attend.” *Called To Be Church: Small Church Communities on Campus*, New Haven: Saint Thomas More the Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University, 2011-2012, p. 346. The same can be said at the end of the weekly session – wherever and whenever it is. Pause for three minutes and offer a prayer of gratitude. Reflect on the fruit of the gathering, for example, what is your take away or practical action during the next week -- before rushing to your next activity.

¹⁴⁵⁸ In a rural area where a number of the SCC members do not read, the steps should be fewer and simpler.

and the four moments in the process of *Lectio Divina* can be incorporated into the weekly meeting.

1. Opening prayer or song.¹⁴⁵⁹

2. Brief reports on the SCC members' lives during the past week. Here SCC members share their recent life experiences good and bad. It is called a "touchdown period"¹⁴⁶⁰ or "catch-up time" that can also serve as an "icebreaker" for the gathering. Some SCCs call it "God moments" when each member tells of a time he or she experienced God during the week. Includes a report on the SCC's actions/tasks (community response) carried out during the previous week. **NOTE:** This step can also take place at the end of the meeting when it can serve to answer the questions: What have I learned from this meeting? What is my take away? What is a point or action to take or to carry home? What is my follow-up/follow-down?

3. Brief introduction of the liturgical theme. This can also be Step 2 of the gathering. Gives the theme/themes of the Scripture readings and the liturgical season in the context of our life situation and local reality.¹⁴⁶¹ The Liturgical Animator/Leader should prepare this step ahead of time through prayer, reading the Gospel, the other Scripture readings and liturgical commentaries, silence and reflection.

¹⁴⁵⁹ The lyrics (words) of the songs are very important and can be a "teaching moment," an opportunity for prayer and formation.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Some SCCs call this Step 2 "the Catch-Up" (from the previous week) or "the Update" (on the events in the SCC members lives since the last meeting). The 14 SCCs at Yale University, USA call this step the "Check-In" or the "Roses and Thorns" -- the ups and downs of the past week. SCC members share the feelings or experiences that touched them or affected their life -- their good and bad experiences, their successes and failures, their lights and shadows during the past week. The question is not "How are you," but "How are you, *really?*"

¹⁴⁶¹ Our SCCs live within the context of the ideal and the real. Some SCCs skip this step. In other SCCs this step is passed over or shortened. Sometimes the Liturgical Animator/Leader does not prepare ahead of time. But this step is very important in helping SCC members to understand the plan of the liturgical year and how to be Lectionary Catholics or Lectionary-based Catholics. Otherwise SCC members can join the present/current meeting only focused on the Gospel of following Sunday -- not aware of, and even oblivious of, previous Sundays and future Sundays in the Catholic Church's liturgical plan.

4. Read the Gospel¹⁴⁶² of the following Sunday (first time).¹⁴⁶³ The Sunday Scripture Readings offer the ordinary lens through which SCC members look at their lives and their world. The reading of the Gospel helps members to discover the Gospel in their lives.

5. Mention a word, phrase or image in the Gospel that strikes you the most/resonates with you the most/stands out to you the most.

6. Read the Gospel of the following Sunday (second time).

7. Silence. Listen to what God is saying/what God wants to tell us in this Gospel passage.. This period of silence is not wasted time or empty time. It can be a time of deeper listening and deeper reflection.¹⁴⁶⁴

¹⁴⁶² In multi-ethnic and multi-language areas the Gospel passage may be read in two or three different languages, for example, Swahili, Gikuyu and English in Kenya. Sometimes there is a value to read the text in one version of the *Bible*. At other times there is a value to hear different versions of the same Gospel text.

¹⁴⁶³ The *Bible* passage is read, and ideally proclaimed, slowly, prayerfully and reflectively. Sometimes the SCC members pass the *Bible* around the circle and each person reads one verse. Just like the Lector/Reader at the celebration of the Eucharist, the reader in the SCC should prepare ahead of time. After participating in thousands of *Bible* Services and masses over 50 years I have experienced the gamut of “preparation:” from the reader who understands “preparation” as merely finding the right page in the *Bible* or *Missal* to the person who spends 20 minutes to pray over and reflect on the text in advance in order to internalize the passage so as to express the meaning better. Especially to Lectors/Readers in outstations and subparishes I remind them that “even the pope prepares the *Bible* reading ahead of time.”

A new way of preparation is to listen to the “Daily Reading Podcast” from an App such as *Laudate* or a website such as the USCCB. The clarity, expression and intonation of a professional reader can help improve one’s own reading and also help one appreciate the content more.

¹⁴⁶⁴ During the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on “*Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*” in Rome in October, 2018 after every set of five interventions there was a period of three minutes of silence for the participants to reflect privately on the content and application of the interventions. All the bishop delegates and other participants said that this silence was very helpful and meaningful. One of the Kenyan Bishop delegates said that it the best part of the synod for him. It set a tone of discernment rather than discussion in the assembly. It is a good model for our SCC gatherings.

In the steps for a “Synodal Process” gathering there are two periods of silence for deeper listening:

1. Participants reflect silently for three minutes preparing their input. Open oneself to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is one reason why the synodal process is different and can be very creative.

2. Three more minutes of silent reflection. Each person takes private notes. After re-reading their notes, each person shares for a further two minutes whatever has enlightened or

8. *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection/Bible*—Daily Life Connections. Connect, relate and apply the *Bible* (Gospel) to our daily lives¹⁴⁶⁵ and experience (on both personal and society-wide levels).¹⁴⁶⁶ This is lectionary-based faith-sharing/gospel-based faith-sharing. SCC members share their reflections sitting together in a circle and for a maximum of five minutes.¹⁴⁶⁷ This is the most important part of the weekly meeting of the SCC.

Sometimes the SCC uses a Daily Life-*Bible* Connections method. Start with special themes and topics as well as our experiences and events of daily life and then go to the *Bible*. Use the “See,” “Judge” and “Act” process of the Pastoral Spiral/Circle/Cycle.

Both ways are an experience of faith-sharing.

9. Prayer of the Faithful (Petitions or General Intercessions or Intercessory Prayers or Bidding Prayers).¹⁴⁶⁸ Usually spontaneous in the SCC.¹⁴⁶⁹ Connects to our daily lives:

resonated with them from the sharing of the other members. The participants are invited to consider what the Holy Spirit seemed to be calling them to, what paths are being opened.

¹⁴⁶⁵ From our research, many Eastern Africans find it very hard to connect the *Bible* to daily life in concrete, specific ways, that is, to apply the Gospel passage to concrete lived experience and the immediate local reality. We have discovered that this a skill that has to be learned, practiced and developed in training workshops, etc.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Some SCC members receive a weekly email message/smartphone text message/Facebook message/What’sApp message/podcast with additional reflections material that makes the connections between the readings and events happenings in the local community, in the Catholic Church and in the world.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Usually SCC members share their reflections in a random order and sometimes not related to the biblical theme or content. This includes the reflections that they have prepared ahead of time. One SCC leader calls this “sharing” the Word of God “together” but “separately.” I know one faithful SCC member who interprets every Gospel passage, regardless of the context, in relation to love.

It is better to focus on the specific gospel of the Sunday and build on the themes and content of the previous reflections shared on the gospel text in the SCC gathering. Sometimes SCC members can feel the Holy Spirit working as the depth and insights of the reflections flow from each other and build on each other. We are challenged in this reflection process to learn from the popular saying: *The biggest communications problem is we don’t listen to understand. We listen to reply.* It is important that the leader (whatever name is used) of the weekly meeting of the SCC facilitates this process well.

¹⁴⁶⁸ There are many styles and types of prayers: some are composed ahead of time and read during the weekly meeting; others are spontaneous. Some meetings (and the subsequent Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy) used lectionary-based prayers based on the Scripture readings of the Sunday.

¹⁴⁶⁹ As contrasted to Mass where the prayers are read from a book or follow a specific structure or are written out ahead of time. Also different from “spontaneous prayer.”

specific, practical and from our grassroots experience. Sometimes the *jumuiya* members speak in their home (heart) languages. Sometimes the *jumuiya* members write out the petitions in advance and read them out loud.

10. Collection.

11. Choose a concrete practical action/task¹⁴⁷⁰ (ideally a community response) to be carried out during the next week. Ideally it is connected to/flows from the Gospel text and is closely related to the pastoral priorities and activities of the parish or local community. Examples: deepening my relationship with Jesus Christ, praying more, reading the *Bible* more, special Advent and Lenten spiritual practices, spend more time in contemplative prayer, visiting the sick, visiting members who rarely come to the SCC, helping needy people, preparing both

¹⁴⁷⁰ Sometimes the SCC members feel overwhelmed by the needs of their families and neighbors and have trouble choosing a specific practical action especially the “who” and the “when.” The universal adage *one day at a time* comes in handy. I remember the story of a Kenyan man who coordinated the Street Children Project in Nairobi, Kenya. On any day 50 or 60 street children could be lined up to get assistance at his outdoor “station” in Westlands. They would ask for money, food, clothes, a school, a job and so forth. As they milled around his desk in a very noisy, even chaotic, atmosphere the man was asked, “How do you manage with all these children and all these requests at the same time?” “It’s simple,” he answered. “One child at a time.”

Many mantras have been created from this universal adage and idea such as: “Climate action, one bite at a time.” “One by one.” “One at a time.” “One thing at a time.” “One step at a time.” “One thoughtful step at a time.” “One day at a time,” “One home at a time.” “Changing lives -- one child at a time.” “One kid at a time.” “One piece at a time.” “One flipper at a time.” “One paddle at a time.” “One bite at a time.” “Cut one branch of a tree at a time.” “Fight poverty one family at a time.” “Eradicate poverty one family at a time.” “Rebuilding the church one parish at a time.” “Rebuilding one’s life one movement at a time.”

This relates to the African Riddle: *How do you eat an elephant?* ANSWER: *One bite at a time*. This includes chewing time -- slowly and digesting well. Meaning: do or tackle one thing at a time. And do it thoroughly and well. Then move on to something else. This is a “slow, but sure” approach and a different mentality than multi-tasking. To show the popularity of this riddle 14,879 people were reached, 416 people clicked “like,” 191 people clicked “Share” and 26 people posted comments as of 11 September, 2015 on our African Proverbs Website Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/afriprov>).

The sayings *if you’re going to talk the talk, you’ve got to walk the walk*, or *walk it like you talk it* are 20th and 21st century American alternatives to various old sayings which epitomize the notion that “talk is cheap,” for example, *actions speak louder than words*, *practice what you preach* and *put your money where your mouth is*. Pope Francis challenges us by the consistency of both his words and his deeds to reach out to the poorest and neediest in whatever ways we understand the meaning of these words.

children and adult for the sacraments, justice and peace actions, advocacy, self-reliance, action of solidarity, etc.¹⁴⁷¹

This is called the take-away.” It can also be some kind of follow-up/follow-down like a learning or a lesson to take home from the gathering. It serves to answer the questions: What have I learned from this SCC gathering/*Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection*? What is my take away? What is a point or action to take home? What is my follow-up/follow-down? Some SCCs include an opportunity for members to express some idea or insight or action that they have learned during the gathering that they will use as their take away or follow up/down in their ongoing actions.

12. Closing prayer or song.

13. Exchange a Sign of Peace.¹⁴⁷² This can be a handshake, hugging or using one of the many African symbols and signs of peace that are referred to in other parts of this Ebook.

NOTE: For a complete description in English see: *A Fifth Gospel: The Experience of Black Christian Values*. Joseph G. Healey. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981 and London: SCM Press, 1981. A Special Edition (32 Years Anniversary Edition printed digitally) was published by Orbis Books in 2013. In Swahili see: *Kuishi Injili (Living the Gospel)*. Joseph G. Healey. Peramiho: Benedictine Publications Ndanda-Peramiho, 2006. A commentary on these steps is also available in articles in *African Christian Studies (CUEA)*, *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)*, *Hekima Review* (Hekima University College) and *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission* (Tangaza University College). See also the Seven-Step Gospel Sharing Method of Lumko (South Africa), the four moments of the process of *Lectio Divina* and the steps in the prayer and song book *Tumshangilie Bwana*. Various dioceses and parishes have developed their own handouts describing the various steps.

More information is available on the:

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and “Facebook Page”
www.smallchristiancommunities.org

Updated: 8 February, 2024

¹⁴⁷¹ A concrete example that I use regularly in reading and reflecting on the Beatitudes (*Matthew 5:1-12*). Verse 9 says: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” In solidarity with Pax Christ International every Friday I pray for specific countries in Africa by name that particularly need peace.

¹⁴⁷² The SCC members that meet on Mondays at the University of Nairobi, Kenya Science Teachers Campus in Nairobi begin by sharing their experiences of the past week. Then the leader asks if members have any grievances against each other. Then they exchange a sign of peace to reconcile themselves to each other and to restore the friendship that they had before.

5. Utaratibu wa Hatua Kumi na Tatu katika Vikao vya Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo (Swahili Version)

NOTE: SCC members in Africa normally meet every week in one of their homes. Usually it is a Bible Service. Ideally this is lectionary-based Faith-sharing and a family-based gathering/meeting. Sometimes food and drink is served. Occasionally there is a pastoral/business meeting. It is not necessary that all the steps be used in each gathering/meeting. The number and order of the steps should be creatively adapted to the local context and situation. The Seven Steps of Gospel Sharing of Lumko (South Africa) and the four moments in the process of *Lectio Divina* can be incorporated into the weekly meeting.

- 1- Sala ya kufungua kikao/Ama wimbo wa kuanzia kikao.
- 2- Kufahamishana kwa ufupi matukio yaliyoingiana na maisha ya wanajumuiya katika juma lilopita. Simulizi fupi kutokana na utekelezaji wa maazimio yaliyolenga majukumu mbali mbali kutokana na kikao cha mwisho cha jumuiya.
- 3- Kupeana utangulizi wa nia ama wazo kuu katika maadhimisho ya liturjia ya juma.
- 4- Kusoma injili ya Jumapili inayofuata kwa mara ya kwanza.
- 5- Kutamka neno, kifungu ama msemo uliokugusa unaotokana na injili iliyosomwa.
- 6- Kusoma injili ya Jumapili inayofuata kwa mara ya pili.
- 7- Kubaki kimya katika hali ya tafakari kwa muda wa dakika chache ili wanajumuiya wasikilize sauti ya Mungu jinsi inavyomzungumzia kila mwanajumuiya katika dhamira na nafsi yake.
- 8- Kushirikishana tafakari katika neno la Mungu. Tafakari hii ihusishe mwelekeo wa maisha ya kawaida kwa utaratibu wa hatua za “Ona,” “Amua” na “Tenda” kama tukio la imani.
- 9- Sala za Waumini.
- 10- Mchango wa jumuiya.
- 11- Kazi ya kutenda. Kuchagua tendo dhahiri litakalo adhimishwa na kutekelezwa katika juma linalofuata. Kwa mfano: Kuenda kuwasabahi wagonjwa.
- 12- Sala ya kufunga kikao ama wimbo wa kumalizia kikao.
- 13- Kutakiana amani ya Kristo.

(Tafsiri na Padri Harrison Yaa wa Jimbo Kuu la Mombasa, Kenya)

6. Seven-Step Gospel Sharing (Lumko, South Africa)

1. WE INVITE THE LORD

- Will someone please invite Jesus in a prayer.
- We share our lives as each person shares with the small community members something good or bad that happened to him or her during the previous week.

2. WE READ THE TEXT

- Let us open to chapter...
- Will someone, please read verses... (1st Time).
- Will someone read the same text from a different version or language, if possible! (2nd Time).

3. WE PICK OUT ANY WORDS AND MEDITATE ON THEM

- We pick out any words or short phrases, read them aloud prayerfully and keep silence in between.
- (afterwards) We read the text again. (3rd Time).

4. WE LET GOD SPEAK TO US IN SILENCE

- We keep silence for... minutes and allow God to speak to us.

5. WE SHARE WHAT WE HAVE HEARD IN OUR HEARTS

- Which word has touched us personally? (PLEASE NO DISCUSSING OR PREACHING)

6. WE DISCUSS ANY TASK WHICH OUR GROUP IS CALLED TO DO (SCC members discuss what the Lord wants them to do as the "Church in the Neighborhood")

- Report on previous task
- Which new task has to be done?

7. WE PRAY SPONTANEOUSLY

- All are invited to pray from the heart. Prayer of the Faithful (General Intercessions).
- (Afterwards) We end with a prayer/hymn that all know.

7. Hatua Saba: Njia za Kutafakari Masoma ya Biblia (Lumko, South Africa, Swahili Version)

1. Tumwalike Bwana.

-- Mmoja amwalike Yesu kwa njia ya sala.

2. Tusome neno la Mungu.

-- Tufungue kitabu cha... sura...

-- Mmoja asome kuanzia mstari wa...

3. Tuchague maneno kadhaa na kutafakari juu yao.

-- Tuchague maneno au fungu la maneno.

-- Tuyasome kwa sauti kwa njia ya sala.

-- Tukae kimya baada ya kila sehemu kusomwa.

4. Tukae kimya ili Mungu aweze kuzumgumza nasi.

-- Tuwe kimya kwa dakika...na kumwacha Mungu azungumze nasi.

5. Tushirikishe yale ambayo moyo unatwambia.

-- Ni neno gani limekugusa moyo wako?

6. Tujadiliane kazi ambayo kundi letu limeitwa kutekeleza.

-- A. Ripoti kuhusu mpango wa kazi ya mkutano uliopita.

-- B. Ni kazi gani mpya tunaweza kufanya? NANI atafanya NINI na ataifanya LINI?

7. Tusali sala isiyo na matayarisho ya awali.

-- Tufunge na ombi/wimbo ambalo kila mtu anajua bila kitabu.¹⁴⁷³

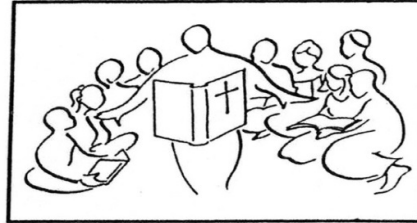
¹⁴⁷³ See *Safari Yetu Pamoja*.

8. Group Response Method/Bible -- Mirror Method (Lumko, South Africa)

BIBLE-MIRROR-METHOD (Group Response)

1. We listen carefully to God's Word

- We invite the Lord in a prayer and welcome him.
- We read the text twice.
- We pick out short phrases, read them aloud three times and keep a pause in between.
- We read the text again.



2. We see our own life reflected in the text.

Let us discuss the following question with the person next to us. We report to the whole group after 3-5 minutes.



- ***What life-situation or problem in our parish, village, town or country is similar to the situation mentioned in the text?-- (Do not talk about your personal problems!)***

☞ **Report after 3-5 minutes.**

(After the report:)

☞ **Choose one problem to discuss further.**

- *Does anyone know more about this problem?*
- *Why do you think we have such a problem?*

3. We look at our life-situation with the eyes of God.

We now imagine ourselves at God's side. We make ourselves one with God and try to look with his eyes at the life situation which we have chosen.

We keep silence for three minutes and ask ourselves:

'How does God look at our problem?'

'What does God think, feel and say about it?'



(Perhaps we remember Psalms and other texts from scripture which may have something to do with our life-situation.)

4. We share on 'God's point of view!'

We tell each other
what we think God is
saying to us about
our problem...



5. We plan in the 'Kingdom Way'.

We ask ourselves:
What does God want us to do?
WHO is doing WHAT and WHEN?

*(If a group has chosen an important and difficult
problem, the action plan should be discussed at a
separate meeting.)*

For making an action plan we use the 'Problem solving
Scheme' on the following page. A detailed explanation
and examples of how to use this Scheme you will find in
AsIPA text A\8.

Before you use this Problem solving Scheme you should
narrow down a "huge problem" (eg. Unemployment) to a
concrete expression or example of this problem. (eg. 'In
our street there are some youth without work!')

9. Five Steps of the Amos Program (Lumko, South Africa)

Step 1: Look at life.

Step 2: Why does this happen?

Step 4: We listen to God.

Step 4: Search for root causes.

Step 5: Plan with firmness and love.

10. The Process of *Lectio Divina*¹⁴⁷⁴

Lectio Divina (Latin for “Divine Reading”) is a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures which enables the *Bible*, the Word of God, to become a means of union with God. Time set aside in a special way for *lectio divina* enables us to discover in our daily life an underlying spiritual rhythm. Within this rhythm we discover an increasing ability to offer more of ourselves and our relationships to the Father, and to accept the embrace that God is continuously extending to us in the person of his Son Jesus Christ.

1. *Lectio* -- reading/listening

The art of *lectio divina* begins with cultivating the ability to listen deeply, to hear “with the ear of our hearts” as St. Benedict encourages us in the *Prologue to the Rule*. When we read the Scriptures we should try to imitate the prophet Elijah. We should allow ourselves to become women and men who are able to listen for the still, small voice of God (I *Kings* 19:12); the “faint murmuring sound” which is God’s word for us, God’s voice touching our hearts. This gentle listening is an “atunement” to the presence of God in that special part of God’s creation which is the Scriptures.

The cry of the prophets to ancient Israel was the joy-filled command to “Listen!” “Sh’ma Israel: Hear, O Israel!” In *lectio divina* we, too, heed that command and turn to the Scriptures, knowing that we must “hear” -- listen -- to the voice of God, which often speaks very softly. In order to hear someone speaking softly we must learn to be silent. We must learn to love silence. If we are constantly speaking or if we are surrounded with noise, we cannot hear gentle sounds. The practice of *lectio divina*, therefore, requires that we first quiet down in order to hear God’s word to us. This is the first step of *lectio divina*, appropriately called *lectio* -- reading.

The reading or listening which is the first step in *lectio divina* is very different from the speed reading which modern Christians apply to newspapers, books and even to the *Bible*. *Lectio Divina* is reverential listening; listening both in a spirit of silence and of awe. We are listening for the still, small voice of God that will speak to us personally -- not loudly, but intimately. In *Lectio Divina* we read slowly, attentively, gently listening to hear a word or phrase that is God’s word for us this day.

2. *Meditatio* -- meditation

Once we have found a word or a passage in the Scriptures that speaks to us in a personal way, we must take it in and “ruminate” on it. The image of the ruminant animal quietly chewing its cud was used in antiquity as a symbol of the Christian pondering the Word of God. Christians have always seen a scriptural invitation to *lectio divina* in the example of the Virgin Mary “pondering in her heart” what she saw and heard of Christ (*Luke* 2:19). For us today these images are a reminder that we must take in the word -- that is, memorize it -- and while gently repeating it to ourselves, allow it to interact with our

¹⁴⁷⁴ *Visio Divina* (Latin for “Divine Seeing”) is similar but uses visual materials for the reflection such as video, photos, paintings, etc.

thoughts, our hopes, our memories, our desires. This is the second step or stage in *lectio divina* -- *meditatio*. Through *meditatio* we allow God's word to become His word for us, a word that touches us and affects us at our deepest levels.

3. Oratio -- prayer

Prayer understood both as dialog with God, that is, as loving conversation with the One who has invited us into His embrace; and as consecration, prayer as the priestly offering to God of parts of ourselves that we have not previously believed God wants. In this consecration-prayer we allow the word that we have taken in and on which we are pondering to touch and change our deepest selves. Just as a priest consecrates the elements of bread and wine at the Eucharist, God invites us in *lectio divina* to hold up our most difficult and pain-filled experiences to Him, and to gently recite over them the healing word or phrase He has given us in our *lectio* and *meditatio*. In this *oratio*, this consecration -- prayer, we allow our real selves to be touched and changed by the Word of God.

4. Contemplatio – contemplation

Finally, we simply rest in the presence of the One who has used His word as a means of inviting us to accept His transforming embrace. No one who has ever been in love needs to be reminded that there are moments in loving relationships when words are unnecessary. It is the same in our relationship with God. Wordless, quiet rest in the presence of the one who loves us has a name in the Christian Tradition -- *contemplatio*, contemplation. Once again we practice silence, letting go of our own words; this time simply enjoying the experience of being in the presence of God.

11. Reading Guide for Understanding the Bible¹⁴⁷⁵

READING GUIDE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF GOD

See Marcel Le Dorze, MEP, *The Bible in 100 Weeks Reading Guide*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2013.

1. Preparation:

- a. Reading of the text is done quietly and meditatively at home after making person prayer for God's guidance. Also to pray for members of your SCC.
- b. Identify the most important themes that are coming from the text as it is presented to you.
- c. The text to be read is the Word of God for us today and must be considered relevant to daily life.

2. Meeting (40 Minutes):

- a. Opening prayer, a hymn or Psalm of praise to God.
- b. Facilitator to animate the meeting.
- c. Each member gives a short verbal or oral narration of the text that was read during the week and pointing out the main themes that are underlined in the text and linking them to daily life.
- d. The facilitator takes notes of the main themes/topics that have been mentioned by the members.
- e. The facilitator presents the main themes that are outline in the prayer manual/guide by stressing making connection to God's plan of salvation.
- f. Members make final comments over the text and the main themes.

3. Shared Prayers (10 minutes):

- a. Spontaneous prayers to be offered by the members while others listen in silence.

4. Conclusion of Meeting (10 minutes):

- a. Any announcements.
- b. Selection of the text for members to read during the course of the week.
- c. The meeting ends with a prayer by any of the members.

¹⁴⁷⁵ There are many resources to help children read and understand the *Bible* including a weeklong extravaganza of fun and learning known as Vacation Bible School or VBS. Pioneered by the Protestants it is slowly entering the Catholic parishes during the vacation months.

READING GUIDE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF GOD

Example of SCC 1: *Isaiah 1 – 2.*

1. Preparation:

- a. Reading of the text is done quietly and meditatively at home after making person prayer for God's guidance. Also to pray for members of your SCC.
- b. Identify the most important themes that are coming from the text as it is presented to you.
- c. The text to be read is the Word of God for us today and must be considered relevant to daily life.

2. Meeting (40 Minutes):

- a. Opening prayer, a hymn or Psalm of praise to God.
- b. Facilitator to animate the meeting.
- c. Each member gives a short verbal or oral narration of the text that was read during the week and pointing out the main themes that are underlined in the text and linking them to daily life.

Summary (*Isaiah 1 – 2*):

- Vision of Isaiah concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
 - Children have rebelled despite God's unconditional care, providence and love.
 - "The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib, but Israel knows nothing. My people understand nothing."
 - God is not happy with sacrifices and says, "Let us talk this over. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. . . . If you are willing to obey, you shall eat good things of the earth. But if you persist rebellion, the sword shall eat you instead."
 - If people repent, God is willing to do something new and rebuild Jerusalem which shall stand as God's holy mountain. People will say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . he will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in his paths."
 - The prophet appeals to the house of Jacob to turn back to the Lord, "O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord."
 - God's power and majesty will conquer all the proud so that his strength will prosper forever.
- d. The facilitator takes notes of the main themes/topics that have been mentioned by the members.
 - e. The facilitator presents the main themes that are outline in the prayer manual/guide by stressing making connection to God's plan of salvation.
 - Isaiah was chosen by God to be a prophet and transmit God's message to people of Israel, Jacob.
 - God has shown the greatness and the majesty of the One True God in a vision.
 - God complains about Israel's unfaithfulness and ingratitude.
 - The people of Israel were chosen as God's people, to believe in the One God, worship Him alone as the Supreme God.
 - The people of Israel failed to do this, they disregarded God's Word and the prophet Isaiah severely criticized them for these actions.
 - God is ready to show mercy in so far as Israel adheres to the message of the prophet, abandon all evil and return to God.
 - f. Members make final comments over the text and the main themes.

3. Shared Prayers (10 minutes):

- a. Spontaneous prayers to be offered by the members while others listen in silence.

4. Conclusion of Meeting (10 minutes):

- a. Any announcements.
- b. Selection of the text for members to read during the course of the week.
- c. The meeting ends with a prayer by any of the members

READING GUIDE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF GOD

Example of SCC 2: *Isaiah 5 – 6.*

1. Preparation:

- a. Reading of the text is done quietly and meditatively at home after making person prayer for God's guidance. Also to pray for members of your SCC.
- b. Identify the most important themes that are coming from the text as it is presented to you.
- c. The text to be read is the Word of God for us today and must be considered relevant to daily life.

2. Meeting (40 Minutes):

- a. Opening prayer, a hymn or Psalm of praise to God.
- b. Facilitator to animate the meeting.
- c. Each member gives a short verbal or oral narration of the text that was read during the week and pointing out the main themes that are underlined in the text and linking them to daily life.
 - In the parable of the vineyard, the prophet talks about the jealous love of God for Israel.
 - God complains of the infidelity of the people as opposed to his fidelity.
 - "What more could have been done for my vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?"
 - This vineyard is the house of Israel.
 - Destruction shall come upon the house of Israel and God will bring judgment upon them.
 - The vision of the Prophet in the Temple of Worship and there God is enthroned on his seat of majesty, while the angels gathered and cried: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."
 - Isaiah says, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."
 - The call of Isaiah as the angel touches his lips and a voice from the smoke says, "Whom shall I send, and who will god for us?" Her I am! Send me. Said Isaiah.
 - Isaiah receives the power from God to bring the message of God to the people and urge them to convert.
- d. The facilitator takes notes of the main themes/topics that have been mentioned by the members.
- e. The facilitator presents the main themes that are outline in the prayer manual/guide by stressing making connection to God's plan of salvation.
 - The image of Israel of God's vineyard refers to God's election of the people which the people of Israel refused and now will be extended to other people. God complains about Israel's unfaithfulness.
 - God chose Israel and was expected to believe in the one God of Israel, worship him and trust in him. But Israel disregards God's Word and they are severely criticized by God.

- God is infinitely holy and can only be recognized with the eyes of faith.
 - In a mysterious way, God manifests himself to all people without exception.
 - Isaiah is called and given the power by God to bring the message to the people.
 - God is the “firm foundation – stone” on which Israel is supposed to rely, but they preferred to rely on military might of the neighboring superpowers.
 - Israel did not trust in God’s promises and becomes an ungrateful child and an unfaithful wife.
- f. Members make final comments over the text and the main themes.

3. Shared Prayers (10 minutes):

- a. Spontaneous prayers to be offered by the members while others listen in silence.

4. Conclusion of Meeting (10 minutes):

- a. Any announcements.
- b. Selection of the text for members to read during the course of the week.
- c. The meeting ends with a prayer by any of the members

READING GUIDE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF GOD

Example of SCC 3: *Isaiah 7 - 8*.

1. Preparation:

- a. Reading of the text is done quietly and meditatively at home after making person prayer for God's guidance. Also to pray for members of your SCC.
- b. Identify the most important themes that are coming from the text as it is presented to you.
- c. The text to be read is the Word of God for us today and must be considered relevant to daily life.

2. Meeting (40 Minutes):

- a. Opening prayer, a hymn or Psalm of praise to God.
- b. Facilitator to animate the meeting.
- c. Each member gives a short verbal or oral narration of the text that was read during the week and pointing out the main themes that are underlined in the text and linking them to daily life.
 - During the reign of King Ahaz, King of Judah, the King of Israel made alliance with other tribe to wage war and capture Jerusalem.
 - Isaiah goes to Ahaz, King of Judah and assures him that God will protect the city of Jerusalem from destruction.
 - The sign to assure Ahaz of God's protection was that, "the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall be called Emmanuel."
 - The reign of Ahaz will come to an end and the Kingdom will be destroyed by the foreigners because people have refused to trust in the Lord.
 - There is little hope for the people of Israel to survive the destruction that is about to happen among them.
 - The prophet calls of the people of Israel to give honor to the one God alone.
- d. The facilitator takes notes of the main themes/topics that have been mentioned by the members.
- e. The facilitator presents the main themes that are outline in the prayer manual/guide by stressing making connection to God's plan of salvation.
 - God is ready to fulfill his promise to Israel.
 - The child will be born, his name is Emmanuel, God with us.
 - The child will be king and represent God among the people.
 - Much of the land given by God to the people has been taken away.
 - Isaiah prophesized that by the power of God the Almighty, a day of liberation would come.
- f. Members make final comments over the text and the main themes.

3. Shared Prayers (10 minutes):

- a. Spontaneous prayers to be offered by the members while others listen in silence.

4. Conclusion of Meeting (10 minutes):

- a. Any announcements.
- b. Selection of the text for members to read during the course of the week.
- c. The meeting ends with a prayer by any of the members.

READING GUIDE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF GOD

Example of SCC 4: *Isaiah 10 – 11*.

1. Preparation:

- a. Reading of the text is done quietly and meditatively at home after making person prayer for God's guidance. Also to pray for members of your SCC.
- b. Identify the most important themes that are coming from the text as it is presented to you.
- c. The text to be read is the Word of God for us today and must be considered relevant to daily life.

2. Meeting (40 Minutes):

- a. Opening prayer, a hymn or Psalm of praise to God.
- b. Facilitator to animate the meeting.
- c. Each member gives a short verbal or oral narration of the text that was read during the week and pointing out the main themes that are underlined in the text and linking them to daily life.
 - The remnant of Israel and the survivals of the House of Jacob will truly rely on God.
 - God warns the people of Israel of the looming destruction that will happen among them.
 - The remnant of Israel will return to God the liberator and the Almighty. "It shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and this yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing one."
 - It will be a time when God will defeat all the enemies of Israel and the remnants will be restored in the land.
 - A King shall come from the stake of Jesse, "a branch shall grow out of his roots."
 - The qualities of the King who is to come are described:
 - The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, Spirit of wisdom and counsel.
 - Hostilities will come to an end.
 - All people will seek the glory of God, salvation beyond the House of Israel.
 - God will liberate the remnants and bring them back to their land, "There will be a highway for the remnant of His people, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.
- d. The facilitator takes notes of the main themes/topics that have been mentioned by the members.
- e. The facilitator presents the main themes that are outline in the prayer manual/guide by stressing making connection to God's plan of salvation.
 - God punishes the people of Israel because of their infidelity to the covenant. Much of the land given by God has now been taken from them by their enemies
 - The age of darkness for Israel, death, destruction and taking refuge.
 - The prophet assures them that God is ready to restore the remnants of Israel by the power of his Mighty. The day of liberation will come for the remnants.

- A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse and become a King. Pointing to the Davidic Kingship and beyond, prophesy for the coming of Christ.
- The qualities and personality of the King is clearly described. A model King who will bring about peace, unity, reconciliation, prosperity and bring back all the remnants of Israel.
- The King will reign over all nations of the earth.

f. Members make final comments over the text and the main themes.

3. Shared Prayers (10 minutes):

- a. Spontaneous prayers to be offered by the members while others listen in silence.

4. Conclusion of Meeting (10 minutes):

- a. Any announcements.
- b. Selection of the text for members to read during the course of the week.
- c. The meeting ends with a prayer by any of the members.

Prepared by:

Rev. Febian Pikuti
AMECEA Pastoral Department
Nairobi, Kenya
2015

12. Sample of Bible Lessons: Bible Month, September, 2013 and Years 2013-2014 -- Book III (Lilongwe, Malawi)

NOTE: *Bible Lessons* is a series of booklets produced by the Pastoral Department of the Catholic Secretariat of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM). The cost is approximately \$1.

SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR THE BIBLE MONTH (SEPTEMBER 2013)

DATE	ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION
1 September (Sunday)	Launching Bible Month on diocesan Level. The celebration is to take place at the Cathedral and all Parishes.	Give a brief explanation on the material in Book II of the Bible Month.
DAYS OF THE WEEK RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES ON PARISH AND SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY LEVEL DURING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, 2013.		

The Faithful should know:

- The difference between Pre-Exilic and Post Exilic prophets
- All pre-exilic prophets in detail
- The number of chapters in each book, authorship, theology and Pastoral Reflection
- The Historical setting and main message in the *Acts of the Apostles*

1-7 September The faithful should be guided to study:
The Introduction to the Prophets: Writing and Non-writing prophets;
Major and Minor prophets
The Prophets: Amos
 : Hosea

8-14 September The faithful should be guided to study the historical setting, structure,
major themes and pastoral reflection in:
The Prophets: Isaiah of Jerusalem
 : Micah
 : Zephaniah

15-21 September The faithful should be guided to study the historical setting, structure,
major themes and pastoral reflection in:
The Prophets: Nahum
 : Habakkuk
 : Jeremiah

22-29 September The faithful should be guided to study the historical setting, structure
and major themes in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

PROPOSED PROGRAM OF BIBLE STUDY IN THE SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR 2013-2014

MONTH	RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY
October (Month of the Rosary)	In depth study of the Introduction to the Prophets In depth study of Prophet Amos
November	The prophet Hosea
December	The Prophet Isaiah of Jerusalem
January	The Prophet Micah
February	The prophet Zephaniah
March	The prophet Nahum
April	The Prophet Habakkuk
May	The Prophet Jeremiah
June	The Acts of the Apostles
July	The Acts of the Apostles continued
August	Revision of the prophet/s that were not well understood

Contact:

Pastoral Department
 Catholic Secretariat, Area 11
 Chimutu Road
 P.O. Box 30384
 Capital City, Lilongwe 3, MALAWI
 Tel: +265 1 772 066/079
 Direct Line: +265 1 772 204
 Fathers Residence: +265 1 772 075
 Fax: +265 1 772 019
 Email: ecm@ecmmw.org
 Website: www.ecmmw.org

13. Stories of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa

1. Theresa's Old, Plastic Armless Crucifix

In animating the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Rulenge Diocese, Tanzania in Western Tanzania we used many ways of emphasizing the importance of the practical action part of our weekly *Bible Service*. One Tuesday afternoon I participated in the *Bible* reflections at the home of Theresa, one of the most faithful Christians in Bukiriro Village. Following the local African custom she prepared a place for us to pray together outdoors. She arranged straw mats in a circle with fresh flowers in a vase in the middle.

But Theresa was embarrassed to put her old plastic crucifix next to the flowers. The crucifix had no arms. It had probably been brought to Tanzania by an expatriate missionary many years before and passed around several families.

I said to Theresa: "Don't worry, Theresa. This crucifix is fine. I'm sure it has a special meaning for us."

After one of the leaders read the Lenten Gospel there was a period of silence followed by shared reflections. Suddenly it dawned on me what that old, battered, armless crucifix was saying to our group of 15 Christians praying together. Jesus Christ was asking us to be his arms and to reach out to the poor, the needy, the sick, the suffering, the oppressed. The other Christians responded immediately to this reflection. They emphasized the importance of mutual help in the local community. One SCC member quoted one of our favorite Swahili sayings in the outstation: *Words without actions are useless*.

During the last part of the *Bible Service* we decided to help Anna, one of our neighbors who had two sick children. We gathered firewood and fetched water for the mother while she stayed at home with her children. Like Jesus we tried to be men and women for others.¹⁴⁷⁶

2. Visiting St. Charles Lwanga SCC

¹⁴⁷⁶ See the story "Theresa's Old, Plastic Armless Crucifix" in Joseph G. Healey (compiled), *Once Upon a Time in Africa: Stories of Wisdom and Joy*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004, p. 118. Story No. 7 in the "SCCs Stories Database," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 27 September, 2011 [http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-stories.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=626](http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-stories.html?task=display2&cid[0]=626). African Story No. 488 in the "African Stories Database," African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 1 January, 2014, [http://afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-database.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=196](http://afriprov.org/index.php/african-stories-database.html?task=display2&cid[0]=196). "Le Crucifix Sans Bras" in Healey, Joseph (Recueillis), *La Sagesse Africaine: Histoires Vraies, Mythes et Contes*, Kinshasa: Editions Paulines, 2012, pp. 40-41.

At 5 p.m. on Sunday 15 enthusiastic lay people gather at Peter Macha's home for the weekly meeting of their St. Charles Lwanga Small Christian Community in the Drive-in Estate of St. Peter's Parish in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The SCC members (mainly adults) report on their families' health and local problems in the neighborhood. Then they reflect on one of the Sunday Scripture readings: the Epistle of *St. James* that stresses that "faith without action is dead." See *James* 2:14-17. Different translations use "action," "works" and "deeds."

The SCC members decide to help some of the homeless street children in their neighborhood. They plan a party for the youth in their SCC who will soon be confirmed. The meeting includes lively singing in Swahili with clapping and offering special prayer intentions for the sick in their parish and peace in Sudan. For these SCC members the maxim *We are the Church* is not just a slogan, but a way of life that truly applies to them.

St. Charles Lwanga SCC was officially launched on the feast of Epiphany in 1978 and in 2004 was the oldest of the 38 active SCCs in St. Peter's Parish,¹⁴⁷⁷ all fully involved in the local pastoral life. The bedrock of this community is the family. Married couples host, organize and lead the group. Other people drift in and out; some only really turn up when there's a celebration and a meal. But it's the couples who provide the core stability of the SCC. Currently there are 22 families with a total membership of 96 including children of all ages. St. Charles Lwanga is a model of a family-based¹⁴⁷⁸ and lectionary-based SCC. The parent SCC started a youth branch, a women's club, and children activities. The SCC is twinned with the Fellowship Group, a Small Reflection Group in the Anglican Rattery Church in South Hams in Devon, England.¹⁴⁷⁹

¹⁴⁷⁷ By 2016 St. Peter's had 60 SCCs.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Every day there are Morning Prayers and Evening Prayers in one of the homes of a SCC member – for those who can come. The adults see this as a "teaching moment" to help their children learn their prayers and the basics of the Catholic faith. The adult SCC members take responsibility for the children faith formation without waiting for the Catholic Parish (for example, Sunday School) or the Catholic School to do it.

¹⁴⁷⁹ See the story "Visiting St. Charles Lwanga SCC" in Joseph Healey and Jeanne Hinton (eds.), *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005 and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006, p. 100. SCCs Story No. 8 in the "SCCs Stories Database," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website retrieved 27 September, 2011 [http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-stories.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=627](http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-stories.html?task=display2&cid[0]=627).

3. We Need To Run Out and Meet Lucia

One Thursday afternoon Maryknoll missionary Father Jim Corrigan participated in the *Bible Service* of the St. Charles Lwanga Small Christian Community (SCC) in the Bomani section of Bunda Town, Tanzania. This SCC has a special concern for the increasing number of people with AIDS in Bunda. Martina Chacha is responsible for the ministry of "Good Neighbor" in her small community. She regularly checks on the sick people in the vicinity of Bomani. During the past week Maria Magesa daughter's Lucia returned after over two months in the TB Ward in Bugando Medical Center in Mwanza. Lucia has AIDS and now is too weak to even get out of bed. The family was too embarrassed to tell anyone, but the word slowly got around. Martina told the SCC leaders about Lucia. They decided to discuss how to help her during the Thursday meeting of the SCC members.

The Gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Lent -- the Parable of the Prodigal Son from the 15th chapter of *St. Luke* -- was read and reflected upon. Jim added his thoughts like everyone else. One SCC member pointed out that the father in the story does not wait for his younger son to return. He runs out to meet him. This shows God's great love for us. He is ready to run out to meet us in love, forgiveness and compassionate care.

When the community members discussed a practical action to flow from the gospel it was immediately clear. As the elderly man James put it: "We need to run out and meet Lucia who is suffering." So after the *Bible Service* and meeting everyone walked over to Maria Magesa's home to visit Lucia. It was dark inside the small bedroom and Jim had trouble adjusting to the poor light. Lucia has no husband which is increasingly common these days. Her two young children were sitting quietly in the corner. Lucia herself was lying on her side in bed, too weak to even sit up. Her face was drawn and flushed. Sores on her tongue had bothered her for many days. Her arms were thin and bony. Occasionally Lucia would put her head over the side of the bed and spit into a small can.

Martina Chacha quietly sat down on the bed, held Lucia's hand and told her how much the small community members cared about her. Philipo, the leader of the SCC, explained how suffering can be a special call from God. The SCC's Patron saint, Charles Lwanga, had to suffer very much in Uganda before he was burned to death for his Christian faith. There were prayers of intercession and everyone, even the children, laid hands on Lucia to pray for her recovery. Lucia said a weak "thank you." Philipo gave her mother Maria a small donation of flour and money from the small community.

Then there was a painful moment of silence. Everyone realized how many families in the Bunda area has a loved one who is either sick with AIDS or already had died. Many people like Lucia are coming home to die. The disease is ravishing East Africa especially on the other side of Lake Victoria around Bukoba and up into Western Uganda. AIDS has no favorites. Rich and poor, old and young, educated and uneducated, city and rural people alike are getting AIDS or are HIV Positive.

Jim was grateful to be part of this SCC outreach to people suffering from AIDS. Recently he had read about one Catholic doctor who said: "As the Christian Churches in Africa at the beginning of the 21st Century, history will judge us by how generously and compassionately we have responded to the AIDS crisis." At first Jim and Michael, the other priest in Bunda Parish, didn't realize how serious the AIDS pandemic really is. But then in walking around the SCCs, Jim began to discover how many people have AIDS. Most families try to hide it. The shame is too great. There is a unique stigma attached to AIDS because it was

different from other diseases. Most people in Africa get AIDS from multi-partner heterosexual relationships. People don't want to be confronted and have to examine their personal lifestyles. They don't want to face the challenge of behavior modification. Others pass it off as "just another illness." Still others say that it was "just bad luck" or that they are "bewitched."

But Jim knew differently.

Soon he began to understand the "*hali halisi*" (Swahili for the "real situation"). Bunda is on a major truck route. Also many people pass through the town on their way to somewhere else. This compounds the problem. There are a lot of multi-partner relationships. It is so very, very hard to convince people to change this sexual behavior. But Jim knew this is the only way. Yet it is going to take a long time. And many people like Lucia are going to suffer and die painful deaths in the meantime.

As he walked out of Lucia's dark room and was temporarily blinded by the bright African sunlight, Jim wondered if and when he would see Lucia again. But the ministry of love and compassion to Lucia and many like her would continue. Jim was proud that the Bunda Parish leaders and the SCCs had responded so generously. He knew that this was what Christianity is all about. He felt deeply that if they really follows Christ it means being compassionate toward suffering people

The next Sunday Jim Corrigan preached about AIDS in church. He called his homily "Suffering Faces and Hearts in Bunda Today." He got permission from Lucia to tell her story. Respectfully he told the painful journey of Lucia, "one of our own Small Christian Community members." In using the Gospel story of the prodigal the priest challenged the people by asking: "Who is the prodigal? The son? The father? In today's world is it the Lucias? Is it the people who accept and love AIDS patients as they are? Let's admit it. We are afraid to talk about AIDS. And meeting a person who is HIV Positive! That is even worse. How much easier to say: "That is someone else's problem. We have doctors and institutions to take care of these AIDS patients."

"Each age has its own terrible form of dying. In the First Century it was crucifixion. From pictures and films we know what a painful death Jesus Christ suffered on the cross. In the 14th Century it was the Black Death (bubonic plague) that was an epidemic disease that killed one-third of the people in Europe. Today it is AIDS. If Jesus chose the most ignominious form of death in his time to redeem us, would he choose to die from AIDS today?" That got some gasps from the Christians at the 7:30 a.m. Eucharistic Celebration in the Bunda Town Church.

Jim went on to ask the congregation: "What is the last word that will be spoken in human history?" After giving the people time to think a little bit he quoted from the 14th century spiritual writer Meister Eckhart who said: The last word of history will be "compassion."¹⁴⁸⁰ Jim added two other words: "forgiving love -- as in the example of today's gospel about the 'Prodigal Father.'"

¹⁴⁸⁰ From Chapter 4 on "A Guest is a Blessing" in *Towards an African Narrative Theology*:

A final question: In a metaphorical or analogous sense what is the last or final word that God will speak in human history? At that last moment of human time, at the end of the Last Judgment, what will God finally say? Over the ages spiritual writers and theologians have

Jim praised the example of St. Charles Lwanga SCC saying: "Outreach to AIDS patients and their families is a special call and challenge for SCCs in East Africa today. SCCs are a community of believers who care about other people. SCCs are a unique support group in the AIDS ministry. As a communion of extended families the SCCs provide support, encouragement and home care for AIDS patients themselves. We have a responsibility to our brothers and sisters with AIDS. Do not be afraid. Be Christ-like and reach out to others who are suffering. Join local "caring communities" like SCCs and other special support groups for AIDS and HIV Positive people." Reach out in personal ways too."

Near the end of his homily Jim told the story of St. "Mother" Teresa of Calcutta whom many had heard about. Her religious community of the Missionaries of Charity works with the poorest of the poor in Dar es Salaam and Tabora. The missionary priest ended his homily by saying: "In talking about people with AIDS St. "Mother" Teresa tells each of us: 'Today people with AIDS are the most unwanted and unloved brothers and sisters of Jesus. So let us give them our tender love and care and a beautiful smile.' Then Jim asked: "How about us here in Bunda? Are we ready to give at least a smile and hopefully much more to these people who are in such need?"¹⁴⁸¹

tried to answer this question. The fourteenth century spiritual writer Meister Eckhart said that the last word spoken by God will be "compassion" -- that is, forgiving love, deep concern, and tender care for God's own children. Other answers are "Yes," or "Love," or "Forgiveness," or "Amen," or "Alleluia." We think God's last word will be "welcome." "Welcome into everlasting life." This word will be spoken in every language, in every country, in every human heart. This adds an insight to the last word being "come" as used in *Matthew* 25:34: "Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" The theology of hospitality will find its fulfillment in God's eternal "come," in God's eternal "welcome."

¹⁴⁸¹ This African story is classified as historical fiction. It is based on a true story in Tanzania, but because of our sensitivity to people with AIDS it is written in a fictionalized way. It is posted as African Story No. 533 in the African Stories Database on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved on 18 August, 2014, [http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/resources/storiesdatabase.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=496](http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/resources/storiesdatabase.html?task=display2&cid[0]=496) In different forms it is published in: pages 67-68 in *Once Upon a Time in Africa: Stories of Wisdom and Joy*; pages 14-15 in *African Stories for Preachers and Teachers*; and pages 84-88 in Joseph Healey, "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as Agents of Change in the Fight Against HIV AND AIDS in Eastern Africa," African Jesuit AIDS Network, Nairobi: Published Paper, 17 pages, 2015 and Jacquineau Azetsop, *HIV and AIDS in Africa: Theological Reflection, Public Health Crises, and Social Transformation*, Orbis Books, 2016.

4. Searching for a Symbol of Reconciliation

A Chagga man and woman got married in the Musoma Town Parish Church in Tanzania in 1991. All the arrangements for the wedding went along smoothly and peacefully. The marriage ceremony itself was a big success. SCC members participated. But the organizers of the wedding forgot to give the mother of the bride and her wedding party a vehicle to return to her home after the celebration and feast in the hall. Therefore she was very upset and refused to attend the thanksgiving mass and the small family party the following day.

The leaders said: "What should we do to make amends?" The leaders spent two hours searching for a proper isale leaf to give the mother as a symbol of reconciliation. Then they visited her. In greeting the bride's mother one of the leaders handed her the isale leaf, a very important sign of peace and unity in the culture of the Chagga Ethnic Group. Immediately upon seeing the leaf she smiled, expressed delight, called her relatives, and told everyone that her anger was finished. She happily rejoined the wedding party. Everything went back to normal and the good spirits and close relationships continued as usual.¹⁴⁸²

¹⁴⁸² See the Raphael Chuwa, "Searching for a Symbol of Reconciliation," in

- a. Joseph Healey (compiled), *Once Upon a Time in Africa: Stories of Wisdom and Joy*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004, p. 101.
- b. Joseph Healey (compiled), *African Stories for Preachers and Teachers*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2005, p. 47.

Raphael Chuwa, "Utafutaji wa Ishara ya Upatanisho," Joseph Healey (compiled), *Hadithi za Kiafrika Kwa Wahubiri na Walimu*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006, p. 47.

Raphael Chuwa, "Le Symbole de la Réconciliation" in Joseph Healey Joseph), *La Sagesse Africaine: Histoires Vraies, Mythes et Contes*, Kinshasa: Editions Paulines, 2012, p. 34.

African Story No. 360 in the "African Stories Database," African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 16 August, 2015,

[http://www.afriprov.org/resources/storiesdatabase.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=138](http://www.afriprov.org/resources/storiesdatabase.html?task=display2&cid[0]=138)

14. Alphabetical Summary of the Choices in the Small Christian Community (SCCs) POLL on our SCCs Website

The SCCs Poll is found on the SCC Website on the top right side of the Home Page at: <https://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>. We have done careful research on, and analyzed feedback from, surveys, questionnaires, workshops, courses, interviews, personal conversations, articles, books, email messages, Facebook Pages, Zoom Faith Sharing and Gospel Sharing, visits to SCCs and conferences on SCCs. We have studied carefully the contemporary signs of the times such as the Covid-19 pandemic and pastoral changes in our parishes and dioceses such as during the 2021-2024 Synodal Process. We have identified 1705 important characteristics or features of SCCs around the world mainly provided by Small Christian Community (SCCs) members themselves: 826 on the dynamics/process/principles/classifications of SCCs and 879 on the activities/content/outreach/practical action of SCCs. These choices reflect both the inner life and the public life of our SCC Model of Church.

The poll uses the statement — **The best part of my Small Christian Community is...** — followed by six choices that are taken from these 1705 important characteristics or features of SCCs listed below alphabetically. We change the poll every two months. The results of the First Round to the Eighty-Seventh round is listed below and on the SCC Poll/SCC Poll Archives Pages.

The best part of my Small Christian Community is...

Absolutely essential in carrying out the mission of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Achieves enormous strides in the evangelization of society. **Round A**
 Accompanying college age students on the path of missionary discipleship. **Round A**
 Accompanying young adults on the path of missionary discipleship. **Round A**
 Action oriented. **Round ten A**
 Active agent of the Word of God. **A**
 Active participation. **Round one D**
 Active participation by all in the community. **Round D**
 Active participation of young people in Small Christian Communities (SCCs). **Round A**
 Active small group community of disciples. **Round one D**
 Acts as a counterbalance to the culture of “individualism.” **A**
 Acts of the Apostles lifestyle. **Round A**
 Actualize the church as a family that is found among the neighbors. **Round A**
 Actualize communion Ecclesiology at the grassroots. **Round A**
 Adapts to the Covid-19 pandemic context. **A**
 Adapts to the local context. **A**
 Adult *Bible* Fellowship. **Round D**
 Adult faith formation. **Round thirty-five A**
 Advocate for family catechesis. **Round A**
 Advocate for family ministry. **Round A**
 Affinity Group. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Affinity Groups as SCCs. **D**
 Agent for mission and the new evangelization in church and society. **Round D**
 Agents of evangelization. **Round A**

Agents of new evangelization for the renewal of humanity. **Round D**
 Aimed at consciousness-raising. **Round twenty-one A**
 All the services/ministries of the sacraments pass through the SCCs. **Round A**
 Alternative way of meeting some basic needs. A
 Alumni CLCs. D
 Alumni Small Christian Communities. D
 Alumni Online CLCs. D
 Alumni Online Small Christian Communities. D
 AMECEA SCCs Pastoral Model of Church. **Round D**
 Anchor of family life. **Round D**
 Anchored on the Word of God. A
 Anchored in the real. A
 Animated by the Gospel spirit. **Round D**
 Answer to the great spiritual crisis in the Catholic Church. D
 Applies the biblical message to our life situation. **Round A**
 Applies the Gospel to our daily/everyday life. **Round thirty-four A**
 Appreciate the values of unity and diversity. A
 Approach to New Evangelization. **Round D**
 Apt for the synodal journey. A
 At the heart of evangelization. **Round D**
 At the heart of pastoral ministry. D
 Archdiocese's priority mission praxis. D
 Are here to stay. D
 Authentic experience of synodality. D
 Authentic school of the Gospel. **Round D**
 Authentic way of evangelization. D
 Avenue for communication and communion among members. D
 Avenue for God to reveal himself/herself anew to people in a more personal way. **Round D**
 Avenue for the revitalization of the Christian Faith. **Round D**
 Avenue of promoting reconciliation among individuals and groups. **Round D**
 Avenue of promoting unity and the common good in the society. **Round D**
 Avenue through which communal solidarity is experienced. **Round D**
 Backbone and launching pad of the Catholic Church, its ministry and its mission. D
 Backbone of all we do in our evangelization. D
 Backbone of the Catholic Church in Africa. D
 Backbone of the RCIA. **Round D**
 Base for restoring hope. **Round D**
 Base of our Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Base of our Christian life. **Round D**
 Baseline is sharing. A
 Basic building block of the church. **Round eleven D**
 Basic cell of the church. **Round D**
 Basic Christianity. **Round D**
 Basic community for prayer, support and consolation. A
 Basic family. **Round D**
 Basic Human Community (BHC). Round forty D
 Basic and indispensable unit for catechesis. A
 Basic means of evangelization. **Round A**
 Basic space where I live my faith. A
 Basic unit of the parish. D
 Basis and foundation of the faith in the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round D**

Basis for *Bible* Sharing, Prayer and Deep Spirituality. **Round A**
 A basis for the synodal journey. D
 Basis of the Church of God. **Round D**
 Beacon of hope. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Beacon of hope to the local community. **Round D**
 Become a leaven of Christian life, of care for the poor and the neglected and of commitment
 to the transformation of the society. A
 Become a means of evangelization and a source of new ministries. A
 Bedrock of the Christian faith. **Round D**
 Bedrock of the church. **Round twenty-fifth D**
 Began to form organically out of the Synodal Process. A
 Begin encountering Jesus in Scripture. A
 Begins with a focus on the “Signs of the Times.” A
 Being Comfortable in a Zoom Church. A
 Being in community is constitutive to our faith. D
 Being mutual and sharing our gifts. A
 Benefits of SCCs to be treasured. D
 Best and most effective means of evangelization. **Round D**
 Best blessing to have happened to the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa. D
 Best expression of the church of the poor. **Round D**
 Best physical way to foster and sustain the growth of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Best placed Catholic Church organ to preach and promote peace. **Round A**
 Best platform of forming the faith. **Round A**
 Best practices of SCCs. Round A
 Best structure for the New Evangelization. **Round D**
 Best thing that has happened in my life in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Best thing that has happened in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Best tool for evangelization here in the university. **Round A**
 Best unity in the Catholic Church. D
 Best way for parish to breathe. **Round A**
 Best way of being church today. A
 Best way of enhancing community spirit. **Round A**
 Best way of evangelization. A
 Best way of evangelizing and accompanying young people. A
 Best way of expressing love. **Round A**
 Best way of fostering reconciliation. **Round A**
 Best way of helping us gain intimacy with God. **Round A**
 Best way of nurturing the Catholic Church in the neighborhood. **Round A**
 Best way of reaching out to people’s lives. A
 Best way to evangelize. A
 Best way to go. **Round A**
 Best way to respond to Pope Francis’ emphasis on evangelization and reaching out to the
 Peripheries. A
 Best way to share the Word of God. **Round A**
 Best way to smell the sheep. **Round A**
 Better social mechanism in the Catholic Church. D
Bible as wellspring of constant renewal. **Round A**
Bible as basis of members’ spiritual lives. **Round A**
Bible as the Center of Faith Formation. **Round A**
Bible-based. **Round A**
Bible-based Faith-sharing small community. **Round A**

Bible is the center of our life. **Round D**

Bible is key and central in its formation and enterprise. **D**

Bible Sharing/*Bible* Reflection. **Round one A**

Bible sharing by members and further discussions about daily life is what interests me.

Round A

Bible sharing gathering. **A**

Bible sharing in a circle. **Round A**

Bible study group. **Round seventeen A**

Biblically-based. **Round A**

Biblically-based Faith-sharing small community. **Round A**

Biblically based Small Communities. **Round D**

Big instrument of the Catholic Church. **Round D**

Blog Discussion Group. **Round A**

Bonding community. **D**

Book Discussion Group/Club. **Round A**

Bones and flesh of the parish. **Round D**

Both the foundation and the goal of Christian life. **Round D**

Both a place and a path for pastoral care and evangelization of families and marriages.

Round D

Breaking open the Word of God. **Round thirty-five A**

Brings Christians together. **A**

Brings the faith to the home. **A**

Brings the faithful together to share the Word of God and prayers from the grassroots. **A**

Brings fruits to every walk of our apostolate. **A**

Brings parishioners closer in their neighborhood. **A**

Brings together the people of God to be useful to one another. **A**

Brings together the people of God to share the good news. **A**

Brings unity and love to the members of the community. **A**

Broad spectrum of youth ministry through SCCs. **Round D**

Broadens the experience of listening and discerning together at the local level. **A**

Build close and lasting friendships. **Round A**

Building a living church through SCCs. **D**

Building the church *up* out of SCCs. **A**

Builds the church from the grassroots. **A**

Build family church through SCCs. **A**

Builds SCC Model of Parish. **A**

Builds your faith and increases your knowledge of Catholic beliefs. **Round A**

Buzz Groups *Bible* Reflection. **Round eighteen A**

Call to respond to the suffering Christ. **Round A**

Campus Small Groups. **Round A**

Carry the voice of faith during daily life struggles. **A**

Carrying the flame of SCCs. **Round A**

Catalyst for effective *Bible* Sharing. **Round A**

Catholic Church as the Family of God finds its origin in the ecclesial model of SCCs. **A**

Catholic Church built up daily through SCCs. **Round D**

Catholic Church on the move. **D**

Catholic family fellowship. **Round A**

Catholic SCC "support group." **Round A**

Catholic small family community. **D**

Celebrations (meals, entertainment, etc.). **Round four A**

Cell based movement. **Round D**

Cell-based (SCCs) student movement. **Round D**
 Cell Groups. **Round D**
 Cell of the village church. **Round D**
 Cells injecting life into the organism of the church. **Round A**
 Center of the church. **Round D**
 Center of charity. D
 Center of Christian witness. D
 Center of communion and formation. **Round D**
 Center of communion and outreach. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Center of constant missionary outreach. **Round A**
 Center of evangelization to the family and youth. D
 Center of interest in the Catholic media. A
 Center of my faith journey. D
 Center of prayer and worship. **Round D**
 Center of renewal program. **Round D**
 Centers of community enterprise and holistic transformation. **Round A**
 Centers of deepening the Word of God and cohesive Faith-sharing. A
 Centers of inculturation in the Catholic Church. **Round A**
 Centering prayer. **Round A**
 Central facet of the parish. D
 Central in the life of the church. **Round D**
 Central to the growth of the church. **Round D**
 Centrality of the Word of God. **Round thirty-four D**
 Channel of community sensitization. D
 Channel of evangelization. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Channel of social solidarity. D
 Channel where the Word of God is studied and meditated on. A
 Child protection as a component of the training we give to the trainers on SCCs. **Round D**
 Child protection component in our SCCs training for facilitators. **Round D**
 Children friendly. **Round A**
 Christ-centered small community. **Round A**
 Christians bond and support each other. A
 Church as Family of God built around SCCs. **Round D**
 Church as the house of God. D
 Church at the grassroots. **Round D**
 Church belongs to me, not to the priest. **Round A**
 Church from below. D
 Church from the grassroots. D
 Church from the roots. D
 Church going to the people. **Round A**
 Churchhood. **Round D**
 Church centered on small groups as the way of doing life and ministry. **Round D**
 Church of the home. **Round twenty-one D**
 Church of the laity. **Round D**
 Church on the ground. **Round D**
 Church on the move. D
 Church in miniature (“Church miniature”). **Round D**
 Church in the locality. **Round D**
 Church in the neighborhood. **Round thirty-three D**
 Church in the village. D
 Church of small communities. D

Church of participation. **Round D**
 Church on the move. **Round D**
 Church Small Group. **Round D**
 Church of tomorrow. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Circle, not pyramid. **Round D**
 Circularity (what comes from the grassroots returns to the grassroots) D
 Clearly articulates its charism, spirituality, purpose or mission. A
 Close-knit community. D
 Cohousing community. **Round A**
 Collaborative effort that very much reflects the spirit of BCCs and our Christian faith. **Round D**
 Collection/donation to upkeep of parish. **Round twenty-two A**
 College-based small communities. **Round D**
 Combination of compatibility and diversity. **Round A**
 Combines Bible Sharing and Faith Sharing. A
 Commitment to being a parish that GATHERS, SHARES AND PRAYS. **Round A**
 Commitment is to foster Small Christian Communities. D
 Communal discernment from below. A
 Communal Lectionary-based Faith Sharing. A
 Communal listening to the Word of God. A
 Communal Reading of Scripture (Public Reading). A
 Communion of Communities Model. **Round eighteen D**
 Communion of Communities Model of Church. **Round D**
 Communion of families. **Round twenty-seven D**
 Communion of extended families in the same neighborhood. **Round D**
 Communitarian ethic. **Round A**
 Community-based ecclesial model. D
 Community-based, not priest-based. **Round D**
 Community of believers sharing life. **Round thirty-four A**
 Community *Bible* sharing. **Round D**
 Community discipleship. **Round A**
 Community experience. **Round twelve D**
 Community of believers on mission. A
 Community of communities for youth ministry. **Round D**
 Community of families. **Round twenty-six D**
 Community of missionary disciples. **Round D**
 Community of proclaiming the Word of God. **Round thirty D**
 Community of warm relationships. **Round D.**
 Community spirit. **Round five A**
 Community spirituality. A
 Concern for others. **Round six A**
 Concrete expression of communion in Christ. **Round A**
 Concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic. A
 Confirmation small group. **Round D.**
 Connected to alternative communities. A
 Connected to alternative faith communities. A
 Connected to my parish. **Round three D**
 Connecting *Bible* to life. **Round thirty-two A**
 Connecting faith to life. **Round thirty-one A**
 Connecting life and faith regularly. **Round A**
 Connecting with other young people. A

Connects God's Word to daily life. **Round A.**
 Connecting households and families. A
 Connects people to one another. **Round thirty A**
 Connects the Scripture to our everyday life every week. A
 Constitutive structure of the Local Church. **Round D**
 Consultative structure of the Local Church. **Round D**
 Contemplative dialog in small groups. **Round A**
 Contemplative dialog process. **Round A**
 Contemplative group. **Round twenty-three A**
 Contemplative prayer group for young adults. A
 Context-based. D
 Context of communion and participation in mission. D
 Continue the evangelization mission. **Round D**
 Contribute to social transformation. **Round A**
 Contribution of SCCs to faith formation. **Round A**
 Conversation as a root metaphor for SCC life. A
 Conversion of Catholic Church structures that enhances the sense of belonging and ownership. A
 Core business is the Word of God. D
 Core ministry of the Catholic Church. D
 Core of ecclesial life. D
 Core of our ministry and the way we develop disciples. **Round D**
 Core of parish life in African dioceses. **Round D**
 Core of the church. D
 Core of the Synodal Process. D
 Core of our church, not just another ministry. D
 Core space for the faithful gathering in the neighborhoods. **Round D**
 Co-responsibility in leadership. **Round D**
 Cornerstone of the Campus Ministry Program. D
 Cornerstone of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Give me courage in overcoming obstacles during Covid-19 pandemic. A
 Creates a Small Christian Community Culture. **Round A**
 Creating many new paths by walking according to the local context. A
 Creating space for young people. A
 Creativity and Flexibility of Hybrid SCC. A
 Critical opportunity for spiritual development. **Round D**
 Critical way to move the Catholic Church forward. D
 Culture of evangelization that launches and expands small groups. D
 Customized strategy for our SCC context. D
 Daily contact in the neighborhood. **Round A**
 Daily experiences sharing. A
 Daily Gospel-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Daily lectionary-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Daily prayer in SCC gatherings plays a key role during the Synodal Process. A
 Daily readings act like an engine to my life. A
 Daily readings always reminds me to be faithful in my Christian journey. A
 Daily scripture-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Daily scripture mantra. **Round A**
 Deepening faith in one's local environment. **Round A**
 Deepening personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A
 Deepens my faith and prayer life. A

Deep SCC spirituality. **Round A**
 Deepens our Gospel understanding. **A**
 Demonstrates the love of Christ and maturity in faith. **Round D**
 Depth in the Eucharist. **A**
 Development indigenous to the several continents. **Round A**
 Development projects. **Round eleven A**
 Develops its own leaders. **A**
 Dialogical. **Round twenty-two D**
 Dialog of action. **Round A**
 Dialog of life. **Round thirty-eight A**
 Dialog of interfaith religious experiences. **Round A**
 Dialog table for family disputes/problems. **A**
 Diaspora Online SCCs. **D**
 Different pastoral model of church. **Round D**
 Digital network of discipleship. **D**
 Digital/online/virtual evangelization. **D**
 Digital Small Community. **D**
 Digital SCCs Webinars. **A**
 Digital SCCs Workshops. **A**
 Digital Small Community. **D**
 Digital evangelization. **D**
 Discerning personal and collective action in small group settings. **A**
 Discernment Circle. **A**
 Discipleship begins in God's Word. **D**
 Discipleship path for students to grow and deepen their relationship with Christ. **Round D**
 Distinct peer group. **D**
 Distinctive way of being Church. **D**
 Doing life and faith in small communities. **A**
 Doing things differently in my parish. **Round six A**
 Do It Yourself (DIY) Small Communities. **D**
 Domestic communities of faith. **Round thirty A**
 Door of entry. **Round D**
 Door to get in the church. **Round D**
 Dream of local community priests. **D**
 Drivers of our own vehicle. **Round A**
 Dynamic church in the midst of the people. **Round D**
 Dynamic, not static -- subject to changes and new ideas. **A**
 Dynamic -- subject to changes that we may experience around us. **A**
 Dynamics of the Small Christian Community Model of Church. **D**
 Easier way to reach Christians. **A**
 Essence connected to recognizing the presence of Christ in community. **D**
 Echo the community spirit of the new South Sudan. **A**
 Ecclesial structure in the parish. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Ecclesiastical extension of the African extended family or clan. **D**
 Ecclesiological model to strongly use for effective evangelization. **Round D**
 Ecumenical activities. **Round twenty-two A**
 Effective channel for reconciliation. **Round A**
 Effective method for church renewal. **Round thirty-five A**
 Effective method or style of evangelization. **Round A**
 Effective platform of catechesis. **Round A**
 Effective way to plant the seed of Gospel values in the Christian faithful. **Round A**

Elders take responsibility for reconciliation and peace in the community. **Round A**

Emerging paradigm of young adult empowerment in Africa. **Round D**

Emerging paradigm of young people empowerment in Africa. **Round D**

Emerging paradigm of youth empowerment in Africa. **Round D**

Emphasis on faith formation. A

Empowering the church at the grassroots/in the neighborhood. A

Empowerment from below. **Round D**

Empowerment of women. **Round D**

Empowers the church in the neighborhood. A

Empowers laypeople to take more responsibility for their church. A

Empowers us all. A

Enables each member be recognized and heard. A

Enables members to go forth and proclaim the Gospel. A Enables us to grow spiritually.

Round A

Encourages friendship with Jesus Christ. A

Encourages Lectionary-based Catholics. A

Encourages prayer methodologies/methods that connect faith and life. **Round A**

Energy of young people. A

Enhances grassroots evangelization. **Round D**

Enlivens young adult parish participation. D

Entry point for new church. **Round D**

Entry point for new ideas, trends and priorities in Eastern Africa. **Round D**

Entry point to campus ministry program. **Round D**

Environment for an encounter with Jesus Christ. **Round D**

Equality between women and men, poor and rich, different ethnic groups. **Round D**

Essence of the Catholic Church. D

Essential component of the parish's structure and ministry. **Round D**

Essential ingredient of our Catholic campus ministry program. D

Essential and life-giving antidote for much of what ails us. D

Essential nature of the structure of the Catholic Church. D

Essential part of any Christian life. **Round A**

Essential part of the structure of the parish. **Round D**

Essentially a spirituality. **Round A**

Estate-based *jumuiyas* that meet in members' homes. A

Eucharistic adoration. **Round twenty-four A**

Eucharistic-centered community. **Round A**

Eucharistic Church. D

Evangelization. **Round A**

Evangelization means practical action and reaching out to others. A

Evangelization means service to other people. A

Evangelizers in our neighborhood. **Round thirty-seven A**

Evangelizing families rooted in SCCs. **Round A**

Evangelizing the grassroots. A

Evangelizing the neighborhood. A

Evangelizing through digital platforms. **Round A**

Evangelizing through smartphones. **Round A**

Evangelizing tool. **Round A**

Every member has an equal amount of air time. D

Everyone in a Small Christian Community is equal. D

Everyone is given a chance to contribute regardless of rank, position, or educational status. A

Experience-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**

Experience-based Faith-sharing questions. **Round A**
 Experience of small church. D
 Experience of synodality. A
 Experience with SCCs has informed my understanding of synodality. A
 Experience/experiences sharing. A
 Experiencing biblical community. Round A
 Experiencing life together. A
 Experiencing our Christian call in the neighborhood. Round A
 Experiential church. **Round A**
 Expresses the Christian faith in the typical setting of a traditional African community. A
 Expression of a renewed church. D
 Extended Christian families. Round eighteen D
 Extension of the church. **Round D**
 Extension of the nuclear and even the extended family. **Round D**
 Extension of good neighborliness. Round forty A
 Facilitating the information and enhancement of weak SCCs. **Round A**
 Faith-based small community. **Round D**
 Faith community of peers. **Round D**
 Faith formation in SCCs. **Round D**
 Faith in action activity. D
 Faith response of poor and marginalized people in the Catholic Church and society. A
 Faith-sharing. **Round thirty-three A**
 Faith-sharing dimension. Round A
 Faith-sharing grounded in Scripture. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Faith-sharing in small community group settings. A
 Faith-sharing resources. **Round D**
 Faith-sharing spirituality. Round A
 Faith-sharing webinars. A
 Faith-sharing within Sunday readings. **Round A**
 Familial model. **Round D**
 Familial relationships. **Round D**
 Families as living witnesses of Gospel values. **Round D**
 Families in the neighborhood. **Round seven D**
 Families ministering to families. **Round A**
 Families support one another in times of need. **Round A**
 Family as basic of SCC. D
 Family-centered parish. **Round D**
 Family-centered parish through SCCs. D
 Family Church. **Round twenty-two D**
 Family communities. **Round seventeen D**
 Family Enrichment Club. **Round A**
 Family-friendly SCC. D
 Family of believers. **Round D**
 Family of families. **Round D**
 Family-like communities. **Round D**
 Family-like evangelization. **Round A**
 Family Masses. A
 Family SCC. **Round D**
 Family Zoom Mass. A
 Feel at home in my SCC. **Round one D**
 Fellowship in smaller sub groups within a parish community. **Round A**

Field hospital. **Round A**
 Find support in one another A
 First agents for the initiation of their children into the Word of God. **Round D**
 First level of the church structure. **Round D**
 FISH Group Family. **Round D**
 Fixed time each week **Round twenty D**
 Flesh and blood of the church. **Round D**
 Flexibility in digital communications and connections. A
 Focal point for evangelization. D
 Focus on Young Adult Small Christian Communities (YASCCs). D
 Focus on the Word of God (*Bible*). D
 Focus questions relating everyday life to scripture. **Round A**
 Focus questions relating scripture to everyday life. **Round A**
 Following Patron/Patroness Saint of my SCC. **Round eight A**
 Follows the example of Christ the Healer. A
 Fonts of community life. **Round A**
 Foretaste of the Kingdom of God. **Round D**
 For our integral development. **Round D**
 Formation component. D
 Form of adult faith formation. **Round D**
 Forms a strong foundation of a Catholic Parish. A
 Forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences of SCCs. A
 Forum for participants to habituate themselves to living, thinking, and acting eucharistically.
 A
 Forum to think about and work on all the dimensions of life. A
 Forms solid ecclesial communion with a small geographical location. **Round A**
 Forum in which adult catechumens listen to Jesus Christ. **Round A**
 Forum to think about and work on all the dimensions of life. A
 Fosters the faith of individuals. **Round A**
 Fosters Faith-Shaping Friendships. A
 Fosters a more evangelized and evangelizing Catholic Church. A
 Fosters the spirit of Synodality. A
 Fosters Synodality among family members. A
 Foundation of the Catholic Church. D
 Frontier of evangelization in the AMECEA Region for the laity. **Round D**
 Force to help renew our faith. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Functional SCCs. A
 Functional SCCs in the parish -- with members knowing what they need to do in the SCCs. A
 Functioning structure. D
 Future of the Church in Africa. D
 Foundation of the Catholic Church. Round D
 Foundation of the church. **Round D**
 Foundation of good Christian life. D
 Foundation stones upon which parishes are built. D
 Foundational pillar of the church. D
 Foundational to the Catholic Church in Africa today. D
 Freedom to share my deep feelings. **Round five A**
 Friendliness of members. **Round three D**
 Friends Model of Church. D
 From the grassroots up. **Round twenty-one D**
 Fruits of the new mode of ecclesiological thinking, especially in Africa. **Round D**

Functional SCCs as a gift to the Catholic Church
 Fundamental model for being church. **Round D**
 Fundamental paradigm of the church. **Round D**
 Future of the African Church is at stake. **Round D**
 Future of the church. **Round twenty-seven D**
 Garden of growth. **Round D**
 Gateway networks. **Round A**
 Gathering of families. **Round A**
 Gathering online to celebrate our faith together. A
 Gathering together listen to one another. A
 Gathers in public spaces. A
 Genuine family of God. **Round D**
 Getting together in small groups to listen to one another. A
 Getting together to listen to one another. A
 Gift of the African Church to the Universal Church. D
 Gift of online SCC. D
 Give community members an opportunity to exercise and practice Christian values. **Round A**
 Gives life in the neighborhood. A
 Gives life to the Catholic Church. A
 Gives me the freedom to be myself. A
 Gives a new flavor to the African Church. **Round A**
 Gives opportunity to know the parishioners living in our area. A
 Gives many young people space to raise their concerns/grievances. A
 Global moment of renewal. **Round D**
 Glue of a campus ministry program. **Round D**
 Glue of our ministry. **Round D**
 Glue to assist young adults to transition from college to parish life. **Round D**
 Go a long way in advancing the work of evangelization. A
 Goes to the heart of what the Catholic Church must be. **Round D**
 Going digital during Covid-19. A
 Good head space for faith formation. A
 Good leadership and coordination. **Round two D**
 Good mixture of people. **Round four D**
 Good place to meet, teach and help each other. A
 Gospel-based Catholic. **Round D**
 Gospel-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Gospel-based living. **Round D**
 Gospel-centered church. **Round D**
 Gospel-centered faith. **Round eighteen D**
 Gospel-centered programs for young adults. **Round A**
 Gospel-centered SCC. **Round D**
 Gospel Houses where we meet around the Word of God. D
 Gospel is our DNA. D
 Gospel sharing. **Round A**
 Grassroots base of SCCs. **Round D**
 Grassroots evangelization. **Round A**
 Grassroots level of Catholic apostolate. D
 Grassroots synodal best practices. A
 Great avenue for evangelization. D
 Great boon to the Catholic Church. D
 Great platform that really enriches the church. Round D

Great source for the voice of the laity. D
 Great way for families to grow together in their faith. D
 Greatest part of a SCC is to be member. **Round D**
 Greatly strengthens the unity and faith of parishioners. Round A
 Greenhouse of evangelization. D
 Grounds me. **Round A**
 Groundwork for a Synodal Parish. D
 Group *Bible* study. **Round A.**
 Group discipleship. **Round A**
 Group Prayer. **Round A**
 Group Response Method of Gospel Sharing/Reflection and *Bible* Sharing/Reflection. **D**
 Group Spiritual Direction. **Round A**
 Growing closer to Christ through Scripture. A
 Growing faith in a circle. **Round thirty-one A**
 Growing faith AND applying faith. A
 Growing in every part of the world. A
 Growing SCCs. A
 Growing small groups. D
 Growing the church. A
 Growing YPSCCs. A
 Growth Groups. **Round D**
 Hallmark of the Catholic Church in Africa. D
 Hallmark of the Church of Jesus Christ in Africa. D
 Harnesses youth power. **Round A**
 Has become part of us in the AMECEA Region. A.
 Has a rightful place in the Catholic Church. A
 Has a synodal identity. D
 Has systems of how to live as a church. A
 Have helped me grow. Round **A**
 Haven for the broken. **Round A**
 Healing prayers for members. **Round three A**
 Healthy cell of the parish. D
 Hearing and then absorbing the Word of God. **Round A**
 Heart of renewal in the Catholic Church today. **Round D**
 Heart of the church. **Round D**
 Heart of this new pastoral model of church. **Round D**
 Heartbeat of the Catholic Church. D
 Heightened participation of the laity. A
 Help each other to grow in faith. **Round A**
 Help each other to grow in the social, family, and most importantly, spiritual life. **Round A**
 Help local Catholics feel that they are the church and more responsible for the church life and decision making. **Round A**
 Help the whole church to do its mission. **Round A**
 Helps Catholics cross the aisle of race and culture. **Round A**
 Helps Christians to deepen their relationship among themselves and their relationship with God. **Round A**
 Helps me to connect the Bible and everyday life. **Round three A**
 Helps me to connect my faith and everyday life. **Round two A**
 Helps me to go deeper in my faith. **Round twenty-fifth A**
 Helps me to grow in faith. A
 Helps me to learn about my Christian faith. **Round five A**

Helps me to live my Christian faith. **Round one A**
 Helps me to prepare for the Sunday Eucharist. **Round four A**
 Helps the needy in our neighborhood. A
 Helps the needy during Covid-19 **Round A**
 Helps needy people in our neighborhood. A
 Helps the neighborhood to grow as a family. **Round A**
 Helps others. A
 Helps our perseverance during Covid-19. A
 Helps our spiritual life. A
 Helps participants to recall, honor, and reify their baptismal promise and its priestly function.
 A
 Helps to grow SCCs around the world. D
 Helps to grow the spirituality of Catholic young adults. A
 Helps us connect and grow in our biblical community. A
 Helps us discover what Christianity in the Catholic tradition is all about and how it can be truly
 lived. A
 Helps us go to the family. A
 Helps us know that no one is alone. A
 Helps us to grow in our faith in SCCs. D
 Helps us to grow our Christian conscience. A
 Helps us to grow our faith in SCCs. D
 Helps us to grow in our faith. D
 Helps us to help each other to connect everyday life and faith. **Round A**
 Helps us to identify suitable parish leaders. A
 Helps us to live the SCCs Model of Church. A
 Helps us to persevere during this Covid-19 crisis. A
 Helps the young generation to strengthen our faith in Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Hinge on which pastoral work evolves. **Round A**
 Home away from home. D
 Home-based. **Round eighteen A**
 Home-based Communities. **Round eighteen A**
 Home Church. **Round twenty-three D**
 Home cell in dialogue. A
 Home Churches. D
 Home-based community. **Round twenty-seven D**
 Home blessings. **Round A**
 Home cell in dialogue. A
 Home eucharistic gathering. A
 Home for everyone. **Round eighteen D**
 Home for faith formation. **Round A**
 Home to everyone. D
 Home Groups. **Round D**
 Home of communion for the 21st century. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Home of compassion. **Round A**
 Home-made church. D
 Home mass. Round A
 Home Small Groups. **Round A**
 Home to all Christians. **Round D**
 Homily preparation session. **Round A**
 Horizontal communities on the grassroots. D
 Hospitable. **Round A**

House cell fellowships. **Round seventeen A**
 House Church Ministry. **Round A**
 House Church Movement. D
 House Eucharists. A
 House mass. **A**
 Household Church. D
 Household Church Communities. D¹⁴⁸³
 Household of faith. D
 Household of God. **Round twenty-fifth D**
 Hub of communion and edification in the Christian life. D
 Hybrid SCC gatherings. D
 Hybrid SCC webinars. D
 Hybrid SCC workshops. D
 Hybrid Small Christian Community. D
 Hybrid Small Christian Communities are the future. D
 Ideal church as community. **Round D**
 Ideal model of the church as a family. **Round D**
 Ideal place for Adult Catechumens. **Round twenty-three D**
 Implementing best SCC practices increases parish vitality. A
 Importance of the Eucharist as the real celebration of our faith that is shared in the SCCs.
Round D
 Importance of group prayer. **Round D**
 Importance of SCCs in the Catholic Church today. D
 Importance of small group ministry. **Round D**
 Important anchor point as a response to the challenges of evangelization. Round D
 Important formation in our spiritual and social life. **Round D**
 Important resource for church renewal. A
 Important way of being church in Africa. **Round D**
 Inclusive. **Round seventeen D**
 Inclusive small community. **Round D**
 Incarnated in local cultures. **D**
 Incarnating SCCs. **Round D**
 In contact with the realities and lives of people on the grassroots. **Round A**
 Indigenous to each continent. D
 Influences seminary formation. A
 In service to the Catholic Church as a Field Hospital. **Round A.**
 Individual and group response in action. **Round A**
 Inspires better pastoral solutions for the young people. A
 Instrument in adult faith formation. **Round A**
 Instrument of formation and evangelization. **Round eighteen A**
 Instrument of true love to one another. D

¹⁴⁸³ Google Chrome Search says: “What is the Small Christian Community? Answer: “Household Church Communities: Families and individuals willingly choose to be part of a Small Christian Community. This SCC is a group of three to five households of varying sizes and make-ups, approximately 20 people (adults, youth, and children).” Microsoft Bing Website, retrieved on 24 June, 2022,
<https://www.bing.com/search?q=small+christian+communities&qsn&form=QBRE&sp=-1&pq=small+christian+communities&sc=9-27&sk=&cvid=B573652701A04A99977E8554BCE5186F&ghsh=0&ghacc=0>

Instruments of genuine conversion. **Round A**
 Instruments of God's love and mercy. **Round D**
 Integral dimension of parish life. D
 Integral part of our church culture. **Round D**
 Intentional community. D
 Intentional discipleship in small communities. A
 Intentional efforts to reclaim spirituality as a means to liberation, justice and flourishing.
Round D
 Intentional faith community. D
 Interactive homilies. A
 Interactive experience. A
 Interactive small community experience. A
 Interconnectedness. **Round seventeen D**
 Interdenominational. **Round twenty-four D**
 Interfaith listening circle. **Round D**
 Interfaith small communities. **Round D**
 Intergenerational. **Round fifteen D**
 Intergenerational church. D
 Intergenerational dialogue. **Round D**
 Intergenerational mass. D
 Intergenerational SCC. D
 Internationalization of the SCCs Model. D
 Internet enables us YSCC members to grow spiritually. **Round A**
 Internet ministry. A
 Interparish singing competition. **Round A**
 The interplay between the Synod and SCCs is magnetic. A
 Interprets the Gospel from below. **Round A**
 Integrating prayer and daily life. **Round fourteen D**
 In solidarity with Covid-19 sufferers and their care givers. A
 In touch with the daily realities. A
 In touch with the reality on the ground. A
 Involved in pastoral animation in parishes. A
 I prepare my Sunday homily by listening to lay people's reflections. **Round A**
 It is a vocation. **Round D**
 Its online faith sharing component. A
 Its synodal spirit. A
 Jesus, through his Word, accompanies us.
 Joining hands in promoting YPSCCs in Eastern Africa. A
 Joint decision making. **Round A**
 Jumuiya process in writing a homily. A
 Jumuiya shared homily. A
 Justice and peace concerns. **Round two A**
Kairos time for SCC Priorities. **Round D**
 Keepers of our brothers and sisters. **Round A**
 Keeps people connected to the Catholic Church. D
 Kernel of the church in Africa. **Round D**
 Key catechesis method. D
 Key for developing Catholic leadership. D
 Key pastoral priority in the church. **Round ten D**
 Key place where we experience the love and mercy of God. A
 A key to creating vibrant parishes. A

Laity are not part of the church; they are the church. **Round D**
 Laity form the engine of SCCs. **Round thirty-nine D**
 Launching pad to nurture the laity. **Round A**
 Lay a strong base for our Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Lay people are the heart of SCCs. D
 Leadership of the Catholic Church in Africa has included it in its evangelization structures. A
 Leadership structure from below. D
 Leadership training. **Round A**
 Learning about other SCCs. **Round ten A**
 Learning from peers how to grow as a disciple. A
 Learning moment. **Round A**
Lectio Divina. **Round A**
 Lectionary-based. **Round eleven D**
 Lectionary-based Catholics. **Round A**
 Lectionary-based Catholics can change the world. **Round A**
 Lectionary-based faith-sharing. **Round twenty-six A**
 Lectionary-based faith sharing in a synodal style. A
 Lectionary-based faith sharing on a daily basis. A
 Lectionary-based faith-sharing small community. **Round A**
 Lectionary-based SCCs. **Round A**
 Lectionary *Jumuiya*. **Round A**
 Lectionary way of life. D
 Lens through which we see the world. A
 Lever of Integral Human Development. D
 Liberation focus. **Round twelve D**
 Lifeblood of the church. **Round D**
 Lifeblood of the larger church. **Round thirty-seven D**
 Life-changing small group. **Round D**
 Life-giving, liberative force for the African continent. **Round D**
 Life-giving small community. D
 Life Groups. **Round D**
 Life of the Catholic Church of today. D
 Life well lived (based on the *Bible*).
 Lifeline of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Lights candles of the faith. A
 Listening circle. D
 “Listening circle” format. D
 “Listening circle” methodology. D
 Listening to young people. A
 Little Faith-sharing Community. **Round D**
 Liturgical preparation for Sunday celebration. A
 Live the closeness of the day-to-day around the Word of God and the Eucharist. A
 Lives synodality in concrete pastoral life. A
 Living branches in the parish. A
 Living cells of the church. **Round A**
 Living cells that build up the Body of Christ. **Round A**
 Living center of evangelization. **Round thirty A**
 Living and growing in our faith is best done as part of a small community. A
 Living the mission *ad gentes*. **Round A**
 Living synodality. A
 Living together as church in the neighborhood. A

Living together as effective and efficient God's instruments of hope, peace and love. A
 Local center of ecclesial reflection. D
 Local church that feels at home. **Round D**
 Local context is king (and queen!). D
 Local family unit. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Local home church group. **Round twenty-four D**
 Local and smaller communities have a greater sense of participation. **Round A**
 Local voluntary leadership. **Round A**
 Localized church in the universal church structure. **Round D**
 Locus for the formation of conscience. **Round D**
 Looks after its members. A
 Loving small faith community. **D**
 LUMKO approach sustains SCCs. A
 Lumko Method. **Round thirty-three A**
 Lungs of the parish. **Round D**
 Major catalyst for sharing grassroots experiences. **Round A**
 Major way of real active participation of the laity. A
 Makes the church close to Christians. **Round D**
 Makes college feel smaller. **Round A**
 Makes a difference in emerging formation of adults. A
 Makes for familiarization of one another. A
 Makes young people feel welcomed and appreciated. A
 Main cell of evangelization. **Round D**
 Mainstream of African Catholic life. **Round D**
 Maintains the bonds of solidarity and communion among Catholics. A
 Making SCC organic cells in the Catholic Church wherever we go. **Round A**
 Makes parish life very intense and present everywhere. **Round A**
 Makes us more resilient for the future. A
 Manageable Group. **Round D**
 Manifestation of the Catholic Church in Africa. A
 Maryknoll Young Adult Community. D
 Maryknoll Young Adult Empowerment Community. D
 Mass in my SCC. **Round seven A**
 Mass in the home. A
 Mass in the neighborhood. A
 Meal sharing in the context of a SCC. A
 Meaningful prayer — time spent connecting with God? A
 Meeting in homes. **Round twenty A**
 Meets the human need to be known, heard, listened to, appreciated and socialize. A
 Meets weekly. A
 Member of a SCC Commune. D
 Members' active support of each other. A
 Members affirm and support one another. A
 Members exercise their priestly capacity to shape shared moments of illumination. A
 Mentorship nursery that grows in the parish. A
 Ministering to emerging adults/adulthood. D
 Ministry of like to like. D
 Ministry to the SCCs family. **Round A**
 Mirror of African household. **Round twenty-four D**
 Mirrors the ongoing Synod of Bishops on Synodality to ensure that no one is left behind. A
 Missional community. **Round A**

Missional small group. **Round twenty-four A**
 Missionary discipleship journey. **Round A**
 Missionary outreach. **Round eighteen A**
 Missionary spirit. **Round five D**
 Mission-minded. **Round twenty-two A**
 Model of building community among students. **Round D**
 Model for change in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Model of church life. **D**
 Model of church that is communitarian. **A**
 Model of evangelization. **D**
 Model of evangelization at the grassroots level. **Round D**
 Model of the church we want. **Round D**
 Model of SCCs in the church of the future. **D**
 Model of SCCs is a gift of the African Church to the Universal Church. **D**
 Model the life of Christians. **A**
 Models the Synodal Process. **A**
 Modern *Acts of the Apostles*. **D**
 Mold young generations through YSCCs. **Round A**
 Moral agency of SCCs. **Round D**
 More focused, holistic approach to small-group ministry. **Round D**
 More intentional part of a synodal, evangelizing church. **A**
 Most basic unit of the Church. **D**
 Most complete synodal organism in the parish. **D**
 Most effective agents for foster God's goodness in Africa. **Round A**
 Most effective ministerial technique with Millennials. **Round D**
 Most effective way of evangelization. **Round D**
 Most efficient and effective avenue of evangelization. **Round D**
 Most important aspect of pastoral life. **D**
 Most important lifeline of the parish. **Round thirty-four D**
 Motive of hope for the Catholic Church and for humanity today. **D**
 Much needed option in the church and world today. **D**
 Multi-ethnic small community. **Round D**
 Multicultural mass. **Round A**
 Multigenerational mass. A multigenerational small community. **Round thirty-one D**
 Multi-modal SCC. **D**
 "Must" hour every week. **A**
 A must if we are to grow the church. **D**
 Mutual support. **Round thirteen D**
 My spiritual health. **Round A**
 Neighborhood Catholics come together. **A**
 Neighborhood Church. **Round D**
 Neighborhood Eucharistic Community (NEC). **Round A**
 Neighborhood evangelism. **Round A**
 Neighborhood mass. **A**
 Neighborhood spirit. **Round eight D**
 Networking. **A**
 Networking Communities. **Round twenty-three A**
 Networking of friendship. **Round A**
 Networking of small communities. **A**
 Networking SCCs within Africa. **Round A**
 Network of SCCs. **Round thirty-five D**

Network of SCCs in Africa. **Round D**
 Networks of SCCs. D
 New arena for campus Faith-sharing. A
 New beginning in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 New Catholic Church space. D
 New expression of faith and community. **Round D**
 New face of the church. **Round forty D**
 New family in the church. **Round D**
 New mode of being church. **Round D**
 New model of being church. **Round D**
 New model of church. **Round eleven D**
 New model of relationship. D
 New model of small group fellowship. **Round D**
 New model of small group fellowship. **Round D**
 New open space for online faith communities and worship. A
 New paradigm of the Family of God. **Round D**
 New pastoral model of being church. **Round D**
 New pastoral model of church. **Round D**
 New shape of the future church. **Round D**
 New theology of the church. **Round D**
 New vision of being church. **Round D**
 New way for the evangelization of the church in Africa. **Round D**
 New way of being Christian in the church. **Round D**
 New way of being church today. **Round ten D**
 New way of being church for young people. D
 New way of being family. D
 New way of being local church. **Round D**
 New way of being local church among our young people. D
 New way of being parish. **Round twenty-six D**
 New way of building God's Kingdom. D
 New way of doing evangelization. **Round D**
 New way of doing theology. **Round D**
 New way of enlivening the church in the neighborhood. D
 New way of evangelization in Africa today. **Round D**
 New way of gospel proclamation. A
 New way of life. D
 New way of life that is to be understood and lived. **Round D**
 New way of our Church Communion Community. **Round D**
 New way of thinking and listening. A
 Non-ordained ministries. **Round twenty-seven A**
 No strong SCCs, no transfiguration/conversion/change. D
 New way of participating in our church. **Round D**
 Nourished by the Gospel. **Round A**
 Nourishes our Faith. A
 Nourishes our personal and communal life. **Round A**
 Nourishment from the shared Word of God. A
 Nucleus of present and future church. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Nursery bed for good marriages and good families in the Catholic Church. **Round A**
 Occupy an essential place in the life of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Offer authentic hope for the entire Catholic church. D
 Offer a meaningful way to gather. D

Offer a way for young adults as well as older adults to more actively engage in the Catholic Church. **Round A**

Offer psychological and social support to the members. **Round A**

Offers many faith formation opportunities. A

On-campus evangelization small groups. **Round D**

One of the most profound pastoral ministries in the Catholic Church today D

Oneness as a family of God. **Round A**

Ongoing formation. **Round twenty-one A**

Ongoing formation of SCC members. A

Ongoing formation and training of SCC leaders and members. A

Ongoing theological formation and training of SCC leaders and members. A

Online Campus SCCs. D

Online community of faith. D

Online congregation. **Round D**

Online conversations. **Round A**

Online evangelization. D

Online faith sharing. **Round A**

Online family community. **Round A**

Online House Churches. **Round thirty-seven D**

Online *jumuiya* (Swahili for “community”). D

Online learning. A

Online Lectionary Based Faith Sharing SCC. A

Online liturgical readings. **Round D**

Online livestreamed mass. A

Online practice of our faith. A

Online Prayer Circle (OPC). A

Online SCC Model of Church. D

Online SCCs as ways of life and hope. A

Online SCCs Resources. **Round thirty-nine A**

Online sharing. A

Online or Virtual SCC. **Round eleven A**

Online Skype prayer family. **Round D**

Online Skype SCC family. **Round D**

Online Skype SCCs Workshop. **Round A**

Online Small Christian Community. A

Online Small Christian Community Ministry. **Round A**

Online Small Community. **Round A**

Online Small Community Faith Sharing. A

Online SCCs Webinars. A

Online SCCs Workshops. A

Only forum where Christians can easily share their faith experiences. A

Only hope of the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round D**

Only sure way for sustainability of our Catholic Church

Only way to make the Catholic Church grow stronger. A

On-the-job training. A

Opportunities for theological formation and training. A

Opportunity for deep listening. D

Opportunity for spiritual nourishment. **Round A**

Opportunity to discuss synodality in SCCs. A

Opportunity to hear Christians offer a reflection on next Sunday’s Gospel. A

Orbis Book Club. D

Original manner of being church. **Round D**
 Our baptismal brotherhood and sisterhood lived out practically with a few people. **Round A**
 Our Christian clan. **Round D**
 Our continuing fundamental model of being church.
 Our DNA as Christians. Round D
 Our new extended family in the city. **Round D**
 Our parish is a “communion of communities model” where the SCCs are structurally
 Connected. A
 Our wedding garment in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Outreach evangelization. A
 Outreach to others. **Round thirty-one A**
 Outreaching church. **Round forty A**
 Paradigm for a participation of listening and diversity. D
 Parish-based. **Round nine D**
 Parish-based neighborhood communities. **Round D**
 Parish-based SCC. **Round D**
 Parish-based Small Church Community. D
 Parish-based Small Faith-sharing Community. **Round D**
 Parish-based Small Faith-sharing Group. **Round D**
 Parish Discussion Group. **Round A**
 Parish-rooted Small Community. D
 Parish Small Group. **Round D**
 Parishioner-led small evangelization groups. **Round A**
 Part of a hub of Small Faith Communities (SFCs) D
 Part of a Small Eucharistic Community. D
 Participation of different denominations. **Round sixteen D**
 Participation of the faithful in the life of the church. **Round D**
 Participative homily sharing. A
 Participatory church. **Round eighteen D**
 Participatory church firmly anchored at the grassroots level by SCCs. **Round D**
 Participatory church in action. A
 Passion is the fuel that drives us forward. A
 Pastoral accompaniment. **Round thirty-eight A**
 Pastoral and apostolic identity. **Round D**
 Pastoral lifeblood of the Christian community. **Round D**
 Pastoral mission of the church. **Round D**
 Pastoral model of the Catholic Church integrally connected to the structures, ministries and
 activities of the parish. **Round D**
 Pastoral power. D
 Pastoral priority for our diocese. **Round D**
 Pastoral priority for our parish. **Round D**
 Pastoral priority in Eastern Africa. **Round D**
 Pastoral structure to empower lay people. **Round D**
 Pastoral tool of evangelization. **Round D**
 Path of evangelization at the grassroots level. D
 Path to move closer to Jesus Christ. A
 Patrimony of the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round D**
 Patron and Patroness saints. **Round D**
 Peace of the Risen Christ is renewed in the structure of the Synod and in the form of SCCs. A
 Peacebuilding. **Round twenty-one A**
 Peer accompaniment. A

Peer group small Faith-sharing community. **Round A**
Peer ministry in a new way. **Round A**
People gather at the local level and express their opinions. A
People for others. **Round fourteen A**
Perfect base for charity, prayer and mercy. **Round D**
Perfect platform for Christians to share and grow. **Round D**
Permanent and ongoing force and influence in the worldwide Catholic Church. **Round D**
Personal and communal witness. **Round A**
Personal encounter with Jesus Christ through SCC. A
Personal experiences shared by members. A
Personal relationships and friendships. **Round two D**
Personal spiritual growth. **Round A**
Phone fast during Lent. A
Phone SCC Conference Call. **Round A**
Pillar of our Catholic Church. **Round D**
Pillars that support the whole Catholic Church edifice. D
Place for members to share what is good for their global life. **Round D**
Place of care and compassion. **Round A**
Place of compassion. **Round A**
Place of concrete reconciliation. **Round A**
Place of evangelization. **Round twenty-nine A**
Place of hospitality. A
Place of initial catechesis. **Round A**
Place of reconciliation. **Round A**
Place of refuge and comfort. A
Place of solidarity. **Round A**
Place of transformation. **Round A**
Place to build relationships and have meaningful conversations about faith. **Round A**
Place to encounter Christ. **Round A**
Place to explore faith in a casual environment. **Round A**
Place to form our faith. **Round A**
Place to grow in our faith journey. A
Place to share faith. A
Place to teach good morals and proper handling of technology. A
Place and path for pastoral care and evangelization of families and marriages. A
Place/space to nurture vocations. **Round A**
Place where each person can grow in their faith journey. A
Place where I have met real family. **Round A**
Place where life's issues can be discussed, shared, and reflected on. A
Place where the church as family is experienced. **Round A**
Place where the different ethnic groups meet together. **Round A**
Place where the faith and spiritual life of the Christians is modelled and nurtured. **Round A**
Place where we share our different talents. D
Places of communion and prayer. **Round A**
Platform for uniting different ethnic groups. D
Play a key role in the growth of the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round A**
Playground of saving one another. **Round A**
Platform and context to deepen the issue of synodality. A
Platform of continuous catechesis. **Round A**
Platform for believers to come together. A
Platform that allows people in the same neighborhood to share practical experiences. **Round**

A

Platform that provide spiritual nourishment to college and university students. **Round A**

PMC small community. **Round D**

Poor use the Bible to liberate themselves from the violence of poverty. A

Post-Alpha resource. D

Post-Alpha style small group resource. D

Post-RCIA Group. **Round A**

Post RCIA Support. **Round twenty D**

Powerful force of renewal of the parish structures. **Round A**

Powerful means of evangelization. **Round twenty-nine A**

Powerful vehicles for adult faith formation. **Round A**

Powerful vehicles for youth faith formation. **Round A**

Powerful way to accompany one another as pilgrims on the journey. A

Power of faith communities to make a real difference. **Round D**

Power of Student Small Christian Communities. **Round A**

Practical action and service. **Round six A**

Practical ministerial tools. **Round A**

Practical way of evangelization. **Round D**

Praxis Discernment. A

Praxis Group. A

“Praxis” of reflection. A

Prayerful group engagement with Scripture. **Round A**

Prayer, reflection and Faith-sharing ‘grounds’ me.” **Round A**

Prayer Circle. **Round A**

Prayer solidarity with refugees crossing borders. A

Prayer Support Group. **Round A**

Praying as a community. **Round A.**

Praying for and assisting people who live on the margins of society. A

Praying for Pope Francis’ monthly intention. A

Praying together for the Golden Jubilee of SCCs in Eastern Africa. A

Praying together for the needs of others. **Round eight A**

Praying together for peace in the world. A

Praying together for peace in war-torn areas. A

Praying together for special intentions. A

Praying together for the Synodal Process between now and October, 2023. A

Praying together for the victims of natural disasters. A

Preferred method of evangelization. **Round A**

Preferred “place” to pass on the Catholic faith. **Round A**

Presence of SCCs for evangelization at the grassroots level. **Round D**

Primary faith community in self-organized small communities of people D

Primary place for the New Evangelization. D

Prime way that people experience life transformation. **Round A**

Prime way that people grow in their relationship with God and others. **Round A**

Prime way that people learn about God. **Round A**

Principal tool for belonging. **Round D**

Priority of the New Evangelization. **Round D**

Priority tool for evangelization. D

Privileged place of faith formation. A

Privileged place of formation. A

Privileged place to experience family spirit, Synodality and outreach to others. A

Privileged place where the experience of walking together is practiced. A

Privilege in our Local Churches in the AMECEA Region. A
 Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. **Round twelve A**
 Promotes child protection in the neighborhood. A
 Promotes the culture of encounter. **Round A**
 Promotes deeper reflection on how to grow as a synodal Church universally. A
 Promotes grassroots evangelization. A
 Promotes the health and vitality of the Catholic faith in the diocese. A
 Promotes integral development for all. A
 Promotes the New Evangelization. **Round thirty-three A**
 Promotes reconciliation and peacebuilding. **Round eight A**
 Promotes social justice. A
 Promotes Young Adults SCCs through YCW. **Round D**
 Promotes of social transformation. **Round thirty-four A**
 Promotion of a Small Church Community vision for parish. D
 Provide a discipleship path for students. **Round D**
 Provides a trusting space where we feel comfortable to share our more personal musing. A
 Provides an atmosphere to share family values. **Round D**
 Provides SCC members a unique opportunity for discernment. D
 Raises understanding about inter-religious dialog. **Round D**
 Rallying point of support during funerals as well as weddings. **Round D**
 Reaches out to motivate the wider society to protect children. **Round A**
 Reaches out to the marginated and those on the periphery of society. **Round A**
 Reaching out to others. **Round one A**
 Reading Group. **Round D**
 Reading and reflecting on the Gospel of the following Sunday ahead of time. **Round A**
 Reading the Scriptures in a slow, deliberate, and faith-oriented way. A
 Readings of the coming Sunday: one is able to internalize the message before further
 elaboration by the priest on Sunday. **Round A**
 Real experience of the Catholic Church is lived in the SCCs. **Round D**
 Real life faith discussion. D
 Real sense of community. **Round D**
 Really a blessed and sacred space for the Christians. **Round D**
 Really changed the Catholic Church. **Round A**
 Reawakens the missionary spirit in the laity. A
 Recognition of certain lay associations as SCCs. **Round D**
 Recognized as an appropriate ecclesial model in the Synodal Church. A
 Recognizes and promotes the specific role of lay people. **Round A**
 Reflecting on Gospel from a SCC perspective. A
 Reflecting on Gospel of the following Sunday. **Round fifteen A**
 Reflecting together in a personal way. **Round A**
 Reflection starting with a critical incident. **Round fourteen A**
 Reflection starting with daily life. **Round fourteen A**
 Reflective environment. **Round D**
 Reflects on the experience of an SCC. A
 Refugees as perfect target population. **Round D**
 Regular Bible Sharing. A
 Regular practical action and outreach. A
 Regular structure of parish life. **Round D**
 Reignites our faith through reading and reflecting on the Gospel. A
 Reinvent the SCCs/BCCs/CEBs. D
 Reinvigorated SCCs as a fruit of Synodality. A

Relational aspect that members have for each other. **Round D**
 Relationship between members. **Round fifteen D**
 Relationships. **Round A**
 Relationship with a Twin (Sister) SCC. **Round seven A**
 Relevant to human life on the African continent. A
 Reliable way of Christian Community in Africa. D
 Remembering the fathers of the early Jumuiya Church, Kalilombe, Mwoleka. A
 Reminder of 1st Century House Churches. **Round eight D**
 Represent an extraordinary social and pastoral lifeline. A
 Represents the success of African Ecclesiology. **Round D**
 Represents the Universal Church. **Round D**
 Research as central in the life of our SCCs. A
 Residence community. **Round A**
 Responding creatively to the New Normal. A
 Responds to various challenges that the human person encounters in life. Round A
 Responsible for its members' concrete needs. A
 Revitalization and promotion of the SCCs across the world. A
 Revitalizing force in the Catholic Church.
 Revolutionary paradigm of being a church. **Round D**
 Rewriting *Bible* passages. **Round A**
 Richness of group sharing. A
 Role in official structure of the Catholic Church. D
 Root from which the wider church emerges. **Round D**
 Roots of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Roots of *Ecclesia in Africa*. **Round D**
 Roots the Catholic Church in people's daily lives. **Round D**
 Rotation of leadership. **Round six D**
 Sacraments celebrated in the SCC. **Round sixteen A**
 Sacred space to unburden ourselves. A
 Safe haven. D
 Safe place for people to share and grow. D
 Safe place for sharing. D
 Safe place for young people to accompany one another. D
 Safe space to discern God's call for each of us. D
 Safe place to listen to each other and hear the voice of God. D
 SCC Book Club. D
 SCC trainers without borders. D
 SCC WhatsApp. **Round D**
 SCC is our second home. D
 SCC is the sure way. **Round D**
 SCC (*Jumuiya*) Mass. **Round thirty-nine A**
 SCC (*Jumuiya*) Mass in the home. A
 SCC shared homily. A
 SCC Strategy (marriage in the home). A
 SCCs *Bible* sharing and prayer. **Round A**
 SCCs are a blessing. D
 SCCs are the avenue for encountering the Word of God. Round A
 SCCs as an entry point to family accompaniment. **Round A**
 SCCs as a safe place for sharing. **Round D**
 SCCs as a way of life. **Round sixteen D**
 SCCs can change the face of Africa. **Round A**

SCCs can ease work of the priests and religious. **Round A**
 SCCs Capacity Building Program. **Round A**
 SCCs Capacity Building Workshops. **Round A**
 SCCs contribute to social transformation. Round D
 SCCs drive the Catholic Church's response to change. **Round D**
 SCCs energize larger parish worship on Sundays. **Round A**
 SCCs evangelization. **Round A**
 SCCs Facebook Nation. **Round D**
 SCCs for the Pontifical Missionary Children (PMC). **Round D**
 SCCs in the context of Catholic campus ministry. **Round D**
 SCCs leaders have the right sets of skills to help them to strengthen their communities. A
 SCCs marriage ministry. **Round A**
 SCCs mentality. **Round D**
 SCCs model of evangelization at the grassroots. **Round D**
 SCCs model of homily and sermon preparation. A
 SCCs model is a gift of the African Church to the Universal Church. D
 SCCs mutual networking. A
 SCCs networking. **Round thirty-seven A**
 SCCs networks. **Round A**
 SCCs processes/methodologies. **Round twenty-nine A**
 SCCs provides the groundwork for a Synodal Parish. A
 SCCs-related Apps. **Round A**
 SCCs spirituality. **Round D**
 SCCs style of mass. D
 SCCs style webinar. D
 SCCs way of becoming church. **Round D**
 SCCs way of grassroots evangelization. **Round D**
 School of communion for the 21st century. **Round twenty-nine D**
 School of discipleship. A
 School of empowerment. A
 School of equality. **Round D**
 School of evangelization. **Round D**
 School of inculturation. **Round D**
 School of learning. **Round thirty-four D**
 School for equality. **Round D**
 School for followers of Jesus Christ. **Round twenty-six D**
 Schools for discipleship. **Round D**
 Scripture-based faith formation. **Round A**
 Scripture-based Faith-sharing. **Round thirty A**
 Scripture-based reflection booklet. **Round A**
 Scripture is the heart of Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Seed of the church. **Round D**
 Seeds of Synodality. D
 Seedbed where faith formation takes place. **Round A**
 Seedbeds of a different Africa. **Round D**
 "See," "Discern"/"Judge" and "Act" Process/Method. **Round thirty-seven A**
 Seeing Jesus Christ in others. **Round three A**
 Seeker-Friendly Small Communities. D
 Seeks social justice. Round twenty-six A
 Self-actualization of the church. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Self-reliance projects. **Round five A**

Seminarians take up the work of animation of SCCs.
 Sense of belonging. A
 Sermon-based group. **Round twenty-five A**
 Sermon-based small group. **Round A**
 Sermon illustrations based on a shared small community experience. D
 Serve God through SCCs. A
 Setting in which we can fulfil our missionary duties. D
 Seven Steps method of Gospel sharing. **Round nine A**
 Shaped by the Gospel. A
 Shared Homily. **Round A**
 Share faith in partnership with others. **Round A**
 Share pastoral experiences. A
 Shares the life of lay people from below, from the grassroots. A
 Shares the life of the neighborhood. **Round A**
 Sharing ideas and ways to evangelize. **Round nine A**
 Sharing in a small group. **Round twenty A**
 Sharing life experiences. A
 Sharing of daily experiences. A
 Sharing our daily life. Round A
 Sharing our faith with others. A
 Sharing prayer requests. Round A
 Sharing the Word of God. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Shines the spirit of sharing. A
 Show that the Spirit is at work. **Round A**
 Shows that the Catholic Church is not foreign in Africa. **Round A**
 Sign of vitality within the Catholic Church. A
 Silence after the Bible reading. **Round six A**
 Silent periods in our gatherings. A.
 Simplest and basic unit of the Catholic Church. D
 Sit around in a circle. A
 Sitting around in a big circle and eating together. A
 Skype Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Smallest cell of the church. **Round thirty-eight D**
 Small Bible-based Faith-sharing Community. **Round A**
 Small Book Club. **Round D**
 Small Breakout Rooms on Zoom. D
 Small Christian Communities apostolate. **Round A**
 Small Christian Community that prays together stays together. A
 Small Christian Communities online forum on Facebook. D
 Small Christian Communities spirituality. **Round A**
 Small Christian Communities without boundaries. **Round D**
 Small Christian Community Process. **Round D**
 Small Christian Support Community in our daily lives. A
 Small Church. **Round D**
 Small Church Group. **Round D**
 Small Church where people can make decisions on certain issues concerning them. **Round D**
 Small communities as the core of your church, not just another ministry. **Round D**
 Small communities at the center of diocesan and parish renewal. **Round D**
 Small communities of faith and practice. **Round A**
 Small Communities of Young People. D
 Small Communities of Young Seekers. D

Small community discipleship. **Round D**
 Small community of families. **Round D**
 Small Community Leader Training Webinar. **Round A**
 Small community of missionary disciples. **Round forty D**
 Small community of faith-sharing. A
 Small community of shared faith. **Round A**
 Small Covenant Group. **Round D**
 Small Devotional Group. **Round D**
 Small Discernment Breakout Group. D
 Small Discipleship Group. **Round D**
 Small enough to allow for closer human relationships. A
 Small Ethnic Community. **Round D**
 Small Faith Community. **Round D**
 Small Faith based Community. **Round D**
 Small Faithful Community. **Round D**
 Small Faith-sharing Community. **Round A**
 Small Faith-sharing community building. **Round A**
 Small Faith-sharing Group. **Round A**
 Small Faith-sharing Group experience. **Round A**
 Small Fraternal Neighborhoods within SCCs. D
 Small, graced, sacramental communities. D
 Small group based community. **Round D**
 Small group communities. **Round D**
 Small group discipleship. **Round D**
 Small group discipleship is the most effective ministerial technique with Millennials. **Round D**
 Small groups during retreat. **Round A**
 Small group dynamic. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Small group experience. **Round D**
 Small group Faith-sharing resources. **Round A**
 Small group fellowship. **Round A**
 Small group focus. **Round thirteen D**
 Small group friendly *Bible* commentary. **Round A**
 Small group life. **Round A**
 Small group management platform. **Round D**
 Small group mentality. **Round D**
 Small group ministry/ies. **Round sixteen A**
 Small group ministries for youth. A
 Small group ministry team. **Round A**
 Small group parish session. **Round A**
 Small group prayer. A
 Small group process of evangelization. **Round D**
 Small group resources. **Round thirty-five D**
 Small group sharing. **Round A**
 Small group study. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Small groups as a model for change in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Small groups during retreat. **Round A**
 Small Home Church. **Round D**
 Small Home-based Community (SHC). **Round D**
 Small Human Community. **Round thirty-nine D**
 Small Intentional Mission Communities (SIMCs). D

Small Bible-based Faith-sharing Community. **Round A**
 Small Lectionary-based Faith-sharing Community. **Round A**
 Small Mission Community. **Round thirty-one D**
 Small Multicultural Faith Community. **D**
 Small Neighborhood Group. **Round D**
 Small Neighborhood Parish-based group. **Round D**
 Small Parish Book Club. **Round A**
 Small Parish Community. **Round D**
 Small Parish Reading Group. **Round A**
 Small Peer Group Faith-sharing Community. **A**
 Small parish without borders. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Small Reflection Group. **Round A**
 Small Religious Group. **Round D**
 Small Rural Faith Communities (SRFCs) **D**
 Small Searching (Seekers) Community. **A**
 Small Spiritual Group. **Round D**
 Small Story-telling Group. **Round A.**
 Small Study Group. **Round A**
 Small Sharing Group. **Round A.**
 Small Young Seekers Community. **A**
 Stones of the church. **D**
 Smaller gatherings (in homes or elsewhere). **A**
 Smaller is better. **Round D**
 Smallness of the group. **Round two D**
 Synodal Church is established on the basis of the Small Christian Communities. **A**
 Synodal model in youth and young adult ministry. **D**
 Social action. **Round twelve A**
 Social activities. **Round nineteen A**
 Social Inquiry Method. **Round D**
 Social exchange as a medium of evangelism. **Round A**
 Social media makes evangelization easy. **Round A.**
 Social justice orientation. **Round A.**
 Socially organized solidarity. **Round A**
 Social outreach activities. **Round thirty-two A**
 Society in miniature. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Solidarity in prayer. **A**
 Solidarity with others. **Round ten D**
 Solution to fulfill the “Joy of the Gospel.” **Round D**
 Solution to parish life. **Round D**
 Solve problems through the inspiration of the Gospel. **A**
 Soul of the church. **Round D**
 Soup for the soul. **D**
 Source of comfort to the faithful. **D**
 Source of new ministries. **D**
 Source of renewal for the Global Church. **Round D**
 Source of spiritual energy. **D**
 Source of spiritual inspiration, works of mercy and pastoral care. **D**
 Source of vocations. **D**
 Space to share together. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Space where the faithful are renewed and confirmed in their baptismal ministry. **A**
 Spaces for reconciliation, humility and unconditional love. **Round D**

Spaces where members share celebrations, events, experiences, ideas and reflections. A
 Special prayers for people with coronavirus. A
 Special structure of evangelization. **Round thirty-eight D**
 Spirit of belonging. **Round seven D**
 Spirit of communion lived in the SCCs. A
 Spirit of development. D
 Spirit of ecclesial synodality. D
 Spirit of an extended family. **Round nine D**
 Spirit of the family. **Round D**
 Spirit of togetherness. **Round D**
 Spiritual direction small group. **Round A**
 Spiritual disciplines in a small group setting. **Round A**
 Spiritual support community. **Round A**
 Spiritual support group. **Round A**
 Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. **Round four A**
 Spreads the Gospel. A
 Staple of Christian life in Africa. **Round D**
 Starts at the grassroots. A
 Starts with the family. **Round A**
 Staying connected through online sharing. A
 Strategy of evangelization. A
 Strength of the church in a new way. **Round D**
 Strength of our parish community. **Round D**
 Strengthening standards to set up successful SCCs. A
 Strengthens the Local Church. A
 Strong community of believers. **Round A**
 Strong foundation in our parishes. **Round D**
 Strong foundation of a Catholic Parish. D
 Strong and mutual inner life. D
 Strong places where respect for human dignity, defense of rights, acceptance and tolerance
 should be considered. **Round D**
 Strong unity/communion allows people to participate fully in Synodal Process. A
 Structural connection to the parish. D
 Structurally connected to the parish. D
 Structurally connected to the parish as a “community of communities” pastoral, ecclesial model
 of church
 Structurally linked to the parish. D
 Structure of fraternity and support. D
 Student activism. A
 Student small Faith-sharing communities. **Round A**
 Student-led small evangelization groups. **Round A**
 Study Church documents. **Round thirteen A**
 Sunday scripture-based reflections. **Round A**
 Super support for spiritual and social life. **Round D**
 Support for my/our spiritual life. A
 Support and encourage each other in our faith journey. **Round A**
 Support group. **Round fourteen D**
 Support group for faith formation. **Round A**
 Support group model. **Round D**
 Support group in the city. **Round A**
 Support in time of need. **Round nine A**

Supported by the leaders of the church in Eastern Africa. **Round A**
 Supportive faith community. D
 Supportive faith sharing. A
 Sure vehicle to true Christianity. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Sure way of evangelization.
 Sure way of making the best out of Pope Francis' Synodal Process. A
 Symbol of unity. **Round D**
 Synod theme aligns seamlessly with the essence of SCCs. D
 Synodal SCCs Model of Church on the local level. D
 Synodality experience. A
 Synodality is the true spirit of a SCC. D
TABLET Reading Group. **Round A**
 Takes a step ahead in terms of building the Catholic Church through encouraging people to
 prioritize SCCs. **Round D.**
 Talk about real life in a peer group. **Round A**
 Teaching moment. **Round A**
 Team or community approach in preparing a homily. A
 Technology tools that enhance the small group experience. A
 Thanking God and celebrating our 50 Year SCCs Anniversary in Eastern Africa. A
 Theological expressions of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. **Round D.**
 Theological importance of the local Christian community in its basic form. D
 Theological mainstay of the model of church as Family of God. D
 Three generations doing faith sharing. A
 Three generations SCCs. A
 This is being church -- the Synodal Process and SCCs creating oneness and togetherness. A
 Through interpersonal relationships it offers a pastoral model of the church. **Round D.**
 Through sharing I continue to love God and others. A
 To follow Jesus Christ in community. A
 Togetherness. **Round D.**
 Tool for effective ministry and evangelization. **Round A**
 Tool for evangelization today. A
 Tool of attracting more people to the Catholic faith. A
 Tool of evangelization. **Round twenty-seven A**
 Tool of living African values on communal living. A
 Tool that brings the bond of unity to all Catholic Church members. **Round A**
 Tool to serve evangelization. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Tools in the vineyard. **Round A**
 Train the Trainers (TOT) Method. **Round A**
 Training for SCC leaders. **Round twenty-five A**
 Training students to be leaders. A
 Training Tools for SCCs. Round A
 Training workshops and seminars. **Round four A**
 Transform society on the local level. Round A
 Transformational outlook. **Round D**
 Transformation of SCCs to internalize and engage the constantly changing contexts. D
 Transformation of society. **Round eleven A**
 Translates Gospel values into real Christian life situations. A
 Treasure in the AMECEA Region. A
 Treasure of the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round D**
 Troubleshoot and learn together. A
 True authentic Catholic DNA. D

True church in the neighborhood. **Round D**
 True experience of communion and collaboration. D
 True experience of Synodality in Africa. D
 True face of the Catholic Church. D
 True family of God. **Round D**
 True way of being the living church. **Round D**
 Truest local vehicle for evangelization. D
 Truly places of study, meditation and sharing of the Word of God. A
 Turns rows into circles. A
 Twinning between Main Adult SCC and Youth SCC. **Round A**
 Ultimate Support System. **Round D**
 Unique opportunity in preparation for the Synod of Bishops. A
 Unique opportunity to engage with the Word of God in a non-intimidating environment. A
 Universal church for small families. **D**
 Unleashes each Catholic's gifts. **Round D**
 Unlocks the power of the laity. A
 Uses the internet and social media. A
 Using the new social media resources to promote faith life. **Round A**
 Using the "See," "Judge" and "Act" Process. **Round seven A**
 Usual and real way of being Church. D
 Valuable space and path upon which we can help nurture Child Protection practices in our society. **Round D**
 Value of the lectionary or Scripture to SCCs. **Round D**
 Value of listening to the Gospel in our current Synodal process. A
 Vehicle for discernment skills. D
 Vehicle for spiritual renewal. **Round thirty-two D**
 Vehicle to empower lay people. **Round D**
 Vehicle to generate grassroots movements. D
 Vehicle to make the church feel small. **Round D**
 Vehicle towards total human development. **Round D**
 Very good at reading, and responding to, the new signs of the times. A
 Very important part of our faith life. A
 Very incredible life changers. A
 Very vital in the Catholic Church. **D**
 Vibrancy. **Round A**
 Vibrant communities of faith and service. **Round thirty-two A**
 Vibrant small communities ministries. A
 Vibrant, spontaneous groups with little hierarchical structure. A
 Video-linked Small Prayer Communities. D
 Virtual evangelization. D
 Virtual intentional small community. **Round D**
 Virtual small communities. **Round D**
 Virtual faith sharing. A
 Virtual faith sharing session. A
 Virtual or Online SCCs is the new way for the church to go. **D**
 Virtual Young People Small Christian Communities. D
 Virtues of the Pope Francis Church made concrete in the African Church within SCCs.
Round D
 Visible sign of the living church. **Round D**
 Visiting parish-based SCCs on the ground. **Round A**
 Visiting the sick. **Round twenty A**

Vital icon for New Evangelization. **Round D**
 Vital way of being church. A
 Vital way to be church. A
 Voice of the Local Church. **Round D**
 Voice of the people. **Round D**
 Volunteer service. A
 Walking together in Jesus. A
 Walking together with Jesus. A
 Warm ground of formation. **Round D**
 Way for the church to grow. **Round D**
 Way for people to be church to one another. D
 Way for people to be Synodal. D
 Way of being church. **Round D**
 Way of being church and pastoral priority. **Round D**
 Way of cementing Christians' life. D
 Way of doing theology. **Round D**
 Way of evangelization in the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. A
 Way of growing. **Round D**
 Way of life. D
 Way of life, not just a program or project in the parish. **Round D**
 Way of making the church more active among the Christian faithful. **Round D**
 Way of sharing leadership with young people. D
 Way that the Christian message can reach people. A
 Way to go. D
 Way to go in today's modern church. D
 Way to life in Christ Jesus. D
 Way to reach out to the suffering Christ. **Round A**
 Way to the development and transformation of the faithful. **Round D**
 We are the church. **Round D**
 Way we are church. **Round D**
 We actually have relevant experience in getting together. A
 We assure one another that no one is alone. A
 We embrace God's love and salvation. A
 We gather in small groups to pray and socialize together. A
 We share our life experiences. A
 Weekly Communal Lectionary based Personal Faith Sharing. A
 Weekly gathering is a treasure trove of spiritual and social inspirations. A
 Weekly gospel-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Weekly "household" meetings on Skype. **Round D**
 Weekly lectionary-based small faith-sharing community. **Round A**
 Weekly lectionary-based faith sharing is the preferred methodology. A
 Weekly prayer group in the residence hall/dorm. **Round D**
 Weekly scripture mantra. **Round A**
 Weekly spiritual recharge. A
 Welcoming friendship. A
 Welcoming people in the SCC. A
 Welcoming. **Round A**
 Well-coordinated. **Round A**
 Well-defined strategy for small community ministry. D
 Well fitted to provide solutions to the many challenges facing Catholic Church in Africa. A
 What "being church" means. D

What it means to be church at the grassroots level. **Round D**
 WhatsApp social media exchange. A
 WhatsApp SCC. D
 WhatsApp SCC as a support group. **Round A**
 Where the church starts/begins. **Round A**
 Where the faithful experience and live Synodality as mission, communion and participation.
 A
 Where the Holy Spirit works. A
 Where one finds harmony, love, brotherhood, and forgiveness. A
 Where the Small Church begins. **Round A**
 Where we refuel every week. A
 Will always continue. A
 Wisdom circles. D
 Wisdom Small Communities. D
 Without borders or boundaries. **Round sixteen D**
 Without SCCs the Catholic Church will fall. **D**
 Women as equal partners in SCCs. Round D
 Women's equal participation. **Round D**
 Wonderful vibrancy in the YSCCs at Kenyatta University. **Round A**
 Word of God as the adhesive on which (SCCs) is centered. A
 Word of God as soul of the SCC. **Round A**
 Word of God is mutually shared among God's people. A
 Word of God Sharing. **Round A**
 Working through SCCs for change. **Round A**
 Working together to build community. **Round thirteen A**
 Work in progress. **Round thirty-two D**
 Works for social progress. A
 Work of the Spirit. **Round D**
 Year-round Lectionary Based Faith Sharing. A
 Young Adult Digital Prayer Community. D.
 Young Adult Virtual Communities. D.
 Young Adults Peer Group SCC. **Round D**
 Young Adults Peer Group Small Faith-sharing community. **Round D**
 Young Adults Peer group Small Faith-sharing Group. **Round fourteen D**
 Young Adults Small Christian Community. D
 Young Adults Small Empowerment Community. D
 Young Adults. **Round fourteen D**
 Young Adults SCC. **Round D**
 Young Married Couples Small Christian Community. **Round fifteen D**
 Young Married Families Small Christian Community. **Round thirteen D**
 Young People Online Small Searching (Seekers) Community. **A**
 Young People Peer Group Small Faith-sharing Community. D
 Young People -- pillar of the Catholic Church today. **D**
 Young People SCC. D
 Young People Small Searching (Seekers) Community. **A**
 Young Professionals Small Christian Community. **Round D**
 Youth and children activities. **Round twelve D**
 Youth faith formation. **Round A**
 Youth Peer Group Small Faith-sharing community. **Round D**
 Youth process adapted to the anxieties and needs of young people. **Round A**
 Youth SCC. **Round D**

Youth and young adult ministry. **Round D**
 Youth are leaders of internet development. **Round D**
 YSCCs are necessary and vital. D
 YSCCs as a bridge from Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC) Programs. **Round D**
 YSCCs Model of Church. **Round D**
 YSCCs open up spaces for young adults. **Round A**
 Zoom Bible Sharing. A
 Zoom gatherings. A
 Zoom Gospel Sharing and Reflection. A
 Zoom Small Breakout Room. D
 Zoom Small Christian Community. D
 Zoom Small Faith Community. D

Total Choices: 1765

845: Dynamics
 920: Activities

The question -- The best part of my Small Christian Community is... followed by six choices:

First Round (April-May, 2009):

Bible Sharing/*Bible* Reflection. **Round one A**
 Feel at home. **Round one D**
 Helps me to live my Christian faith. **Round one A**
 Reaching out to others. **Round one A**
 Active participation. **Round one D**

The leading vote getter was: "Helps me to live my Christian faith." 50

Second Round (June-July, 2009):

Justice and peace concerns. **Round two A**
 Good leadership and coordination. **Round two D**
 Helps me to connect my faith and everyday life. **Round two A**
 Personal relationships and friendships. **Round two D**
 Smallness. **Round two D**

The leading vote getter was: "Helps me to connect my faith and everyday life." 46

Third Round (August-September, 2009):

Connected to my parish. **Round three D**
 Friendliness of members. **Round three D**
 Helps me to connect the *Bible* and everyday life. **Round three A**
 Seeing Jesus Christ in others. **Round three A**

Healing prayers for members. **Round three A**

The leading vote getter was: “Helps me to connect the *Bible* and everyday life.” 50

Fourth Round (October-November, 2009):

Good mixture of people. **Round four D**
 Training workshops and seminars. **Round four A**
 Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. **Round four A**
 Celebrations (meals, entertainment, etc.) **Round four D**
 Helps me to prepare for the Sunday Eucharist. **Round four A**

The leading vote getter was: “Spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.” 36

Fifth Round (December, 2009-February, 2010):

Missionary spirit. **Round five D**
 Freedom to share my deep feelings. **Round five A**
 Helps me to learn about my Christian faith. **Round five A**
 Community spirit. **Round five D**
 Self-reliance projects. **Round five A**

The leading vote getter was: “Community spirit.” 38

Sixth Round (March, 2010-April, 2010):

Rotation of leadership. **Round six D**
 Concern for others. **Round six A**
 Silence after the Bible reading. **Round six D**
 Doing things differently in my parish. **Round six A**
 Practical action and service. **Round six A**

The leading vote getter was: “Practical action and service.” 52

Seventh Round (May, 2010-June, 2010):

Relationship with a Twin (Sister) SCC. **Round seven A**
 Mass in my SCC. **Round seven A**
 Sharing with families in the neighborhood. **Round seven D**
 Using the SEE, JUDGE and ACT Process. **Round seven A**
 Spirit of belonging. **Round seven D**

The leading vote getter was: “Spirit of belonging.” 53

Eighth Round (July, 2010-August, 2010):

Follows Patron/Patroness Saint of our SCC. **Round eight A**

Reminder of 1st Century House Churches. **Round eight D**
 Prays together for the needs of others. **Round eight A**
 Promotes reconciliation and peacebuilding. **Round eight A 51**
 Neighborhood spirit. **Round eight D**

The leading vote getter was: “Prays together for the needs of others.” 67

Ninth Round (September, 2010-October, 2010):

Parish-based. **Round nine D**
 Seven-step Gospel Sharing. **Round nine A**
 Sharing ideas and ways to evangelize. **Round nine A**
 Spirit of an extended family. **Round nine D**
 Support in time of need. **Round nine A**

The leading vote getter was: “Sharing ideas and ways to evangelize.” 52

Tenth Round (November, 2010-December, 2010):

Key pastoral priority in the church. **Round ten D**
 Action oriented. **Round ten A**
 Learning about other SCCs. **Round ten A**
 New way of being church. **Round ten D**
 Solidarity with others. **Round ten D**
 The leading vote getter was: “New way of being church.” 54

Eleventh Round (January, 2011-February, 2011):

Lectionary-based. **Round eleven D**
 Online or Virtual SCC. **Round eleven A**
 Basic building block of the church. **Round eleven D**
 Development projects. **Round eleven A**
 New model of church. **Round eleven D**

The leading vote getter was: “New model of church.” 63

Twelfth Round (March, 2011-April, 2011):

Youth and children activities. **Round twelve A**
 Community experience. **Round twelve D**
 Liberation focus. **Round twelve D**
 Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ **Round twelve A**
 Social action. **Round twelve A**

The leading vote getter was: “Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.” 61

Thirteen Round (May, 2011-June, 2011):

Young Married Families. **Round thirteen D**
 Mutual support. **Round thirteen D**
 Small Group focus. **Round thirteen D**
 Study Church documents. **Round thirteen A**
 Working together to build community. **Round thirteen A**

The leading vote getter was: “Study Church documents.” 36

Fourteenth Round (July, 2011-August, 2011):

Young Adults. **Round fourteen D**
 Integrating prayer and daily life. **Round fourteen D**
 People for others. **Round fourteen A**
 Support Group. **Round fourteen D**
 Reflection starting with daily life. **Round fourteen A**

The leading vote getter was: Two tied at 30.

Fifteenth Round (September, 2011-October, 2011):

Young Married Couples. **Round fifteen D**
 Transformation of society. **Round fifteen A**
 Intergenerational. **Round fifteen D**
 Reflecting on Gospel of the following Sunday. **Round fifteen A**
 Relationship between members. **Round fifteen D**

The leading vote getter was: “Relationship between members.” 36

Sixteenth Round (November, 2011-December, 2011):

Participation of different denominations. **Round sixteen D**
 Sacraments celebrated in the SCC. **Round sixteen A**
 Small group ministry/ies. **Round sixteen A**
 SCCs as a way of life. **Round sixteen D**
 Without borders or boundaries. **Round sixteen D**

The leading vote getter was: “SCCs as a way of life.” 73

Seventeenth Round (January, 2012-February, 2012):

Interconnectedness. **Round seventeen D**
Bible study group. **Round seventeen A**
 Family communities. **Round seventeen D**
 House cell fellowships. **Round seventeen A**
 Inclusive. **Round seventeen D**

The leading vote getter was: “Family communities.” 58

Eighteenth Round (March, 2012-April, 2012):

Extended Christian families. **Round eighteen D**
 Gospel-centered faith. **Round eighteen D**
 Home-based. **Round eighteen A**
 Instrument of evangelization. **Round eighteen A**
 Communion of Communities Model. **Round eighteen D**

The leading vote getter was: "Gospel-centered faith." 54

Nineteenth Round (May, 2012-June, 2012):

Participatory Church. **Round nineteen D**
 Buzz Groups *Bible* Reflection. **Round nineteen A**
 Home for everyone. **Round nineteen D**
 Social activities. **Round nineteen A**
 Missionary outreach. **Round nineteen A**

The leading vote getter was: "Missionary outreach." 35

Twentieth Round (July, 2012-August, 2012):

Meeting in homes. **Round twenty A**
 Post RCIA Support. **Round twenty D**
 Fixed time each week. **Round twenty D**
 Visiting the sick. **Round twenty A**
 Sharing in a small group. **Round twenty A**

The leading vote getter was: "Sharing in a small group." 49

**Special Round of top voter getters of the first 20 rounds
(September, 2012-October, 2012):**

Family Communities. D
 Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. A
 SCCs as a way of life. D
 Prays together for the needs of others. A
 New model of church. D

The leading vote getters were: "Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ" and
 "New model of church." 46

Twenty-second Round (November, 2012-December, 2012):

Aimed at consciousness-building. **Round twenty-two A**
 Church of the home. **Round twenty-two D**
 From the grassroots up. **Round twenty-two D**
 Ongoing formation. **Round twenty-two A**

Peace building. **Round twenty-two A**

The leading vote getter was: "Peace building." 47

Twenty-third Round (January, 2013-February, 2013):

Helps upkeep of parish. **Round twenty-three A**

Dialogical. **Round twenty-three D**

Ecumenical activities. **Round twenty-three A**

Family Church. **Round twenty-three D**

Mission-minded. **Round twenty-three A**

The leading vote getter was: "Mission-minded." 48

Twenty-fourth Round (March, 2013-April, 2013):

Contemplative group. **Round twenty-four A**

Ideal place for Adult Catechumens. **Round twenty-four D**

Home Church. **Round twenty-four D**

Networking Communities. **Round twenty-four A**

Strengthen each other in our faith. **Round twenty-four A**

The leading vote getter was: "Strengthen each other in our faith." 77

Twenty-fifth Round (May, 2013-June, 2013):

Eucharistic adoration. **Round twenty-five A**

Interdenominational. **Round twenty-five D**

Local home church group. **Round twenty-five D**

Mirror of African household. **Round twenty-five D**

Missional small group. **Round twenty-five A**

The leading vote getter was: "Local home church group." 36

Twenty-sixth Round (July, 2013-August, 2013):

Bedrock of the church. **Round twenty-six D**

Helps me to go deeper in my faith. **Round twenty-six A**

Household of God. **Round twenty-six D**

Sermon-based group. **Round twenty-six A**

Training for SCC leaders. **Round twenty-six A**

The leading vote getter was: "Training for SCC leaders." 59.

Twenty-seventh Round (September, 2013-October, 2013):

Community of families. **Round twenty-seven D**
 Lectionary-based Faith-sharing. **Round twenty-seven A**
 New way of being parish. **Round twenty-seven D**
 School for followers of Jesus Christ. **Round twenty-seven D**
 Seeks social justice. **Round twenty-seven A**

The leading vote getter was: “Lectionary-based Faith-sharing.” 48

Twenty-eighth Round (November, 2013-December, 2013):

Communion of families. **Round twenty-eight D**
 Future of the church. **Round twenty-eight D**
 Home-based community. **Round twenty-eight D**
 Non-ordained ministries. **Round twenty-eight A**
 Tool of evangelization. **Round twenty-eight A**

The leading vote getter was: “Tool of evangelization.” 45

Twenty-ninth Round (January, 2014-February, 2014):

Self-actualization of the church. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Center of communion and outreach **Round twenty-nine D**
 Faith-sharing grounded in Scripture. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Force to help renew our faith. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Nucleus of present and future church. **Round twenty-nine D**

The leading vote getter was: “Faith-sharing grounded in Scripture.” 57

Thirty Round (March, 2014-April, 2014):

Living center of evangelization. **Round thirty D**
 Community of proclaiming the Word of God. **Round thirty D**
 Connects people to one another. **Round thirty A**
 Domestic communities of faith. **Round thirty D**
 Scripture-based Faith-sharing. **Round thirty A**

The leading vote getters were: “Connects people to one another” and “Scripture-based Faith-sharing.” 43

Thirty-first Round (May, 2014-June, 2014):

Growing faith in a circle. **Round thirty-one A**
 Multigenerational small community. **Round thirty-one D**
 Connecting faith to life. **Round thirty-one A**
 Outreach to others. **Round thirty-one A**
 Small mission community. **Round thirty-one D**

The leading vote getter was: Three tied for first. 43.

Thirty-second Round (July, 2014-August, 2014):

Connecting *Bible* to life. **Round thirty-two A**
 Social outreach activities. **Round thirty-two A**
 Vehicle for spiritual renewal. **Round thirty-two D**
 Vibrant community of faith and service. **Round thirty-two D**
 Work in progress. **Round thirty-two D**

The leading vote getter was: “Connecting *Bible* to life.” 80.

Thirty-third Round (September, 2014-October, 2014):

Promotes the New Evangelization. **Round thirty-three A**
 Church in the neighborhood. **Round thirty-three D**
 Faith-sharing. **Round thirty-three A**
 Lumko Method. **Round thirty-three A**
 Church of tomorrow. **Round thirty-three D**

The leading vote getter was: “Church in the neighborhood.” 49

Thirty-fourth Round (November, 2014-December, 2014):

Promotion of social transformation. **Round thirty-four A**
 Community of believers sharing life. **Round thirty-four A**
 Centrality of the Word of God. **Round thirty-four D**
 School of learning. **Round thirty-four D**
 Applies the Gospel to our daily/everyday life. **Round thirty-four A**

The leading vote getter was: “Applies the Gospel to our daily/everyday life.” 56

Thirty-fifth Round (January, 2015-February, 2015):

Small group resources. **Round thirty-five D**
 Breaking open the Word of God. **Round thirty-five A**
 Effective method for church renewal. **Round thirty-five A**
 Adult faith formation. **Round thirty-five A**
 Network of SCCs. **Round thirty-five D**

The leading vote getters were: “Breaking open the Word of God” and “Network of SCCs.” 55

Thirty-sixth Round (March, 2015-April, 2015):

Community of missionary disciples. **Round thirty-six D**
 Home-based faith group. **Round thirty-six A**
 Small group study. **Round thirty-six A**

Sharing the Word of God. **Round thirty-six A**
 Small parish without borders. **Round thirty-six D**
 The leading vote getters were: “Community of missionary disciples” and “Sharing the Word of God.” 75

Thirty-seventh Round (May, 2015-June, 2015):

Lifeblood of the larger church. **Round thirty-seven D**
 Evangelizers in our neighborhood. **Round thirty-seven A**
 SCCs networking. **Round thirty-seven A**
 “See,” “Discern” and “Act” Process/Method. **Round thirty-seven A**
 Online House Churches. **Round thirty-seven D**

The leading vote getter was: “See,” “Discern” and “Act” Process/Method. 45

Thirty-eighth Round (July, 2015-August, 2015):

Dialog of life. **Round thirty-eight A**
 Group Response Method. **Round thirty-eight A**
 Pastoral accompaniment. **Round thirty-eight A**
 Smallest cell of the church. **Round thirty-eight D**
 Special structure of evangelization. **Round thirty-eight D**

The leading vote getter was: Pastoral accompaniment. 39

Thirty-ninth Round (September, 2015-October, 2015):

Small Human Community. **Round thirty-nine D**
 Laity form the engine of SCCs. **Round thirty-nine D**
 New way of becoming church. **Round thirty-nine D**
 SCC (Jumuiya) Mass. **Round thirty-nine A**
 Online SCCs Resources. **Round thirty-nine A**

The leading vote getter was: New way of becoming church. 26

Fortieth Round (November, 2015-December, 2015):

Small community of missionary disciples. **Round forty D**
 Basic Human Community. **Round forty D**
 Extension of good neighborliness. **Round forty A**
 Outreaching church. **Round forty A**
 New face of the church. **Round forty D**

The leading vote getter was: Small community of missionary disciples. 24

Forty-first Round (January, 2016-February, 2016):

Authentic school of the Gospel. **Round D**
 Dialog of interfaith religious experiences. **Round A**
 Fundamental paradigm of the church. **Round D**
 Field hospital. **Round A**
 Relationships. **Round A**

The leading vote getters were: Field hospital and Relationships. 85

Forty-second Round (March, 2016-April, 2016):

Small group Faith-sharing resources. **Round A**
 Families support one another in times of need. **Round A**
 Agents of evangelization. **Round A**
 Space to share together. **Round D**
 Ecclesial structure in the parish. **Round D**

The leading vote getter was: Families support one another in times of need. 59

Forty-third Round (May, 2016-June, 2016):

YSCCs Model of Church. **Round D**
 Small faith-based community. **Round D**
 Beacon of hope. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Extension of good neighborliness. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Channel of evangelization. **Round twenty-nine A**

The leading vote getter was: Small faith-based community. 75

Forty-fourth Round (July, 2016-August, 2016):

Powerful means of evangelization. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Small group dynamic. **Round twenty-nine D**
Bible-based. **Round A**
 Pillar of our church. **Round D**
 Local family unit. **Round twenty-nine D**

The leading vote getter was: *Bible*-based. 49

Forty-fifth Round (September, 2016-October, 2016):

Best way to smell the sheep. **Round A**
 Parish-based Small Faith-sharing Group. **Round D**
 Cell-based (SCCs) student movement. **Round D**
 Young adult peer group Small Faith-sharing Group. **Round D**
 Lectionary-based Catholics. **Round A**

The leading vote getters were: Best way to smell the sheep and Lectionary-based Catholic. 50

Forty-sixth Round (November, 2016-December, 2016):

Tool to serve evangelization. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Communion of families in the neighborhood. **Round D**
 Expression of the *sensus fidelium*. **Round A**
 Most important lifeline of the parish. **Round thirty-four D**
 Supported by the leaders of the church in Eastern Africa. **Round A**

The leading vote getters were: Tool to serve evangelization and Supported by the leaders of the church in Eastern Africa. 49

Forty-seventh Round (January, 2017-February, 2017):

SCCs Facebook Nation. **Round D**
 Multigenerational small community. **Round thirty-one D**
 Using the new social media resources to promote faith life. **Round A**
 Youth peer group small Faith-sharing community. **Round D**
 Gospel-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**

The leading vote getter was: Gospel-based Faith-sharing. 108

Forty-eighth Round (March, 2017-April, 2017):

“Communion of Communities” Model of Church. **Round D**
 Prayer, reflection and Faith-sharing grounds me. **Round A**
 Key pastoral priority in Eastern Africa. **Round D**
 Campus small communities. **Round A**
 Place of evangelization. **Round twenty-nine A**

The leading vote getter was: Prayer, reflection and Faith-sharing grounds me. 105

Forty-ninth Round (May, 2017-June, 2017):

Church on the ground.
 Interfaith small communities.
 Best and most effective means of evangelization.
 Strength of our parish community.
 Weekly Gospel-based Faith-sharing.

The leading vote getter was: Weekly Gospel-based Faith-sharing. 85

Fiftieth Round (July, 2017-August, 2017):

Daily Scripture-based Faith-sharing.

Church in the neighborhood.
Best thing that has happened in my life in the Catholic Church.
Empowerment of women.
Online small community.

The leading vote getter was: Empowerment of women. 98

Special Round of top voter getters of the first 50 rounds (September, 2016-October, 2016):

Prayer, reflection and Faith-sharing grounds me.
Key pastoral priority in Eastern Africa.
Youth peer group small Faith-sharing community.
Empowerment of women.
Gospel-based Faith-sharing.

The leading vote getter was: Prayer, reflection and Faith-sharing grounds me. 125

Fifty-second Round (November, 2017-- December, 2017):

WhatsApp SCC as a support group.
Church on the move.
Neighborhood evangelism.
Church of the laity.
Reaches out to the marginated and those on the periphery of society.

The leading vote getter was: Reaches out to the marginated and those on the periphery of society. 105

Fifty-third Round (January, 2018-- February, 2018):

Multi-ethnic small community. Round D
Home blessings. Round A
Peer group small Faith-sharing community. Round A
Basic means of evangelization. Round A
Personal spiritual growth. Round D

The leading vote getter was: Peer group small Faith-sharing community. 486 (high number resulted from Chinese hacking)

Fifty-fourth Round (March, 2018-- April, 2018):

No Poll. Technical glitch in migrating from Joomla to Word Press.

Fifty-fifth Round (May, 2018-- June, 2018):

Evangelizing through smartphones. Round A
 Anchor of family life. Round D
 Laity form the engine of SCCs. Round D
 Young Professionals Small Christian Community. D
 Mass in the neighborhood. A

The leading vote getter was: Mass in the neighborhood. 52

Fifty-sixth Round (July, 2018-- August, 2018):

Agent of evangelization. **Round A**
 Safe place for sharing. **Round D**
 Lectionary-based Catholics can change the world. **Round A**
 Glue of a campus ministry program. **Round D**
 Adapts to the local context. **A**

The leading vote getter was: Lectionary-based Catholics can change the world. 50

Fifty-seventh Round (September, 2018-- October, 2018):

Lectio Divina. **Round A**
 Growing SCCs. **A**
 Home mass. **Round A**
 Emerging paradigm of youth empowerment in Africa. **Round D**
 Affinity Group. **Round twenty-nine D**

The leading vote getter was: Emerging paradigm of youth empowerment in Africa. 107

Fifty-eighth Round (November, 2018-- December, 2018):

Listening circle. **D**
 Deepens my faith and prayer life. **A**
 Seven steps method of Gospel sharing. **A**
 SCC trainers without borders. **D**
 Outreach evangelization. **A**

The leading vote getter was: Outreach evangelization. 74

Fifty-ninth Round (January, 2019 – February, 2019):

Weekly lectionary-based Faith-sharing. **A**
 Small Multicultural Faith Community. **D**
 Local context is king (and queen!). **D**
 Safe place for people to share and grow. **A**
 Reawakens the missionary spirit in the laity. **A**
 The leading vote getter was: Safe place for people to share and grow. 108

Sixtieth Round (March, 2019 – April, 2019):

Small Peer Group Faith-sharing Community. A
 Every member has an equal amount of air time. D
 New way of evangelization. **Round D**
 Online small community. **Round D**
 Connecting with other young people. A

The leading vote getter was: New way of evangelization. 98

Sixty-first Round (May, 2019 – June, 2019):

Pillar that supports the whole Catholic Church structure. D
 Expression of the *sensus fidelium*. A
 Small Young People Peer Group Faith-sharing Community. A
 Evangelization means practical action and reaching out to others. A
 Foundational to the Catholic Church in Africa today. D

The leading vote getter was: Small Young People Peer Group Faith-sharing Community. 69

Sixty-second Round (July, 2019 – August, 2019):

Evangelization means service to other people. A
 Meets weekly. A
 Foundation stones upon which parishes are built. D
 Structurally connected to the parish. D
 Combines Bible Sharing and Faith-sharing. A

The leading vote getter was: Combines Bible Sharing and Faith-sharing. 101

Sixty-third Round (September, 2019 – October, 2019):

Tool for evangelization today. D
 Parish-based Small Christian Community. D
 Sharing life experiences. A
 Church from the grassroots. D
 Joining hands in promoting YPSCCs. A

The leading vote getter was: Sharing life experiences. 133

Sixty-fourth Round (November, 2019 – December, 2019):

Online SCC. Round A
 Personal encounter with Jesus Christ through SCC. A
 Model of evangelization. D
 SCCs model -- gift of the African Church to the Universal Church. D

Intergenerational mass. A

The leading vote getter was: Personal encounter with Jesus Christ through SCC. 134

Sixty-fifth Round (January, 2020 – February, 2020):

Parish is communion of communities model with SCCs structurally connected. D

Empowers laypeople to take more responsibility for their church. A

Ongoing formation of SCC members. A

Regular practical action and outreach. A

Way of life, not just a program or project in the parish. D

The leading vote getter was: Way of life, not just a program or project in the parish.

104

Sixty-sixth Round (March, 2020 – April, 2020):

Pastoral tool of evangelization today. D

WhatsApp social media exchange. A

Interactive shared homilies. A

Authentic experience of synodality. D

“Must” hour every week. A

The leading vote getter was: Interactive shared homilies. 90

Sixty-seventh Round (May, 2020 – June, 2020):

Young People Small Searching (Seekers) Community. A

Helps deepen our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A

Core of our church, not just another ministry. D

Special prayers for people with Covid-19. A

Virtual SCC. D

The leading vote getters were: Helps deepen our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and Special prayers for people with Covid-19. 153

Sixty-eighth Round (July, 2020 – August, 2020):

Digital SCC. D

Sitting around in a circle. D

Online faith sharing. A

Evangelizing the grassroots. A

Helps the needy during Covid-19. A

The leading vote getters were: Helps the needy during Covid-19 and Online faith sharing. 167.

Sixty-ninth Round (September, 2020 – October, 2020):

WhatsApp SCC. D
 Building a living church through SCCs. D
 Concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic. A
 Multigenerational mass. A
 Sharing daily experiences. A

The leading vote getters were: “Concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic” and “Sharing daily experiences.” 153

Seventieth Round (November, 2020 – December, 2020):

Helps needy people in our neighborhood. A
 Responds creatively to the New Normal. A
 Adapts to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. A
 Catholic Church from the grassroots. D
 Hybrid Small Christian Community. D

The leading vote getter was: Adapts to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. 124

Seventy-first Round (January, 2021 – February, 2021):

Responds to Pope Francis’ emphasis on reaching out to the marginalized. A
 Richness of small community Gospel reflection and faith sharing. A
 Going digital during Covid-19. A
 Catholic Church on the move. D
 Zoom Small Christian Community. D
 Expressing fraternity and solidarity amid the Covid-19 situation. A

The leading vote getter was: Richness of small community Gospel reflection and faith sharing. 166

Seventy-second Round (March, 2021 – April, 2021):

Helps the needy during Covid-19. A
 Opportunity to thank God for all he has done for us. A
 Gathering online to celebrate our faith together. A
 Focus questions that relate scripture to our daily life. Round A
 Young Adults Small Empowerment Community. D
 Integral dimension of parish life. D

The leading vote getter was: Opportunity to thank God for all he has done for us. 142

Seventy-third Round (May, 2021 – June, 2021):

Way of evangelization in the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. A
 Basic unit of the parish. D
 Responds to Pope Francis’ emphasis on reaching out to those on the peripheries. A

Zoom and other online platforms for Gospel Sharing and Reflection. A
 Alumni Online Small Christian Community. D
 Our DNA as Christians. Round D.

The leading vote getter was: Zoom and other online platforms for Gospel Sharing and Reflection. 140

Seventy-fourth Round (July, 2021 – August, 2021):

Online Small Christian Community Ministry. Round A
 Creativity and Flexibility of Hybrid SCC. A
 Helps me persevere through Covid-19 pandemic. A
 Privileged place of faith formation. A
 Central in the life of the church. Round D
 Element or Feature in the Synodal Church D

The leading vote getter was: Privileged place of faith formation. 135.

Seventy-fifth Round (September, 2021 – October, 2021):

We share faith and hope with one another. A
 Support for our spiritual life. A
 Experience of synodality. A
 Permanent influence in the worldwide Catholic Church. D
 Give us courage to overcome obstacles during Covid-19 pandemic. A
 Gospel is our DNA. D

The leading vote getters were: “Experience of synodality,” “We share faith and hope with one another” and “ Give us courage to overcome obstacles during Covid-19 pandemic.”
 103

Seventy-sixth Round (November, 2021 – December, 2021):

Platform and context to deepen the issue of synodality. D
 Helps us learn from the Covid-19 pandemic. A
 Helps our spiritual life. A
 Participative homily sharing. A
 Essence of the Catholic Church. D

The leading vote getter was: Helps us learn from the Covid-19 pandemic. 105

Seventy-seventh Round (January, 2022 – February, 2022):

A basis for the Synodal journey. D
 Spiritual support community. A
 Helps us persevere during Covid-19. A
 Sharing faith and hope with one another. A

Online *jumuiya* (Swahili for “community”). D
Follows the example of Christ the Healer. A

The leading vote getter was: A basis for the Synodal journey. 95

Seventy-eighth Round (March, 2022 – April 2022):

Powerful way to accompany one another as pilgrims on the journey. A
Helps other people. A
True experience of Synodality in Africa. D
Zoom Small Faith Community. D
In solidarity with Covid-19 sufferers and their care givers. A
Empowers the church in the neighborhood. A

The leading vote getter was: Powerful way to accompany one another as pilgrims on the journey. 91

Seventy-ninth Round (May, 2022 – June, 2022):

Focus on the Word of God (*Bible*). D
Thanksgiving for getting back to nearer normal. A
Online practice of our faith. A
Unique opportunity to use the Synodal Process. A
Praying together for peace in the world. A
Source of comfort to the lay faithful. D

The leading vote getter was: Praying together for peace in the world. 170

Eightieth Round (July, 2022 – August, 2022):

From viewpoint of young people/young adults:

Uses the internet and social media. A
Networking of young people through SCCs. A
Flexibility in digital communications and connections. A
Prayer solidarity with refugees crossing borders. A
Hybrid SCC Webinars. D
Digital/online/virtual evangelization. D

The leading vote getter was: Prayer solidarity with refugees crossing borders. 135

Eighty-first Round (September – October, 2022):

Sure way of making the best out of Pope Francis' Synodal Process. A
Helps to grow the spirituality of young adults. A
Communal listening to the Word of God. A
Being comfortable in a Zoom Church. A

Primary faith community in self-organized small communities of people D
Functioning structure. D

The leading vote getter was: Communal listening to the Word of God. 157

Eighty-second Round (November – December, 2022):

Discernment Circle. A
Operates in a synodal style or way. A
Safe space to discern God's call for each of us. A
Lectionary-based faith sharing in a synodal style. D
Strong foundation of a Catholic Parish. D
Spreads the Gospel. A

The leading vote getter was: Spreads the Gospel. 123

Eighty-third Round (January – February, 2023):

Strong unity/communion allows people to participate fully in the Synodal Process. A
Offers many faith formation opportunities. A
Zoom Bible Sharing. A
Online mission of SCCs. A
Hybrid Small Christian Communities are the future. D
Essential unit of parish life. D

The leading vote getter was: Strong unity/communion allows people to participate fully in the Synodal Process. 125

Eighty-fourth Round (March – April, 2023):

Communal discernment from below. A
Reignites our faith through reading and reflecting on the Gospel. A
Clearly articulates its charism, spirituality, purpose and mission. A
Praying together for special intentions. A
Online Campus SCCs. D
Synodality is the true spirit of a SCC. D

The leading vote getter was: Praying together for special intentions. 114

Eighty-fifth Round (May – June, 2023):

Daily prayer in gatherings plays a key role during the Synodal Process. A
Value of listening to the Gospel in our current Synodal Process. A
Silent periods in our gatherings. A.
Thanking God and celebrating our 50 Year SCCs Anniversary in Eastern Africa. A
Critical way to move the Catholic Church forward. D
Privileged place to experience family spirit, Synodality and outreach to others. D

The leading vote getter was: Daily prayer in gatherings plays a key role during the Synodal Process. 90

Eighty-sixth Round (July – August, 2023):

Lens through which we see the world. A
 Where the Holy Spirit works. A
 Reinvigorated SCCs as a fruit of Synodality. A
 Weekly lectionary-based faith sharing leading to practical action. A
 Most complete Synodal Process in the parish. D
 Backbone of the Catholic Church in Africa. D

The leading vote getter was: Where the Holy Spirit works. 122

Eighty-seventh Round (September -- October, 2023):

Weekly lectionary-based faith sharing is the preferred methodology. A
 Praying together for the Golden Jubilee of SCCs in Eastern Africa. A
 Where the faithful experience and live Synodality as mission, participation and communion. A
 Praying together for the Synod to take place in Rome in October, 2023. A
 Pray for and assist people living on the margins of society. A
 Center of evangelization to the family and youth. D

The leading vote getter was: Praying together for the Synod to take place in Rome in October, 2023. 174

Eighty-eighth Round (November -- December, 2023):

Praying together for peace in war-torn areas. A
 Everyone is given a chance to contribute regardless of rank, position, or educational status. A
 Mirror the ongoing Synod to ensure that no one is left behind. A
 Small Christian Support Community in our daily lives. A
 Synodal SCCs Model of Church on the local level. D
 Christ-centered Small Community. D

The leading vote getter was: Christ-centered Small Community. 133

Eighty-ninth Round (January -- February, 2024):

Experience with SCCs has informed my understanding of synodality. A
 Word of God as the adhesive on which (SCCs) is centered. A
 Praying together for the victims of natural disasters. A
 Walking together with Jesus Christ. A
 Groundwork for a Synodal Parish. D
 Structure of fraternity and support. D

The leading vote getter was: Walking together with Jesus Christ. 131

Ninetieth Round (March -- April, 2024):

Basic space where I live my faith. A
 Demonstrates the love of Jesus Christ. A
 Appreciate the values of unity and diversity. A
 Volunteer service. A
 SCCs are my first introduction to a synodal church. D
Bible is key and central in its formation and enterprise. D

The leading vote getter was: Demonstrates the love of Jesus Christ. 129

Ninety-First Round (May -- June, 2024):

Functional SCCs as a gift to the Catholic Church.
 Walking together with Jesus.
 Hallmark of the Catholic Church in Africa.
 Call to respond to the suffering Jesus Christ.
 Part of a Small Eucharistic Community.
 Synod theme aligns seamlessly with the essence of SCCs.

The leading vote getter was: Walking together with Jesus. 123

Ninety-Second Round (July -- August, 2024):

Sacred space to unburden ourselves. A
 Living together as church in the neighborhood. A
 Community of believers on mission. A
 Encourages friendship with Jesus Christ. A
 Home away from home. D
 Seeds of Synodality. D

The leading vote getter was:

Ninety-Third Round (September -- October, 2024):

SCCs mutual networking. A
 Began to form organically out of the Synodal Process. A
 SCCs provides the groundwork for a Synodal Parish. A
 Being comfortable in a Zoom Church. A
 Very incredible life changer. A
 Manifestation of the Catholic Church in Africa. A
 Very important part of our faith life. A
 Vital way to be church. A
 Anchored on the Word of God. A

Begins with a focus on the “Signs of the Times.” A
 Living cell that builds up the Body of Christ. A
 Recognizing the presence of Jesus Christ in our small community. A
 Place to encounter Jesus Christ. A
 Live the closeness of the day-to-day around the Word of God and the Eucharist. A
 Privileged place where the experience of walking together is practiced. A
 Regular Bible Sharing. A
 Leadership of the Catholic Church in Africa has included it in its evangelization structures. A
 Jesus, through his Word, accompanies us.
Weekly Communal Lectionary-based Faith Sharing. A
 More intentional part of a synodal, evangelizing church. A
Three generations doing faith sharing together. A
 Three generations SCCs. A
Year-round Lectionary Based Faith Sharing. A
 Best way to evangelize. A

Ecclesial Model in the Synodal Church.
 Cornerstone of our Campus Ministry Programs. D
 Core of the Synodal Process. D
 Priority tool for evangelization. D
 Essential nature of the structure of the Catholic Church. D
 Way for people to be Synodal. D

CHECK and REVISE

School of communion for the 21st century. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Society in miniature. **Round twenty-nine D**
 SCCs processes/methodologies. **Round twenty-nine A**
 Sure vehicle to true Christianity. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Home of communion for the 21st century. **Round twenty-nine D**
 Heart of the church. **Round D**

New way of evangelization. **Round D**
 Hinge on which pastoral work evolves. **Round A**
 New expression of faith and community. **Round D**
 Sure way of evangelization. **Round D**

Our way of being church. **Round D**
 Tools in the vineyard. A
 Evangelizing families rooted in SCCs. **Round A**

Personal spiritual growth. **Round D**
 Anchor of family life. **Round D**
 Staple of Christian life in Africa. **Round D**
 Lifeline of the church. **Round. D**

Lungs of the parish. **Round D**

Center of communion and formation. **Round D**

Cornerstone of the church. **Round D**

Place where the church as family is experienced. **Round A**

Strength of our parish community. **Round D**

True way of being the living church. **Round D**

SCCs contribute to social transformation. **Round A**

Agents of Evangelization. **Round A**

Laity form the engine of SCCs. **Round D**

Online congregation. **Round D**

Family-like communities. **Round D**

New family in the church. **Round D**

Community *Bible* sharing. **Round D**

Communitarian ethic. **Round A**

Life-changing small group. **Round. D**

Vital icon for New Evangelization. **Round D**

Communion of families in the neighborhood. **Round D**

Experienced-base Faith-sharing. **Round A**

Family of families. **Round D**

Reflective environment. **Round D**

Shares the life of the neighborhood. **Round A**

Church of the laity. **Round D**

Focus questions. **Round A**

Gospel sharing. **Round A**

Individual and group response in action. **Round A**

SCCs way of grassroots evangelization. **Round D**

Experiencing biblical community. **Round A**

Model of community among students. **Round D**

Model of evangelization at the grassroots level. **Round D**

Socially organized solidarity. **Round. A**

Word of God Sharing. **Round A**

Kernel of the church in Africa. **Round D**

Neighborhood Eucharistic Community (NEC). **Round A**

New mode of being church. **Round D**

Prayer Support Group. **Round A**

Represents the success of African Ecclesiology. **Round D**

Families as living witnesses of Gospel values. **Round D**

Local voluntary leadership. **Round A**

Most efficient and effective avenue of evangelization. **Round D**

Multi-ethnic small community. **Round D**

Small communities of families. **Round D**

Base of our Christian life. **Round D**

Community of warm relationships. **Round D.**

Dynamic church in the midst of the people. **Round D**

Pastoral tool of evangelization. **Round A**

Way of making the church more active among the Christian faithful. **Round D**

Center of prayer and worship. **Round D**

Haven for the broken. **Round A**

Main cell of evangelization. **Round D**

Church of participation. **Round D**

Ideal church as community. **Round D**

Roots of *Ecclesia in Africa*. **Round D**

SCCs can change the face of Africa, **Round A**

Treasure of the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round D**

Important way of being church in Africa. **Round D**

Networking of friendship. **Round D**

Place of concrete reconciliation. **Round A**

Preferred “place” to pass on the Catholic faith. **Round A**

Strong foundation in our parishes. **Round D**

Importance of group prayer. **Round D**

Instruments of genuine conversion. **Round A**

SCCs as an entry point to Family Accompaniment. **Round A**

Transform society on the local level. **Round A**

All the services/ministries of the sacraments pass through the SCCs. **Round A**

Centers of inculturation in the Catholic Church. **Round A**

Contribution of SCCs to faith formation. **Round A**

Door of entry. **Round D**

Garden of growth. **Round D**

Families ministering to families. **Round A**

Gathering of families. **Round A**

Instrument in adult faith formation. **Round A**

Manageable Group. **Round D**

Using the new media resources to promote faith life. **Round A**

Place of solidarity. **Round A**

Places of communion and prayer. **Round A**

Small group-based. **Round D**

Small group Faith-sharing resources. **Round A**

Best way of enhancing community spirit. **Round A**

Best way of helping us gain intimacy with God. **Round A**

Bible as wellspring of constant renewal. **Round A**

Bible as basis of members’ spiritual lives. **Round A**

Launching pad to nurture the laity. **Round A**

Contribute to social transformation. **Round A**

Dialog of action. **Round A**

Dialog of interfaith religious experiences. **Round A**

Voice of the Local Church. **Round D**

Voice of the people. **Round D**

Biblically based Small Communities. **Round D**

Essential component of the parish's structure and ministry. **Round D**

Faith-sharing within Sunday readings. **Round A**

Living the mission *ad gentes*. **Round D**

New model of small group fellowship. **Round D**

Adult *Bible* Fellowship. **Round D**

Real sense of community. **Round D**

Small group fellowship. **Round A**

Small Sharing Group. **Round A.**

Small Story-telling Groups. **Round A.**

Life Groups. **Round D**

Parishioner-led small evangelization groups. **Round A**

Small covenant group. **Round D**

Spiritual direction small group. **Round A**

Student-led small evangelization groups. **Round A**

Small Book Club. **Round D**

Small Church Group. **Round D**

Small Devotional Group. **Round D**

Small Religious Group. **Round D**

Small Spiritual Group. **Round D**

Catholic family fellowship. **Round A**

Church Small Group. **Round D**

Parish Small Group. **Round D**

Small Parish Community. **Round D**

Small group sharing. **Round A**

Basic cell of the church. **Round D**

Deep SCC spirituality. **Round A**

Our new extended family in the city. **Round A**

SCCs mentality. **Round D**

Rewriting *Bible* passages. **Round A**

Center of constant missionary outreach. **Round A**

Entry point for new church. **Round D**

Faith-sharing spirituality. **Round A**

Fundamental model for being church. **Round D.**

Makes parish life very intense and present everywhere. **Round A**

Bones and flesh of the parish. **Round D**

Greatly strengthens the unity and faith of parishioners. **Round A**

Nourishes our personal and communal life. **Round A**

SCCs are the avenue for encountering the Word of God. **Round A**

Training Tools for SCCs. **Round A**

Backbone of the RCIA. **Round D**
 Best platform of forming the faith. **Round A**
 Effective platform of catechesis. **Round A**
 Our DNA as Christians. **Round D**.
 Small group friendly *Bible* commentary. **Round A**

Frontier of evangelization in the AMECEA Region for the laity. **Round D**
 Home-based Communities. **Round eighteen A**
 SCCs way of becoming church. **Round D**
 Small Home Church. **Round D**
 Way for the church to grow. **Round D**

Forum in which adult catechumens listen to Jesus Christ. **Round A**
 Genuine family of God. **Round D**
 Little Faith-sharing Community. **Round D**
 Platform of continuous catechesis. **Round A**
 True family of God. **Round D**

Living cells that build up the Body of Christ. **Round D**
 Place of transformation. **Round A**
 SCCs evangelization. **Round A**
 School of equality. **Round D**
 Spiritual support group. **Round A**

Basis for *Bible* Sharing, Prayer and Deep Spirituality. **Round A**
 Home for faith formation. **Round A**
 Moral agency of SCCs. **Round D**
 Powerful vehicles for adult faith formation. **Round A**
 Support group for faith formation. **Round A**

Connects God's Word to daily life. **Round A**.
 Home of compassion. **Round A**
 School for equality. **Round D**
 Sharing prayer requests. **Round A**
 Togetherness. **Round D**.
 Build close and lasting friendships. **Round A**
 Builds your faith and increases your knowledge of Catholic beliefs. **Round A**
 Living cells of the church. **Round D**
 Share faith in partnership with others. **Round A**
 Support and encourage each other in our faith journey. **Round A**

Actualize communion ecclesiology at the grassroots. **Round A**
 Fonts of community life. **Round A**
 Online family community. **Round A**
 Show that the Spirit is at work. **Round A**
 Work of the Spirit. **Round D**

Church at the grassroots. **Round D**
 Oneness as a family of God. **Round A**
 Responds to various challenges that the human person encounters in life. **Round A**
 SCCs Capacity Building Program. **Round A**

SCCs marriage ministry. **Round A**

Cell Groups. **Round D**

Growth Groups. **Round D**

Home Groups. **Round D**

Laity are not part of the church; they are the church. **Round D**

On-campus evangelization small groups. **Round D**

Gives a new flavor to the African Church. **Round A**

Group Prayer. **Round A**

House Church Ministry. **Round A**

School of inculturation. **Round D**

Symbol of unity. **Round D.**

Extension of the church. **Round D**

In contact with the realities and lives of people on the grassroots. **Round A**

Perfect base for charity, prayer and mercy. **Round D**

Revolutionary paradigm of being a church. **Round D**

Seed of the church. **Round D**

Avenue of promoting reconciliation among individuals and groups. **Round D**

Avenue of promoting unity and the common good in the society. **Round D**

Call to respond to the suffering Christ. **Round A**

Keepers of our brothers and sisters. **Round A**

Place of compassion. **Round A**

Catalyst for effective *Bible* Sharing. **Round A**

Helps the neighborhood to grow as a family. **Round A**

In service to the Catholic Church as a Field Hospital. **Round A.**

Represents the Universal Church. **Round D**

Small Church. **Round D**

Church in the locality. **Round D**

Flesh and blood of the church. **Round D**

Pastoral and apostolic identity. **Round D**

Personal and communal witness. **Round A**

Small neighborhood parish-based group. **Round D**

Base of our Catholic Church. **Round D**

Christ-centered community. **Round A**

New paradigm of the Family of God. **Round D**

New way of being local church. **Round D**

Skype Faith-sharing. **Round A**

Foretaste of the Kingdom of God. **Round D**

Global moment of renewal. **Round D**

Heart of renewal in the church today. **Round D**

New way of life that is to be understood and lived. **Round D**

Small group process of evangelization. **Round D**

Help each other to grow in faith. **Round A**

Platform that allows people in the same neighborhood to share practical experiences.

Round A

Small community of shared faith. **Round A**

Strong community of believers. **Round A**

Vehicle towards total human development. **Round D**

FISH Group Family. **Round D**

Localized church in the universal church structure. **Round D**

Seedbed where faith formation takes place. **Round A**

Soul of the church. **Round D**

Working through SCCs for change. **Round A**

Bedrock of the Christian faith. **Round D**

New pastoral model of being Church. **Round D**

Our baptismal brotherhood and sisterhood lived out practically with a few people.

Round A

Sharing our daily life. **Round A**

Word of God as soul of the SCC. **Round A**

Church belongs to me, not to the priest. **Round A**

Essentially a spirituality. **Round A**

Online SCC. **Round A**

Root from which the wider church emerges. **Round D**

Social media makes evangelization easy. **Round A.**

Centering prayer. **Round A**

Mainstream of African Catholic life. **Round D**

Pastoral lifeblood of the Christian community. **Round D**

Small Faith-sharing Community. **Round A**

Small group ministry team. **Round A**

Combination of compatibility and diversity. **Round A**

Essential part of any Christian life. **Round A**

Experienced-based Faith-sharing questions. **Round A**

Small Faith-sharing Group. **Round A**

Smaller is better. **Round D**

Multicultural mass. **Round A**

Powerful force of renewal of the parish structures. **Round A**

Familial model. **Round D**

Familial relationships. **Round D**

Faith-sharing dimension. **Round A**

Grounds me. **Round A**

Nourished by the Gospel. **Round A**

Post-RCIA Group. **Round A**

SCCs-related Apps. **Round A**

At the heart of evangelization. **Round D**

Church as Family of God built around SCCs. **Round D**

Group *Bible* study. **Round A.**

Reflecting together in a personal way. **Round A**
 Small group life. **Round A**

Active small group community of disciples. **Round one D**
 Cell based movement. **Round D**
 Cell-based (SCCs) student movement. **Round D**
 Small Faith-sharing Group experience. **Round A**

Small group discipleship. **Round D**
 Active participation by all in the community. **Round D**
 Model for change in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Most effective ministerial technique with Millennials. **Round D**
 Small group communities. **Round D**

Help us help each other to connect everyday life and faith. **Round A**
 Reading Group. **Round D**
 Small group management platform. **Round D**
 Small Study Group. **Round A**
 Weekly “household” meetings on Skype. **Round D**

Basic family. **Round D**
 Family of believers. **Round D**
 Small Parish Book Club. **Round A**
 Small Parish Reading Group. **Round A**
 Spirit of the family. **Round D**

Blog Discussion Group. **Round A**
 Eucharistic-centered community. **Round A**
 Grassroots base of SCCs. **Round D**
 Local and smaller communities have a greater sense of participation. **Round A**
 Sermon-based small group. **Round A**

Kairos time for SCC Priorities. **Round D**
 Online Skype SCCs Workshop. **Round A**
 Small Community Leader Training Webinar. **Round A**
 Solution to fulfill the “Joy of the Gospel.” **Round D**
 Weekly prayer group in the residence hall/dorm. **Round D**

Faith community of peers. **Round D**
 Foster the faith of individuals. **Round D**
 Small group parish session. **Round A**
 Social Inquiry Method. **Round D**
 Youth and young adult ministry. **Round D**

Evangelization. **Round A**
 Key Pastoral priority in Eastern Africa. **Round D**
 Preferred method of evangelization. **Round A**
 Seminarians take up the work of animation of SCCs.
 Small groups as a model for change in the Catholic Church. **Round D**

Campus Small Communities. **Round A**

CLCs/BCCs are the revitalizing force in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Harnesses youth power. **Round A**
 Priority of the New Evangelization. **Round D**
 Small Neighborhood Group. **Round D**

Carrying the flame of SCCs. **Round A**
 Community of communities for youth ministry. **Round D**
 Confirmation Small Group. **Round D**.
 Scripture-based reflection booklet. **Round A**
 Small group discipleship is the most effective ministerial technique with Millennials.

Round D

Concrete expression of communion in Christ. **Round A**
 Incarnating SCCs. **Round D**
 Small groups during retreat. **Round A**
 True church in the neighborhood. **Round D**
 New pastoral model of church. **Round D**

Experiential church. **Round A**
 Heart of this new pastoral model of church. **Round D**
 Leadership training. **Round A**
 Small Discipleship Group. **Round D**
 Solution to parish life. **Round D**

Prayerful group engagement with Scripture. **Round A**
 Churchhood. **Round D**
 Peer ministry in a new way. **Round A**
 Small Faithful Community. **Round D**
 Small Faith-sharing community building. **Round A**

Gospel-based living. **Round D**
 Opportunity for spiritual nourishment. **Round A**
 Youth process adapted to the anxieties and needs of young people. **Round A**
 SCCs networks. **Round A**
 Youth faith formation. **Round A**
 Accompanying college age students on the path of missionary discipleship. **Round A**
 Accompanying young adults on the path of missionary discipleship. **Round A**
 Children friendly. **Round A**
 Hospitable. **Round A**
 Welcoming. **Round A**

Gospel-centered church. **Round D**
 Group Spiritual Direction. **Round A**
 Parish-based Small Faith-sharing Community. **Round D**
 Promote the culture of encounter. **Round A**
 Young adult peer group small Faith-sharing community. **Round D**

Development indigenous to the several continents. **Round A**
 New beginning in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Power of Student Small Christian Communities. **Round A**
 "Regular" structure of parish life. **Round D**

Social exchange as a medium of evangelism. **Round A**

Door to get in the church. **Round D**

Helps Catholics cross the aisle of race and culture. **Round A**

Practical ministerial tools. **Round A**

Prayer Circle. **Round A**

Promoting Young Adults SCCs through YCW. **Round D**

Different pastoral model of church. **Round D**

Future of the African Church is at stake. **Round D**

Parish-based SCC. **Round D**

SCCs in the context of Catholic campus ministry. **Round D**

Young adult peer group SCC. **Round D**

Basis of the Church of God. **Round D**

Scripture-based faith formation. **Round A**

New model of being church. **Round D**

Permanent and ongoing force and influence in the worldwide Catholic Church.

Round D

Well-coordinated. **Round A**

Critical opportunity for spiritual development. **Round D**

Online conversations. **Round A**

Principal tool for belonging. **Round D**

AMECEA SCCs Pastoral Model of Church. **Round D**

Gateway networks. **Round A**

Seedbeds of a different Africa. **Round D**

Young Adults SCC. **Round D**

Youth SCC. **Round D**

Basic Christianity. **Round D**

Essential part of the structure of the parish. **Round D**

Family Enrichment Club. **Round A**

For our integral development. **Round D**

Network of SCCs in Africa. **Round D**

Best practices of SCCs. **Round A**

Book Discussion Group/Club. **Round A**

Family SCC. **Round D**

Small group experience. **Round D**

Best expression of the church of the poor. **Round D**

First level of the church structure. **Round D**

Interparish singing competition. **Round A**

Pastoral mission of the church. **Round D**

Virtual communities. **Round D**

TABLET Reading Group. **Round A**

Best tool for evangelization here in the university. **Round A**

Biblically based. **Round A**

Home to all Christians. **Round D**
 Spiritual disciplines in a small group setting. **Round A**
 Visible sign of the living church. **Round D**

Great platform that really enriches the church. **Round D**
 Patrimony of the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round D**
 Place of initial catechesis. **Round A**
 Constitutive structure of the Local Church. **Round D.**
 Consultative structure of the Local Church. **Round D**

Center of the Church. **Round D**
 Collaborative effort that very much reflects the spirit of BCCs and our Christian faith.
Round D

Fruit of the new mode of ecclesiological thinking. **Round D**
 New way for the evangelization of the church in Africa. **Round D**
 Power of faith communities to make a real difference. **Round D**

Cells injecting life into the organism of the church. **Round A**
 Lectionary Catholic. **Round A**
 Lectionary *Jumuiya*. **Round A**
 Twinning between Main Adult SCC and Youth SCC. **Round A**
 Warm ground of formation. **Round D**

Give community members an opportunity to exercise and practice Christian values.
Round A

Major catalyst for sharing grassroots experiences. **Round A**
 Small Christian Community Process. **Round D**
 Strength of the church in a new way. **Round D**
 Tool for effective ministry and evangelization. **Round A**

Empowerment from below. **Round D**
 Have helped me grow. **Round A**
 Importance of small group ministry. **Round D**
 Offer a way for young adults as well as older adults to more actively engage in the
 Catholic Church. **Round A**
 Recognition of certain lay associations as SCCs. **Round D**

Contemplative dialog in small groups. **Round A**
 Contemplative dialog process. **Round A**
 Evangelizing tool. **Round A**
 Small Christian Communities without boundaries. **Round D**
 Church going to the people. **Round A**

Connecting life and faith regularly. **Round A**
 Experiencing our Christian call in the neighborhood. **Round A**
 Gospel-based Catholic. **Round D**
 Schools for discipleship. **Round D**
 Sunday scripture-based reflections. **Round A**

Acts of the Apostles lifestyle. **Round A**
Bible Sharing in a circle. **Round A**

Daily contact in the neighborhood. **Round A**
 Deepening faith in one's local environment. **Round A**

New way of being Christian in the church. **Round D**
 Circle, not pyramid. **Round D**
 Parish-based neighborhood communities. **Round D**
 Shared Homily. **Round A**
 Way of life, not just a program or project in the parish. **Round D**

Continue the evangelization mission. **Round D**
 Drivers of our own vehicle. **Round A**
 Facilitating the information and enhancement of weak SCCs. **Round A**
 Faith-sharing resources. **Round D**

Both foundation and goal of Christian life. **Round D**
 Extension of the nuclear and even the extended family. **Round D**
 Instruments of God's love and mercy. **Round D**
 Roots the Catholic Church in people's daily lives. **Round D**
 Theological expressions of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. **Round D.**

Help each other to grow in the social, family, and most importantly, spiritual life.
Round A

Ideal model of the church as a family. **Round D**
 Important formation in our spiritual and social life. **Round D**
 Perfect platform for Christians to share and grow. **Round D**
 Super support for spiritual and social life. **Round D**

Helps the young generation to strengthen our faith in Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Internet enables us YSCC members to grow spiritually. **Round D**
 It is a vocation. **Round D**
 Small Church where people can make decisions on certain issues concerning them.
Round D
 Virtues of the Pope Francis Church made concrete in the African Church within
 SCCs. **Round D**

Play a key role in the growth of the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round A**
 Real experience of the Catholic Church is lived in the SCCs. **Round D**
 Way of being church. **Round D**
 Way of doing theology. **Round D**
 Wonderful vibrancy in the YSCCs at Kenyatta University. **Round A**

Avenue for God to reveal himself/herself anew to people in a more personal way.
Round D

Enables us grow spiritually. **Round A**
 Greatest part of a SCC is to be member. **Round D**
 Place to build relationships and have meaningful conversations about faith. **Round A**
 Place where the different ethnic groups meet together. **Round A**

Best way to go. **Round D**
 Help local Catholics feel that they are the church and more responsible for the church
 life and decision making. **Round A**

Lay a strong base for our Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Pastoral model of the Catholic Church integrally connected to the structures,
 ministries and activities of the parish. **Round D**
 Powerful vehicles for youth faith formation. **Round A**

Best thing that has happened in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Life well lived (based on the *Bible*).
 Ministry to the SCCs family. **Round A**
 Shows that the Catholic Church is not foreign in Africa. **Round A**
 Way of growing. **Round D**

Central to the growth of the church. **Round D**
 Only hope of the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round D**.
 Readings of the coming Sunday: one is able to internalise the message before further
 elaboration by the priest on Sunday. **Round A**
 Really changed the Catholic Church. **Round A**
 Starts with the family. **Round D**
 Importance of the Eucharist as the real celebration of our faith that is shared in the
 SCCs. **Round D**
 Model of the church we want. **Round D**
 Really a blessed and sacred space for the Christians. **Round D**
 Small Christian Communities apostolate. **Round A**
 Strong places where respect for human dignity, defence of rights, acceptance and
 tolerance should be considered. **Round D**

Best structure for the New Evangelization. **Round D**
 Best way to share the Word of God. **Round D**
 Broad spectrum of youth ministry through SCCs. **Round D**
 Participation of the faithful in the life of the church. **Round D**
 Takes a step ahead in terms of building the Catholic Church through encouraging
 people to prioritize SCCs. **Round D**.
Bible sharing by members and further discussions about daily life is what interests
 me. **Round A**
 Foundation of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Through interpersonal relationships it offers a pastoral model of the church. **Round**

D.

Where the Small Church begins. **Round D**
 Youth are leaders of internet development. **Round D**

Best way for parish to breathe. **Round A**
 Participatory church firmly anchored at the grassroots level by SCCs. **Round D**
 Presence of SCCs for evangelization at the grassroots level. **Round D**
 SCC is the sure way. **Round D**

Best way of expressing love. **Round A**
 Best way of fostering reconciliation. **Round A**
 Mold young generations through YSCCs. **Round A**
 Small communities of faith and practice. **Round A**
 Vibrancy. **Round A**

Empowerment of women. **Round D**

Joint decision making. **Round A**
 Patron and Patroness saints. **Round D**
 Train the Trainers (TOT) Method. **Round A**
 We are the church. **Round D**

Big instrument of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Both a place and a path for pastoral care and evangelization of families and marriages.
Round D
 Making SCC organic cells in the Catholic Church wherever we go. **Round A**
 Our Christian clan. **Round D**
 Place to form our faith. **Round A**

Best placed Catholic Church organ to preach and promote peace. **Round A**
 Elders take responsibility for reconciliation and peace in the community. **Round A**
 Fellowship in smaller sub groups within a parish community. **Round A**
 Intentional efforts to reclaim spirituality as a means to liberation, justice and
 flourishing. **Round D**
 Spirit of togetherness. **Round D**

Best and most effective means of evangelization. **Round D**
 Best physical way to foster and sustain the growth of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Church on the ground. **Round D**
 Most effective way of evangelization. **Round D**
 Way to the development and transformation of the faithful. **Round D**

Best thing that has happened in my life in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Cell of the village church. **Round D**
 Nursery bed for good marriages and good families in the Catholic Church. **Round A**
 Practical way of evangelization. **Round D**
 Relational aspect that members have for each other. **Round D**

Agents of New Evangelization for the renewal of humanity. **Round D**
 Most effective agent for foster God's goodness in Africa. **Round A**
 Place of care and compassion. **Round A**
 Place of reconciliation. **Round A**
 Way to reach out to the suffering Christ. **Round A**

Help the whole church to do its mission. **Round A**
 Interfaith small communities. **Round D**
 Parish Discussion Group. **Round A**
 Place for members to share what is good for their global life. **Round D**
 SCCs can ease work of the priests and religious. **Round A**

Equality between women and men, poor and rich, different ethnic groups. **Round D**
 Helps Christians to deepen their relationship among themselves and their relationship
 with God. **Round A**
 Makes the church close to Christians. **Round D**
 SCCs model of evangelization at the grassroots. **Round D**
 Women's equal participation. **Round D**

Effective way to plant the seed of Gospel values in the Christian faithful. **Round A**

Emerging paradigm of youth empowerment in Africa. **Round D**
 Locus for the formation of conscience. **Round D**
 Tool that brings the bond of unity to all Catholic Church members. **Round D**
 Weekly gospel-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**

Avenue for the revitalization of the Christian faith. **Round D**
 Effective channel for reconciliation. **Round A**
 Effective method or style of evangelization. **Round A**
 Lifeblood of the church. **Round D**
 PMC small community. **Round D**

Agent for mission and the new evangelization in church and society. **Round D**
 Missional community. **Round A**
 Scripture is the heart of Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Small community discipleship. **Round D**
 Transformational outlook. **Round D**

Lectionary-based SCCs. **Round A**
 Place/space to nurture vocations. **Round A**
 Roots of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Support group in the city. **Round A**
 Support group model. **Round D**

Daily Gospel-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Daily lectionary-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Daily Scripture-based Faith-sharing. **Round A**
 Church. **Round D**
 WhatsApp SCC as a support group. **Round A**

Catholic SCC “support group.” **Round A**
 Centers of community enterprise and holistic transformation. **Round A**
 Core of parish life in African dioceses. **Round D**
 Core space for the faithful gathering in the neighborhoods. **Round D**
 Phone SCC Conference Call. **Round A**
Bible-based Faith-sharing small community. **Round A**
 Homily preparation session. **Round A**
 Online Skype prayer family. **Round D**
 Online Skype SCC family. **Round D**
 SCCs spirituality. **Round D**

Applies the biblical message to our life situation. **Round A**
 Biblically-based Faith-sharing small community. **Round A**
 College-based small communities. **Round D**
 Interprets the Gospel from below. **Round A**
 Teaching moment. **Round A**

Community discipleship. **Round A**
 Group discipleship. **Round A**
 Lectionary-based Faith-sharing small community. **Round A**
 Networking SCCs within Africa. **Round A**
 Student small Faith-sharing communities. **Round A**

Co-responsibility in leadership. **Round D**
 Glue of our ministry. **Round D**
 Recognizes and promotes the specific role of lay people. **Round D**
 Small Christian Communities spirituality. **Round A**
 Unleashes each Catholic's gifts. **Round D**

Church centered on small groups as the way of doing life and ministry. **Round D**
 Core of our ministry and the way we develop disciples. **Round D**
 More focused, holistic approach to small-group ministry. **Round D**
 Pastoral structure to empower lay people. **Round D**
 Vehicle to empower lay people. **Round D**

Actualize the church as a family that is found among the neighbors. **Round A**
 Goes to the heart of what the Catholic Church must be. **Round D**
 Home Small Groups. **Round A**
 SCCs *Bible* sharing and prayer. **Round A**
 Small communities as the core of your church, not just another ministry. **Round D**

Gospel-centred programs for young adults. **Round A**
 Interfaith listening circle. **Round D**
 Model of building community among students. **Round D**
 Raises understanding about inter-religious dialog. **Round D**

Creates a Small Christian Community Culture. **Round A**
 Environment for an encounter with Jesus Christ. **Round D**
 Form of adult faith formation. **Round D**
 Integral part of our church culture. **Round D**
 YSCCs open up spaces for young adults. **Round A**

Avenue through which communal solidarity is experienced. **Round D**
 Backbone of the RCIA. **Round D**
 Beacon of hope to the local community. **Round D**
Bible is the center of our life. **Round D**
 Hearing and then absorbing the Word of God. **Round A**

Center of renewal program. **Round D**
 Enhances grassroots evangelization. **Round D**
 New way of our Church Communion Community. **Round D**
 Offer psychological and social support to the members. **Round A**
 Rallying point of support during funerals as well as weddings. **Round D**

Base for restoring hope. **Round D**
 Place where I have met real family. **Round A**
 Platform that provide spiritual nourishment to college and university students. **Round**

A

Small communities at the center of diocesan and parish renewal. **Round D**
 Virtual SCC. **Round D**

Basis and foundation of the faith in the Catholic Church in Africa. **Round D**
 Cohousing community. **Round A**

Inclusive small community. **Round D**
 Missionary discipleship journey. **Round A**
 Residence community. **Round A**

A Active participation of young people in Small Christian Communities (SCCs). **Round**

Gospel-centered SCC. **Round D**
 Discipleship path for students to grow and deepen their relationship with Christ.

Round D Important anchor point as a response to the challenges of evangelization. **Round D**
 Spaces for reconciliation, humility and unconditional love. **Round D**

Pastoral priority for our diocese. **Round D**
 Pastoral priority for our parish. **Round D**
 SCCs drive the Catholic Church's response to change. **Round D**
 Source of renewal for the Global Church. **Round D**
 Women as equal partners in SCCs. **Round D**

Absolutely essential in carrying out the mission of the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Daily scripture mantra. **Round A**
 Glue to assist young adults to transition from college to parish life. **Round D**
 SCCs energize larger parish worship on Sundays. **Round A**
 Weekly scripture mantra. **Round A**

Achieves enormous strides in the evangelization of society. **Round A**
 Best way of nurturing the Catholic Church in the neighborhood. **Round D**
 Commitment to being a parish that GATHERS, SHARES AND PRAYS. **Round A**
 Faith formation in SCCs. **Round D**
 Occupy an essential place in the life of the Catholic Church. **Round D**

Church in miniature ("Church miniature"). **Round D**
 Grassroots evangelization. **Round A**
 Our wedding garment in the Catholic Church. **Round D**
 Praying as a community. **Round A**.
 Refugees as perfect target population. **Round D**

Evangelizing through digital platforms. **Round A**
 Evangelizing through smartphones. **Round A**
 Family-like evangelization. **Round A**
 Home blessings. **Round A**
 Playground of saving one another. **Round A**

Child protection as a component of the training we give to the trainers on SCCs.
Round D

Reaches out to motivate the wider society to protect children. **Round A**
 Reading and reflecting on the Gospel of the following Sunday ahead of time. **Round**

A Valuable space and path upon which we can help nurture Child Protection practices in our society. **Round D**
 YSCCs as a bridge from Pontifical Missionary Childhood (PMC) Programs. **Round D**
 Advocate for family catechesis. **Round A**

Advocate for family ministry. **Round A**
 Child protection component in our SCCs training for facilitators. **Round D**
 Prime way that people learn about God. **Round A**
 Value of the lectionary or Scripture to SCCs. **Round D**

Lectionary-based Catholics can change the world. **Round A**
 New way of participating in our church. **Round D**
 Online liturgical readings. **Round D**
 Prime way that people experience life transformation. **Round A**
 Prime way that people grow in their relationship with God and others. **Round A**

Ecclesiological model to strongly use for effective evangelization. **Round D**
 Life-giving, liberative force for the African continent. **Round D**
 Safe place for sharing. **Round D**
 SCCs for the Pontifical Missionary Children (PMC). **Round D**
 What it means to be church at the grassroots level. **Round D**

Bible as the Center of Faith Formation. **Round A**
 Entry point to campus ministry program. **Round D**
 Makes college feel smaller. **Round A**
 Original manner of being church. **Round D**
 Provide a discipleship path for students. **Round D**
 Catholic Church built up daily through SCCs. **Round D**
 Family-centered parish. **Round D**
 Vehicle to make the church feel small. **Round D**
 Visiting parish-based SCCs on the ground. **Round A**

Encourages prayer methodologies/methods that connect faith and life. **Round A**
 I prepare my Sunday homily by listening to lay people's reflections. **Round A**
 Animated by the Gospel spirit. **Round D**
 Local church that feels at home. **Round D**
 My spiritual health. **Round A**

Lectio Divina. **Round A**
 Mass in the home. **A**
 Neighborhood mass. **A**
 Talk about real life in a peer group. **Round A**
 Offer authentic hope for the entire Catholic church. **D**

Christians bond and support each other. **A**
 Family-centered parish through SCCs. **D**
 House mass. **A**
 SCC (*Jumuiya*) Mass in the home. **A**
 Without SCCs the Catholic Church will fall. **D**

Deepens my faith and prayer life. **A**
 Enlivens young adult parish participation. **D**
 First agents for the initiation of their children into the Word of God. **Round D**
 Small group ministries for youth. **A**
 Major way of real active participation of the laity. **A**
 Adapts to the local context. **A**

Focus on Young Adult Small Christian Communities (YASCCs). D
 Forms solid ecclesial communion with a small geographical location. **Round A**
 Promotes child protection in the neighborhood. A
 Provides an atmosphere to share family values. **Round D**

Answer to the great spiritual crisis in the Catholic Church. D
 Center of charity. D
 Modern *Acts of the Apostles*. D
 New way of being family. D
 Post-*Alpha* resource. D

Avenue for communication and communion among members. D
 Church in the village. D
 New way of building God's Kingdom. D
 Place and path for pastoral care and evangelization of families and marriages. A
 Very vital in the Catholic Church. **D**

Benefits of SCCs to be treasured. D
 Best blessing to have happened to the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa. D
 Backbone and launching pad of the Catholic Church, its ministry and its mission. D
 Channel of social solidarity. D
 Essential and life-giving antidote for much of what ails us. D

Heartbeat of the Catholic Church. D
 Source of new ministries. D
 Stones of the church. D
 True face of the Catholic Church. D
 YASCCs are necessary and vital. D

At the heart of pastoral ministry. D
 Faith in action activity. D
 Home to everyone. D
 One of the most profound pastoral ministries in the Catholic Church today D
 Opportunity to hear Christians offer a reflection on next Sunday's Gospel. A

Only forum where Christians can easily share their faith experiences. A
 Place to teach good morals and proper handling of technology. A
 Platform for uniting different ethnic groups. D
 Way to go in today's modern church. D
 Welcoming people in the SCC. A

Family Masses. A
 Life-giving small community. D
 New way of enlivening the church in the neighborhood. D
 Small Christian Community that prays together stays together. A

Friends Model of Church. D
 New way of being church for young people. D
 Phone fast during Lent. A
 SCCs Capacity Building Workshops. **Round A**
 Source of vocations. D

Daily readings act like an engine to my life. A
 Dynamics of the Small Christian Community Model of Church. D
 New shape of the future church. **Round D**
 On-going theological formation of SCCs leaders. A
 Young People Pillar of the Catholic Church Today. **D**

Anchored in the real. D
 Daily readings always reminds me to be faithful in my Christian journey. A
 Incarnated in local cultures. **D**
 Networks of SCCs. D
 Outreach evangelization. A

Growing SCCs. A
 Growing small groups. D
 Growing the church. A
 Household of faith. D
 To follow Christ in community. A

Church of small communities. D
 Experience of small church. D
 Lectionary way of life. D
 Ministering to emerging adults/adulthood. D
 Path to move closer to Jesus Christ. A

Core of the church. D
 Foundational pillar of the church. D
 Living branches in the parish. D
 Makes a difference in emerging formation of adults. A
 Soup for the soul. D

Affinity Groups as SCCs. D
 Building the church *up* out of SCCs. A
 Growing YPSCCs. A
 Pastoral power. D
 Way of sharing leadership with young people. D

Connected to alternative communities. A
 Connected to alternative faith communities. A
 Model the life of Christians. A
 Place to grow in our faith journey. A
 Vehicle to generate grassroots movements. D

Bonding community. D
 Center of my faith journey. D
 Intentional faith community. D
 SCC trainers without borders. D
 Small group prayer. A

Great boon to the Catholic Church. D
 Model of church life. D

Safe place for sharing. D
 Small Multicultural Faith Community. **D**

Estate-based *jumuiyas* that meet in members' homes. A
 Home Churches. D
 Place where life's issues can be discussed, shared, and reflected on. A
 Small Reflection Group. **Round A**
 Source of spiritual inspiration, works of mercy and pastoral care. D

Context-based. D
 Encourages Lectionary-based Catholics. A
 "Listening circle" methodology. D
 Ministry of like to like. D
 Safe place to listen to each other and hear the voice of God. D

Distinct peer group. D
 Emerging paradigm of young adult empowerment in Africa. **Round D**
 Emerging paradigm of young people empowerment in Africa. **Round D**
 Grassroots level of Catholic apostolate. D
 Remembering the fathers of the early Jumuiya Church, Kalilombe, Mwoleka. A

Better social mechanism in the Catholic Church. D
 Creating many new paths by walking according to the local context. A
 Energy of young people. A
 Forum to think about and work on all the dimensions of life. A
 Key for developing Catholic leadership. D

Family-friendly SCC. D
 Inspires better pastoral solutions for the young people. A
 Interactive small group experience. D
 Universal church for small families. **D**
 Vehicle for discernment skills. D
 Growing closer to Christ through scripture. A
 Growing YPSCCs. A
 Small, graced, sacramental communities. D
 Supportive faith community. D
 Training students to be leaders. A

Community-based ecclesial model. D
 Digital network of discipleship. D
 Doing life and faith in small communities. A
 Post-Alpha style small group resource. D
 Small Fraternal Neighborhoods within SCCs. D

Best way of evangelizing and accompanying young people. D
 Helps to grow SCCs around the world. D
 Keeps people connected to the Catholic Church. D
 "Listening circle" format. D

Commitment is to foster Small Christian Communities. D
 Empowering the church at the grassroots/in the neighborhood. A

Key catechesis method. D
 Most important aspect of pastoral life. D
 Small Faith Community. **Round D**

Best unity in the Catholic Church. D
 Develops its own leaders. A
 Helps us to grow in our faith. D
 Model of SCCs in the church of the future. D
 Reflecting on Gospel from a SCC perspective. A

Authentic way of evangelization. D
 Internationalization of the SCCs Model. D
 Paradigm for a participation of listening and diversity. D
 Personal experiences shared by members. A
 Works for social progress. A

Contemplative prayer group for young adults. A
 Horizontal communities on the grassroots. D
 Liturgical preparation for Sunday celebration. A
 Safe haven. D
 Solidarity in prayer. D

Echo the community spirit of the new South Sudan. A
 Family as basis of SCC. D
 Place where we share our different talents. D
 Shines the spirit of sharing. A

Core business is the Word of God. D
 Peer accompaniment. A
 Student activism. A
 Welcoming friendship. A

Discipleship begins in God's Word. D
 Essential ingredient of our Catholic campus ministry program. D
 Home eucharistic gathering. A
 In touch with the reality on the ground. A
 Opportunity for deep listening. D

Culture of evangelization that launches and expands small groups. D
 Indigenous to each continent. D
 Members affirm and support one another. A
 New arena for campus Faith-sharing. A
 Promotes integral development for all. A

Building a living church through SCCs. D
 Foundational to the Catholic Church in Africa today. D
 Sharing life experiences. A
 Tool for evangelization today. A
 Promotion of a Small Church Community vision for parish. D

Gives life in the neighborhood. A

Communal Reading of Scripture (Public Reading). A
 Strengthens the Local Church. A
 LUMKO approach sustains SCCs. A
 New theology of the church. **Round D**

Faith-sharing in small community group settings. A
 Great source for the voice of the laity. D
 Builds the church from the grassroots. A
 Most basic unit of the Church. D
 Center of interest in the Catholic media. A

Usual and real way of being Church. D
 Well fitted to provide solutions to the many challenges facing Catholic Church in
 Africa. A
 Church on the move. D
 SCC Strategy (marriage in the home). A
 Only way to make the Catholic Church grow stronger. A

Everyone in a Small Christian Community is equal. D
 Small communities of young people. D
 Joining hands in promoting YPSCCs in Eastern Africa. A
 Well-defined strategy for small community ministry. D
 Customized strategy for our SCC context. D

Young People SCC. D
 Expression of a renewed church. D
 Primary place for the New Evangelization. D
 Place to share faith. A

Simplest and basic unit of the Catholic Church. D
 Meal sharing in the context of a SCC. A
 Sharing of daily experiences. A
 Church from below. D
 Creating space for young people. A

Gift of the African Church to the Universal Church. D
 Neighborhood Catholics come together. A
 Share pastoral experiences. A
 Key place where we experience the love and mercy of God. A

New way of being local church among our young people. D
 Truest local vehicle for evangelization. D
 Reliable way of Christian Community in Africa. D
 Home-made church. D
 Intergenerational church. D

New Catholic Church space. D
 Wisdom circles. D
 Wisdom Small Communities. D
 Experiencing life together. A
 Bring Christians together. A

Setting in which we can fulfil our missionary duties. D
 Centers of deepening the Word of God and cohesive Faith-sharing. A
 Poor use the *Bible* to liberate themselves from the violence of poverty. A
 Way to life in Christ Jesus. D
 Participatory church in action. D

Connects the Scripture to our everyday life every week. A
 Where we refuel every week. A
 Helps us to grow our faith in SCCs. D
 Formation component. D

Motive of hope for the Catholic Church and for humanity today. D
 Influences seminary formation. A
 Shares the life of lay people from below, from the grassroots. A
 Place to explore faith in a casual environment. **Round A**
 Begin encountering Jesus in Scripture. A

Learning from peers how to grow as a disciple. A
 Promotes social justice. A
 Structurally linked to the parish. D
 Ongoing formation and training of SCC leaders and members. A
 Only sure way for sustainability of our Catholic Church. D

Serve God through SCCs. A
 Opportunities for theological formation and training. A
 Spirit of ecclesial synodality. D
 Growing in every part of the world. A
 SCCs style of mass. D

Great avenue for evangelization. D
 Lever of Integral Human Development. D
 Reinvent the SCCs/BCCs/CEBs. D
 Discerning personal and collective action in small group settings. A
 Searching (Seekers) small community. A

Place of hospitality. A
 Life of the Catholic Church of today. D
 Local center of ecclesial reflection. D
 Greenhouse of evangelization. D
 Hub of communion and edification in the Christian life. D

No strong SCCs, no transfiguration/conversion/change. D
 Active agent of the Word of God. A
 Meaningful prayer -- time spent connecting with God? A
 Jumuiya shared homily. A
 SCC shared homily. A

Way that the Christian message can reach people. A
 What "being church" means. D
 Helps us know that no one is alone. A

Theological mainstay of the model of church as Family of God. D
 Ecclesiastical extension of the African extended family or clan. D

Virtual faith sharing. A
 Online Small Group Faith Sharing. A
 Virtual or Online SCCs is the new way for the church to go. D
 Young People Online Small Searching Community. A
 Virtual faith sharing session. A

Way of cementing Christians' life. D
 Brings parishioners closer in their neighborhood. A
 Looks after its members. A
 Brings parishioners closer in their neighborhood. A
 Brings together the people of God to be useful to one another. A

Foundation of good Christian life. D
 Instrument of true love to one another. D
 Enables each member be recognized and heard. A
 Brings unity and love to the members of the community. A
 Makes for familiarization of one another. A

Represent an extraordinary social and pastoral lifeline.
 A must if we are to grow the church. D
 In touch with the daily realities. A
 Fosters Faith-Shaping Friendships. A
 Online SCCs as ways of life and hope. A

Alumni Online Small Christian Communities. D
 Lights candles of the faith. A
 Young Adult Virtual Communities. D.
 Technology tools that enhance the small group experience. A
 Conversation as a root metaphor for SCC life. A

Lay people are the heart of SCCs. D
 Responsible for its members' concrete needs. A
 Gives opportunity to know the parishioners living in our area. A
 Dynamic, not static -- subject to changes and new ideas. A
 Very good at reading, and responding to, the new signs of the times.

Maryknoll Young Adult Empowerment Community. D
 Digital Small Community. D
 Virtual Young People Small Christian Communities. D
 Diaspora Online SCCs. D
 Community spirituality. A

Baseline is sharing. A
 Being in community is constitutive to our faith. D
 Video-linked Small Prayer Communities. D
 Implementing best SCC practices increases parish vitality. A
 Smaller gatherings (in homes or elsewhere). A

Church as the house of God. D
 Young Adult Digital Prayer Community. D.
 Gathers in public spaces. A
 Offer a meaningful way to gather. D
 Research as central in the life of our SCCs. A

House Eucharists. A
 Emphasis on faith formation. A
 Basic community for prayer, support and consolation. A
 Home cell in dialogue. A
 Dynamic -- subject to changes that we may experience around us. A

Spirit of development. D
 Gift of online SCC. D
 Channel of community sensitization. D
 Gives me the freedom to be myself. A
 Connects households and families. A

Word of God is mutually shared among God's people. A
 Dialog table for family disputes/problems. A
 Online community of faith. D
 Dream of local community priests. D
 Focal point for evangelization. D

Bible sharing gathering. A
 Safe place for young people to accompany one another. D
 Vibrant small communities ministries. A
 Small communities of young seekers. D
 Gives many young people space to raise their concerns/grievances. A

Makes young people feel welcomed and appreciated. A
 Staying connected through online sharing. A
 Online sharing. A
 New way of gospel proclamation. A

Empowers us all. A
 Seeker-Friendly Small Communities. D
 Great way for families to grow together in their faith. D
 Solve problems through the inspiration of the Gospel. A

Jumuiya process in writing a homily. A
 Team or community approach in preparing a homily. A
 Troubleshoot and learn together. A
 Internet ministry. A
 House Church Movement. D

Source of spiritual energy. D
 We assure one another that no one is alone. A
 School of empowerment. A
 Online livestreamed mass. A

Sharing faith and hope with one another. A
 Nourishing our faith. A
 Small Breakout Rooms on Zoom. D
 SCCs leaders have the right sets of skills to help them to strengthen their communities. A

Small community of faith-sharing. A

Evangelizing the neighborhood. A
 Build family church through SCCs. A
 Basic and indispensable unit for catechesis. A
 Multi-model SCC. D
 Synodality experience. A

Unlocks the power of the laity. A
 Gives life to the Catholic Church. A
 New way of life. D
 Involved in pastoral animation in parishes. A
 On-the-job training. A

Online learning. A
 Sense of belonging. A
 Reflects on the experience of an SCC. A
 Go a long way in advancing the work of evangelization. A

SCCs style webinar. D
 Member of a SCC Commune. D
 School of discipleship. A
 Way for people to be church to one another. D
 Starts at the grassroots. A

SCCs model of homily and sermon preparation. A
 Revitalization and promotion of the SCCs across the world. A
 Enables members to go forth and proclaim the Gospel. A
 Small enough to allow for closer human relationships. A
 Path of evangelization at the grassroots level. D

Sign of vitality within the Catholic Church. A
 Growing faith AND applying faith. A
 Central facet of the parish. D
 Empowers the church in the neighborhood. A
 Helps me to grow in faith. A

Through sharing I continue to love God and others. A
 Helps us to grow our Christian conscience. A
 Helps to grow the spirituality of Catholic young adults. A
 Helps us to live the SCCs Model of Church. A
 Has a synodal identity. D

Grassroots synodal best practices. A
 True authentic Catholic DNA. D
 Spreads the Gospel. A

Has a rightful place in the Catholic Church. A
 Shaped by the Gospel. A

Role in official structure of the Catholic Church. D
 Place where each person can grow in their faith journey. A
 True experience of communion and collaboration. D
 Interactive experience. A
 Synodal model in youth and young adult ministry. D

Eucharistic Church. D
 Depth in the Eucharist. A
 Good head space for faith formation. A
 People gather at the local level and express their opinions. A
 Truly places of study, meditation and sharing of the Word of God. A

Promotes grassroots evangelization. A
 Expresses the Christian faith in the typical setting of a traditional African community.

A

Walking together with Jesus. A
 Way we are church. Round D
 Privilege in our Local Churches in the AMECEA Region. A

Provides SCC members a unique opportunity for discernment. D
 Apt for the synodal journey. A
 SCCs are a blessing. D
 Much needed option in the church and world today. D
 Nourishment from the shared Word of God. A

Meets the human need to be known, heard, listened to, appreciated and socialize. A
 Weekly gathering is a treasure trove of spiritual and social inspirations. A
 Opportunity to discuss synodality in SCCs. A
 Lectionary based faith sharing on a daily basis. A

Forms a strong foundation of a Catholic Parish. A
 Treasure in the AMECEA Region. A
 Has become part of us in the AMECEA Region. A
 New way of thinking and listening. A
 Vital way of being church. A

Important resource for church renewal. A
 Has systems of how to live as a church. A
 Makes us more resilient for the future. A
 Backbone of all we do in our evangelization. D
 Brings fruits to every walk of our apostolate. A

Gathering together listen to one another. A
 Getting together to listen to one another. A
 We actually have relevant experience in getting together. A
 We gather in small groups to pray and socialize together. A

Helps us discover what Christianity in the Catholic tradition is all about and how it can be truly lived. A

Core ministry of the Catholic Church. D
 Sermon illustrations based on a shared small community experience. D

Provides a trusting space where we feel comfortable to share our more personal
 musing. A

Channel where the Word of God is studied and meditated on. A
 Getting together in small groups to listen to one another. A
 Helps us connect and grow in our biblical community. A

Tool of attracting more people to the Catholic faith. A
 Center of Christian witness. D
 Gospel Houses where we meet around the Word of God. D
 Sharing our faith with others. A

Online SCCs Webinars. D
 Online SCCs Workshops. D
 Digital SCCs Webinars. D
 Digital SCCs Workshops. D

Spaces where members share celebrations, events, experiences, ideas and reflections.
 A

Digital evangelization. D
 Virtual evangelization. D
 Online evangelization. D
 Hybrid SCC gatherings. D

Hybrid SCC webinars. D
 Hybrid SCC workshops. D
 Small Christian Communities online forum on Facebook. D
 Forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences of SCCs. A
 Strong and mutual inner life. D

Functional SCCs in the parish -- with members knowing what they need to do in the
 SCCs. A

Orbis Book Club. D
 Catholic small family community. D
 Future of the Church in Africa. D
 Translates Gospel values into real Christian life situations. A

Close-knit community. D
 Small Discernment Breakout Group. D
 SCC Book Club. D
 Networking. A
 Strengthening standards to set up successful SCCs. A

Unique opportunity to engage with the Word of God in a non-intimidating environment.
 A

Entry point for new ideas, trends and priorities in Eastern Africa. **Round D**
 Models the Synodal Process. A
 Zoom Small Breakout Room. D
 Deepens our Gospel understanding. A

Builds SCC Model of Parish. A
 Small Intentional Mission Communities (SIMCs). D
 Young People Seekers Small Christian Community. A **add**
 Young People Seekers Faith Sharing Small Christian Community

Virtual intentional small community. **Round D**
 Online Lectionary Based Faith Sharing SCC. A
 Online Small Christian Community. A
 New open space for online faith communities and worship. A
 Listening to young people. A

Household Church Communities. D
 Turns rows into circles. A
 Living and growing in our faith is best done as part of a small community. A
 Importance of SCCs in the Catholic Church today. D
 SCC is our second home. D

Place of refuge and comfort. A
 Theological importance of the local Christian community in its basic form. D
 Household Church. D
 Way of life. D
 Relevant to human life on the African continent. A

Will always continue. A
 Are here to stay. D
 Leadership structure from below. D
 Structural connection to the parish. D
 Best way of being church today. A

Best way of evangelization. D
 Zoom gatherings. A
 We share our life experiences. A
 Intentional community. D
 Do It Yourself (DIY) Small Communities. D

Find support in one another A
 Its synodal spirit. D
 Real life faith discussion. D
 Foundation of the Catholic Church. D
 Core of ecclesial life. D

Its online faith sharing component. A
 Online Prayer Circle (OPC). A
 Space where the faithful are renewed and confirmed in their baptismal ministry. A
 Conversion of Catholic Church structures that enhances the sense of belonging and ownership. A
 Helps participants to recall, honor, and reify their baptismal promise and its priestly function.
 A

Members exercise their priestly capacity to shape shared moments of illumination. A

Forum for participants to habituate themselves to living, thinking, and acting eucharistically.

A

Small Home-based Community (SHC). D

Alternative way of meeting some basic needs. A

We embrace God's love and salvation. A

Acts as a counterbalance to the culture of "individualism." A

Praxis Group. A

Praxis Discernment. A

Being mutual and sharing our gifts. A

Part of a hub of Small Faith Communities (SFCs) D

Small Rural Faith Communities (SRFCs) D

Functional SCCs. A

Promotes the health and vitality of the Catholic faith in the diocese. A

Strategy of evangelization. A

"Praxis" of reflection. A

Carry the voice of faith during daily life struggles. A

Platform for believers to come together. A

New model of relationship. D

Brings the faithful together to share the Word of God and prayers from the grassroots. A

Where one finds harmony, love, brotherhood, and forgiveness. A

Passion is the fuel that drives us forward. A

Way of being church and pastoral priority. D

Tool of living African values on communal living. A

Good place to meet, teach and help each other. A

Praying for Pope Francis' monthly intention. A

Heightened participation of the laity. A

Fosters a more evangelized and evangelizing Catholic Church. A

Distinctive way of being church. D

Members' active support of each other. A

Reading the Scriptures in a slow, deliberate, and faith-oriented way. A

Priority tool for evangelization. D

Living together as effective and efficient God's instruments of hope, peace and love. A

Way to go. D

Promotes deeper reflection on how to grow as a Synodal Church universally. A`

Broadens the experience of listening and discerning together at the local level. A

Cornerstone of the Campus Ministry Program. D

Healthy cell of the parish. D

Fosters Synodality among family members. A

Fosters the spirit of Synodality. A

Mentorship nursery that grows in the parish. A

Transformation of SCCs to internalize and engage the constantly changing contexts. D

Catholic Church as the Family of God finds its origin in the ecclesial model of SCCs. A

Synodal Church is established on the basis of the Small Christian Communities. A

Peace of the Risen Christ is renewed in the structure of the Synod and in the form of SCCs. A
Model of church that is communitarian. A

Vibrant, spontaneous groups with little hierarchical structure. A
Faith response of poor and marginalized people in the Catholic Church and society. A
Become a leaven of Christian life, of care for the poor and the neglected and of commitment
to the transformation of the society. A
Become a means of evangelization and a source of new ministries. A
This is being church -- the Synodal Process and SCCs creating oneness and togetherness. A

The interplay between the Synod and SCCs is magnetic. A
Circularity (what comes from the grassroots returns to the grassroots) D
Intentional discipleship in small communities. A
Archdiocese's priority mission praxis. D
Hallmark of the Church of Jesus Christ in Africa. D

Context of communion and participation in mission. D
Spirit of communion lived in the SCCs. A

Top vote getters in the SCCs Poll:

Peer group small **faith sharing community**. A 486 **NOTE**: Distorted by Chinese hacking.
Mass in the neighborhood. A 211
Praying together for the **Synod** to take place in Rome in October, 2023. A 174
Praying together for peace in the world. A 170
Online **faith sharing**. A 167
Helps the needy during **Covid-19**. A 167
Richness of small **community Gospel** reflection and **faith sharing**. A 166
Communal listening to the **Word of God**. A 157
Special **prayers** for people with **Covid-19**. A 153
Helps deepen our personal relationship with **Jesus Christ**. A 153
Concern about the **Covid-19** pandemic. A 153
Sharing daily experiences. A 153
Pray for and assist people living on the margins of society. A 148.
Opportunity to thank God for all he has done for us. A 142
Zoom and other online platforms for **Gospel** Sharing and Reflection. D 140
Privileged place of faith formation. D 135
Prayer solidarity with refugees crossing borders. A 135
Personal encounter with **Jesus Christ** through SCC. A 134
Sharing life experiences. A 133
Christ-centered Small **Community**. D 133
Walking together with **Jesus Christ**. A 131
Demonstrates the love of **Jesus Christ**. A 129
Prayer, reflection and **faith sharing** grounds me. A **Special Poll** 125
Strong unity/communion allows people to participate fully in the **Synodal** Process. A 125
Adapts to the **Covid-19** pandemic situation. A 124
Responds creatively to the New Normal. A 123
Helps needy people in our neighborhood. A 123
Spreads the **Gospel**. A 123

Where the Holy Spirit works. A 122

Expressing fraternity and solidarity amid the **Covid** 19 situation. A 117

Praying together for peace in war-torn areas. A 116

Praying together for special intentions. A 114

Networking of young people through SCCs. D 113

Tool for evangelization today. D 110

Safe place for people to share and grow. D 108

Gospel-based Faith sharing. A 108

Lectionary-based faith sharing in a **Synodal** style. A 108

Emerging paradigm of youth empowerment in Africa. D 107

Helps us learn from the **Covid**-19 pandemic. A 105

Prayer, reflection and **faith sharing** grounds me. A 105

Reaches out to the marginalized and those on the periphery of society. A 105

Way of life, not just a program or project in the parish. 104 D

Empowerment of women. D **Special Poll 103**

Experience of **Synodality.** 103 A

We share faith and hope with one another. 103 A

Gives us courage to overcome obstacles during **Covid**-19 pandemic. 103 A

Reignites our faith through reading and reflecting on the **Gospel.** 103 A

Combines **Bible Sharing** and **Faith Sharing.** A 101

Reinvigorated SCCs as a fruit of **Synodality.** A 101

Weekly **lectionary-based faith sharing** leading to practical action. A 101

Youth peer group small **faith sharing community.** D **Special Poll 100**

New way of evangelization. D 98

Key pastoral priority in Eastern Africa. D 97

Platform and context to deepen the issue of **Synodality.** D 97

Helps our spiritual life. A 97

Supportive **faith sharing.** A 97

A basis for the **Synodal** journey. D 95

Key pastoral priority in Eastern Africa. D **Special Poll 93**

Youth peer group small **faith sharing community.** D 92

Gospel-based Faith sharing. A **Special Poll 91**

Powerful way to accompany one another as pilgrims on the journey. A 91

Daily **prayer** in our gatherings plays a key role during the **Synodal** Process. A 90

Interactive shared homilies. A 90

Evangelization means service to other people. A 90

Small Peer Group **Faith Sharing Community.** D 90

Weekly **lectionary-based faith sharing.** A 89

Weekly **lectionary-based faith sharing** is the preferred methodology. A 89

Flexibility in digital communications and connections. D 88

Small Christian Support **Community** in our daily lives A 88

Synodality is the true spirit of a SCC. D 87

SCCs as a way of life. D 86

Neighborhood evangelism. A 86

Helps other people. A 86

True experience of **Synodality** in Africa. D 86

Way of evangelization in the current situation of the **Covid**-19 pandemic. D 86

Relationships. A 85

Field hospital. A 85

“Communion of **Communities**” Model of Church. D 85

Weekly **Gospel-based Faith sharing.** A 85

Daily **Scripture**-based **Faith sharing**. A 85
Praying together for the Golden Jubilee of SCCs in Eastern Africa. A 85
 In solidarity with **Covid**-19 sufferers and their caregivers. A 85
 Helps the needy during **Covid**-19. A 85
 SCCs model -- gift of the African Church to the Universal Church. D 83
 Where the faithful experience and live **Synodality** as mission, participation and communion.
 A 82
 Center of evangelization to the family and youth. D 82
 Operates in a **Synodal** style or way. A 82
Word of God as the adhesive on which SCCs are centered. D 81
 Helps me persevere through **Covid**-19 pandemic. A 81
 Using the new social media resources to promote faith life. A 80
 Connecting **Bible** to life. A 80
 Focus on the **Word of God (Bible)**. D 80
 Online practice of our faith. A 80
 Responds to Pope Francis' emphasis on reaching out to those on the peripheries. A 80
 WhatsApp social media exchange. D 80
 Empowers laypeople to take more responsibility for their church. A 80
 Element or feature in the **Synodal** Church. A 78
Bible is key and central in the SCC's formation and activities. A 77
 Strengthen each other in our faith. A 77
 Helps us persevere during **Covid**-19. A 77
 Gathering online to celebrate our faith together. A 77
 Spiritual support **community**. 76 D
 Sharing faith and hope with one another. 76 A
 Value of listening to the **Gospel** in our current **Synodal** Process. A 76
 Local context is king (and queen!). D 76
 Growing SCCs. A 76
 Home mass. D 76
Community of missionary disciples. D 75
 Sharing the **Word of God**. A 75
 Small faith-based **community**. D 75
 Source of comfort to the lay faithful. D 75
 Outreach evangelization. A 74
 Joining hands in promoting YPSCCs. A 73
 Young Professionals SCC. D 73
 Basic means of evangelization. A 72
 Personal spiritual growth. A 72
 Listening circle. A 71
 Multi-ethnic small **community**. D 70
 Zoom **Bible** Sharing. A 70
 Discernment Circle. A 70
 Support for our spiritual life. D 70
 Young People Small Searching **Community**. D 70
 Model of evangelization. D 70
 Home blessings. A 69
 Small Young People Peer Group **Faith Sharing Community**. D 69
 Church on the ground. D 68
 Privileged place to experience family spirit, **Synodality** and outreach to others. A 68
 Evangelization means practical action and reaching out to others. A 68
 Weekly **lectionary**-based **faith sharing**. A 67

Strength of our parish **community**. D 67
Prays together for the needs of others. A 67
 Connecting with other young people. A 67
 Evangelizing through smartphones. A 66
 Online small **community**. D 66
 Deepens my faith and **prayer** life. A 65
 Thanksgiving for getting back to nearer normal. A 65
 Unique opportunity to use the **Synodal** Process. A 65
 Groundwork for a **Synodal** Parish. D 64
 Structure of fraternity and support. D 64
 Sharing life experiences. A 64
 Thanking God and celebrating our 50 Year SCCs Anniversary in Eastern Africa. A 64
 Responds to Pope Francis' emphasis on reaching out to the marginalized. A 64
 Family **Communities**. D 63
 New model of church. D 63
 Digital SCC. D 63
 Ongoing formation of SCC members. A 63
 Regular practical action and outreach. A 63
 Local context is king (and queen!). D 62
 Place of evangelization. A 62
 WhatsApp SCC as a support group. A 62
 Campus small **communities**. D 61
 Proclaiming the **Good News** of **Jesus Christ**. A 61
 Reawakens the missionary spirit in the laity. A 60
 Families support one another in times of need. A 59
 Training for SCC leaders. A 59
 Strength of our parish **community**. D 58
 Focus questions that relate **Scripture** to daily life. A 58
Synodal SCCs Model of Church on the local level. D 58
 Laity form the engine of SCCs. A 57
Faith sharing grounded in **Scripture**. A 57
Gospel-centered faith. D 57
 Silent periods in our gatherings. D 57
 Church from the grassroots. D 57
 Volunteer service. A 56
 Basic space where I live my faith. A 56
 Applies the **Gospel** to our daily/everyday life. A 56
 Offers many faith formation opportunities. A 56
Lectio Divina. D 56
 Breaking open the **Word of God**. A 55
 Network of SCCs. D 55
 Virtual SCC. D 55
 Center of communion and outreach. D 54
 New way of being church. D 54
 "Must" hour every week. D 54
 Authentic experience of **Synodality**. A 54
 Online SCC. D 54
 Intergenerational mass. D 54
 Mirror the ongoing **Synodal** Process to ensure that no one is left behind. A 54
 Helps me to go deeper in my faith. A 53
 Online **communities**. D 53

Networking **communities**. A 53
 Spirit of belonging. D 53
 Online *jumuiya* (Swahili for “**community**”). D 53
 Follows the example of **Christ** the Healer. A 53
 Practical action and service. A 52
 Sharing ideas and ways to evangelize. A 52
 Safe space to discern God’s call for each of us. A 52
 Pastoral tool of evangelization today. D 52
 Structurally connected to the parish. D 52
 Mass in the neighborhood. A 52
 Parish is communion of **communities** model with SCCs structurally connected. D 52
 Online Campus SCCs. D 51
 Walking together with **Jesus**. A 51
 Call to respond to the suffering **Jesus Christ**. A 51
 Part of a Small Eucharistic **Community**. D 51
Lectionary-based Catholics can change the world. A 50
 Effective network of church renewal. D 50
 Missionary Outreach. A 50
 Helps me to connect the **Bible** and everyday life. A 50
 Encourages friendship with **Jesus Christ**. A 50
Community of believers on mission. A 50
 Seeds of **Synodality**. D 50

Our analysis and assessment is as follows:

1. Key words marked: **Bible/Good News/Gospel/lectionary/Scripture/Lectio Divina/Word of God** in **BLACK** bold; **faith sharing** in **ORANGE** bold; **Pray/Prays/Prayer** in **BLUE** bold; **Synodality** in **GREEN** bold; **Jesus/Jesus Christ/Christ** in **RED** bold; **Covid** in **DARK BLUE** bold; **Community** in **YELLOW** bold; and **Evangelization/Evangelizing/Evangelism/Evangelize** in **PURPLE** bold.
2. The number of overall choices is close (839 on D: the dynamics/process/principles/classifications of SCCs and 914 on A: activities/content/Outreach/practical action of SCCs). Of the top 20 choices, 18 are A and only 2 are D. This reveals a voting preference for activities, etc.
3. **Bible**-related, etc. is the most common word (28). **Community** is the second most common word (24). **Faith sharing** is the third most common word (21). Followed by **Synodality** (21), **Evangelization/Evangelizing/Evangelism/Evangelize** (14), **Pray/Prays/Prayer** (13), **Covid** (11) and **Jesus Christ** (10).
4. There is a big difference in the choices of those who vote in person (paper and pen) and those who vote online.

5 August, 2024

15. Examples of Demonstrations, Role Plays, Questions and Group Dynamic Exercises on the Meaning and Importance of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa

A. Formal Demonstration of a Small Christian Community *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection/*Bible*—Life Connections Service

Eight participants in a SCCs Training Workshop volunteer to sit in a circle in front of the hall or classroom and go through the Seven Steps of LUMKO or the 13 steps of a weekly *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Reflection/*Bible*—Life Connections Service. The goal is to demonstrate lectionary-based Faith-sharing. Usually the Gospel of the following Sunday is chosen. This practical demonstration is valuable on two levels. First, it introduces beginners to the basic steps in how to read and reflect on the *Bible* and to connect the *Bible* to our daily lives. Emphasis is on the **quality** of the sharing and reflection. Second, it reminds active SCC members of the basic steps and helps them to correct mistakes that have crept into their weekly meetings like forgetting the period of silence or not reading the Gospel a second time.

Then the rest of the workshop participants give their evaluation, comments and feedback. The ongoing discussion is based on their collective experience.

B. Who is First?

In various SCCs Training Workshops we use a very simple, but effective demonstration (role play) on unity, cooperation and the “Communitarian Model of Church”.¹⁴⁸⁴ First, six volunteers walk in single file in one direction. The facilitator asks, “Who is in front?” and all of the workshop participants give the name the person in the front of the line. The facilitator asks, “Who is last in the line?” and the participants gave the name of the last person. Then the facilitator asked the six people to turn around and walk in the opposite direction. The same two questions are asked but the names were reversed. Then the facilitator asks the six volunteers to join hands and stand in a circle. When asked, “Who is first?” the participants answer, “No one.” When asked, “Who is last?” the participants answer, “No one.” The teaching is clear. We are challenged to overcome our intense individualism, excessive competitiveness and exaggerated rivalries to work together in building community and emphasizing a horizontal (a circle) rather than a vertical (pyramid) model of church.

¹⁴⁸⁴ I first saw this role play performed by five-year-old children in the Montessori School on the grounds of Assumption of Mary Parish (Umoja) in Nairobi, Kenya. I have used this demonstration many times including during an international meeting of professors of mission in the USA in 2004.

C. Draw the Church

In SCC Training Workshops, SCCs Courses, talks and Zoom Gatherings we use a demonstration (role play) where three volunteers come to the blackboard (or front of the room/gathering) and are asked to "Draw the Church" (*Chora Kanisa* in Swahili) without seeing what the other two people beside them are drawing. Then the three drawings are evaluated and discussed by all the participants in the workshop. Most drawings are of the church building alone,¹⁴⁸⁵ some drawings are of the church building with people inside. Very few participants draw the church as a Christian Community, a Community of Believers, the "People of God" ("we lay people are the church"), the Church as the Family of God and the House Church of the *New Testament* using symbols of community and unity like the circle and linking signs.¹⁴⁸⁶

Most drawings over emphasize the importance of the priest and clerical/ religious leadership – forgetting that 99% of the Catholic Church are lay people.

This can lead to a discussion of the People of God Ecclesiology from the Second Vatican Council, Communion Ecclesiology (the parish as a "communion of communities"), the Church as Concentric Circles and the Church as family Ecclesiology from the First African Synod in Rome in April, 1994.¹⁴⁸⁷ The discussion can also reflect on the sacred character of the church that Jesus by extension calls "my Father's house" (*John 2:15*).

Similar exercises are:

1. Draw the "Kingdom of God" from an African Perspective.
2. Draw an image or picture of Jesus Christ that comes to your mind or reflects the work that you do. Interpret this image or picture and how it reflects your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
3. Ask the question: If a newspaper headline or a radio/TV headline starts: "The Catholic Church Says..." who do you think the "Church" is in this context? In a survey of lay people in Tanzania 95 % said: "the Bishops." We have a long way to go to change this

¹⁴⁸⁵ In a conversation with the author, Maryknoll missionary priest Father John Lange MM said that Africans continue to view the Catholic Church as a building and as the "House" of God (similar to how the Jews view the "Temple" in Jerusalem). Better educated African Catholics and expatriates view the Catholic Church as people and specifically as the People of God. Nairobi, Kenya, 16 January, 2017.

¹⁴⁸⁶ "The parish is not principally a structure, a territory, a building. A parish is first all a community of the faithful. That is the task of the parish today: to be a community, to rediscover itself as community." St. John Paul II to the Parish Focolarini, March, 1986.

¹⁴⁸⁷ St. John Paul II posed an interesting challenge to the Catholic Church in Africa under the section "The Church as God's Family:" "It is earnestly to be hoped that theologians in Africa will work out the theology of the Church as Family with all the riches contained in this concept, showing its complementarity with other images of the Church." John Paul II, *The Church in Africa (Ecclesia in Africa)*: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), No. 63.

mentality of seeing the Catholic Church as a hierarchical institution (a top down, vertical approach) to the People of God (a horizontal communion).

D. Passing on a Message

An effective communications exercise in SCC Training Workshops is the demonstration (role play) of “Passing on the Message.” Participants are divided into groups of six sitting together in a line or row. The first person in the group is told or read a story with a message of various names, events and facts. He or she tells this message to the next person and then to the next person down the line until the end. The last person in each group then tells what he or she heard to all the workshop participants. Then the original story/message is told or read to the whole group. Workshop participants give comments and feedback on the process of passing on the message. What has been left out? What has been added? Is the basic meaning of the original story/message still recognizable?

The style of the demonstration (role play) can varied according to the number of participants and the local context.

This is a good demonstration in improving the listening skills of SCC members. It is practical because at times we are challenged to pass on a message clearly and accurately. For example, an announcement on a coming SCCs Workshop is made at the end of the Sunday Mass in the Parish Church. This announcement is passed on to the subparish and then to the outstation and then to the weekly SCC meeting and finally to a person who was not at the meeting. Has the announcement/message been passed on clearly and accurately?

E. Demonstration of Unity and Working Together Using an African Proverb

During a SCC Workshop a very effective teaching on of unity and working together is to demonstrate African proverb *The cooking pot sits on three stones* in the traditional African fireplace. The three cooking stones of equal size and placement easily support the clay or metal cooking pot. The three cooking stones are positioned very carefully. The balance between their standing close together yet apart is a symbol of community life. The three stones need each other; they work together. Take away one stone and the pot falls down.¹⁴⁸⁸

The teachings:

5. A creative way of teaching the importance of SCCs is to describe the three cooking stones on which SCCs are "cooked" as spiritual values, acts of mercy, and concrete projects.
6. The metaphor of the one cooking pot¹⁴⁸⁹ and three stones can be used in different ways to describe the Catholic Church.
 - a. One church but three parts: priests, religious and laity.
7. The image of the cooking pot and the three stones is an important analogy for the Trinity: one God and three Divine Persons.
8. A Sukuma, Tanzania proverb: *The three stones that support the cooking pot are cold* (literally *mafiga baridi* in Swahili) means that there is no fire and thus no food is being cooked -- a sign of the lack of hospitality, welcome and love. The cold stones are a sign of the lack of good relationships within the home itself and with people living outside.
9. The water pot is compared to a stable family or community where everyone has to give joint positive support in all activities for success to be realized.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Rita Ishengoma is a SCC specialist in using this demonstration. She travels with a small box that contains a cooking pot and three very small stones. She uses the demonstration as part of a Prayer Service or Talk on unity and working together.

¹⁴⁸⁹ *The Parable of the Pot:*

During a demonstration in a Small Christian Community (SCC) Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, three members separately tried to stabilize an African clay cooking pot with a rounded bottom on a table top. They failed. Having no flat bottom on which to rest, the pot would simply roll to one side. Going on their hands and knees they tried the same thing on the floor and failed again. Eventually each person added a small stone at the base of the pot until three stones together finally stabilized it. The pot now stood upright.

Then they turned to SCC members and simply asked, "What did you see?" Small group conversation started and then an open forum. A wide range of keen observations and rich reflections flowed from the group. "The church is the pot. The three stones are the priests, the religious and the laity that have complementary roles." "The church is the pot. It is supported by the people, by Small Christian Communities from the grassroots." "The stones represent faith, hope and charity." "Everyone has a contribution to make to the church." "Conflict and tension are part of being church." "It is only when we get down on our hands and knees that we do the work of being the church." "The stones suggest the Trinity that supports the whole church." "The pot is the one God and the three stones are the three Persons of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Some examples of the many African proverbs:

The cooking pot sits on three stones. OR Three stones support the cooking pot. (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

If you sit on a hearthstone, you do not grow tall or The person who sits on a stone that supports the cooking pot will never grow taller (Ganda, Uganda).

A water pot cannot stand on its own without a support. (Luo, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda)

Two stones are not enough for cooking (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).

Cold stones – an idiom in Sukuma, Tanzania (*Mafiga baridi* in Swahili). Meaning translation above.

In traveling around the world one can ask what are the parallels for the metaphor of one and three in other contexts and cultures. Some examples:

1. Flashlight (torch) with three parts.
2. Photocopy machine with three parts.
3. Flag with three colors.

F. Rewriting Bible Passages

An interesting exercise is for the SCC members to rewrite *Bible* passages in an African context. Some examples mentioned in this book.

- i. Parable of the Good Samaritan (*Luke* 10:25-37).
- ii. Epiphany of the Lord (*Isaiah* 60:1-6 and *Matthew* 2:1-12).
- iii. St. Paul's Teaching on Equality (*Colossians* 3:11).

G. Write Down the Names of Three Close Friends?

An interesting exercise in SCC Training Workshops that emphasize the importance of the *Bible*: hand out a blank piece of paper and ask the participants to write down the names of three close friends? These are friends that they have known for a long, long time and with whom they have regular contact and communications.

Then ask: Did anyone write down the name of one of the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) or an important writer of books in the *Bible* like St. Paul? Probably not. But the message/reality is clear. These writers are our close friends. At certain times of the liturgical year we “meet” them every day. We regularly read their gospels/epistles and reflect and meditate on them. We try to put their teachings into practice. But ordinarily we don’t think of them as “friends.”

A related exercise is to hand out a blank piece of paper and ask the participants to write down ten favorite *Bible* passages (a quotation, a parable, a miracle, a special event, etc.) without looking at the *Bible* itself. Then open the *Bible* and next to each passage put its author/writer. In this way you can see what are your favorite books of the *Bible* and your favorite authors/writers of the books of the *Bible*.¹⁴⁹⁰

¹⁴⁹⁰ When the author did this exercise on “Your Favorite Evangelist” during a retreat he discovered that nine of the 10 passages were from St. *Luke’s* Gospel.

H. Topics of Specific Role Plays on Small Christian Communities

- a. *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection in a Small Group: Weekly Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* is essential part of a SCC. A practical role play (demonstration) of six to eight SCC members sitting around in a circle and reflecting on the Gospel of the following Sunday is very helpful for people to understand more deeply and practice Steps 4-8 as follows:

Step 4: Read the Gospel of the following Sunday (first time).

Step 5: Mention a word, phrase or image in the Gospel that strikes you the most.

Step 6: Read the Gospel of the following Sunday (second time).

Step 7: Silence. Listening to what God is saying/what God wants to tell us.

Step 8. *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection/Bible—Life Connections*. Connect, relate and apply the *Bible* (Gospel) to our daily lives and experience (on both personal and society-wide levels).

Then the whole audience gives their comments and feedback.

- b. Pastoral problems facing Small Christian Communities in the parish: the harm of gossip among Small Christian Community members, tensions in marriage, infidelity, misuse of money and weak leadership. EXAMPLE: During one of the Peacebuilding Seminars for the Small Christian Community leaders of Christ the King Catholic Parish in Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya on Saturday, 7 March 2009 there was a role play on infidelity in marriage. Leaders of the Small Christian Communities were encouraged to gather information and facts and then patiently and sensitively listen to members' views. Having done so, then address the matter "*kijumuiya*" that is, involving the other members of the Small Christian Community. Gossip causes a lot of ill feelings such as in the group, raises suspicions, anger, distrust and so needs to be handled carefully. There is a need for a proper reconciliation service after any such events.
- c. Tribalism, negative ethnicity, poverty, insecurity, instability, abuse and corruption in the urban slums. EXAMPLE: During one of the Reconciliation and Peacebuilding Seminars for the Small Christian Community leaders of Christ the King Catholic Parish in Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya on Saturday, 7 March 2009 there was a role play on the causes of instability in Kibera slums. Kibera is a very populous slum located in Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya and its inhabitants come from almost all the ethnic groups in Kenya. The residents live from hand to mouth in desperate conditions such as poor infrastructures. Their main concern is to meet their very basic human needs. Due to this diversity and vulnerability it was one of the hot spots of the post-election violence in 2008 with examples of tribalism, negative ethnicity, instability and other problems. Hence the need for a reconciliation and peacebuilding seminar.
- d. Social issues such as abortion, drug abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, human trafficking, prostitution and unethical behavior.

e. *Bible Stories*:¹⁴⁹¹

- i. “Samaritan Woman at the Well” (*John* 4:4-42). Theme of unity in diversity. Jesus breaks barriers between ethnic communities (Jews and Samaritans) and man-women relationships by talking with the Samaritan woman.
- ii. “Unforgiving Debtor” (*Matthew* 18: 22-35). Theme of forgiveness in the context of the reconciliation programs in parishes after the 2008 post-election violence in Kenya.
- iii. “The Good Samaritan” (*Luke* 10:25-37). Themes of love, compassion and service to others. There are many creative opportunities. Children and youth can do a role play on this parable during a SCC meeting or workshop. The short DVD Scripture music video “Who Is My Neighbor” (5:57 minutes in the *Parables Alive!* Series produced by Paulines Africa Books and Audiovisuals¹⁴⁹² can be played during a SCC meeting or workshop followed by discussion. This music video retells the classic Good Samaritan story in a contemporary African setting and context. It tells the story of “The Good Muslim” who is a porter at the railway station in Nairobi, Kenya and has a powerful message about overcoming stereotypes and divisions to show love to people who are different from us. This is one of the many contemporary adaptations of the famous *Bible* parable in an African context.
- iv. “That Person is You.” SCC members are invited to participate in the story of the two disciples walking to the village of Emmaus (*Luke* 24:13-35). Who is the “other” disciple, the companion of Cephas who is the only person named. The answer: “You”. “What things” (see verse 19) do you want to talk over with Jesus Christ?
- v. A Pastoral Theological Reflection (PTR) Session in a SCC based on the Gospel story in *Mark* 6: In verse 7 Jesus sends out the 12 apostles two by two to preach and to heal. Then in verse 30: “The apostles rejoined (gathered together with) Jesus and reported all they had done and taught” (also found in *Luke* 9:10). This is the “See,” “Judge” and “Act” process or methodology starting with the apostles’ mission experience. Then Jesus says to them in verse 31: “Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.” Silence is an important part of the reflection process. After a period of rest and reflection the apostles start a new action.
- vi. “No, This is the First Time You are Reading This Gospel.” A SCC member reads a particular Gospel text – either the Gospel of the following Sunday or a well-known story or teaching in the *New Testament*. We ask the SCC Workshop participants if they have ever heard or read this Scripture text

¹⁴⁹¹ Drawn from many sources such as: Stories performed at Annual SCCs Open Day at Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Parish, South B, Nairobi, Kenya on 30 October, 2011. Youth Plays as part of the Sunday Homily. African youth can find *Bible* Readings long and boring (for example, the Gospels during Lent). But acting out the story can be entertaining, informative and educational. DVDs/Videos.

¹⁴⁹² <http://www.paulinesafrica.org/audiovisual.html>

before. Some answers are: “Yes, I have read this passage many times.” “We use this Gospel in the Sunday readings. “This is a common text in our religious education classes and talks.” Then we answer: “No, This is the First Time You are Reading This Gospel.” This demonstration reminds the SCC members that they are hearing/reading this Gospel (or any other *Bible* text) – for the first time. Not because the story is new, but the context, the local situation, the contemporary reality, the time (today, now, at this moment as we are personally involved) are new and can bring new insights and applications.

These role plays and demonstrations can include different creative ways of reading and reflecting on the *Bible*.¹⁴⁹³ One way is to read the Gospel slowly and meditatively using the method of Ignatian contemplation that engages our active imagination. This involves the method of “Composition of Time and Place.”¹⁴⁹⁴ We visualize the event as if we are making a movie. We place ourselves in the scene and lose ourselves in the story. We attend to the details -- the sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings of the event. We don’t worry if our imagination is running too wild. Contemplating a Gospel scene is not simply remembering it or going back in time. Through the act of contemplation, the Holy Spirit makes present a mystery of Jesus’ life in a way that is meaningful for us now. We use our imagination to dig deeper into the story so that God may communicate with us in a personal, evocative way. See more at: <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises/ignatian-contemplation-imaginative-prayer> **NOTE:** In the *Spiritual Exercises* contemplation is a very active way of praying that engages the mind and heart and stirs up thoughts and emotions. In other spiritual traditions contemplation has quite a different meaning. It refers to a way of praying that frees the mind of all thoughts and images.

¹⁴⁹³ After participating in over 1000 weekly meetings of SCCs around the world in the last 40 years I have seen three styles:

1. The leaders and other SCC participants merely reread, retell or rephrase the actual Scripture reading.
2. The leaders and other SCC participants explain the meaning of the actual Scripture reading: historical background, exegesis of the text, etc. – a *Bible* study approach. A helpful mantra is: “Everything in the *Bible* is true. Some of it happened.”
3. The ideal: The leaders and other SCC participants connect the actual Scripture reading to our daily lives, our lived reality.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Once I celebrated Sunday Mass at Christ the King Parish in New Vernon, New Jersey, USA. I invited the parishioners to enter creatively into the Scripture Readings (the *Bible* story) by using the method of “Composition of Time and Place.” In the First Reading, *Genesis* 18:1–2 says: “The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.” Abraham showed immediate hospitality to the three men, inviting them to rest under a tree and preparing a big meal for them (verses 3–8). After mass a Catholic man greeted me in the sacristy and said, “Father, I followed your suggestion of entering into the *Bible* story. Wow, it was hot sitting with Abraham in the heat of the day in the desert. I started to sweat and my shirt became wet.”

Another is a communal reading of the *Bible* when each SCC member reads a verse in turn or a paragraph at a time.

I. Where is the Nearest Catholic Church?

How can we explain that "we are the church" -- that the Catholic Church is not just the bishops and the priests, that the church is the whole community of believers, that the church is Christian people in given local area, that lay people (often ordinary people at the "base") take responsibility for *their* Local Church communities. During workshops and seminars we pose the following situation: A stranger comes up to you on the street in your town and says, "I am a visitor here. Would you please tell me where is the nearest Catholic Church?" What would you tell the person? Usually there is a wide variety of answers from "The cathedral is over there near the high school" to "I'll be glad to walk to the church with you." Participants always be surprised to hear that perhaps the best answer to the question "Where is the church" is to point to oneself and say: "I am the church" (that is, as a member of the "community of believers").

At a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in May, 2008 10 people pointed to the nearby parish church building before one participant finally said: "I would tell the visitor that I am the church and even take him or her to my SCC."

J. How Many Missionaries Are in the Room?

I enjoy shocking African audiences, especially lay people, when I ask them. “When St. John Paul II was asked, “What was the most important day of your life,” what do you think he answered? Many thought he would answer, “When I was elected pope” or “The day I became a bishop.” But he quickly answered, “The day I was baptized.” He recognized that the day he was baptized he fully become a child of God and began participating in the life of the Trinity. Through his Baptism into the Christian community he became responsible to be a missionary and to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to others.

During SCCs Meetings I like to remind people that every Catholic is a missionary by virtue of his or her Baptism. The most effective way is to ask the question: “How Many Missionaries Are in the Room?”

Here is how it happened when I participated in the weekly meeting of St. Catherine of Siena SCC in Queen of Heaven Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese on Monday, 28 July, 2014. We were a total of 19 participants: 16 lay people, two priests and one religious sister. When I asked the SCC members how many missionaries were in the room, I kept getting the answer “three.” This is the standard and most common answer. Then one woman suddenly said “19.” I asked her to stand up and everyone clapped. Yes, she “got it.” I hope everyone in that SCC remembers.

K. Special Exercise to Identify Obstacles/Problems in the Growth/Development of SCCs and Find Practical, Pastoral Solutions

Many SCC Training Workshops and Seminars in Eastern Africa begin with this practical exercise. This is a new way of conducting a workshop or seminar. After participant introductions, the first session is not a lecture on SCCs (deductive and from the top down), but this practical, pastoral, experiential exercise (inductive and from the bottom up).

Step 1: From their personal experience workshop participants identify some 20 or 25 common obstacles/problems in the growth/development of their SCCs on the local level.

Step 2: Participants vote for their top five or six choices, that is, the obstacles/problems that they would like to analyze more in depth and to find solutions.¹⁴⁹⁵

Step 3: Analyze and discuss in depth these most common and troubling obstacles/problems using the resources of the *Bible*, social analysis (history, anthropology, economics, politics, sociology), theological reflection, pastoral experiences and propose practical, pastoral solutions. Most important is to learn from the experience of other SCCs and how they solved these obstacles/problems on the local level.¹⁴⁹⁶

Step 4: Make an Action Plan and Timetable to carry out these practical, pastoral solutions.

Two concrete examples: First, many SCC Workshops and Seminars in Eastern Africa identify “lack of youth in our SCCs” as a major obstacle/problem. One solution is to start specific Youth SCCs in which the youth take responsibility for their own regular lectionary-based Faith-sharing and a wide variety of other activities.

Second, many SCC Workshops and Seminars in Eastern Africa identify “there are few men in our SCCs” as a major obstacle/problem. Our Eastern Africa SCC Training Team feels there are practical solutions. One is to politely but firmly challenge the assumption that men are superior to women,¹⁴⁹⁷ and that men have more leadership skills than women. Help

¹⁴⁹⁵ Steps 1 and 2 can take place ahead of time when the Eastern Africa SCC Training Team meets with SCC leaders, members of the Parish Pastoral Council, catechists and parish staff.

¹⁴⁹⁶ As I travel around the most frequent question that I get is: How do other SCCs practically solve these obstacles/problems?

¹⁴⁹⁷ Vincent Donovan, CSSP dramatizes this challenge in the short story “In the Eucharist There Is Neither Male Nor Female:” *Christianity Rediscovered*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005, pp. 91-92:

There is a long-standing tradition of Maasai men in East Africa never to eat in the presence of Maasai women. In their minds, the status and condition of women were such that the very presence of women at the time of

the men to appreciate equality, working together, collaboration and sharing gifts and skills in the SCC. Another is to encourage activities and projects in the SCCs that attract men more than simply being part of a prayer group. It important to give the men a certain status and dignity so they feel wanted and needed.

eating was enough to pollute any food that was present. But here in the Eucharist we were at the heart of the unchanging gospel that I was passing on to them. They were free to accept that gospel or reject it, but if they accepted it, they were accepting the truth that in the Eucharist, which is to say in Christ, "there is neither slave nor free, neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female."

They did accept it, but it was surely a traumatic moment for them, as individuals and as a people, that first time when I blessed the cup, or gourd in this case, and passed it on to the woman sitting next to me, told her to drink from it, and then pass it on to the man sitting next to her. I don't remember any other pastoral experience in which the "sign of unity" was so real to me. And I was not surprised some time later when a group of teenage girls told me privately that the *ilomon sidai* ("good news") that I talked about constantly, was really good news for them.

16. Using the “See,” “Discern,” and “Act” Process/Method as Part of the Pastoral Spiral

Future Challenge/Priority/Action No. 6 states: “Promote the use of the “See,” “Discern” and “Act” (Pastoral Spiral) process/methodology in SCCs (including *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* and social/cultural analysis) to reflect on the deeper issues of reconciliation, justice and peace in Africa leading to concrete action so that this process becomes a central part of the life and ministry of SCCs.”

The Pastoral Spiral process/methodology is explained and demonstrated in many places in this Ebook. Here are two resources:

1. Guidelines for the “SCC Practicum Write-up”

1. **See (or Ona/Tazama)**: Describe the actual experience that you had in the SCC. When? Where? How long was the activity/gathering? Number of SCC members present (men, women, youth, children)? What did they do? Number and quality of the *Bible Sharings/Bible Reflections*. Did they connect to daily life? What was the spirit/feeling/style of the gathering?
2. **Discern (or Amua/Tafakari/Tathmini)**:¹⁴⁹⁸ Evaluate, assess and critique the actual experience. Use various methods and tools of Pastoral Theological Reflection (PTR):
 - a. *Bible*.
 - b. History.
 - c. Theology (Ecclesiology, Pastoral Theology).
 - d. Social and Cultural Analysis (sociology, politics, psychology, anthropology).
3. **Act (or Tenda)**: What actions did the SCC members decide on? What recommendations for further action do you have for the SCC members especially related to pastoral planning? What actions (if any) are you personally going to take (this is related to any learnings that you had from the experience)?

Updated: 12 December, 2023

1. Example of a SCC Practicum Write-up

SEE

Bible Service and Meeting of St. Kizito Small Christian Community (SCC),

¹⁴⁹⁸ There is a lot of discussion (and even disagreement) on the best words to use. “Discern” is preferred over “Judge.” Alternate words in Swahili are *tafakari* and *tathmini*.

Waruku (an informal settlement) in St. Austin's Parish, Nairobi Archdiocese, Nairobi, Kenya on Sunday afternoon, 22 February, 2009 from 2:15 to 4:15 p.m. Swahili. At Clementina Mulongo's (the SCC's new Treasurer) home. Total of 25 participants: 13 women, 12 men. Mixed ethnic groups. All three readings of the following Sunday (1st Sunday of Lent, 1 March, 2009) especially the Gospel: *Mark* 1:12-15. 14 bible verses cited. Only three *Bible* reflections (two men, one woman). Five petitions ("Prayer of the Faithful").

The number of *Bible* reflections was shortened because of the long pastoral and business agenda (plus the fact that SCC does not meet on the 1st Sunday of the month):

1. Deaconate of Joseph in St. Austin's Parish on 28 March, 2009.
2. *Zamu* of the SCC at the parish masses on Sunday, 1 March, 2009.
3. Meaning of Lent and the 2009 Kenya Lenten Campaign.
4. Marriage of Maureen Achieng and Chrispin Odhiambo on 7 March, 2009.
5. Short comment by a newcomer to the SCC with an explanation of typical financial problems.

Discussion on various financial collections. Materials on the 2009 Kenya Lenten Campaign and various booklets in Swahili on marriage, etc. were handed out.

DISCERN

No silence between the Scripture readings. A very active SCC, but decision-making is always long and complicated, for example, deciding on what gifts to give to the new deacon and to the new married couple. It was pointed out that last year the materials on the 2008 Kenya Lenten Campaign got "stuck" in one home and were not passed around. The Chairperson had to leave early and the Assistant Chairperson had more trouble running the meeting especially collecting and recording financial contributions. Serving tea and *mandazi* in the middle of the meeting was distracting. Later I pointed out that bad habits can creep into the *Bible* Service part of the weekly gathering: SCC Members "teaching" rather than sharing during their *Bible* Sharings/*Bible* Reflections. One sharing included a long, long story that was not connected to the theme of the scriptures.

ACT

Decision to have an extra St. Kizito SCC Meeting on another day to cover all the agenda listed above. SCC leaders stayed behind to work on implementation and follow-up. Trying to solve two problems privately after the meeting: Dispute over the amount of the gift from the SCC Fund to a needy SCC member. The plan for a memorial mass in Machakos for the son of the Vice Chairperson who was killed in an automobile accident is to be implemented *kijumuiya* later in the year.

Prepared by:
Rev. Joseph G. Healey, M.M.
Updated 12 December, 2023

17. SCC Reflection on Adoptive Parent Families

NOTE: This SCC Reflection is adapted from *The Journey of Faith – 5: Together in Jesus’s Family*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2012. It is based on *Matthew* 18:5 and 25:40; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) Nos. 2379, 1654; and *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC), No. 218. It helps SCCs in the ongoing formation of couples and the deeper understanding of family and marriage.

1. Learn from an African Story

In most African cultures, childlessness is considered a curse. This is one of the reasons given for polygamy, a practice that is still encouraged. Stephen and Caroline had been married for five years and no children came their way. It was painful for the couple as they had become the talk of the African village. In fact, some of Stephen’s friends thought that Caroline was not the best choice for him and advised him to marry another woman. Stephen’s parents also kept pressurizing them. They wanted to see their grandchildren before dying and joining their ancestors.

It was a time of crisis for the couple. Both knew that it was against the Church’s teaching for Stephen to marry another wife. The Small Christian Community, however, was constantly on their side. They tried to encourage them to keep faithful to their marriage and kept advising them to consider adoption since they had all the possibilities to care for children. This was not agreeable to the parents of Stephen since they wanted their own grandchildren.

Stephen and Caroline however, stood firm and planned to choose adoption rather than break their marriage. Three months later a young couple who were members of the Small Christian Community lost their lives in a terrible road accident, leaving behind three little children. It was a sad moment for the entire community. Stephen and Caroline offered to adopt these children as other relatives were financially unable to meet their needs. Though a sad incident, Stephen and Caroline were happy that they could take these children as their own and provide for all their necessities.

2. Lessons from the African Story

1. With the support of their SCC Stephen and Caroline stood firm together despite the pressure that came from friends and family. In this way, they confirm the fact that their marriage remains valid and meaningful despite being childless. They can “nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality and of sacrifice” (CCC, 1654).

2. “The Gospel shows that physical sterility is not an absolute evil. Spouses who suffer from infertility after exhausting legitimate medical procedures should unite themselves with the Lord’s cross, the source of all spiritual fecundity. They can give expression to their generosity by adopting abandoned children or performing demanding services to others” (CCC, 2379).

3. When faced with childlessness, it is important to seek advice from the right people. These include qualified medical people and those who would help to keep the marriage stable. Stephen and Caroline choose to listen to their Small Christian Community and finally opt for adoption and to keep the unity of their marriage.

18. Questionnaire on Fidei Donum Priests Animating the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Model of Church in Kenya Today (Nairobi, Kenya)¹⁴⁹⁹

1. Do you personally belong to a SCC?

If yes, describe it.

2. Do you celebrate Mass in the homes of SCC members?

How is the homily done?

3. Write some words/phrases to describe the role of a priest in a SCC in Kenya today.

4. Number of SCCs in Kenya today _____

5. Number of SCCs in AMECEA (Eastern Africa) today _____

6. How important are SCCs in your parish?

7. How important are SCCs in your diocese?

¹⁴⁹⁹ This is a sample of a questionnaire used in SCCs workshops, seminars, meetings and other training sessions. The starting point is not a lecture or a talk but the participants' personal, practical, pastoral experience. The 13 participants (12 priests and one bishop) at the Fidei Donum Priests Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya on 25 April, 2013 formed St. Mark SCC for the duration of the workshop (based on the saint of the day).

19. Questionnaire on Evaluating the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Priority in a Parish or Diocese in Eastern Africa

It is helpful to do a basic inventory as a beginning step. Then evaluate both the quantity and quality of the SCCs.

On the Parish Level:

Arriving in a parish, a person can rather quickly gather data. First, on the more informational level:

How many SCCs are in the parish?¹⁵⁰⁰

How many YSCCs are in the parish?

Is there a Parish Pastoral Plan?

Are SCCs a major part of the Parish Pastoral Plan?

Is there a coordinator of SCCs on the parish level? Full time? Part time? Is there a Parish SCCs Coordination Team?

Is there a Parish SCCs Training Team?

Are the SCCs listed on the parish bulletin board?

Are the SCCs mentioned in the homily?

Are the SCCs mentioned in the Prayer of the Faithful?

Are the SCCs mentioned in the announcements?

Are the SCCs mentioned in the parish bulletin (paper and online)?

Are SCCs emphasized on the Parish Website?

Are books, booklets and pamphlets on SCCs included in the sale of religious literature?

Are books, booklets and pamphlets on SCCs in the parish library?

Then the deeper questions:

¹⁵⁰⁰ The answer to this question feeds into the question -- How many SCCs are in the diocese? -- that feeds into the question -- How many SCCs are in the country? that feeds into the question -- How many SCCs are in the AMECEA Region?

How many SCCs in the parish do lectionary-based Faith-sharing on a weekly basis, that is, read and reflect on the Gospel of the following Sunday?

Do the SCCs' weekly *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection/Bible--Daily Life Connections* directly contribute to the content of the Sunday homilies and other teachings of the priests and other parish leaders?

Do the SCCs have Recollection Days and Retreats?

Does the Parish Pastoral Team model a small community style? Is lectionary-based Faith-sharing a regular part of the meetings of the Parish Pastoral Team?

How are SCCs integrated in the pastoral structure of the parish? How are SCCs represented on the Parish Pastoral Council?

How are the SCCs different from the Small Apostolic Groups/Traditional Parish Organizations or Associations in the parish?

Are the SCCs just one of many pastoral ministries in the parish or fundamental to the whole ecclesial structure and life of the parish?

Do the lay ecclesial ministers, catechists, coordinators, animators and facilitators in the Pastoral Ministry of SCC have regular meetings?

Do they have formation and training workshops? How is the formation and training carried out?

Are there formation and training workshops in the SCCs themselves?

How many pastoral activities of the parish pass through the SCCs?

Are the sacraments sometimes celebrated in the SCCs?

Are religious services and activities like the Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, the Way of the Cross, etc. coordinated through the SCCs?

How much parish fund raising is coordinated through the SCCs?

Do the SCCs have self-help projects?

How do the SCCs participate in justice and peace activities?

Is there an annual SCC Day in the parish?

Is the pastor (and other parish leaders) committed to this Small Christian Community Model of Church? Do the priests, religious, catechists and lay ecclesial leaders emphasize the importance of SCCs in their talks?

How do the SCCs in the parish use the internet especially the social media and social networking? Facebook? Twitter? What'sApp? YouTube?

On the Diocesan Level:

Arriving in a diocese a person can rather quickly gather data. First, on the more informational level:

How many SCCs are in the diocese?¹⁵⁰¹

How many YSCCs are in the diocese?

Is there a Diocesan Pastoral Plan?

Are SCCs a major part of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan?

Is there a coordinator of SCCs on the diocesan level? Full time? Part time? Is the person connected to the Pastoral Department of the diocese?

Is there a Diocesan SCCs Coordination Team?

Is there a Diocesan SCCs Training Team?

Are SCCs emphasized in Pastoral Letters?¹⁵⁰²

Are SCCs emphasized on the Diocesan Website?

Then the deeper questions:

Are there regular meetings of SCCs coordinators, animators and facilitators at the diocesan and deanery levels?

Are there regular formation and training workshops of SCCs coordinators, animators and facilitators at the diocesan and deanery levels?

Is the bishop (local ordinary) committed to this Small Christian Community Model of Church? Does the bishop emphasize the importance of SCCs in his homilies and talks?

Is there an annual SCC Day in the diocese?

Are SCCs a major part of the Diocesan Synods?

On the diocesan level, how do the SCCs use the internet especially the social media and social networking?

¹⁵⁰¹ These results can feed into the national results and eventually into the Eastern Africa results (nine AMECEA countries) to get a complete picture of the number of SCCs in the AMECEA Region.

¹⁵⁰² A study of many Pastoral Letters in dioceses in the USA show that SCCs are recommended as one of the many pastorals and spiritual options in the parish along with *Bible Study Groups*, popular devotions (like adoration, novenas, the rosary and Stations of the Cross) and prayer groups rather than a new Pastoral Model of Church.

Does the diocese share its SCCs experiences with other dioceses and the Catholic Secretariat of the National Catholic Bishops' Conference?

Updated: 12 December, 2023

**20. Sample of the Program/Timetable of a SCCs
Workshop¹⁵⁰³: National Youth SCCs Workshop on the
Theme “Youth Embrace the Word of God in SCCs”**

THEME: YOUTH EMBRACE THE WORD OF GOD IN SCCS

VENUE: SALESIAN CENTRE, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

DATES: 2 – 4 DECEMBER, 2013

Monday 2 December, 2013: Day One

- Arrival of participants
- Meeting of Steering Committee (AMECEA Facilitators Team, National Pastoral Coordinator, Youth Coordinator, 2 participants: girl/boy)
- Evening after Supper:
 - Touchdown period: self-introduction, brief sharing on personal experiences of SCCs and expectations for the workshop.
 - Sharing of roles and responsibilities, structure of the program/timetable.
 - Creation of four Youth SCCs.
 - Discussion on plan for SCCs Mass to be led by Fr. Joe Healey the following day.

Tuesday, 3 December 2013: Day Two

- SCCs Mass
- Touchdown period discussion continues.
- “Sharing on the AMECEA Pastoral Priority of SCCs (1973 – 2013) with focus on Zambia.”
- “Focus on Youth in SCCs in the AMECEA Region.”
- “Centrality of the Word of God in SCCs.”
- Lectionary-based Faith-sharing in four Youth SCCs: *Matthew 3:1-12* (2nd Sunday of Advent).
- Evening: DVD on SCCs.

Wednesday, 4 December 2013: Day Three

- Learnings, questions and comments from the 1st Day.
- Using **SEE – DISCERN/JUDGE – ACT** reflection method in four Youth SCCs.
 - a. Explanation of the method/process.
 - b. Practical Experience in four Youth SCCs.
- “Interacting with Youth in the Social Media.”
- “An Experience of *Bible* Sharing in four Youth SCCs.”
- Evaluation and the Way Forward
- Evening: DVDs on AMECEA.

¹⁵⁰³ After many years of experience in participating in SCCs Workshops, Seminars, Meetings and Conferences a very good “learning” is that we should be energized by the people who come, not de-energized by the people who do not come.

DAY/DATE	TIME (HRS)	ACTIVITY	RESOURCE PERSON
<u>Monday 2 Dec.</u>	16:00	Arrival of Delegates/Registration Meeting of Steering Committee.	
	18:30	Supper	
	20:00	Opening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening remarks - Touchdown: self-introduction, brief sharing on their experience of SCCs and expectations for the workshop. - Sharing of roles and responsibilities, structure of the program/timetable. - Creation of four Youth SCCs Bed Time	
<u>Tuesday 3rd Dec.</u>	06:30	SCCs Mass	Fr. J. Healey
	07:30	Breakfast	All
	08:00	Opening Remarks: Secretary General SCCs as AMECEA Pastoral Priority	Fr. C Lungu Fr. F. Pikiti
	10:30	Health Break	
	11:00	Focus on Youth in SCCs in the AMECEA Region	Fr. J. Healey
	12:30	Lunch	
	14:00	Centrality of the Word of God in SCCs	Fr. F. Pikiti
	16:00	Health Break	
	16:30	Lectionary-based Faith-sharing in four Youth SCCs <i>Matthew 3:1-12 (2nd Sunday of Advent)</i>	Fr. J. Healey
	18:30	Supper	
	20:00	DVD on SCCs	Fr. J. Healey
	22:00	Bed Time	
<u>Wednesday 4 Dec.</u>	06:30	SCCs Mass	Fr. F. Pikiti
	07:30	Breakfast	All
	08:00	Learning, questions, comments of Day One	Fr. J. Healey
	10:30	Health Break	
	11:00	Using SEE – JUDGE – ACT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of the method - Practical experience 	
	12:30	Lunch	
	14:00	Interacting with Youth in Social Media	Fr. J. Healey
	16:00	Health Break	
	16:30	An experience of Bible Sharing in four Youth SCCs	Fr. F. Pikiti
	18:30	Supper	
	20:00	DVDs on AMECEA	Fr. J. Healey
	22:00	Bed Time	

--	--	--	--

21. Sample of an African Inculturated Small Christian Community Mass -- *Jumuiya* Mass¹⁵⁰⁴ (Nairobi, Kenya)

How are Small Christian Communities (SCCs) concretely a “New Model of Church” and a “New Way of Being Church” in Africa today. One practical example is the special celebration of the Eucharist in a SCC, usually in the home of one of the members. What we call a “*Jumuiya* Mass” (*jumuiya* means “community” in Swahili, the main language of Eastern and Central Africa). The plan for a *Jumuiya* Mass in an institutional or larger group setting is as follows. African countries represented are marked in **bold**:

African Inculturated Small Christian Community (*Jumuiya*) Mass on Wednesday of the Seventh Week of Ordinary Time, Year I

12 Noon

Hekima University College
Jesuit School of Theology
Nairobi, Kenya
Wednesday, 23 February, 2011

1. Entrance Songs:
 - “*Nalifurahi Sana*” (No. 6 in *Hymnal*).”
 - “Here I Am Lord.”
2. Introduction by Celebrant Father Joseph Healey, M.M.
3. Penitential Rite following the order of the Zaire (now the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**) Rite. At the end of the rite is an African Exchange of Peace using a sign of peace from **South Sudan and Sierra Leone**: Place your right hand on the left shoulder of the other person and say “Peace” in our home language/mother tongue. At the end sing: “Bind Us Together, Lord” (No. 361 in *Hymnal*). . The idea is that the Christian community should be reconciled and at peace with each other **before** hearing the Word of God.
4. First Reading: *Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)* 4:11-19 followed by Silence (*Lectio Divina*).
5. After First Reading instead of the Psalm sing: "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace" (on sheet).
6. Gospel:
 - a. Introduction to Shared Homily: NO Preached Homily. Instead Buzz Groups, a feature of group dynamics. First, participants are encouraged to experience the proclaimed

¹⁵⁰⁴ Mass begins in an African way with the celebrant greeting the congregation with “Good Morning.” Then “Welcome to this Eucharistic Celebration on the feast of...” Mentioning the liturgical season, the feast day and a reference to the theme of the Scripture readings puts the mass in context and makes it more personal.

Gospel using the method of “Composition of Time and Place.” A mental representation of the scene/place of the Gospel story involves seeing in our imagination the people, the buildings, the nature, the interaction, the actions, etc. In our praying the Gospel we consider all the people involved in the scene including ourselves and consider their words, actions and relationships. We apply our five senses to the events. We enter into the story as participants.

- b. *Matthew* 9:38-40.
- c. Silence (*Lectio Divina*).
- d. Five minutes of sharing in Buzz Groups of two or three people each reflecting on the two readings and applying them to Africa today (connecting the *Bible* and our faith to our daily life). Guided question: “What *Bible* words, phrases or verses struck you and what do they mean for our lives today?”

7. Spontaneous "Prayer of the Faithful" starting from our everyday local experience in English and in our home language/heart language/ mother tongue. Some intentions flow directly from the scripture readings. Ends with the Shona (**Zimbabwe**) name for Jesus Christ: “The One Who Turns Things Up-side-down.”

8. Offertory Song: “In Bread We Bring You, Lord” (No. 186 in *Hymnal*).
Our Father: Substitute "Food" rather than "Bread" to express solidarity with hungry and starving people in Northern **Kenya** and other places in Africa and to appreciate that many African languages do not have a word for "Bread."

9. Before Communion: **Ugandan** proverb: *Relationship is in the eating together*.

10. Communion Song: “*Tazama, Tazama*”¹⁵⁰⁵ (on sheet).

11. Prayer after Communion: The ending uses the Sukuma (**Tanzania**) names for Jesus in the coming Lenten season: “Jesus Christ the Great Healer and Victor over Death.”

12. Concluding Rite: Saying about being sent: *When you go down from the altar of sacrifice, bring not the ashes, but the fire*. “The Mass is beginning, go in peace to announce the Gospel of the Lord.”

13. Recessional Song: “*Upendo*” (No. 318 in *Hymnal*).

Prepared by St. Josephine Bakhita SCC, the members of the class Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (TE14)

¹⁵⁰⁵ The lyrics of this song are a powerful teaching moment. A refrain is *ndugu kuishi pamoja* (“friends living together”)...*kwa umoja* (“in unity”)...*kwa mapendo* (“in love”). There are references to joyfully gathering together, forgiving one another and living together with Jesus Christ in our midst.

22. African Proverbs and Sayings Related to Small Christian Communities (SCCs)

African Proverbs and Small Communities go hand in hand. There are thousands and thousands of African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories¹⁵⁰⁶ on the themes of belonging, brotherhood and sisterhood, collaboration, collegiality, communion, community, consensus, cooperation, family, friendship, intimacy, marriage participation, mutuality, partnership, personal relationships, sharing, solidarity, synodality, teamwork, togetherness, union, unity¹⁵⁰⁷ and working together (and their opposites). In turn, African Small Christian Communities use African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories in their calendars, discussions, liturgies, meetings, planning, prayers, reflections and sharing. Some are universal proverbs applied to the African context and situation. 228 popular African proverbs and sayings on community and community-related themes listed alphabetically are:

Alive, we live in the same house or under the same roof. Dead, we rest in the same tomb.
Alone a youth runs fast, with an elder slow, but together they go far.
Alone, alone, one cannot produce history.
All good friends are bad friends to lose.
An army of well-organized ants can bring down an elephant.
As long as you stay united in a group, the lion will go hungry.
Baboons shared the chaff.
Bananas cook best when bunched in a pot (Meaning: Neighbors do good things together).
Bangles sound when there are two.
A baby on its mother's back does not know the way is long.
A big cooking pot of rice is not without hard, burnt rice at the bottom.
A bird builds its nest using feathers of other birds.
Blood is thicker than water.
Blood relationships don't often procure mercy; favor comes only by divine connection.
A boat cannot go forward if each rows his or her own way.
A neighbor near by is better than a brother or sister who lives afar.
Brotherhood and sisterhood does not mean physical resemblance but mutual assistance.
Brothers are like calabashes, even if they knock each other, they don't break.

¹⁵⁰⁶ A Search for the word “community” on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website reveals 50 results (hits), retrieved on 2 April, 2014, <http://afriprov.org/index.php/search.html?searchword=community&ordering=&searchphrase=all>

A Search for the word “community” on the Small Christian Communities Website reveals 53 results (hits), retrieved on 2 April, 2014, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/search.html?searchword=community&ordering=&searchphrase=all>

¹⁵⁰⁷ For examples six saying on “unity” and two sayings on “community” are found in Joseph Healey, *Collection of, and Commentary on, 436 Sayings on East African Cloth (Misemo Kwenye Khanga na Vitenge vya Afrika Mashariki)*,” Nairobi: African Proverbs Working Group, 2005, Ebook, African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 5 November, 2017, <http://www.afriprov.org/images/afriprov/books/easayingsoncloth.pdf>. Computer Version updated to 600 sayings, 16 April, 2018.

Carve with your friends; alone you cut yourself.
A chicken develops a headache when it sees another chicken in the cooking pot.
A child belongs to everyone.
The child of many guardians is not bitten by ants.
The child who stays near his or her mother does not fall into the trap.
The cooking pot sits on three stones.
The cows never run away from her calves.
Cross the river in a crowd and the crocodile won't eat you.
Eating together promotes friendship.
Eating together strengthens brotherhood and sisterhood; there is nothing like brotherhood and sisterhood.
Everything is all right if you love each other.
A family is like a forest, when you are outside it is dense, when you are inside you see that each tree has its place.
The family is the cornerstone of our society.
The family that eats together, stays together.
The family that prays together, stays together.
Famine said, "send me to people who don't unite."
A friend is someone you share the path with.
Friendship is eating and sharing with friends.
Goat droppings (that later become manure) are mainly found in a loafing shed (barn).
Goodbye until we meet again.
Grasp all, lose all.
The guinea fowl says that it goes in pairs so that one would see what the other does not see.
The hen with chicks doesn't swallow the worm.
A herd is comprised of animals of all ages.
A herd of aged animals has no future.
Hoes that dig together never miss to knock at one another.
Home is best.
Home is not where we live; home is where we belong.
Home is where we return for resources for the journey of life.
A home that welcomes strangers will never lack food.
The hoes of two people cultivating together in a field clash (hit against each other).
The hyena chasing two gazelles at the same time will go to bed hungry.
I am because we are; we are because I am.
I belong by blood relationship. Therefore I am.
If creeping plants could unite, they'll easily tie up an elephant.
If each person sweeps in front of his or her house then the whole world will be clean.
If God lives as a community, we must do the same.
If people come together, they can even mend a crack in the sky.
If relatives help each other, what evil can hurt them.
If we stand tall, it is because we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.
If you get a fine harvest of maize don't break your local brotherhood and sisterhood.
If you pick up one end of the stick you also pick up the other.
If you run after two hares you will catch neither.
If you want to go fast, walk alone. If you want to go far, walk with others.
It is the gathering of people that gave birth to discussion.
It is in the shelter of each other that people live.
It is the teeth that are together that bite meat.
It takes a village to educate a child.
It takes a village to prevent abuse.

It takes a (whole) village to raise a child.
It takes many hands joined together to put a roof on a house.
It takes many hands to capture a buffalo.
The journey of many people does not make one get tired easily.
The journey of one person is a problem. The journey of two persons together easily gets them to the top of the mountain.
Let the guest come so that the host may benefit (get well).
Let us pull together (English translation of the Swahili saying Harambee).
Life is when you are with others; alone you are like an animal.
Like ants, eat little and carry the rest back to your home.
Like ring and finger.
Little and little, fills the measure.
Little by little, a little becomes a lot.
The load is lighter when two people carry it.
A lone buffalo is an easy hunt for a lion or a hunter.
A lone traveler is swept by a stream.
Many beads form one necklace.
Many beads threaded onto a single string.
Many bells on the legs make a loud sound.
Many buffaloes have no good soup/Many buffaloes are no meat.
Many cooks spoil the broth/pot).
Many hands make light work.
Many hands will more easily lift a mortar.
Many pieces of firewood keep the fire burning until the morning.
Many sticks burn together.
The mother is the cornerstone of the family.
Mountains never meet but people do.
Neighbor before house.
A neighbor is a second cloth.
A neighbor near by is better than a brother or sister who lives afar.
Neighbors share meat.
Never be afraid to be outnumbered. Remember pigeons flock together but an eagle flies alone.
No matter how powerful a person is, he or she cannot make the rains fall or his or her farm alone.
No matter how skinny, the son always belongs to his father.
No matter how small and crowded the house, there is always room for the people you love.
No person is an island (universal proverb that is found in African languages including Turkana, Kenya).
Not to aid one in distress is to kill him/her in your heart.
One bite at a time.
One does not love if one does not accept from others.
One faith, one hope, one love.
One by one a bird makes a nest.
One child does not chase away birds from the millet field.
One¹⁵⁰⁸ finger does not (or cannot) kill a louse.

¹⁵⁰⁸ In analyzing hundreds of African proverbs on unity and community we found that certain patterns and emphases clearly emerge. Most common is the "one...does not..." pattern to teach the inadequacy and weakness of individualism and a person working alone. Conversely

One finger does not kill a flea.
One finger does not play a drum.
One finger does not remove a thorn.
One finger nail does not crush a louse.
One furrow at a time.
One giant alone cannot catch a lizard.
One grain does not make porridge.
One hand alone does not tie up a parcel.
One hand cannot clap.
One hand does not catch a buffalo.
One hand does not collect corn meal.
One hand does not cultivate a field.
One hand does not nurse a child.
One hand does not tie a parcel.
One hand washes the other.
One head does not hold up (or carry) a roof.
One head does not sit in council.
One knee does not bring up a child.
*One person is thin porridge or gruel; two or three people are a lump (handful) of ugali (stiff
 cooked meal/flour from sorghum or millet).*
One person's arms alone do not encircle an ant hill.
One white ant does not build an ant hill.
One who eats alone cannot taste the food with others.
The one who eats alone dies alone.
*The one who eats with you is not ready to die with you; only he or she who is born with you is
 (Meaning: A brother or sister sticks closer than a friend).*
The one who encounters problems in a crowd will be helped.
The one who walks alone by the river gets eaten (by the crocodile).
The one with many uncles slept hungry.
The pain for one of us is the pain for all of us.
A single bracelet does not jingle.
A single firewood cannot make a fire.
A single thumb does not kill a louse.
Those who move together remind each other.
A person cannot dance well on one leg only.
A person is a person through other persons.
The person who does not listen to an elder's advice gets his or her leg
The person who eats alone dies alone.
The porcupine lovingly licks her spinney (thorny) offspring.
Pull together! Work together! Let us sing together!
Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.
The quiver hangs from the strap and the strap hangs on the shoulder.
Rain does not fall on one roof alone.
Reconciliation is strengthened by eating together.
The red gourd is shared from one person/homestead to another.
Relationship is in the eating together.

proverbs using the pattern "Two..." communicate unity, togetherness, cooperation, strength, and success. This includes the importance of sharing and working together in the family, SCC, neighborhood, village and town. See Healey and Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, pp. 113-28.

A relationship is incomplete unless people dine together.

Relationship is a space filled by eating.

Ring and finger don't separate.

Sharing is wealth.

Show me your friend and I will tell you who you are.

A single bracelet does not jingle.

A single stick may smoke, but it will not burn.

A single thumb does not kill a louse.

The sky is vast enough for all birds to fly without collisions.

*A small house will hold a hundred friends. **NOTE:** This Duruma proverb is often used as a riddle. A small house with many people. Answer. Pawpaw.*

The snake like walking alone and that is why it is killed.

The speed of a whole herd of buffaloes depends on the slowest one at the back compare A chain is only as strong as its weakest link).

Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable/Sticks in a bundle cannot be broken.

Teamwork without coordination leads to confusion.¹⁵⁰⁹

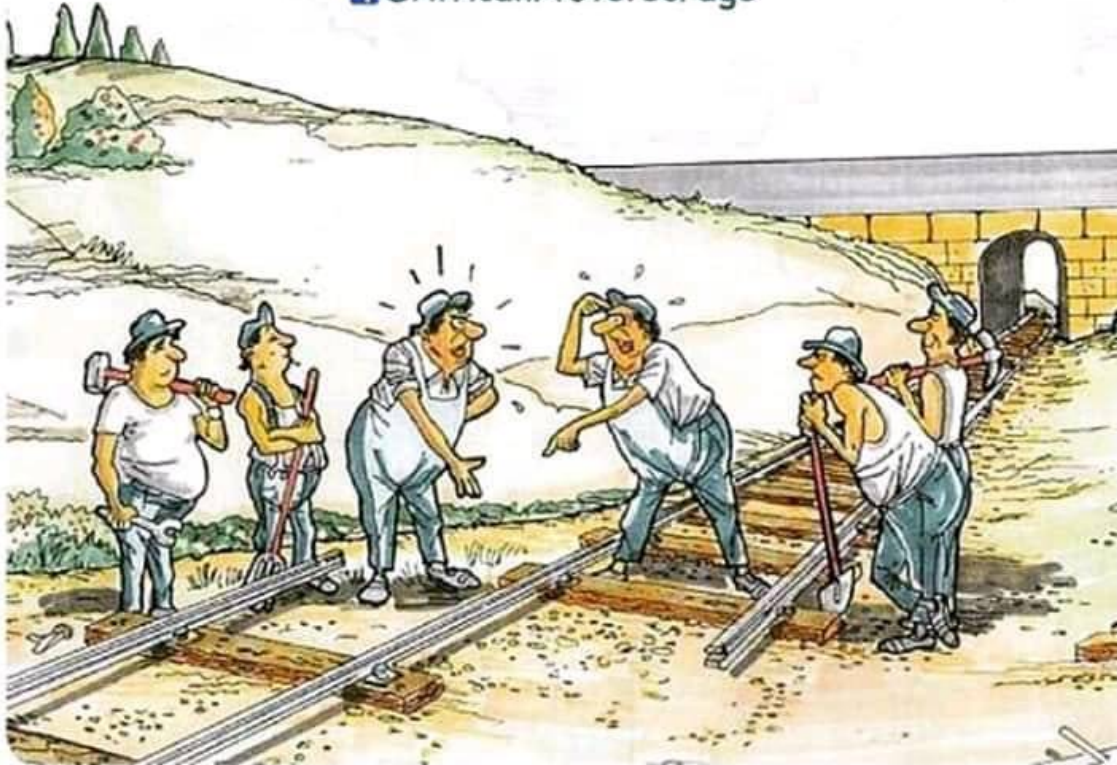
¹⁵⁰⁹ If a picture is worth a thousand words, then this drawing of two gangs of railroad workers laying tracks that don't match is perfect for this proverb.

"TEAMWORK WITHOUT COORDINATION LEADS TO CONFUSION"



AFRICAN PROVERB

[f @AfricanProverbsPage](#)



The teeth can only bite when they work together.
There's always room for one more person at the table.
There is no hyena without a friend.
There is no secret between two people.
There's always room for one more person at the table.
They help each other like white ants.
Three stones support the cooking pot.
Things are interdependent.
Those who eat together do not eat one another.
Those who move together remind each other.
Together like basket and food.
Together many people lift up a mortal.
Together use the long way to get there rather than the short cut that does not get there.
Together we stand, divided we fall (universal proverb popular in Africa).
To put a roof on the walls of a hut needs the joining of hands.
To stay together is brotherhood and sisterhood.
Two ants do not fail to pull one grasshopper.

Two eyes see better than one.
No matter how big an eye is, two eyes are better than one (together, we can do more).
Two fingernails kill a louse.
Two fingers killed a louse.
Two foxes cannot fail to carry a beehive.
Two hands wash each other.
Two heads are better than one.
Two honey badgers cannot fail to break into a beehive.
Two is better than one.
Two or more people scared by a lion will make a good company in the forest.
Two bulls can't stay in the same kraal.
Two bulls can't share the same cowshed.
Two lions cannot rule in the same valley.
Two roads overcame the hyena.
The umbilical cord and strap in which the cord is wrapped is like mother and child.
United we stand, divided we fall (universal proverb very popular in Africa).
Unity is the real thing.
Unity is power.
Unity is strength; division is weakness.
The unity of the fire stones.
A visitor is always for the community.
A visitor is a guest for two days. On the third day give him or her a hoe.
A visitor is never an interruption.
The voice of many is heard by God.
The voice of the people is the voice of God.
Through unity we stand.
A water pot cannot stand on its own without a support.
We create the path by walking (originally from Spanish).
We don't heal in isolation, but in community.
We rather than I.
What falls on one, falls on all.
Whenever there is a feast everyone is welcome.
When a leaf falls to the ground, the tree gets the blame/the shame goes to the tree.
When minds are one, what is far comes near.
When one finger is injured, the whole hand is stained with blood.
When one hand washes the other, both hands are clean.
When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.
When there is a death in your family, there is a death in our family.
When there is a death in your SCC, there is a death in our SCC.
When they work together strings of bark can tie up an elephant.
When a woman is hungry she says: "Roast something for the children that they may eat."
Where there are many, nothing goes wrong.
Where there are many people God is there.
Wisdom is like fire. People take it from others.
You can live without a friend, but you can't live without a neighbor.
You can't break a bundle.
You can't chase two antelopes at once.
You can't eat with your enemy.
You marry into a household/family and not only to your husband.
Your home is your home.
Your mother is your mother even if she has a small leg.

23. African Proverbs and Sayings Related to Family and Marriage

It is interesting to analyze these African proverbs and sayings and understand their use in family gatherings and discussions, SCCs meetings, counseling sessions, etc. They are classified in the three categories in Chapter 13: family life, raising children and marriage ministry/marriage preparation/marriage counseling. Some are universal proverbs applied to the African context and situation. Here are 219 examples:

Family Life (105)

- *A united family eats from the same plate* (Ganda, Uganda).
- *Members of the same family are open to each other and can discuss anything* (Samburu, Kenya).
- *The family is the cornerstone of our society* (many languages).
- *A family is like a forest. When you are outside it is dense. When you are inside each tree has its place* (Africa).
- *The family that eats together, stays together.*
- *The family that prays together, stays together.*
- *If relatives help each other, what evil can hurt them.* (Africa).
- *Goat droppings (that later become manure) are mainly found in a loafing shed (barn)* (Sukuma, Tanzania).
- *Famine said, "send me to people who don't unite"* (Hema, DRC).
- *Never bite the hand that once fed you.*
- *There is no secret between two people* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *One who gossips with you will gossip about you.*
- *A small house will hold a hundred friends* (Duruma, Kenya). NOTE: This Duruma proverb is often used as a riddle. *A small house with many people.* Answer. Pawpaw.
- *There's always room for one more person at the table.*
- *No matter how small and crowded the house, there is always room for the people you love.*
- *The house of a person we love is never far* (Kenya).
- *If two brothers have only the head of a fly, they will divide it equally between them* (Setswana, Botswana).
- *Dine with a stranger but save your love for your family* (Ethiopia).
- *Those who love each other need only a small space* (Ganda, Uganda).
- *We are blind to the faults of those we love.* (Yoruba, Nigeria).
- *Fighting does not build a family* (Kamba, Kenya).
- *When brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits their father's estate* (Ibo, Nigeria).
- *The person who forgives ends a quarrel* (Africa).
- *Issues/things of the family should not be displayed in public* (English equivalent: *Do not wash your dirty linen in public*) (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *Do not show your nakedness in public, that is, don't share family secrets in public including to children* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *Tall stories destroy family relationships* (Luba--Katanga, DRC).

- *A big cooking pot of rice is not without hard, burnt rice at the bottom* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa)
- *Many cooks spoil the pot* (Nuer, South Sudan).
- *Blood is thicker than water* (many African languages including Rendille, Kenya).
- *Brotherhood and sisterhood does not mean physical resemblance but mutual assistance* (Africa).
- *Even the fool has relatives* (Alur, DRC).
- *You will die poor if you rely on relatives* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *Eating together strengthen brotherhood [and sisterhood]; else there is nothing like brotherhood [and sisterhood]* (Tongo, Ghana).
- *Relationship (sisterhood, brotherhood) is in the eating together* (Ganda, Uganda).
- *A relationship is incomplete unless people dine together* (Shona, Zimbabwe).
- *The color of the skin doesn't matter* (Zimbabwe).
- *You can't eat with your enemy* (DRC).
- *One hand washes the other* (Meru, Kenya, Uganda).
- *When one hand washes the other, both hands are clean* (Africa).
- *Impatience with your brother or sister is in the flesh; it doesn't reach the bone* (Mamprussi, Burkina Faso).
- *Brothers [and sisters] are like calabashes; even if they knock each other, they don't break* (Bunyoro, Uganda).
- *Brothers [and sisters] are like ants, they never fight each other but attack the enemy together* (Bunyoro, Uganda).
- *If you get a fine harvest of corn/maize, don't break your local brotherhood and sisterhood* (Bembe, Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC, Tanzania).
- *If people come together, they can even mend a crack in the sky* (Africa).
- *I belong by blood relationship. Therefore I am* (Ghana).
- *I am because we are; we are because I am* (Zulu, South Africa, Swaziland).
- *A chicken develops a headache when it sees another chicken in the cooking pot.*
- *When you reap problems, you share with your family* (Nande, Democratic Republic of Congo – DRC, Uganda).
- *What falls on one, falls on all* (Africa).
- *A person is a person through other persons* (Zulu, South Africa, Swaziland).
- *Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are/tell you your character* (many African languages).
- *All good friends are bad friends to lose* (Africa).
- *The person who sits on a stone that supports the cooking pot will never grow taller* (Ganda, Uganda).
- *Blood relationships don't often procure mercy; favor comes only by divine connection* (Africa).
- *Any sheepfold without siblings has no life because sooner or later it will be finished* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *A boma without calves is a dead one* (Africa).
- *A herd of aged animals has no future* (Luhya, Kenya).
- *It's better to have a bad mannered brother than none* (Luo, Kenya).
- *A visitor is a guest for two days. On the third day give him or her a hoe* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *Let the guest come so that the host may benefit (get well)* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *The youth talk first and then listen; the elders listen first and then talk* (Africa).

- *The person who does not listen to an elder's advice gets his or her leg broken* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *Give advice; if people don't listen, let adversity teach them* (Africa).
- *Even though you disagree, do not refuse to listen* (Africa).
- *Like ants, eat little and carry the rest back to your home* (Bembe, Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC, Tanzania)
- *Do not look at how small my egg is; one day it will hatch into a cock and feed my entire family* (Luhya, Kenya).
- *The fetus that is afraid of criticism is never born* (Rwanda, Rwanda).
- *When a man raises his voice at home, know that he is lowering it elsewhere* (Africa).
- *Women give birth with other women* (Alur, DRC and Uganda).
- *Giving birth brings happiness* (Nyanga, DRC).
- *The cord for bearing the baby remains where the mother died* (Nyanga, DRC).
- *The umbilical cord is not a sweet potato vine* (Mbeere, Kenya).
- *A woman who uses safe delivery might be killed by the ninth delivery* (when she least expects it, it happens) (Tanzania).
- *Parents are gold; to take care of them is a blessing* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *You only have one mother* (many African languages).
- *The mother is the cornerstone of a family* (Somali, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia).
- *My thanks, receive Mother* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *Your friend's mother is your mother too* (Digo, Kenya).
- *A mother can take care of 10 children, but sometimes 10 children can't take care of their mother* (Africa).
- *When you stand with the blessings of your mother and God, it matters not who stands against you* (Africa).
- *The person who has not traveled widely thinks his or her mother is the only cook (the best cook)* (many African languages including Bemba, Zambia and Ganda, Uganda).
- *A child does not laugh at the ugliness of its mother* (Uganda).
- *When you follow in the path of your father, you learn to walk like him* (Ashanti, Ghana).
- *A child can be taller than his father but never be older than his father.*
- *Give a stammerer enough time, and he/she will pronounce his/her father's name.* (Africa).
- *It doesn't matter how tall your grandfather was* (Medumba, Cameroon)
- *The person who has friends from wherever he or she walks to, gets a place to sleep* (Gusii, Kenya).
- *Best friends killed each other over a hare's head* (Tonga, Zambia).
- *You don't ask for a chair when you visit a place where the chief sits on the floor* (Africa).
- *It's not how big the house is, it's how happy the home is* (Africa).
- *Without a home or (family) support, a country is of no use to you* (Bemba, Zambia).
- *Never despise the home that once gave you shelter* (Africa).
- *Home is not where we live; home is where we belong* (Africa).
- *Home is where we return for resources for the journey of life* (Swahili).

- **A home that welcomes strangers will never lack food.** (Africa).
- *It is in the shelter of each other that people live.*
- *We don't heal in isolation, but in community* (Africa).
- *You can live without a friend, but you can't live without a neighbor* (Africa).
- *"Neighbor before house."*
- *If we stand tall, it is because we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.*

Raising Children (64)

- *The hen with baby chicks doesn't swallow the worm* (Sukuma, Tanzania).¹⁵¹⁰
- *A hen's feet cannot kill its chicks* (Ganda, Uganda).
- *A cow never runs away from her calves.* (Bemba, Zambia).
- *A cow's horn does not/cannot kill its calf.* (Kalenjin, Kenya and Uganda and Nandi, Kenya).
- *A hen's feet cannot kill its chicks* (Ganda, Uganda proverb).
- *A child eats at his/her parents even if he/she has poured out the flour.* (Nyanga, DRC).
- *When the woman is hungry she says, "Roast something for the children so they might eat"* (Akan, Ghana).
- *A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm* (Yoruba, Nigeria and Cameroon).
- *A baby on its mother's back does not know the way is long* (Ibo, Nigeria, Sukuma, Tanzania and many African languages).
- *The old woman looks after the child to grow its teeth and the young one in turn looks after the old woman when she loses her teeth* (Akan, Ghana).
- *In Africa old people are not kept in a nursing home; they stay home and teach their grandchildren the ways of life* (Africa).
- *Who loves the mother must love the children also* (Bemba, Zambia).
- *One who loves you, loves you with your dirt* (Africa).
- *A child who is not taught by its mother will be taught by the world* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *The person who has not traveled widely thinks his or her mother is the only cook (the best cook)* (many African languages including Bemba, Zambia and Ganda, Uganda).
- *Even if your mother has a short leg she is still your mother* (Malawi).
- *A stupid cow leads her calf near the road.* (Hema, Democratic Republic of Congo - DRC).
- *Why do you behave like a woman whose son has just gotten married?* Maasai (Kenya, Tanzania).

¹⁵¹⁰ A full explanation can be found on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved on 26 May, 2014, <http://www.afriprov.org/index.php/african-proverb-of-the-month/29-2003proverbs/194-october-2003-proverb-qthe-hen-with-baby-chicks-doesnt-swallow-the-wormq-sukuma-tanzania.html>

- *A child that has never visited another man's farm will brag that his or her father's farm is the biggest* (Yoruba, Nigeria).
- *When you follow in the path of your father, you learn to walk like him* (Ashanti, Ghana).
- *No matter how skinny, the son always belongs to his father* (Kipsigis, Kenya and Galla, Ethiopia).
- *Do not tell the person who is carrying you that he or she stinks* (Africa).
- *There are no children to be discarded and given to the hyena to eat* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *When the hyena wants to eat its children, it first accuses them of smelling like goats.* (Africa).
- *All people are born with the same rights. There are no children of the stomach and of the back* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *You can only resemble the parents that gave birth to you. For a cow does not give birth to a sheep* (Yoruba, Nigeria).
- *You give birth to a child, not their character* (Beti, Cameroon).
- *The child's appearance/respect/dignity mirrors that of a parent* (Chewa, Malawi).
- *A snake gives birth to a snake* (Zulu, South Africa).
- *You are the child of a duck; take care of yourself* (Sukuma, Tanzania).
- *You must treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It is loaned to you by your children* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *The happiness of a parent is the laughter of a child* (Ganda, Uganda).
- *Children are a blessing from God* (Africa).
- *Children are a gift from God* (Africa).
- *Children are the reward of life* (Africa).
- *Children are the seeds of the future* (Nuer, South Sudan).
- *The child you sired hasn't sired you* (Somali, Somalia),
- *If you think education is costly, try ignorance* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *Nobody teaches a baby to believe in God* (Akan, Ghana).
- *By crawling a child learns to stand* (West Africa).
- *A stick is straightened while still young* (many African languages).
- *A tree can easily be straightened out when it is still young* (Rwanda).
- *The hardworking, obedient child will always get someone to wash him or her, will always get a response* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *An elder (or a parent) who won't sharply reprimand a child when young will be compelled to run helter skelter when the child is fully grown, and becomes grossly disobedient* (Africa).
- *It's not hard work to bear a child, but the work is to nurture him/her.* (Africa).
- *A little patience is better than a lot of force.*
- *When a chicken spends a night outside its coop, it becomes a partridge* (Bembe, Democratic Republic of Congo -- DRC).
- *Spare the rod, spoil the child* (Tugen, Kenya).
- *The parent who corrects his or her child with a rod does not sin* (Bangubangu, Democratic Republic of Congo -- DRC).
- *If a father gets so angry as to throw his child into a raid of army ants, by the time he's appeased, the ants may not be* (Nigerian Proverb).
- *No one can stop monkeys from squatting; no one should deprive a child of his patrimony* (Nigerian Proverb).

- *One knee does not bring up a child* (Sukuma, Tanzania proverb).¹⁵¹¹
- *One hand does not nurse a child.* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa Proverb)
- *A child belongs to everyone.* (Haya, Tanzania)
- *It takes a village to educate a child.*
- *It takes a village to prevent abuse.*
- *It takes a whole village to raise a child* (Igbo and Yoruba, Nigerian Proverb).
- *The child of many guardians is not bitten by ants* (Sukuma, Tanzania).
- *If the youth are not initiated into the village, they will burn it down just to feel its warmth* (Africa).
- *The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth* (Africa).
- *A heavy burden weighs heavily on both sides* (Bemba, Zambia).
- *Children of a hippo play in all the pools of water in the river or the lake* (Bemba, Zambia).
- *A water pot cannot stand on its own without a support* (Luo, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda).
- *One finger cannot kill a louse* (many African languages).
- *Two fingers killed a louse* (Saamia, Kenya and Uganda) Proverb).

Marriage Ministry/Marriage Preparation/Marriage Counseling (49)

- *A home is for a husband and a wife* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *A good home is made of a good woman* (Tiv, Nigeria).
- *A home without a wife is dead* (Luyia, Kenya)
- *To be happy in one's home is better than to be a chief* (Yoruba, Nigeria).
- *A happy man marries the girl he loves, but a happier man loves the girl he marries* (African proverb).
- *Love is blind* (Rendille, Kenya and Nuer, South Sudan),
- *There is no hill too steep when going to a loved one* (another translation: *a lover's place has no hills or there are no hills to a lover's place*) (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *For those who love each other a louse's skin will be the right size to cover them against the cold.* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *Everything is all right if you love each other.* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *One who married for love alone will have bad days but good nights* (Arabic, Egypt).
- *Home is best* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *He has not gotten married yet* (figurative). *He does not have a stove yet* (literal) (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *A faithful woman is a crown to her husband* (Gusii, Kenya).
- *The beauty of a woman is to please her husband and what she does for the people of her community* (Kabwari, Democratic Republic of the Congo -- DRC).

¹⁵¹¹ Some of the Sukuma proverbs cited here are explained in Kamati ya Utafiti wa Utamaduni Bujora, *Kugundua Mbegu za Injili: Hekima ya Kisukuma na Lugha Mbalimbali juu ya Familia na Ndoa -- Kitabu cha Pili*, Peramiho: Benedictine Publications Ndanda -- Peramiho, 1993. The English translation is *Discovering Seeds of the Gospel: The Wisdom of Sukuma and Different Languages on Family and Marriage -- Book II*. The cover of the book is the Jesus Mafa painting of the Holy Family.

- *Wife is the wealth* (Tembo, Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC).
- *If you marry a monkey for his wealth, the money goes and the monkey remains as is* (Egyptian proverb).
- *My beloved* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *If a woman has a gentle tongue, her husband will never refuse to eat her food.*
- *It does not matter how hot-tempered you are, you will never boil yams* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *Educate a woman, educate a nation* (Fanti (Ghana)).
- *The journey of marriage is far, far* (Ashante, Ghana).
- *Marriage is the main post of the hut* (African)
- *Marriage is like a peanut/groundnut; you have to crack it to see what is inside* (Akan, Ghana).
- *Marriage is like a book; every page/day is a new lesson* (Ewe, Ghana).
- *Marriage is a school* (Tetela, Democratic Republic of Congo).
- *Perfect people hardly find each other in marriage* (Shona, Zimbabwe).
- *A widow who's missing her late husband, should remember her 'living husband'* (Nigeria)
- *No one gives away a woman to a man in marriage and provides him a bed besides* (Ga, Ghana).
- *The house that is built well (like a fixed faith) doesn't move any longer* (Lwalu, Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC).
- *Any goat can serve as bridewealth unless it has a defect* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *A single person cannot counsel a married couple* (Luo, Kenya and Tanzania).
- *An uncircumcised person can never advise a circumcised person (concerning adulthood including marriage)* (Gikuyu, Kenya).
- *A monogamist sleeps with his wife even when she is sick* (Esan, Nigeria).
- *The gas passed by the woman you love does not smell* (Builsa, Ghana).
- *Settle down with one woman, there are many beautiful women in the world* (Shona, Zimbabwe).
- *The cow does not feel the weight of its two horns* (Amharic, Ethiopia).
- *One piece of wood by itself cannot cook food* (Amharic, Ethiopia).
- *The hoes of two people cultivating together in a field sometimes clash (hit) against each other* (Sukuma, Tanzania).
- *Hoes that dig together never miss to knock at one another* (Swahili, Eastern and Central Africa).
- *Two calabashes in a basin of water will by all means touch each other but not break each other* (Ewe, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria).
- *A broken relationship is better than a broken marriage* (Africa).
- *"Now the marriage begins," says the woman who has been beaten with thorns* (Nigeria).
- *A man with envy has always his eye on his wife's pot* (Kele, DRC).
- *The person who sees the in-laws to be bad is not the engaged woman.* (Tembo, DRC)
- *Come we stay* (Kenya).
- *Character is like pregnancy; you cannot hide it for long* (Chewa, Malawi).
- *He who has a sister has a brother-in-law* (Chonyi, Kenya).
- *A family that has a son will never lose the debts owed to it* (Rendille, Kenya).
- *Where there is a will, there is a way* (universal proverb popular in Africa).

24. Constitution of St. John the Evangelist Small Christian Community (Nairobi, Kenya)¹⁵¹²

BACKGROUND

St. John the Evangelist Small Christian Community in St. John the Baptist Parish, Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya was founded in 1999 by the then Parish priest, Father John Kiongo. It was known as “*Jumuiya ya Father*” until it was officially given the name it uses at present. The SCC was established primarily to accommodate the non-Gikuyu speaking population of the parishioners. Over time, however, the SCC has grown and accommodates all parishioners.

Name

The name shall be St. John the Evangelist Small Christian Community

Aim

To share the Word of God and support each other as a Christian community. To nourish each other spiritually as Christians

Objectives

- To promote Christian lifestyle of the members
- To promote unity of the members
- To promote good neighborliness
- To promote socio-economic development of the members

Members

Members of the SCC shall be residents of the parish and shall also be parishioners at the out-station where the SCC is domiciled.

One shall obtain and retain membership of the SCC by:

- Paying the prescribed registration fee
- Participating in the meetings and activities of the SCC
- Participating in financial contribution of the SCC and parish as required
- Upon completion of the probation period of six months

Members shall lose/relinquish their membership if:

- They change their residence to within the borders of another parish. If this happens the member shall be issued with a letter of recommendation to the new parish.
- They do not participate in the meetings and activities of the SCC for eight consecutive weeks, without justifiable explanation to the executive committee.
- They do not participate in the financial contributions of the SCC as required, without justifiable explanation to the executive committee.

Meetings

¹⁵¹² As an example of the usefulness of these two printed constitutions of SCCs: A person from Mombasa, Kenya wrote to the “info” email address of our SCCs Website: “I am a member of Holy Ghost Cathedral Church, Mombasa, Kenya. On Sunday 30 March, 2014 we shall be electing our SCCs office bearers. Kindly and urgently send me with the correct format of election or the one the church prefers most.” We referred them to the full texts of these two printed constitutions that are available in our free, online Ebook on our SCCs Website.

There shall be meetings of the SCC as follows:

Weekly meeting – will be held every Sunday, other than the third Sunday of the month, for prayers and *Bible* discussion. (Appendix 2)

Monthly meeting – will be held every third Sunday of the month as an open forum for members to discuss matters affecting the SCC.

Special meetings – will be called in the event of:

Activities organized on any other day other than Sunday

Crisis affecting any member of the SCC

The quorum at monthly and special meetings shall be 15 members.

Executive committee

The executive committee shall constitute members duly elected as per the elections schedule of the parish. The committee shall comprise of the following members:

Chairperson

The chairperson shall:

Chair meetings and co-ordinate activities of the SCC

Represent the SCC at the pastoral council meetings

Ensure spiritual, economic and social growth of the SCC

Ensure members perform tasks assigned to them

Promote co-operation with other SCCs in the parish

Vice chairperson

The vice chairperson will perform the duties of the chairperson in his or her absence.

Secretary

The secretary shall:

Keep a written record of the proceedings of every meeting

Present reports to members whenever called upon to do so

Any other duties allocated by the chairperson

Assistant secretary

The assistant secretary will perform the duties of the secretary in his/her absence

Treasurer

The treasurer shall

Keep a record of the assets of the SCC

Keep a record of all money received and paid out of the SCC kitty

Present statement of account monthly

Any other duties allocated by the chairperson

Code of conduct

Members shall be of good conduct as expected of a Christian.

Members shall be encouraged to attend Mass¹⁵¹³ regularly and to receive various Sacraments.

The SCC shall give its opinion to the church on any member prior to administration of any Sacrament to the member.

Behavior classified as gross indiscipline may lead to suspension of the member. (Appendix 3)

¹⁵¹³ This is an unfortunate expression that is used frequently. Better is “to participate in mass.”

Finances

The finances of the SCC shall comprise its assets and cash balances

Raising finances

Registration fee shall be Ksh.300

Every member shall pay a monthly contribution of Ksh.50

Harambee shall be held weekly. The main guest shall contribute a minimum of Ksh.200

Every other member who is present shall contribute a minimum of Ksh.20

Members who are absent may send Ksh.20

Contribution for events

Wedding of a member. Each member will contribute a minimum of Ksh.100

Death of a member or spouse or child of a member. Each member will contribute a minimum of Ksh.100

Donations as may be made by members or any other person

Use of finances (Appendix 4)

Finances will be used for prescribed purposes

For the normal operation of the SCC

Approval from members shall be sought, prior to spending, where the intended use is not among those prescribed.

Custody of finances

The treasurer shall maintain a record of all assets of the SCC and their physical location.

Cash shall be held in trust for the SCC at the bank account of the parish.

Accountability for finances

A report on the financial position of the SCC shall be made available to members at every monthly meeting.

Members shall be free to air their opinions on the financial report upon its presentation.

Amendment of the Constitution

Any clause of this constitution shall be amended by resolution of a simple majority in a meeting attended by two-thirds of all bona fide members. Any appendix may be amended by resolution of a simple majority of bona fide members at a monthly or special meeting.

Dissolution and disposal of assets

The SCC shall be deemed dissolved in the event that:

The parish ceases to exist. In this case, the assets of the SCC shall be deemed to belong to the archdiocese.

The pastoral council resolves to split the SCC into two or more Small Christian Communities. In this eventuality, the inventory of the SCC shall be valued and shared proportionately among the resultant Small Christian Communities.

Upon agreement of ALL members in a meeting attended by two-thirds of bona fide members of the SCC. If this happens the assets of the SCC shall revert to the parish.

APPENDICES TO CONSTITUTION OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Appendix 1

Membership

A register of members and all the sacraments they receive shall be kept and updated as necessary.

Efforts shall be made to assist members receive sacraments they do not receive already

Induction of new members into the SCC shall be based on a standardized induction program.

Appendix 2**Program for weekly meetings**

Opening hymn

Opening prayer

Bible reading and reflection

Bible discussion

Register

Collections

Announcements

Prayer of the faithful

Closing prayer

Duration of the meeting will not exceed one hour

Appendix 3

The following will be considered gross indiscipline:

Fighting during meetings, at home or at any other place that may diminish the reputation of the member.

Use of insulting language by a member against another member, against members of the clergy or against other parishioners while in the precincts of the parish.

Inappropriate relationships between/among members such as extramarital affairs.

Misappropriation of funds of the SCC

Appendix 4**Use of finances**

Wedding -- In addition to the cash raised for this occasion, Ksh.3 000 shall be withdrawn from the treasury to purchase a present for the couple at a wedding occasion involving a bona fide member. Any cash balance shall be given to the couple.

Sickness -- Ksh.2 000 shall be given, from the treasury, to a bona fide member following admission to hospital. Ksh.1 000 shall be given from the treasury of the SCC to a bona fide member following the admission to hospital of the spouse or child of the member.

Death -- When a bona fide member dies Ksh.10 000 shall be given to the bereaved from the treasury of the SCC in addition to the cash raised for such events. Where the deceased does not satisfy the qualification for bona fide membership the executive committee shall have discretion over the amount to be paid from the treasury. If the death is that of a spouse or child of a bona fide member, Ksh.5 000 shall be paid from the treasury in addition to the cash raised for such events.

Travel -- The executive committee shall have discretion over the amount to be withdrawn from the treasury as travelling fares for members appointed to represent the SCC.

Any other important activity not described above, at the discretion of the executive committee.

Refund -- No cash refund shall be made to any member of the SCC at the time of separation.

Appendix 5**Various occasions**

Matrimony

Support for preparations and other related matters as may be agreed by members.

Bereavement

When a member is bereaved, all the membership of the SCC will accord all the necessary support to the bereaved member/family in terms of but not limited to:

Daily prayer meetings during the period of mourning

Fund raising to cater for expenses during the period of mourning
Accompaniment by at least two members to the place of burial, should it be away from
Nairobi.¹⁵¹⁴

¹⁵¹⁴ Text contributed by Kenyan layman Paul Njuki.

25. Constitution of St. Joseph Small Christian Community **(Nairobi, Kenya)**

NAME OF THE GROUP: Saint Joseph Small Christian Community, a constituent group of the Holy Family Minor Basilica, Nairobi Archdiocese, Nairobi, Kenya.

OFFICE OF OPERATION: The Holy Family Minor Basilica, Nairobi.

ADDRESS:

St. Joseph Small Christian Community
c/o The Holy Family Minor Basilica
Archdiocese of Nairobi
P.O. Box 40891-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Email: stjosephchristians@gmail.com

ABOUT OUR PATRON: St. Joseph, the Spouse/Husband of Mary and Foster Father of Jesus.

Feasts:

March 19 for Joseph the Spouse/Husband of Mary
May 1 for Joseph the Worker.
Sunday after Christmas for Feast of the Holy Family

PROFILE:

He was a carpenter, a working man (*Matthew 13:55*). He wasn't rich for when he took Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised and Mary to be purified he offered the sacrifice of two turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb (*Luke 2:24*).

Despite his humble work and means, Joseph came from a royal lineage. Joseph's genealogy marks his descent from David, the greatest king of Israel (*Matthew 1:1-16* and *Luke 3:23-38*). Indeed the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also for Jesus.

Joseph was a compassionate, caring man. When he discovered Mary was pregnant after they had been betrothed, he knew the child was not his but was as yet unaware that she was carrying the Son of God. He planned to divorce Mary according to the law but he was concerned for her suffering and safety.

Joseph was man of faith, obedient to whatever God asked of him without knowing the outcome. When the angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him the truth about the child Mary was carrying, Joseph immediately and without question or concern for gossip, took Mary as his wife. When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. He waited in Egypt without question until the angel told him it was safe to go back (*Matthew 2:13-23*).

Joseph loved Jesus. His one concern was for the safety of this child entrusted to him. Not only did he leave his home to protect Jesus, but upon his return settled in the obscure town of Nazareth out of fear for his life. When Jesus stayed in the Temple we are told Joseph

(along with Mary) searched with great anxiety for three days for him (*Luke 2:48*). Joseph treated Jesus as his own son for over and over the people of Nazareth (*Luke 4:22*) Joseph respected God. He followed God's commands in handling the situation with Mary and going to Jerusalem to have Jesus circumcised and Mary purified after Jesus' birth. He took his family to Jerusalem every year for Passover, something that could not have been easy for a working man.

Joseph is also Patron of the Universal Church, fathers, carpenters, and social justice. Scripture has left us with the most important knowledge: who he was -- "a righteous man" (*Matthew 1:18*).

In His Footsteps: Joseph was foster father to Jesus. There are many children separated from families and parents who need foster parents.

Prayer: "Saint Joseph, Patron of the universal Church, watch over the Church as carefully as you watched over Jesus, help protect it and guide it as you did with your adopted son. Amen."

HISTORY OF THE FORMATION OF OUR SCC:

After one year of intense Adult Catechism (RCIA) in 2010/2011, and upon successful "graduation" (Adult Baptism at the Easter Vigil, April, 2011), members of the group, through the advice and help of their Catechist – Deacon Oscar, and Father Simon Peter Kamomoe, Father-in-charge, Holy Family Minor Basilica, decided to form a Small Christian Community.

They named the SCC St. Joseph Small Christian Community in Honor of Saint Joseph the Spouse, Husband of Mary and Foster Father of Jesus.

MISSION OF THE SCC:

To emulate our Patron Saint, to ultimately give our lives, grow and strengthen our faith and that of our neighbors in the new found joy and purpose in GOD, through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

VISION OF THE SCC:

To transform our lives and those around us

OBJECTIVES OF THE SCC:

- To listen to Scripture and share our understanding of it.
- To recount the experience of our life since we last met, using a Christian viewpoint as we talk and listen.
- To talk over some of our problems in life and try to help each other with them in terms of Christian faith.
- To help each other with personal decisions on the basis of our faith.
- To socialize every so often.
- To make some group decisions on social action issues or assisting people who need our help.
- To discuss ways of living our Christian faith in our professions or places of work.

MEMBERSHIP:

- Membership is out of own free will, irrespective of gender, age, color or race.
- Two passport photos required for an identity card and the others for filing. A membership form to be duly be filled and kept for future reference.
- All above 18 years of age are however required to contribute a monthly subscription of Kshs. 200/= for SCC's upkeep and development. No backdate for the amount for a new member.
- Note that all members are assumed to have been there from the formation of the SCC. New members to be inculcated into the St. Joseph culture.
- Once one is a member, membership is open to his/her immediate relations.
- Where a member is married then both spouses are obliged to contribute individual monthly contributions irrespective of the spouse's attendance.
- Each member is entitled to all rights and privileges of the SCC from the time of joining.
- One ceases to be a member:
 - i) Out of free will,
 - ii) Loss of life,
 - iii) Under extremities of expulsion,
 - iv) When one fails to attend three consecutive meetings with no adequate explanation.

Apologies to be done within 48 hours to the meeting.

OFFICE BEARERS:

The SCC shall consist of the following office bearers:

- i) Patron.
- ii) Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.
- iii) Secretary and Vice Secretary.
- iv) Treasurer.
- v) Organizing Secretary.
- vi) Liturgist.
- vii) Welfare officer.
- viii) Music Coordinator.
- ix) Caterer.
- x) Storekeeper.
- xi) Executive committee consists of:
 - Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Welfare Officer, Caterer and organizing secretary.
 - The executive committee shall meet once every month.
- xii) Advisory committee consisting of:
 - Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Welfare officer, Patron, Organizing Secretary, vice chairpersons and any member selected by the SCC.
 - The advisory committee shall meet when need arises.

ELECTIONS:

- All elections shall be held every 3 years.
- All office bearers shall be practicing Catholics.

- All office bearers shall assume duties from the date of election until the succeeding election, but shall be eligible for reelection for not more than two consecutive terms.
- Any office bearer who ceases to be a member of the SCC shall automatically cease to be an office bearer – thereof
- The advisory committee shall have such powers by resolution to remove an official from office and to fill such a vacancy, or any other vacancy created, at any time or during a general meeting.
- An official who wishes to resign from office shall do so having satisfactorily handed over to the Advisory Committee within 14 days notice.

DUTIES OF OFFICE BEARERS:

a) The Patron.

He is the Patron, and overall overseer of the SCC in all issues; both spiritually and in all other businesses.

b) Chairperson.

- Unless prevented by illness or other sufficient cause, he/she shall preside over all the SCC's meetings.
- Shall represent the affairs of the SCC at any given forum.
- Be a signatory to the SCC's accounts.
- Shall resume matters of the SCC in consultation with the executive officials.
- Shall perform all other duties assigned by the advisory committee.

c) Vice Chairperson.

- Shall perform any duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence, or any duty assigned by the chairman or advisory committee.

d) Secretary.

- Shall deal with all the general administration of the SCC.
- Shall attend and take minutes at all seatings under the supervision and direction of the chairperson/vice chairperson.
- Shall keep all minutes of meetings and preservation of records of all meetings for the SCC.
- Shall be responsible for the preparation of periodicals; pamphlets, newsletters, or such instructional matters as the advisory committee may instruct the production thereof.
- Shall attend to and deal with all correspondences and shall issue notices convening and prepare agendas for all meetings.
- Be a signatory to the SCC.

e) Vice Secretary.

- Shall perform all the duties of the secretary in his/her absence and such other duties as shall be assigned by the secretary, chairman or advisory committee
- Shall assist the treasurer in his/her absence.

f) Organizing Secretary.

- Shall organize and co-ordinate all activities of the SCC, or as assigned by the advisory group.
 - In his absence, any member may voluntarily assist or as assigned by the SCC.
 - He/she will work closely with the welfare officer.
- g) Treasurer.
- Shall act under authority of advisory committee, or chairperson.
 - Shall be principal accounting officer of the SCC.
 - Shall receive and also disburse under the direction of the advisory committee all monies belonging to the SCC.
 - Shall issue receipts and vouchers for all money transactions.
 - Shall ensure that proper books of accounts are properly prepared, preserved and made available for inspection
 - Shall be a signatory to the SCC's accounts.
 - In his/her absence, the vice secretary may handle petty cash or receive collections.
 - Reserve in her possession a minimum of Kshs. 10,000/= for emergency.
- h) Liturgist.
- Shall coordinate liturgy in the SCC meetings and during animation.
 - Shall assist the SCC in selecting and following the church calendar.
 - Shall be the official spokesperson of the SCC on spiritual matters.
 - Shall handle/welcome all new members and nourish them spiritually and update them on SCC's agenda.
- i) Welfare officer.
- Shall look into the wellbeing of the members and advise the advisory committee.
 - Shall be in-charge of counseling matters of the SCC or individual members, and taking general welfare of the members as given by rules governing the SCC.
 - Will be in-charge of welfare account records i.e. contributions during weddings; hospital or members relative as governed by the SCC's rules or in all needy situations.
 - Shall assist SCC's members in co-coordinating such activities as weddings; or visits to members during times of need.
 - Will identify needy situations and advise the advisory committee.
- j) Music coordinator.
- Co-ordinate all collaborations between other choirs.
 - Coordinate singing in the SCC.
- k) Advisory Committee.
- Shall represent the SCC in the Parish Council, hence shall attend all Parish Council meetings (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer).
 - Shall give direction to SCC and the members as a whole
 - Resolve and or approve all major undertakings of the SCC.
 - Approve all money transactions by the SCC.
 - Shall be the disciplinary committee of the SCC when such matters arise.
 - Shall seek ways and means of raising funds for all charitable activities of the SCC.

- Shall consist of the chairman; secretary, treasurer, welfare officer and organizing secretary and Patron.
- 50% of members by resolution in writing shall petition the Patron to convene a special general meeting to discuss a disciplinary or urgent matter that has arisen touching on office bearers or any other member as a last resort.
- Shall identify areas of assisting and advising the church.

MEETINGS:

- i) The SCC shall meet every Sunday at 10.00 a.m.
- ii) The venue is Father's parking area unless told otherwise.
- iii) The SCC will use Resource Center at St. Dominic Hall and the room attached for office matters.

ORDER OF SUNDAY MEETINGS:

- i) Opening prayers
- ii) Praying the rosary
- iii) Singing -- at least a chorus
- iv) Share at least one of the readings of that day, i.e. either 1st reading, psalms; 2nd reading or Gospel reading. Silence followed by *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection*.
- v) Prayer of the faithful
 - For church
 - For families
 - For the sick
 - For the country
- vi) Discuss any other business
- vii) Concluding prayers to include
 - St. Joseph Prayer
 - Any other prayers
- viii) As guided by the schedule planned.

POLICY ON FINANCES AND SCC SUPPORT:

1. Each member shall contribute Kshs. 200/=monthly for SCC operations
 - The SCC account shall allocate Kshs. 10,000 in the following situations
 - i) Wedding – In form of a gift for such amount when any of our member conducts a wedding in the church
 - ii) Hospital admission – Kshs.10, 000/=in cash during hospitalization (of the member, children, or spouse). Help for extended family will be voluntary contribution from members and not from the SCC account.
 - iii) Loss of life – Kshs. 20,000/= to the member's next of kin during loss of life of the said member, and 10,000 for the nuclear family i.e. parents of the member, child of the member or spouse of the member.
2. The SCC shall also raise funds from its catering projects.

NOTE: Where such needs not covered by amount stipulated, the welfare officer in consultation with the advisory committee shall ask/request members to make a voluntary contribution to attend to such needs.

NOTE: Communication should be done directly to the welfare officer whenever need arises.

*For any correspondences, the secretary shall be given an amount approved by the advisory committee for facilitation of the activities of the SCC, e.g. communication and transport.

NOTE: The executive committee shall discuss the SCC's finances before the fourth Sunday of the month and present the same to the members on the fourth Sunday of the month.

ELECTIONS:

- Shall be called by the advisory committee.
- All members to attend.
- Shall be held every 3 years.
- All positions to be filled.

OTHER SCC ACTIVITIES:

This will be elaborately covered in the SCC's calendar of events.

- CHARITY.

The SCC shall conduct matters of charity once every quarter, through visit of a home or as advised otherwise by the committee

- RETREAT.

(Several days event, well observed especially Christmas or Lent)

- RECOLLECTION (one-day event)

The SCC shall have a Recollection Day once every quarter.

- END OF YEAR PARTY.

- There shall be at least one end-of-year party whose expenses shall be met by the SCC's account. All family members will be invited.

- SPORTS.

- Will have sports at least twice a year.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH: "Litany of St. Joseph"

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God, the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,

pray for us.

St. Joseph,

pray for us.
Renowned offspring of David,
pray for us.
Light of Patriarchs,
pray for us.
Spouse of the Mother of God,
pray for us.
Chaste guardian of the Virgin,
pray for us.
Foster father of the Son of God,
pray for us.
Diligent protector of Christ,
pray for us.
Head of the Holy Family,
pray for us.
Joseph most just,
pray for us.
Joseph most chaste,
pray for us.
Joseph most prudent,
pray for us.
Joseph most strong,
pray for us.
Joseph most obedient,
pray for us.
Joseph most faithful,
pray for us.
Mirror of patience,
pray for us.
Lover of poverty,
pray for us.
Model of artisans,
pray for us.
Glory of home life,
pray for us.
Guardian of virgins,
pray for us.
Pillar of families,
pray for us.
Solace of the wretched,
pray for us.
Hope of the sick,
pray for us.
Patron of the dying,
pray for us.
Terror of demons,
pray for us.
Protector of Holy Church,
pray for us.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,
spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,
graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

V. He made him the lord of his household.

R. And prince over all his possessions.

Let us pray. O God, in your ineffable providence you were pleased to choose St. Joseph to be the spouse of your most holy Mother; grant, we beg you, that we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in heaven whom on earth we venerate as our Protector: You who live and reign forever and ever. R. Amen.

This CONSTITUTION was AGREED on this date: ____ OCTOBER 2012

CHAIRPERSON

SECRETARY

PATRON

Select Annotated Bibliography of Books, Booklets, Articles, Reports, Papers and Printed Materials and Other Resources including Online Digital Resources (607)¹⁵¹⁵

1969 Seminar Study Year, Summaries and Questions for Discussion in Each Catholic Diocese, Parish and Subparish on “The Church in Tanzania Today: Its Tasks and Priorities,” Mwanza: Privately Printed, 1969.

Abbott, Walter (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*,¹⁵¹⁶ New York: America Press, 1966.

Achiego, Rose, “Church in Africa Committed to Evangelization Through SCCs,” “News,” 27 October, 2016, Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) Website, retrieved on 23 December, 2016, <http://www.kccb.or.ke/home/news-2/church-in-africa-committed-to-evangelization-through-sccs>

Achiego, Rose, “Missio Germany Researcher Jets In to Learn About Small Christian Communities,” *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 223, 23 February, 2018. AMECEA Website, retrieved on 27 February, 2018, <http://amecea.blogspot.co.ke/2018/02/kenya-missio-germany-researcher-jets-in.html>

ACI Africa Staff, “Make Sacred Scripture “Frame of Family Values”: PMS Official in Kenya,” *ACI Africa Online News Service*, 24 January, 2024, ACI Africa Website, retrieved on 25 January, 2024, https://www.aciafrica.org/news/10093/make-sacred-scripture-frame-of-family-values-pms-official-in-kenya?utm_campaign=ACI%20Africa&utm_medium=email&hsmi=291402662&hsenc=p2ANqtz-ISEWgBbWJh6sxQk3LMKmVgAswBQu_TxLhtUmIO4fQ2MnBgaZp_jvUedAtXFX8-m76zwQbCoNOIFFD-oToK8VhTeMyVg&utm_content=291402662&utm_source=hs_email

In an interview with ACI Africa following the Sunday of the Word of God 2024 marked on 21 January 2024, Father Bonaventure Luchidio went on to explain the value of the *Bible* in the reality of Small Christian Communities (SCCs), a new way of being church that the leadership of the Catholic Church in Africa has included in its evangelization structures.

“While reading the *Bible*, God actively speaks to the hearts of each person present in the gathering. As each person shares their reflections, God strengthens our resolve and when we pray together in our voices God listens to our prayers,” he said.

¹⁵¹⁵ Certain books, booklets, journals, magazines, articles, reports and DVDs are chosen to show the overall historical development of SCCs in the AMECEA Region especially during this 1973-2024 period. A great deal of this “Bibliography” can be found online in various online databases, digital documents libraries, digital libraries and websites. Click on the hyperlinks or go to online resources such as (alphabetically): Academia, Africabib, Atla Religion Database (90 results for “Joseph Healey”), Docstoc, DSpace, EBSCO Host, Google Books (contains the online version of many books on SCCs), Google Scholar (104 results for “Joseph Healey”), Mikado (75 results for “Joseph Healey”), JSTOR, Questia, Refdoc, Readbag, ResearchGate, Scribd, Taylor & Francis and WorldCat.

¹⁵¹⁶ As a footnote in my personal history, I carried this book with me when I came to Africa in 1968. I carried it to all the places that I have lived in East Africa during the past 54 years (1968-2022) using it from time to time. Now as I pack to return to the USA for good, I throw away this dog-eared edition with its cover already torn off. Good bye.

The Nairobi-based member of the Clergy of Kenya's Kakamega Diocese emphasized the need for "Bible" Sharing during gatherings in SCCs, distinguishing these SCCs gatherings from those of self-help groups where financial matters take center stage.

"The *Bible* is key and central in SCCs formation and enterprise," Luchidio said and added, "Reading of the Word of God in the SCCs builds up the Body of Christ in prayer and adoration of God." The Kenyan Catholic Priest further said, "Our faith is strengthened more when we share our stories and experiences of our encounter with the word of God."

ACI Africa Staff, "Training of Small Christian Community Leaders among AMECEA 'Pastoral Strategies: Official,'" *ACI Africa Online News Service*, 25 February, 2024, ACI Africa Website, retrieved on 26 February, 2024,

https://www.aciafrica.org/news/10339/training-of-small-christian-community-leaders-among-amecea-pastoral-strategies-official?utm_campaign=ACI%20Africa&utm_medium=email&hsmi=295633774&hsenc=p2ANqtz_-iDYhwrccpToe8fLrFTxQQFq2veZvPQelxjpl-iPKahtGHRiJVYXEbPQnW61OC_uLtee2Ng2y0SV3eHE-GuGuwG-LAg&utm_content=295633774&utm_source=hs_email

Capacity building initiatives targeting animators of [Small Christian Communities](#) (SCCs) is one of the strategies that members of the [Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa](#) (AMECEA) have identified in their effort to realize "deeper evangelization" in the region, an official of the nine-nation association has said.

The pastoral strategy, Archbishop Muhatia said, "specifically targets the formation of Small Christian Community (SCC) leaders, animators, facilitators, or coordinators in a deeper evangelization that integrates African values and Christian values."

[Last August](#), AMECEA launched the Golden Jubilee Year of SCCs to assess the status of this new way of being church that the leadership of the Church in Africa has included in its evangelization structures. For the whole year, starting from the 19 August 2023 launch, the nine countries in the AMECEA region are to reflect on the goals that Catholic Bishops in the region had when they founded SCCs in 1973.

Ad Gentes – Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church: With Pastoral Theological Reflections to Assist the Readers, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015.

Includes an "Introduction" by Patrick Mwanja, CSSp, 12 Questions for Reflection and the text of the *Decree* itself.

Adinda, Pamela, "[KENYA: Kenyatta University SCCs set to meditate on the Virtues of Cardinal Otunga](#)," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 265, 25 January, 2019.

Adinda, Pamela, "KENYA: Lumko Program Steering Small Christian Communities' Meetings toward Bible Oriented Approach," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 113, 9 October 2015.

Adinda, Pamela, "KENYA: 'There is a Need for Bishops Delegates and Youth Representatives to the Synod from AMECEA to have a Listening Session,' - Fr Healey," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 217, 12 January 2018, AMECEA Website, <http://amecea.blogspot.co.ke/2018/01/kenya-there-is-need-for-senate-bishops.html>

African Continent and African Countries Articles on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and “Facebook Page,”
www.smallchristiancommunities.org

Africa Faith and Justice Network (compiled and edited), *The [First] African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

The African Bible (especially the African-related commentaries and footnotes), Nairobi: Paulines Africa, 1999.

The African Synod Comes Home -- A Simplified Text, Pauline Publications Africa, 1995.
Africa Study Bible, Wheaton, IL: Oasis International Ltd, 2012.
<http://www.africastudybible.com>

Developed by Africans for Africans, the *Africa Study Bible* will transform lives by bringing God’s Word to His people in language that speaks directly to their hearts and relates Scripture to their everyday lives. The *Bible* will be published initially in English using the New Living Translation and other major languages will follow. The study notes are being written by African pastors and scholars. The African contextualized study notes including African Proverbs and Stories are helpful for SCC members to connect Scripture to their daily lives.

“AFRICA: Prioritize SCCs Bishop Urges Church,” *Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) Email News Bulletin*. Issue No. 76, Friday, 28 September, 2012. Available in email message dated 28 September, 2012 and on the CISA Website,
<http://a4a0g.s18.it/f/rnl.aspx/?fgc=wwsrx.f.dh=n5dd0=tw25a1cc=008&x=pv&7:8j&x=cc&0f:33idNCLM>

Afripa Team, AFRIPA (African Integral Pastoral Approach) Texts. Khartoum, Sudan: Palica Center, n.d.

Ahern, Kevin, “Young People Are Leading a New Approach to Campus Ministry,” *U.S. Catholic*, September, 2021, *U.S. Catholic Website*, retrieved on 26 August 2021.
<https://uscatholic.org/articles/202108/young-people-are-leading-a-new-approach-to-campus-ministry/>

Ahern insightfully describes the challenges to campus ministry with practical examples. Highlights are: the explanation of the Small Faith Communities (SFCs) Model of Church; how in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, student faith groups have demonstrated a dynamic sense of resiliency; and Pope Francis’s call for synodal models in youth and young adult ministry (so relevant as the world wide Synodal Process begins in October, 2021). Hopefully the article can also point readers to another important book on campus ministry: Randy Young, "Catholic Campus Ministry: Fifteen Profiles in Achievement," New Jersey, 2020. Ebook and paperback, Amazon Website, retrieved on 26 August 2021.
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08HZFBNQ5/ref=pe_385040_118058080_TE_M1DP?fbclid=IwARIT_15Oy67a7KGv9HRhe-sY6wYNYHgMqNyBP0RHJw0rtkNuKU2JvNQXuFQ

Ahern, Kevin, and Christopher Derige Malano, (eds.), *God’s Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018. Available on Amazon as an Ebook and paperback, retrieved on 3 May, 2020.

https://www.amazon.com/Gods-Quad-Communities-Campus-Beyond/dp/1626982872/ref=vsr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1524187932&sr=1-2&keywords=God%E2%80%99s+Quad

Anne, Henriette, "AMECEA: Lay Leadership Trained on New Innovative Approaches to SCCs," *AMECEA Online News*, Special Issue 502, 1 September, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 3 September, 2023, [AMECEA: Lay Leadership Trained on New Innovative Approaches to SCCs](#)

Anne, Henriette, "AMECEA: SCCs Pastoral Agents Equipped with Skills after the 50 Years Launch," *AMECEA Online News*, Special Issue 502, 1 September, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 3 September, 2023, [AMECEA: SCCs Pastoral Agents Equipped with Skills after the 50 Years Launch](#)

Available from Orbis Books: Religion: God's Quad - Orbis Books | Religious Books, History, & Books on Christianity

Contributors from five continents offer case studies of best practices and practical tools for creating and maintaining different kinds of Small Christian Communities/Small Christian Faith Sharing Communities for young adults, both within and beyond academic settings.

Aineah Agnes, "Church in AMECEA Seeking to Grow Small Christian Communities in Yearlong Celebrations," "ACI Africa Online News Service," 25 August, 2023, retrieved on the ACI Africa Website on 26 August, 2023, [Church in AMECEA Seeking to Grow Small Christian Communities in Yearlong Celebrations](#)

Aineah, Agnes, "Maryknoll Cleric Growing Online Small Christian Communities Amid Kenya's COVID-19 Measures," *ACI Africa Online News*, 21 April, 2020, ACI Africa Website, retrieved on 24 April, 2020, <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/1193/maryknoll-cleric-growing-online-small-christian-communities-amid-kenyas-covid-19-measures>

Alier Samuel Ajak Alier, *African Posters to Teach the Bible -- Guide Book*, African Stories edited by Joseph Healey, Questions for Reflection and Discussion by Joseph Healey and Peter Onyango-Ajus, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002. Also in French, Portuguese and Swahili.

Allen, Roland *Missionary Methods, St Paul's or Ours?* Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2006.

AMECEA Celebrating a Golden Jubilee of Evangelization in Solidarity: Proceedings of the 17th Plenary Assembly at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) 27 June -- 6 July, 2011, Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2011.

AMECEA Consolidated Reports of Member Episcopal Conferences 2008 – 2011, Nairobi: AMECEA Secretariat, 2011.

AMECEA Contribution to the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization, Compiled by the AMECEA Pastoral Department, Nairobi, Kenya: AMECEA Secretariat, 2014.

AMECEA 50 Years of Evangelization in Solidarity: 1961 – 2011, Nairobi: AMECEA Secretariat, 2011.

“AMECEA Hosts SECAM Workshop for Small Christian Communities,” AMECEA *News Blog*, 25 September 2012, AMECEA Website, http://72.30.186.176/search/srptcache?ei=UTF-8&p=small+christian+communities+in+kenya&xa=Lc7Hffn4bwOs7_aokGMeSw--%2C1362399838&fr=yfp-t-900-s&rs=6&u=http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=small+christian+communities+in+kenya&d=4640708785279279&mkt=en-US&setlang=en-US&w=gtXeLNReOfg-WdK1NRRiX7268FCWrzOb&icp=1&.intl=us&sig=6eqa4AbTzoh78OySCfH5FQ--

AMECEA Leading Research Team, *Evaluation of AMECEA Pastoral Mission of Evangelization in Solidarity 1961-2011*, Nairobi: AMECEA Secretariat, 2011.

AMECEA *News*, Issues 1-50, 2016.

AMECEA Pastoral Department, *AMECEA Contribution to the III Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization*, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2014.

AMECEA Pastoral Department, *Child Safeguarding: Standards and Guidelines: A Catholic Guide for Policy Development*, A Training Handbook for Facilitators, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2019.

AMECEA Pastoral Department, “How Can We Make Our Small Christian Communities More Vibrant?” *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, Issue 020 (11 October 11, 2013), AMECEA Website, retrieved on 30 July, 2022, http://ameceapastoral.blogspot.com/2013/10/how-can-we-make-our-small-christian.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=f73682de40-AMECEA+Online+Newsletter+6+5+2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-f73682de40-6746297

AMECEA Pastoral Department, “Phase One -- AMECEA Pastoral Department Action Plan 2015-2018” in “Implementation of AMECEA Strategic Pastoral Plan 2014-2024.” See especially Goal 1: “Promote New and Deeper Evangelization” and “Objective 1: Revitalize and utilize SCCs as modes of evangelization at the grassroots,” Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2015.

AMECEA Pastoral Department (ed.), *Simplified Text of Africa’s Commitment: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Africae Munus* of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2012.

AMECEA Pastoral Department, “Small Christian Communities 20 Years Later: Insights from an AMECEA Survey and Workshop on Small Christian Communities ,” *AMECEA Documentation Service (ADS)* 10-11/No. 472/1997 (June/July, 1997).

AMECEA Plenary: Building Christian Communities, African Ecclesial Review (AFER), Vol. 18, No. 5 October, 1976. Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1976.

Includes Patrick Kalilombe, “An Overall View on Building Christian Communities”

and Brian Hearne, “Theological Reflections on the Objectives of Christian Community.”

AMECEA Plenary: Building Small Christian Communities, African Ecclesial Review (AFER), Vol. 21, No. 5 (October, 1979). Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1979.

Includes papers on SCCs by de Jong, Homes-Siedle, Kakubi, Ndingi and Nsabi and a “Short Bibliography” by Hearne.

AMECEA Plenary: Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s, African Ecclesial Review (AFER), Vol. 16, No 1& 2 (1974). Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1974.

Full report of the December, 1973 Meeting. Includes Patrick Kalilombe, “The Theme’s Biblical Background” and reference to Bishop Raphael Ndingi Mwana a’Nzeki of Nakuru Diocese, Kenya’s script of a sound-slide show on “Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s.”

AMECEA Strategic Pastoral Plan 2014-2024, Nairobi: AMECEA Secretariat, 2014.

AMECEA Synod Delegates Workshop: Shaping the Prophetic Voice of the Region, Nairobi: AMECEA Secretariat, 2009.

Amigu, Titus, “*Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo* Small Christian Communities in Tanzania,” *Bulletin Dei Verbum* 86/87, 2006,
http://www.c-b-f.org/documents/Gemeinschaften_e.pdf

Annotated Syllabus of “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (PTC418).” Tangaza University College (Catholic University of Eastern Africa -- CUEA), Nairobi, Kenya, January to March, 2017.

Araya, Edgardo Jara, *The BECs at St. Camillus Church: A Sacred Space to Practice Christian Belief in the Presence of God in Others*. Unpublished Dissertation, Fordham University, 2023.

Churches continue to be a privileged places where most active Catholics learn, live, and celebrate their faith. However, many Catholics are looking for deeper ways to experience community and belonging. In recent decades, many apostolic movements along with the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs), have played an important role in parishes with Hispanic ministries in the United States. Saint Camillus church, in the Archdiocese of Washington, is one of them. In 2006, this parish started a process to develop Base Ecclesial Communities.

This study explores the pastoral effectiveness of the three oldest BECs at St. Camillus. The goal is to determine the characteristics and elements that have helped them to stay active for so many years. Using participant observation and qualitative interviews, the research seeks to discover the secret, the recipe and the ingredients that have made these three small communities an example of perseverance. What are their stories, opportunities, strengths, and challenges that have allowed them to grow and prosper? As Roberto S. Goizueta said, “one’s actions are the most accurate reflection of one’s identity. If you want to know who I am, observe how I live my life, with whom I interrelate, to

which activities I devote my time, energy, and resources.”

The investigation concludes that these three BECs have been a sign of vitality within the parish, where members can live the sacredness in the small. These BECs have offered a sacred space where first generation Hispanic immigrants can experience belonging and the presence of God in and through others. This sacred space also offers a way to grow in their Catholic Christian faith.

Arua Diocese, “Growing Together: An Awareness Program for SCCs and Associations,” Arua: Privately Printed, 1996.

“ASIA/PHILIPPINES -- The Synodal Path in the Philippines Enhances the Basic Ecclesial Communities,” Agenzia Fides, 26 September 2023, Fides Website, retrieved 12 September, 2023 http://www.fides.org/en/news/74234-ASIA_PHILIPPINES_The_synodal_path_in_the_Philippines_enhances_the_Basic_Ecclesial_Communities

Importance of the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) in the Philippines and their relationship to the ongoing 2021 – 2024 Synodal Process. The first small communities were established in the Philippines in the late 1960s, immediately after the Second Vatican Council, by foreign missionaries, the American Maryknoll Missionaries, who came to the vast area of Mindanao and surrounding islands. They worked in close collaboration with the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) that is one of the largest organizations of rural workers in the Philippines --a socio-political movement run by peasants and for peasants.

Assenga, Peter, *Towards an African Model of Church as Family: A Socio-Anthropological, Ecclesiological and Pastoral Study Based on Family Structures and Community Building Rituals among the Chagga in Tanzania*, Doctorate Dissertation, Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2009.

Aurel, Kristiana, “Beach Lovers Unite: Planting Hope for Our Coastlines in Aikawapuka Village, Timika, Papua, Indonesia,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 5 February, 2024, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/beach-lovers-unite-planting-hope-for-our-coastlines-in-aikawapuka-village-timika-papua-indonesia> Catholic Church Reform Intl. Website, retrieved 5 February, 2024, <https://catholicchurchreformintl.org/hope-for-the-coastline-in-indonesia>

In Papua, Indonesia Kristiana Aurel writes about a SCC of 15 passionate young environmentalists joining forces to plant mangrove seedlings. This is a small community in action promoting the care of creation. The five colored photos really show well how the mangrove seedlings are planted in the water.

Aurel, Kristiana and Alloys Nyakundi, “Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Community’s View on Why a Small Christian Community Is Important and What Happens in Small Communities That Doesn’t Happen in More Traditional Larger Church Gatherings,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 12 September, 2023, https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Article-SCC-draft_Aurel.pdf

Our “[Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Community](#)” is a digital place for young people from all over the world to come and exchange ideas on why [Small Christian Communities \(SCCs\)](#) are so important for young people and what the difference is between gathering in a Small Christian Community and gathering in a traditional church. The Online Young Adult Seekers of Small Christian Communities met and exchanged ideas through Zoom on 17 August 2023. Here are some answers in a pdf File from five young men and three young women. Six are from Kenya, one from Tanzania and one from Indonesia. There are seven hyperlinks. The article is posted on our SCC Website under Africa (African Continent, Kenya and Tanzania) and Asia (Indonesia and Pakistan). It is also posted on other websites and Facebook Pages:

Today’s American Catholic Website,
<https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/2023/09/a-sense-of-belonging/>

Catholic Church Reform Int’l Website,
[Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Community’s View on Why a Small Christian Community Is Important and What Happens in Small Communities That Doesn’t Happen in More Traditional Larger Church Gatherings - Catholic Church Reform International \(catholicchurchreformintl.org\)](https://catholicchurchreformintl.org/online-young-adult-seekers-small-christian-communitys-view-on-why-a-small-christian-community-is-important-and-what-happens-in-small-communities-that-doesnt-happen-in-more-traditional-larger-church-gatherings)

Aurel, Kristiana, Alloys Nyakundi and Mary Wahome, “The Main Challenges Facing the Catholic Church in 2024 and the Practical Solutions to Overcome these Challenges – From the Perspective of Young Adults in the Global South,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 1 May, 2024,
<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/the-main-challenges-facing-the-catholic-church-in-2024-and-the-practical-solutions-to-overcome-these-challenges-from-the-perspective-of-young-adults-in-the-global-south/>

Part 1: Young Seekers’ Views in their Online SCCs Gatherings.

Part 2: Young Seekers’ Interviews With Other Young People.

In the ongoing Synodal Process, the Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Community (SCC)’s engagement has emerged as an essential and dynamic platform to discuss and address the most pressing challenges facing the Catholic Church in 2024. As the church navigates the complexities of modern times, the SCC actively contributes to analyzing and suggesting solutions to its central challenges.

Azetsop, Jacquelineau (ed.), *HIV & AIDS in Africa: Christian Reflection, Public Health, Social Transformation*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. In process: African Editions in both English and French.
 Contains Seven Parts.

This comprehensive look by African scholars at the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Africa features contributions from noted scholars from across the continent, offering analysis from theological, sociological, ecclesiological, and public health perspectives. It is a valuable resource for social analysis and theological reflection from an African perspective, something badly needed for theologians and academics alike.

Includes, “Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as Agents of Change in the Fight Against HIV and AIDS in Eastern Africa,” by Joseph Healey, Small Christian Communities

Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 9 September, 2016,
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/311-small-christian-communities-sccs-as-agents-of-change-in-the-fight-against-hiv-aids-in-eastern-africa.html>

Google Website, retrieved 2 September, 2016,
https://books.google.com/books?id=hl3ADAAAQBAJ&pg=PT20&lpg=PT20&dq=home+based+care+Leonard+Chiti+Zambia&source=bl&ots=d8Nr-bb7AN&sig=C5zmtn_sBReBFgRpDC1wsg9p3EM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjtgIyiq_DOAhXDJB4KHckkCMEQ6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=home%20based%20care%20Leonard%20Chiti%20Zambia&f=false

Baawobr, Richard, *God's Word -- Year A, God's Word -- Year B, God's Word -- Year C*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006-8. In Swahili in three booklets, *Kujifunza na Kushirikishana Biblia katika Injili ya Mathayo, Injili ya Marko, Injili ya Luka kwa ajili ya Jumuiya za Kikristo*, Nairobi: AMECEA Pastoral Department and BICAM, 2008.

Baawobr, Richard, *God's Word for Christian Communities: Guidelines for Facilitators*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2013.

This book offers help to facilitators of Small Christian Communities, *Bible* Sharing Groups and *Bible* Study Groups. The first part explores in simple terms the person and role of the facilitator in a Small Christian Community alongside the usefulness of Small Christian Communities and *Bible* Sharing Groups for living our faith as the Church Family of God in Africa. The second part proposes five *Bible* Sharing/*Bible* Study methods.

Baawobr, Richard, "The Origins and Reasons for Small Christian Communities," Missionaries of Africa West Africa Website, retrieved on 24 August, 2015,
<http://www.mafrwestafrica.net/content/view/648/71/lang.en>

"Background Papers" of the Fifth International SCCs Consultation: International Video Conference (Webinar) on "Small Christian Communities: The Church on the Move around the World," Notre Dame, Indiana: Latin American/North American Church Concerns (LANACC), 2014.

"Background Papers and Final Statement" of the Fourth International SCCs Consultation on "Global Spirituality for SCCs," Notre Dame, Indiana: Latin American/North American Church Concerns (LANACC), 2002.

"Background Papers and Final Statement" of the First International SCCs Consultation on "Rediscovering Community: International Perspectives," Notre Dame, Indiana: Institute for Pastoral and Social Ministry, 1991.

Ball, Robert and Kyle Markham with Rev. Robert S. Pelton, CSC, *The Future of Our Past: The Rev. Robert S. Pelton, CSC's Life, Light and Social Vision of Notre Dame in the New Millennium*, South Bend, Indiana: Diamond Communications, Inc, 2001.

Baranowski, Arthur, *Creating Small Church Communities: A Plan for Restructuring the Parish and Renewing Catholic Life*, 3rd Edition, Cincinnati, OH: St Anthony Messenger Press, 1996.

- Baranowski Art and Theresa Doyle, *Eucharist at the Center: Continually Forming the Parish*, North Hampton, NH: Mindstir Media (www.mindstirmedia.com), 2019. Available on Amazon, retrieved on 2 September 2020, https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Eucharist+at+the+Center%3A+Continually+Forming+the+Parish&i=stripbooks&ref=nb_sb_noss
- Barasa, John Kevin, *Low Participation of the Youth in SCCs: A Case Study of St. Austin Parish, Muthangari, Nairobi Archdiocese*, Eldoret, Kenya: Catholic University of Eastern Africa, AMECEA Gaba Campus, 2019.
- Baur, John, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, First Edition, 1994, Second Edition, 2009.
- Benedict XVI, *The Door of Faith, Motu Proprio Porta Fidei* with Pastoral Recommendations for the Year of Faith by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2012.
- Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *The Word of the Lord*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2010.
- Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Africa's Commitment (Africae Munus)*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2011. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africaemunus_en.html <http://www.zenit.org/article33862?!=english>
- Bible Lessons: Bible Month, September, 2013* Book III, Lilongwe, Malawi: ECM Catholic Secretariat Pastoral Department, 2013. Some of these booklets are also available in Chewa and Tumbuka.
- Biziyaremye, Gilbert, "The Relevance of *Ecclesia in Africa* for Small Christian Communities in Africa: Case of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kigali, Rwanda," in *African Christian Studies* (CUEA), Vol. 28, No. 4 (December, 2012): 7-21.
- Blaney, Joanne, "Celebrating Holy Week 2020 in an Online Base Community in São Paulo, Brazil: A 2020 Holy Week Celebration With People Who Live or Lived on the Street Moves to Zoom This Year," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website retrieved on 26 April, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/celebrating-holy-week-2020-in-an-online-base-community-in-sao-paulo-brazil>
- Bodewes, Christine, *Parish Transformation in Urban Slums: Voices of Kibera, Kenya*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2005.
- Boff, Leonardo, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986.

It is generally agreed that the SCC/BCC/BEC/CEB Model of Church started with the CEBs in Barra do Pirai Diocese, Brazil in 1956. The language was Portuguese. Leonardo Boff traces their beginning to the lament of a humble old lady [called the 'Rosa Parks of CEBs'] so her words may be among the most momentous uttered in church history.

“Christmas Eve,” she complained, “all three Protestant Churches were lit up and full of people...and the Catholic Church closed and dark!...Because we can’t get a priest.” The question naturally arose why everything should come to a standstill simply because there was no priest. This led to an initiative by Brazilian Bishop Agnelo Rossi, Bishop of Barra do Pirai Diocese in the Metropolitan of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to launch a community catechetical/evangelization movement in Barra do Pirai out of which small communities [CEBs] eventually emerged.

Bongmba, Elias Kifon, (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology*, Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2020.

An authoritative and comprehensive survey of the theological landscape of Africa. Available in a Print Version and Online Version (eBook with a Read Aloud feature).

Under “Part III: Regional and Emergent Theological Themes,” Chapter 20 is “We Create the Path by Walking: Evolving an African Narrative Theology” by Joseph G. Healey. *We create the path by walking* goes a well-known universal saying. The same can be said about the development of African Narrative Theology in its many forms. Africans are writing a narrative contextual theology of inculturation and liberation out of their own experiences and lives.

Bonnar, David, *Testify to the Light*, a Pastoral Letter of Bishop David J. Bonnar, Bishop of Youngstown, Ohio, USA, 19 February, 2021. <https://doy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pastoral-Letter-Bishop-Bonnar-2021.pdf>

Bishop Bonnar is clearly a Francis Bishop who understands the life and activities of the SCCs Model of Church. He highlights:

1. “The Value of Faith Sharing” (*Lectio Divina*)
2. “The Sacredness of Parish Life” (“community of communities”)
3. “The Formation of Small Groups” (parishes form small communities for people to share their faith and support one another as they become disciples)

Bosch, David, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991.

Breen, Frank (compiler and editor), *Maryknoll History in Africa*,

Volume One (Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Namibia – 1951 to 2011), Maryknoll, NY: Privately Printed, 2011.

Volume Two (Tanganyika – 1946 to the early 1960s), Maryknoll, NY: Privately Printed, 2015.

Volume Three (Musoma Diocese – 1961 to 2015), Maryknoll, NY: Privately Printed, 2016.

Volume Four (Shinyanga Diocese from Independence to 2016), Maryknoll, NY: Privately Printed, 2017.

Volume Five (Archdioceses of Dar es Salaam and Mwanza, Zambia, Mozambique and Rome), Maryknoll, NY: Privately Printed, 2017.

Available online on the Maryknoll Africa Region Website, under “Our Downloads” under “Resource Center,” <https://maryknollafrika.org/category/our-downloads>
OFFLINE

Broszkowski, Krzysztof, *The Unity of the Parish and the Celebration of the Eucharist in Small Parish Communities in the Light of Recent Documents of the Magisterium of the Church*, Warsaw, 2013.

I analysed the problem of parish unity faced with separate Eucharistic celebrations organized by small communities [especially connected to the Neocatechumenal Way] existing in a parish. I tried to formulate theological principles of that unity in the light of the magisterial documents of 20th and 21st century. The unity of a parish is most importantly connected with the spiritual, invisible dimension that is also expressed in the external, visible way by bonds of profession of faith, sacraments, church hierarchy and communion. Unity between parishioners is built by initiating them into the Paschal Mystery and into daily meditation of the Word of God. Instead of seeing in SCCs a threat to unity, both John Paul II and Benedict XVI indicate that small communities participate in the process of strengthening the unity of the parish by leading people along the mystagogical way towards the initiation into the Paschal Mystery. I also referred to sociological data about religiosity in contemporary Polish parishes indicating that there is a serious crisis in the life of faith and a dire need for these communities as a means of Christian initiation.

Bukumbi Pastoral Institute, “Position Papers for the 1969 National Seminar Study Year (SSY),” Bukumbi: Printed Papers, 1969.

Bujo, Bénédzet, *Plea for Change of Models of Marriage*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009.

Bwangatto, Ambrose, “A Church Struggling to Answer Her Missionary Vocation,” Kampala: Privately Printed, 2018.

Bwangatto, Ambrose, “A New Way of Being Church for Young People? Small Christian Communities and the Youth in Uganda,” published in “Reader for the Network Small Christian Communities Africa – Fifth Workshop” (Réseau des Communautés Ecclésiales de Base en Afrique – Cinquième Atelier), Theme: “A New Way of Being Church for Young People? Small Christian Communities and the Youth” (Theme “Une nouvelle manière d’être Église pour les jeunes? Les Communautés Ecclésiales de Base (CEB) et les jeunes,” Aachen: Missio, Privately Printed, 2018.

Called To Be Church: Small Church Communities on Campus, New Haven: Saint Thomas More the Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University, 2011-2013.

Cardinal, Ernesto, *The Gospel in Solentiname*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010.

Collection of commentaries on the Christian gospels composed by Ernesto Cardenal that were made by a group of peasants in Solentiname. For many years, the peasants in Solentiname, a remote archipelago in Lake Nicaragua, gathered each Sunday in a type of CEB to reflect on the gospel reading. From recordings of their dialogue, this extraordinary

document was composed. First published in the 1970s in four volumes, it was immediately acclaimed as a classic expression of liberation theology and a radical reading of the Good News of Jesus from the perspective of the poor and oppressed. Forty years later, now available in one volume, *The Gospel in Solentiname* retains its freshness and power.

Caramazza, Giuseppe and Eleanor Gibson (eds.), *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Proceedings of the Symposium held at Tangaza University College, February, 2017, Nairobi: Institute of Youth Studies, 2018. Includes:

Chapter 9: “Youth Small Christian Communities: Creating the Path by Walking” by Alloys Nyakundi (covering university YSCCs and Parish YSCCs)

“The Way Forward: Creating the Path by Walking” by Joseph Healey, MM (including YSCCs providing a safe place for prayer, sharing and reflection)

Carney, J. J., “The People Bonded Together by Love: Eucharistic Ecclesiology and Small Christian Communities in Africa,” *Modern Theology* 30: 2, April, 2014, https://www.academia.edu/8361392/The_People_Bonded_Together_by_Love_Eucharistic_Ecclesiology_and_Small_Christian_Communities_in_Africa

This article examines the most important Catholic ecclesiological development in East and Central Africa since Vatican II - Small Christian Communities or Living Ecclesial Base Communities. Drawing from historical literature on the movement as well as participant interviews in Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo, the article argues that the SCC movement has striking resonance with post-Vatican II Eucharistic ecclesiology and calls for deeper theological reflection on the sociopolitical implications of a thoroughly "Eucharistic" vision of the SCC.

The author breaks new ground in bringing two important Catholic ecclesial visions -- Small Christian Communities as the dominant model of church in Africa and Eucharistic Ecclesiology --into dialog with one another. First, he analyzes the origins and theological vision of the Small Christian Community movement in Africa, focusing on Eastern and Central Africa. Second, he considers the resonances and tensions between the SCC vision and post-Vatican II Eucharistic Ecclesiology. Third, he discusses what many see as the biggest contemporary challenge facing both SCCs and the African church—namely their engagement with issues of social justice, peace, and reconciliation. He argues that the growing SCC emphasis on social analysis and social justice could be further developed through more intentional theological reflection on the Eucharistic politics implicit in the Small Christian Community.

Carney, J. J., “The People Who Do All Things Together,” Living Ecclesial Base Communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, *Theological Studies*, 85:2, 2024. <file:///C:/Users/Father%20Joe/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/JVJO7TUY/DRC%20CEVB%20People%20Who%20Do%20All%20Things%20Together%20TS%20Article%202024.pdf>

This article analyzes the pastoral practice and ecclesiological vision of Living Ecclesial Base Communities (CEVBs) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through a case study in the Diocese of Tshumbe. Contextualizing this within the broader history of Global South Base Communities, the author argues that CEVBs exemplify Vatican II’s people of God ecclesiology

and Africa's image of the church as the family of God. They also embody Pope Francis's calls for a more synodal and dialogical church that empowers laity, provides opportunities for women's leadership, and integrates faith and social concern.

In Lingala, the language most widely spoken in DRC's capital of Kinshasa, CEVBs -- *Communauté Ecclesiale Vivante du Base* or "Living Ecclesial Base Community" -- are known simply as *lisangas* -- the "people who do all things together."

Many references to SCCs in Eastern Africa.

Carney, Joseph, *The History of the Functional Structure of the Maryknoll Mission in Musoma and Shinyanga, Tanzania*, New York: St John's University Unpublished Dissertation, 1973.

Cashore, Thomas (ed.), *Robert S. Pelton Latin America Collection*, South Bend: Moreau Seminary Library, 2018.

The collection contains the following:

- All of Pelton's books and published articles.
- Excellent documentation on the history of CEBs going back to the Medellín and Puebla Conferences up to the present.
- Full set of the *Latin American/North American Church Concerns (LANACC) Newsletters and Papers*.
- Complete Record of the International Small Christian Communities Conferences that Pelton coordinated.
- Audio-visual Resources.
- Some Eastern Africa SCCs documents and resources.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994.

Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa Pastoral Policy, Mombasa: Unpublished Paper, 2014. Chapter Two is on "Small Christian Communities."

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Build Our Family and Nation with Dignity: Today's Seeds, Tomorrow's Harvest*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2015, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2015. Available on the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) Website at:

<http://www.cjpckkenya.org/index.php?page=programs&fid=1>

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *A Dawn of New Hope: Implementing the New Constitution*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2011, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2011.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *How Can We Be One?...for the Sanctification and Salvation of All People*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2014, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2014. Available on the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) Website at:

<http://www.cjpckkenya.org/index.php?page=other&gid=84>

- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Justice, Peace and Reconciliation*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2009, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2009.
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Kenya's Good Governance: My Responsibility*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2007, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2007.
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Lent: Let Light Shine Out of Darkness... Kenya Lenten Campaign Training Manual for Small Christian Communities*, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2012.
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *The Leadership Handbook* (Swahili is *Maelekezo ya Uongozi*), Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2012.
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Peaceful and Credible Elections – Leaders of Integrity*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2017, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2017.
<http://www.cjpkenya.org/index.php?page=other&gid=94>
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Peaceful and Prosperous Kenya... My Responsibility*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2016, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2016.
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Reconciliation for Peaceful Co-Existence and National Integration: Justice for All (Mapatanisho ili Kuishi Pamoja kwa Amani kwa Taifa Lenye Usawa kwa Wote)*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2018, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2018. KCCB Website, retrieved on 1 March, 2018,
 English: <http://www.kccb.or.ke/home/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/lenten-campaing-english-16-1-181.pdf>
 Swahili: <http://www.kccb.or.ke/home/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/lenten-campaing-kiswahili-16-1-18.pdf>
- Weekly topics:
- First week – Good governance.
 - Second week – Reconciliation.
 - Third week – Youth and Development.
 - Fourth week – Security.
 - Fifth week - Child Protection (covering different kinds of child abuse including physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse). **NOTE:** This week was used in the SCCs Course at Tangaza University College in March, 2018.
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Towards Healing and Transformation*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2010, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2010.
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Towards a Transformed Kenya: Let Light Shine Out of Darkness*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2012, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2012.
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *United and Peaceful Kenya...The Change I Want To*

See, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2013. Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2013. Including the DVD *United and Peaceful Kenya...The Change I Want To See: 2013 Lenten Campaign Launch, 9th February 2013, Nyayo National Stadium, Nairobi.*

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *Uniting, Healing and Renewal of our Nation... God's Gift*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2019. Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2019.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, *With a New Heart and a New Spirit*, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2008. Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2008.

Centore, Michael, "Cords of Human Kindness": An Introduction to Small Christian Communities, *Today's American Catholic (TAC)*, 29 November 2022, article in *Today's American Catholic (TAC)* Website retrieved on 5 March, 2023, <https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/2022/11/cords-of-human-kindness/> Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 5 March, 2023, [Cords-of-Human-Kindness.pdf \(smallchristiancommunities.org\)](https://smallchristiancommunities.org/cords-of-human-kindness/)

This article from the online magazine *Today's American Catholic (TAC)* takes its title from a verse in the Old Testament book of *Hosea* 11:1-4

Centore, Michael, "The Hallowing of the Real": Small Christian Communities and the Universal Priesthood, article *Today's American Catholic (TAC)*, 3 March 2023, *Today's American Catholic (TAC)* Website, retrieved on 5 March, 2023, ["The Hallowing of the Real": Small Christian Communities and the Universal Priesthood - Today's American Catholic \(todaysamericancatholic.org\)](https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/the-hallowing-of-the-real-small-christian-communities-and-the-universal-priesthood/) Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 5 March, 2023, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/the-hallowing-of-the-real-small-christian-communities-and-the-universal-priesthood/>

This article from the online magazine *Today's American Catholic (TAC)* takes its title from what the Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel called "the hallowing of the real," and our participation in this hallowing as devotional beings fulfills the words of Fr. Schmemmann: "If the church is in Christ, its initial act is always this act of thanksgiving, of returning the world to God."

Centore, Michael, "A Leaven for Positive Change: Synod Report for October 12, 2023," *Today's American Catholic*, 12 October, 2023. Retrieved from the *Today's American Catholic* Website on 16 October, 2023. [Leaven for Positive Change: Synod Report for October 12, 2023 - Today's American Catholic \(todaysamericancatholic.org\)](https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/leaven-for-positive-change-synod-report-for-october-12-2023/)

The importance of Small Christian Communities (SCCs), also known as Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) or Basic Christian Communities (BCCs), to the life of the church has been a recurring theme of the synodal discussion this week.

Centore, Michael, "Loyola Institute for Ministry and Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa Advance the Work of Synodality and Small Christian Communities," *Today's American Catholic (TAC)*, 1 June 2023, *Today's American Catholic (TAC)* Website, retrieved on 1 June, 2023,

<https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/2023/06/loyola-institute-for-ministry-and-episcopal-conferences-of-eastern-africa-advance-the-work-of-synodality-and-small-christian-communities/>

Summary article of an international Zoom Gathering with the following headings:

- The Synodal Spirit
- A Lasting Collaboration
- Walking with Young Adults
- A “Neighborhood Church”
- Inner Life and Public Life
- Conclusion: Reasons for Hope

Chikwekwete, Dadirai Miriam and Janice McLaughlin, MM, eds., *Combating Human Trafficking - Voices from East, West and Southern Africa*, Harare: African Forum for Social Teaching (AFCAST), Arrupe Jesuit University, 2021.

American Maryknoll Sister Janice McLaughlin who died earlier in 2021 seamlessly integrated African stories and proverbs into her talks and writings. The "Acknowledgement" section of this book quotes the African proverb, *It takes many hands joined together to put a roof on a house.*

Chimenge, Sylvester, Interview with Jane Njenga, *Polygamous Marriages and the Eucharistic Famine*, 10 November 2015 in *Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as a Platform for Continuous Catechesis in Eastern Africa -- Opportunities and Challenges: Case Study of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish South B, Nairobi, Kenya*, Nairobi: Unpublished Master's Thesis in Pastoral Ministry, Tangaza University College, 2016.

Jane is a second wife who goes to Mass every Sunday and is a faithful member of her SCC. She entered the RCIA (Adult Catechumenate) with the desire to be baptized as a Catholic. But she had to stop the instructions because she is a second wife. Her husband is a Catholic, but he had to stop receiving the Eucharist when he married a second wife. Jane was unable to find a suitable husband (men seem fewer in Kenya). To meet her human /sexual/social needs she decided to become a second wife.

Chimombo, Emmanuel, “AMECEA: Pastoral Coordinator Assures Theologians that Small Christian Communities Domesticcate Theology at Grassroots,” *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, Issue 441 (29 July, 2022), AMECEA Website, retrieved on 30 July, 2022, [AMECEA: Pastoral Coordinator Assures Theologians that Small Christian Communities Domesticcate Theology at Grassroots](#)

Chimombo, Emmanuel, “Establishing Small Christian Communities: Ecclesial Communities in Vatican II and Post-Conciliar Documents.” CUEA. Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 2003.

Chimombo, Emmanuel, Joseph G. Healey, Rita Ishengoma, Rose Musimba, Febian P. Mulenga and Alphonse C. L. Omolo, (eds.), *Strengthening the Growth of Small Christian Communities in Africa -- A Training Handbook for Facilitators*, Nairobi: AMECEA Pastoral Department and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2017. Second Revised Edition, 2018.

The Swahili (Eastern and Central Africa) is *Kuimarisha Ukuaji wa Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo katika Afrika* (2022).

The Chewa (Malawi) is *Kulimbikitsa Miphakaki/Malimana mu Africa – Buku Lophunzitsira ndi Kusulira* (2023).

The Tumbuka (Malawi) is *Kukhozga Kakuliro ka Mauzengezani mu Africa – Buku La Kunjirikizgira Wasambizgi* (2023).

The French is *Renforcer la croissance des Petites Communautés Chrétiennes (CEB, CCB, CEV, PCC, CEVB, CEVB) en Afrique– Manuel de Formation pour les Animateurs et Animatrices*.

1. Paperback and Ebook available on Paulines Publications Africa.
Ebook available through Paulines Publications Africa on Android Platforms only (smartphones, tablets, etc.) – not on Apple or Microsoft.
<http://e.paulinesafrica.org/index.php/book/bookDetails/1356>

Malawi editions by Likuni Press

2. Paperback (Print on Demand -- POD) and Ebook available on Amazon.
https://www.amazon.com/STRENGTHENING-GROWTH-CHRISTIAN-COMMUNITIES-AFRICA-ebook/dp/B07H2YRBTJ/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1536294296&sr=8-1&keywords=emmanuel+chimombo

1. 128-page booklet to assist in SCCs training courses for SCCs facilitators and animators in Africa.
2. Preface by H. E. Souraphiel Cardinal Berhaneyesus, Archbishop of Addis Ababa Archdiocese, Ethiopia and former Chairman of AMECEA.
3. Recommends 15 topics and sessions for an effective training course on this key pastoral priority of the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa. They include: arrival of the participants, introduction of the participants, logistics, sharing of roles and responsibilities, participant's fears or concerns, training topics, expectations and training objectives.
4. Includes a rich bibliography that comprises references, additional reading materials, videos, DVDs as well as accompanying rich annexes. The new handbook recommends a checklist of 16 common activities in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa today for effective training of SCCs facilitators.

Chin, Maria-Pia Negro, "Embracing Synodality: Missioners Listen, Dialogue and Discern Together in the Worldwide Synodal Process," *Maryknoll Magazine*, Winter, 2023, retrieved on 1 June, 2023, [Embracing Synodality - Maryknoll Magazine](#)

Chin, Maria-Pia Negro, "Young Adult Faith Leads To Action: Maryknoll Accompanies and Empowers Young Adult Missionary Disciples," *Maryknoll Magazine*, Summer, 2022, retrieved on 7 June, 2022, [Final-LORES-MKMG-Summer-2022-1.pdf \(maryknollmagazine.org\)](#) **CORRECT**

1. Young people “are not bystanders. They’re part of the journey,” says Father Healey. He has spent over 10 years researching and writing about small young adult faith-sharing communities. All of this leads to responding to the baptismal call to mission. “It is faith leading to action,” he says.

2. Community members also delve into the global charism of Maryknoll. For example, a missionary working in Kenya connected them with Small Christian Community leader Alphonse Omolo who facilitated an international virtual encounter of young people. Coordinators say they are constantly working with Maryknoll to ensure YAE members feel part of God’s mission and the mission of the universal Church.

3. With Father Healey’s guidance, YAE coordinators engaged members in the Synod on Synodality, a Catholic Church-wide process of listening and dialogue. Some young adults were already involved in listening processes in their home dioceses; all look forward to the fruits of this “journeying together” as a church.

Chiti, Leonard, “Fighting AIDS From the Grassroots: History, Theology, Values and Challenges of Home-Based Care in Zambia,” in Jacquineau Azetsop (ed.), *HIV and AIDS in Africa: Theological Reflection, Public Health Crises, and Social Transformation*, Orbis Books, 2016.

The home-based care (HBC) system emerged in Zambia in the late 1980s as a complement to the mainstream health-care delivery system for people living with HIV. Local parish had home-based care programs such as the group called Caring Women who went around their neighborhood bringing medicine and praying for those terminally ill, many of whom had AIDS. In Zambia in the Catholic Church that accounts for a third of the people calling themselves Christian, the home-based care system followed closely the pattern of Small Christian Communities.

Cieslikiewicz Christopher, “Pastoral Involvement of Parish-based SCCs in Dar es Salaam,” in Joseph Healey and Jeanne Hinton (eds.), *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005 and Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

Cieslikiewicz, Christopher, *Small Christian Communities: Pastoral Priority and a Vital Force for Evangelization in the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. An Evaluation and New Perspectives*, Rome: Lateran University, 2004.

Thorough doctorate dissertation based on current SCC surveys, an in-depth questionnaire and extensive field interviews with extensive bibliography and appendices.

Cieslikiewicz Christopher, “Urban Small Christian Communities and Formation for the New Vision of the Church: Tanzanian Study Case,” *Africa Tomorrow*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (June, 2006).

Cimperman, Maria, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015.

This is the successor to the best-selling classic *Social Analysis: Linking Faith to Action* and it’s 25th Anniversary volume *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*.

Today, the widespread use of social analysis in many forms, makes this publication very timely and helpful. Based on her experience of teaching courses, conducting workshops, and participating in social movements, the author has brought together both theory and practice with good examples, realistic methods, and probing challenges. This book explores the “Pastoral Spiral.” This process, undertaken communally, in dialog, is geared towards the transformation of systems and also towards the transformation of individuals and peoples involved. The process offers tools, for seeing, assessing, reflecting, responding, acting and helping people to work together to imagine and allow possible responses to emerge from a vision of God’s world, and finally to take action to create this vision.

Our SCCs in Eastern Africa (and around the world) regularly use the Pastoral Spiral that is also called the Pastoral Circle and the Pastoral Cycle. See, Christine Bodewes, *Parish Transformation in Urban Slums: Voices of Kibera, Kenya*.

Unfortunately this particular edition has few African examples.

Chongwain, Ireneus Chia, “Editorial: Small Christian Communities, Learning from the East African Experience,” *L’Effort Camerounai*, 23 October, 2008, *L’Effort Camerounais* Website, retrieved on 22 July, 2014, <http://www.leffortcamerounais.com/2008/10/editorialsmall.html>

Christian Life Community: Resources for Small Groups. Phase 1: “Friends in God.” Phase 2: “Finding God in All Things.” Phase 3: “Vocation Discernment.” Santa Clara, CA: Santa Clara University, Campus Ministry, 2010.

The Church We Want to Be: Elements for a Common Vision of the Pastoral Action of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia – a Pastoral Letter of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Privately Printed, 2002.

Le Communautés Chrétiennes Catholiques de Base: Lancement et Organisation – Diocese D’Atakpame, Lome: Editions Saint-Augustin Afrique, 27 Juin 2009, 2015.

“Communique of the 3rd Pan-African Workshop on the Founding of a Network of Small Christian Communities in Africa held in Nairobi, Kenya, 21 to 25 October, 2016,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 28 October, 2016, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/COMMUNIQUE.pdf>

The 16 participants made the following commitments:

- To form a Pan–African Network of Small Christian Communities
- To promote Small Christian Communities in our countries and bring more members on board
- To support a steering committee that has been selected and mandated to coordinate the networking
- To meet annually on a rotational manner in different countries of Africa
- To share the best practices through social media and internet
- To start an independent African SCCs Networking Website with its own domain name. The internet address is: www.africansccsnetworking.org. It should include the Missio SCCs Network logo. The website will have dialog/discussion pages in English, French and Portuguese. This will be a revised and updated version of the “original, temporary” African SCCs Networking Website (what we call the trial or

Beta version) created in April, 2016 that has the internet address (URL):

http://www.topsoftchoice.com/secam_scc/

- To mandate the AMECEA Pastoral Department to manage this newly created website on SCCs Networking
- To encourage people from all 54 countries in Africa to send articles on SCCs

The Community Called Church. Volume 5 of an Experimental Sourcebook for Religious Education, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* No. 60, December, 1979.

Congar, Yves, *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity*, Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1965.

Cornwell, Megan, "What Young Catholics Want – the Answers May Surprise You," Blog on the *Tablet* Website, 09 January 2018, retrieved on 22 January, 2018, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/1115/what-young-catholics-want-the-answers-may-surprise-you>

Cotonou Archdiocese, "Manual to Guide Small Christian Communities in Benin's Cotonou Archdiocese," Cotonou: Privately Published, 2021.

<https://www.aciafrica.org/news/3548/manual-to-guide-small-christian-communities-in-benins-cotonou-archdiocese-released>

Archbishop Roger Houngbédji said, "The Catholic Church will only be able to give its full measure of Church-Family if it branches out into communities that are small enough to allow for closer human relationships, through what we call SCCs." The manual contains presentations of life experiences with thematic explanations and biblical extracts and the writings of St. Augustine on fraternal communion.

Courage! Get on Your Feet, Continent of Africa, "Homily of his Holiness Benedict XVI at the Concluding Mass" and "Message of the Bishops of Africa to the People of God" of the Second African Synod, Nairobi: 2009.

Cowan, Michael and Bernard Lee, SM, *Conversation, Risk, and Conversion: The Inner & Public Life of Small Christian Communities*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.

This book has had a big influence on the development of SCCs worldwide. It is used as a textbook (sent as an electronic copy to students throughout the world) in two Online LIM Courses at the University of Loyola in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA: the "Inner Life of Small Christian Communities" and the "Public Life of Small Christian Communities."

Damaseke, Francis, "AMECEA: The Church has Everything for Every One: Archbishop Tambala to Christians," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 499, 25 August, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 29 August, 2023, [AMECEA: The Church has Everything for Every One: Archbishop Tambala to Christians](#)

Davies, Colon, "A Call to Action on Eucharistic Hunger – Now! Making the Eucharist Available to all Baptized People as the Bread of Eternal Life," Liverpool, England: Unpublished Paper, 2015.

Davies, Colon, *From Pilot to Pastoral Bishop: Memoirs and Reflections of 53 Years of Missionary Life in Kenya*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2014.

Pages 111-114 highlight “Small Christian Communities.” The author emphasizes Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as a model of being church. “SCCs should make Christianity a way of life, really touching their lives and supporting them in their problems. A SCC is ideally a communion of families” (page 14). He encourages membership and participation of the clergy in these small communities. He describes the Psycho-Social Method of Paul Frere in the African context. The great value of the method was/is that it is genuinely involves “groups of people” becoming “communities” that are united in implementing projects.

Dayan, Eti, *One of Them: My Life Among the Maasai of Kenya*, ebookPro Publishing, 2020.

Available on Amazon as an Ebook and POD paperback,

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=One+of+Them%3A+My+Life+Among+the+Maasai+of+Kenya&i=stripbooks&ref=nb_sb_noss_2

Ddungu, Charles, *Towards Self-Ministering Small Christian Communities: The Case of Ndala Parish*, Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Brussels: Catholic University of Louvain, 2005.

Digal, Santosh, “My Experience with Filipino Basic Ecclesial Communities at the Synod,” *PIME AsiaNews*, retrieved on PIME AsiaNews Website on 27 August, 2023, [ECCLESIA IN ASIA Estela Padilla: 'My Experience with Filipino Basic Ecclesial Communities at the Synod' \(asianews.it\)](https://www.pime.org/asia/news/2023/08/27/ecclesia-in-asia-estela-padilla-my-experience-with-filipino-basic-ecclesial-communities-at-the-synod)

Diocesan Pastoral Secretariat, *Pastoral Guidelines: Lilongwe Diocesan Mini-Synod 24 November, 1973 – 24 August, 1975*, Lilongwe: Likuni Print, 1976

Dixon, Rick, “Altars of Hope in El Salvador in Times of COVID-19,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 26 April, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/altars-of-hope-in-el-salvador-in-times-of-covid-19/>

Document Diocesain de la Pastoral des CCCB (Communautés Chrétienne Catholique de Base), Vogan, Togo: Anêho Service Diocesain Archives et Bibliothèque, 2009.

Dodson, Laura, “Can Small Christian Communities Help Heal a ‘Eucharistic Famine’? This Maryknoll Priest Thinks So,” *OSV News*, 19 February, 2024, Our Sunday Visitor (OSV) Website, retrieved on 20 February, 2024, <https://www.oursundayvisitor.com/can-small-christian-communities-help-heal-a-eucharistic-famine-this-maryknoll-priest-thinks-so/>

Published in 15 places:

Catholic Nutshell News

Central Minnesota Catholic Magazine

Florida Catholic Media (plus audio, plus Spanish)

Florida Catholic Website

Microsoft Bing Summary

New Outlook: Diocese of Tucson Online News (plus Spanish)

Orbis Books Facebook Page

Orbis Books Instagram Page

Orbis Books Twitter Page

OSV Page with new devotional headline

Our Sunday Visitor

Our Sunday Visitor Twitter (X) Page

St. Brigid & St. James Knights of Columbus 16179 (devotional headline)

Sticna (devotional)

We are Church Ireland

Born in Detroit in 1938, Father Healey was ordained a priest for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers in 1966 and spent more than 50 years in East Africa, predominantly focused on forming what are called “[Small Christian Communities](#),” or SCCs. Having formed several thousand — in person and over the internet — he is sought out as an expert in what it means to answer Jesus’ call as a disciple and to be sent forth as an apostle.

Now back in the U.S., he passionately continues to spread the essential role of SCCs in the church’s evangelizing mission. SCCs (also known as “Basic Christian Communities”) have also gained the attention of the global Synod of Bishops, which will continue discerning how they can become a more intentional part of a synodal, evangelizing church when the synod reconvenes in Rome this October.

Father Healey hopes the July 17-21 [National Eucharistic Congress](#) in Indianapolis will include the opportunity for participants to gather in small groups to share their faith, to discuss what the Eucharist means to them and the community. “There is a Eucharistic famine in Africa,” he explained, “where many communities will go for as long as a year without a priest to celebrate Mass. The pinnacle of our Catholic faith is absent.”

1378

intentional theological reflection on the Eucharistic politics implicit in the Small Christian Community.

Carney, J. J., “The People Who Do All Things Together,” *Living Ecclesial Base*

Communities

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,: Unpublished Manuscript, 2023.

In Lingala, the language most widely spoken in DRC's capital of Kinshasa, CEVBs -- Communauté Ecclesiale Vivante du Base or "Living Ecclesial Base Community" -- are known

simply as lisangas -- the "people who do all things together."

Carney, Joseph, The History of the Functional Structure of the Maryknoll Mission in Musoma

and Shinyanga, Tanzania, New York: St John's University Unpublished Dissertation, 1973.

Thomas Cashore (ed.), Robert S. Pelton Latin America Collection, South Bend: Moreau Seminary Library, 2018.

The collection contains the following:

- All of Pelton's books and published articles.
- Excellent documentation on the history of CEBs going back to the Medellín and Puebla Conferences up to the present.
- Full set of the Latin American/North American Church Concerns (LANACC) Newsletters and Papers.
- Complete Record of the International Small Christian Communities Conferences that Pelton coordinated.
- Audio-visual Resources.
- Some Eastern Africa SCCs documents and resources.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994.

Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa Pastoral Policy, Mombasa: Unpublished Paper, 2014. Chapter Two is on "Small Christian Communities."

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Build Our Family and Nation with Dignity: Today's Seeds, Tomorrow's Harvest, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2015, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2015. Available on the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) Website at:

<http://www.cjpckkenya.org/index.php?page=programs&fid=1>

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, A Dawn of New Hope: Implementing the New

Constitution, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2011, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2011.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, How Can We Be One?...for the Sanctification and

Salvation of All People, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2014, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2014. Available on the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) Website at:

1379

<http://www.cjpckkenya.org/index.php?page=other&gid=84>

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, Kenya Lenten

Campaign, 2009, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2009.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Kenya's Good Governance: My Responsibility, Kenya

Lenten Campaign, 2007, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2007.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Lent: Let Light Shine Out of Darkness... Kenya

Lenten Campaign Training Manual for Small Christian Communities, Nairobi: KCCB

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2012.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, The Leadership Handbook (Swahili is Maelekezo ya Uongozi), Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2012.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Peaceful and Credible Elections – Leaders of Integrity, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2017, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2017.

<http://www.cjpckenya.org/index.php?page=other&gid=94>

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Peaceful and Prosperous Kenya...My Responsibility, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2016, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2016.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Reconciliation for Peaceful Co-Existence and National Integration: Justice for All (Mapatanisho ili Kuishi Pamoja kwa Amani kwa Taifa Lenye Usawa kwa Wote), Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2018, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2018. KCCB Website, retrived on 1 March, 2018,

English: <http://www.kccb.or.ke/home/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/lenten-campaing-english-16-1-181.pdf>

Swahili: <http://www.kccb.or.ke/home/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/lenten-campaing-kiswahili-16-1-18.pdf>

Weekly topics:

First week – Good governance.

Second week – Reconciliation.

Third week – Youth and Development.

Fourth week – Security.

Fifth week - Child Protection (covering different kinds of child abuse including physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse). NOTE: This week was used in the SCCs Course at Tangaza University College in March, 2018.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Towards Healing and Transformation, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2010, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2010.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Towards a Transformed Kenya: Let Light Shine Out of Darkness, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2012, Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2012.

1380

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, United and Peaceful Kenya...The Change I Want To See, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2013. Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2013. Including the DVD United and Peaceful Kenya...The Change I Want To See: 2013 Lenten Campaign Launch, 9th February 2013, Nyayo National Stadium, Nairobi.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Uniting, Healing and Renewal of our Nation...God's Gift, Kenya Lenten Campaign, 2019. Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2019.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, With a New Heart and a New Spirit, Kenya

Lenten

Campaign, 2008. Nairobi: KCCB Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 2008.

Centore, Michael, "Cords of Human Kindness": An Introduction to Small Christian Communities, Today's American Catholic (TAC), 29 November 2022, article in Today's American Catholic (TAC) Website retrieved on 5 March, 2023,

<https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/2022/11/cords-of-human-kindness/>

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 5 March, 2023, Cords-of-Human-Kindness.pdf (smallchristiancommunities.org)

This article from the online magazine Today's American Catholic (TAC) takes its title from a verse in the Old Testament book of Hosea 11:1-4

Centore, Michael, "The Hallowing of the Real": Small Christian Communities and the Universal Priesthood, article Today's American Catholic (TAC), 3 March 2023,

Today's American Catholic (TAC) Website, retrieved on 5 March, 2023, "The Hallowing of the Real": Small Christian Communities and the Universal Priesthood - Today's American Catholic (todaysamericancatholic.org)

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 5 March, 2023, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/the-hallowing-of-the-real-small-christian-communities-and-the-universal-priesthood/>

This article from the online magazine Today's American Catholic (TAC) takes its title from what the Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel called "the hallowing of the real," and

our participation in this hallowing as devotional beings fulfills the words of Fr.

Schmemmann:

"If the church is in Christ, its initial act is always this act of thanksgiving, of returning the world to God."

Centore, Michael, "A Leaven for Positive Change: Synod Report for October 12, 2023,"

Today's American Catholic, 12 October, 2023. Retrieved from the Today's American Catholic Website on 16 October, 2023. Leaven for Positive Change: Synod Report for October 12, 2023 - Today's American Catholic (todaysamericancatholic.org)

The importance of Small Christian Communities (SCCs), also known as Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) or Basic Christian Communities (BCCs), to the life of the

church has been a recurring theme of the synodal discussion this week.

Centore, Michael, "Loyola Institute for Ministry and Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa

Advance the Work of Synodality and Small Christian Communities," Today's American Catholic (TAC), 1 June 2023, Today's American Catholic (TAC) Website, retrieved on 1 June, 2023,

1381

<https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/2023/06/loyola-institute-for-ministry-and-episcopal-conferences-of-eastern-africa-advance-the-work-of-synodality-and-small-christian-communities/>

Summary article of an international Zoom Gathering with the following headings:

- The Synodal Spirit
- A Lasting Collaboration
- Walking with Young Adults
- A "Neighborhood Church"
- Inner Life and Public Life
- Conclusion: Reasons for Hope

Chikwekwete, Dadirai Miriam and Janice McLaughlin, MM, eds., *Combating Human Trafficking - Voices from East, West and Southern Africa*, Harare: African Forum for Social Teaching (AFCAST), Arrupe Jesuit University, 2021.

American Maryknoll Sister Janice McLaughlin who died earlier in 2021 seamlessly integrated African stories and proverbs into her talks and writings. The "Acknowledgement"

section of this book quotes the African proverb, It takes many hands joined together to put a roof on a house.

Chimenge, Sylvester, Interview with Jane Njenga, Polygamous Marriages and the Eucharistic Famine, 10 November 2015 in *Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as a Platform for Continuous Catechesis in Eastern Africa -- Opportunities and Challenges: Case Study of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish South B, Nairobi, Kenya*, Nairobi: Unpublished Master's Thesis in Pastoral Ministry, Tangaza University College, 2016.

Jane is second wife who goes to Mass every Sunday and is a faithful member of her SCC. She entered the RCIA (Adult Catechumenate) with the desire to be baptized as a

Catholic. But she had to stop the instructions because she is a second wife. Her husband is a

Catholic, but he had to stop receiving the Eucharist when he married a second wife. Jane was

unable to find a suitable husband (men seem fewer in Kenya). To meet her human needs/sexual/social needs she decided to become a second wife.

Chimombo, Emmanuel, "AMECEA: Pastoral Coordinator Assures Theologians that Small

Christian Communities Domesticate Theology at Grassroots," AMECEA Online Newsletter, Issue 441 (29 July, 2022), AMECEA Website, retrieved on 30 July, 2022, AMECEA: Pastoral Coordinator Assures Theologians that Small Christian Communities Domesticate Theology at Grassroots

Chimombo, Emmanuel, "Establishing Small Christian Communities: Ecclesial Communities

in Vatican II and Post-Conciliar Documents." CUEA. Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 2003.

Chimombo, Emmanuel, Joseph G. Healey, Rita Ishengoma, Rose Musimba, Febian P.

Mulenga and Alphonse C. L. Omolo, (eds.), *Strengthening the Growth of Small Christian Communities in Africa -- A Training Handbook for Facilitators*, Nairobi: AMECEA Pastoral Department and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2017. Second Revised Edition, 2018.

1382

The Swahili (Eastern and Central Africa) is *Kuimarisha Ukuaji wa Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo katika Afrika* (2022).

The Chewa (Malawi) is *Kulimbikitsa Miphakaki/Malimana mu Africa – Buku Lophunzitsira ndi Kusulira* (2023).

The Tumbuka (Malawi) is *Kukhozga Kakuliro ka Mauzengezgani mu Africa – Buku La Kunjirikizgira Wasambizgi* (2023).

The French is *Renforcer la croissance des Petites Communautés Chrétiennes (CEB, CCB, CEV, PCC, CEVB, CEVB) en Afrique– Manuel de Formation pour les Animateurs et Animatrices*.

1. Paperback and Ebook available on Paulines Publications Africa. Ebook available through Paulines Publications Africa on Android Platforms only (smartphones, tablets, etc.) – not on Apple or Microsoft.
<http://e.paulinesafrica.org/index.php/book/bookDetails/1356>
 Malawi editions by Likuni Press
 2. Paperback (Print on Demand -- POD) and Ebook available on Amazon.
https://www.amazon.com/STRENGTHENING-GROWTH-CHRISTIAN-COMMUNITIES-AFRICA-ebook/dp/B07H2YRBTJ/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1536294296&sr=8-1&keywords=emmanuel+chimombo
1. 128-page booklet to assist in SCCs training courses for SCCs facilitators and animators in Africa.
 - 2 Preface by H. E. Souraphiel Cardinal Berhaneyesus, Archbishop of Addis Ababa Archdiocese, Ethiopia and former Chairman of AMECEA.
 3. Recommends 15 topics and sessions for an effective training course on this key pastoral priority of the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa. They include: arrival of the participants, introduction of the participants, logistics, sharing of roles and responsibilities, participant's fears or concerns, training topics, expectations and training objectives.
 4. Includes a rich bibliography that comprises references, additional reading materials, videos, DVDs as well as accompanying rich annexes. The new handbook recommends a checklist of 16 common activities in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa today for effective training of SCCs facilitators.
- Chin, Maria-Pia Negro, "Embracing Synodality: Missioners Listen, Dialogue and Discern Together in the Worldwide Synodal Process," Maryknoll Magazine, Winter, 2023, retrieved on 1 June, 2023, Embracing Synodality - Maryknoll Magazine
- Chin, Maria-Pia Negro, "Young Adult Faith Leads To Action: Maryknoll Accompanies and Empowers Young Adult Missionary Disciples ," Maryknoll Magazine, Summer, 2022, retrieved on 7 June, 2022, Final-LORES-MKMG-Summer-2022-1.pdf (maryknollmagazine.org) CORRECT
1383
1. Young people "are not bystanders. They're part of the journey," says Father Healey. He has spent over 10 years researching and writing about small young adult faith-sharing communities. All of this leads to responding to the baptismal call to mission. "It is faith leading to action," he says.
 2. Community members also delve into the global charism of Maryknoll. For example, a missionary working in Kenya connected them with Small Christian Community leader Alphonse Omolo who facilitated an international virtual encounter of young people. Coordinators say they are constantly working with Maryknoll to ensure YAE members feel part of God's mission and the mission of the universal Church.
 3. With Father Healey's guidance, YAE coordinators engaged members in the Synod on Synodality, a Catholic Church-wide process of listening and dialogue. Some young adults were already involved in listening processes in their home dioceses; all look forward

to the
fruits of this “journeying together” as a church.

Chiti, Leonard, “Fighting AIDS From the Grassroots: History, Theology, Values and Challenges of Home-Based Care in Zambia,” in Jacquineau Azetsop (ed.), *HIV and AIDS in Africa: Theological Reflection, Public Health Crises, and Social Transformation*, Orbis Books, 2016.

The home-based care (HBC) system emerged in Zambia in the late 1980s as a complement to the mainstream health-care delivery system for people living with HIV. Local

parish had home-based care programs such as the group called Caring Women who went

around their neighborhood bringing medicine and praying for those terminally ill, many of

whom had AIDS. In Zambia in the Catholic Church that accounts for a third of the people

calling themselves Christian, the home-based care system followed closely the pattern of

Small Christian Communities.

Cieslikiewicz Christopher, “Pastoral Involvement of Parish-based SCCs in Dar es Salaam,”

in Joseph Healey and Jeanne Hinton (eds.), *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005 and Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

Cieslikiewicz, Christopher, *Small Christian Communities: Pastoral Priority and a Vital Force for Evangelization in the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. An Evaluation and New Perspectives*, Rome: Lateran University, 2004.

Thorough doctorate dissertation based on current SCC surveys, an in-depth questionnaire and extensive field interviews with extensive bibliography and appendices.

Cieslikiewicz Christopher, “Urban Small Christian Communities and Formation for the New

Vision of the Church: Tanzanian Study Case,” *Africa Tomorrow*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (June, 2006).

Cimperman, Maria, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015.

This is the successor to the best-selling classic *Social Analysis: Linking Faith to Action* and its 25th Anniversary volume *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for*

Truth and Transformation.

Today, the widespread use of social analysis in many forms, makes this publication very timely and helpful. Based on her experience of teaching courses, conducting workshops,

1384

and participating in social movements, the author has brought together both theory and

practice with good examples, realistic methods, and probing challenges. This book explores

the “Pastoral Spiral.” This process, undertaken communally, in dialog, is geared towards the

transformation of systems and also towards the transformation of individuals and peoples

involved. The process offers tools, for seeing, assessing, reflecting, responding, acting and helping people to work together to imagine and allow possible responses to emerge from a vision of God's world, and finally to take action to create this vision. Our SCCs in Eastern Africa (and around the world) regularly use the Pastoral Spiral that is also called the Pastoral Circle and the Pastoral Cycle. See, Christine Bodewes, Parish Transformation in Urban Slums: Voices of Kibera, Kenya. Unfortunately this particular edition has few African examples. Chongwain, Ireneaus Chia, "Editorial: Small Christian Communities, Learning from the East African Experience," L'Effort Camerounais, 23 October, 2008, L'Effort Camerounais Website, retrieved on 22 July, 2014, <http://www.leffortcamerounais.com/2008/10/editorialsmall.html> Christian Life Community: Resources for Small Groups. Phase 1: "Friends in God." Phase 2: "Finding God in All Things." Phase 3: "Vocation Discernment." Santa Clara, CA: Santa Clara University, Campus Ministry, 2010. The Church We Want to Be: Elements for a Common Vision of the Pastoral Action of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia – a Pastoral Letter of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Privately Printed, 2002. Le Communautés Chrétiennes Catholiques de Base: Lancement et Organisation – Diocese D'Atakpame, Lome: Editions Saint-Augustin Afrique, 27 Juin 2009, 2015. "Communique of the 3rd Pan-African Workshop on the Founding of a Network of Small Christian Communities in Africa held in Nairobi, Kenya, 21 to 25 October, 2016," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 28 October, 2016, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/COMMUNIQUE.pdf> The 16 participants made the following commitments:

- To form a Pan–African Network of Small Christian Communities
- To promote Small Christian Communities in our countries and bring more members on board
- To support a steering committee that has been selected and mandated to coordinate the networking
- To meet annually on a rotational manner in different countries of Africa
- To share the best practices through social media and internet
- To start an independent African SCCs Networking Website with its own domain name. The internet address is: www.africansccsnetworking.org. It should include the Missio SCCs Network logo. The website will have dialog/discussion pages in English, French and Portuguese. This will be a revised and updated version of the "original, temporary" African SCCs Networking Website (what we call the trial or Beta version) created in April, 2016 that has the internet address (URL): 1385 http://www.topsoftchoice.com/secam_scc/
- To mandate the AMECEA Pastoral Department to manage this newly created

website

on SCCs Networking

- To encourage people from all 54 countries in Africa to send articles on SCCs The Community Called Church. Volume 5 of an Experimental Sourcebook for Religious

Education, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, Spearhead No. 60, December, 1979.

Congar, Yves, Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity, Westminster,

MD: Newman Press, 1965.

Cornwell, Megan, "What Young Catholics Want – the Answers May Surprise You," Blog on

the Tablet Website, 09 January 2018, retrieved on 22 January, 2018,

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/1115/what-young-catholics-want-the-answers-may-surprise-you>

Cotonou Archdiocese, "Manual to Guide Small Christian Communities in Benin's Cotonou

Archdiocese," Cotonou: Privately Published, 2021.

<https://www.aciafrica.org/news/3548/manual-to-guide-small-christian-communities-in-benins-cotonou-archdiocese-released>

Archbishop Roger Houngbédji said, "The Catholic Church will only be able to give its full measure of Church-Family if it branches out into communities that are small enough

to allow for closer human relationships, through what we call SCCs." The manual contains

presentations of life experiences with thematic explanations and biblical extracts and the

writings of St. Augustine on fraternal communion.

Courage! Get on Your Feet, Continent of Africa, "Homily of his Holiness Benedict XVI at

the Concluding Mass" and "Message of the Bishops of Africa to the People of God" of the Second African Synod, Nairobi: 2009.

Cowan, Michael and Bernard Lee, SM, Conversation, Risk, and Conversion: The Inner &

Public Life of Small Christian Communities, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.

Damaseke, Francis, "AMECEA: The Church has Everything for Every One:

Archbishop Tambala to Christians," AMECEA Online News, Issue 499, 25 August, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 29 August, 2023, AMECEA: The Church has Everything for Every One: Archbishop Tambala to Christians

Davies, Colon, "A Call to Action on Eucharistic Hunger – Now! Making the Eucharist Available to all Baptized People as the Bread of Eternal Life," Liverpool, England: Unpublished Paper, 2015.

Davies, Colon, From Pilot to Pastoral Bishop: Memoirs and Reflections of 53 Years of

Missionary Life in Kenya, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2014.

Pages 111-114 highlight "Small Christian Communities." The author emphasizes Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as a model of being church. "SCCs should make

Christianity a way of life, really touching their lives and supporting them in their problems. A

SCC is ideally a communion of families" (page 14). He encourages membership and

participation of the clergy in these small communities. He describes the Psycho-Social

1386

Method of Paul Frere in the African context. The great value of the method was/is that it is

genuinely involves “groups of people” becoming “communities” that are united in implementing projects.

Dayan, Eti, *One of Them: My Life Among the Maasai of Kenya*, ebookPro Publishing, 2020.

Available on Amazon as an Ebook and POD paperback,

<https://www.amazon.com/s?k=One+of+Them%3A+My+Life+Among+the+Maasai+of+Kenya>

[a&i=stripbooks&ref=nb_sb_noss_2](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=One+of+Them%3A+My+Life+Among+the+Maasai+of+Kenya&i=stripbooks&ref=nb_sb_noss_2)

Ddungu, Charles, *Towards Self-Ministering Small Christian Communities: The Case of*

Ndala Parish, Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Brussels: Catholic University of Louvain, 2005.

Denio, Peter **ADD**

Digal, Santosh, “My Experience with Filipino Basic Ecclesial Communities at the Synod,”

PIME AsiaNews, retrieved on PIME AsiaNews Website on 27 August, 2023,

ECCLESIA IN

ASIA Estela Padilla: 'My Experience with Filipino Basic Ecclesial Communities at the Synod'

(asianews.it)

Diocesan Pastoral Secretariat, *Pastoral Guidelines: Lilongwe Diocesan Mini-Synod* 24

November, 1973 – 24 August, 1075, Lilongwe: Likuni Print, 1976

Dixon, Rick, “Altars of Hope in El Salvador in Times of COVID-19,” *Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website*, retrieved on 26 April, 2020,

<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/altars-of-hope-in-el-salvador-in-times-of-covid-19/>

Document Diocesain de la Pastoral des CCCB (Communautés Chrétiennes Catholique de

Base), Vogan, Togo: Anêho Service Diocesain Archives et Bibliothèque, 20

Driciru, Mary Lilly, “UGANDA: AMECEA To Celebrate Small Christian Communities

Golden Jubilee,” *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, 11 August, 2023, AMECEA Website,

retrieved on 11 August, 2023, [UGANDA: AMECEA To Celebrate Small Christian Communities Golden Jubilee](#)

There is a need to promote campaigns for mass recruitment of members into SCCs. Home visits are also recommended for promoting children, youth and men participation in SCCs. Father Kaganda noted that they will use the mass media to promote key characteristics of SCCs and strengthen training and formation of leadership of SCCs focusing on the true spirit and characteristics of SCCs.

In this jubilee year the region desires that vivid information about a true picture of the SCCs be established: their numbers; their level of participation; the number of times they meet to share the Word of God; whether they are represented in the administrative structure in the parish/diocese. He added: “We desire to see the successes of the SCCs in the Local Church. We need to know how the church in the neighborhood has profited from SCCs. We also need to know the concrete programs carried out by the SCCs in building the church.”

Dufitimana, Damien, “Small Christian Communities and the Promoting of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Nairobi Archdiocese: An Anticipation of the General Elections of 2013 in Kenya,” *African Christian Studies* (CUEA), Vol. 29, No.1 (March, 2013): 52-67.

Dulles, Avery. *Models of Church*, New York: Image Books, 1974.

A classic book that describes five models of the Catholic Church:

1. Institution.
2. Mystical Communion.
3. Sacrament.
4. Herald.
5. Servant.

Later Dulles added a sixth model -- Community of Disciples – that is an amalgamation of the the five models. We need an African Avery Dulles, that is, an African theologian of the new generation, to develop concrete examples of African Models of Church such as “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today.”

Duwe, Johannes ed., *Network Small Christian Communities Africa: Small Christian Communities as Missionary Agents*, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, September, 2019.

East African Participants (Joseph Healey, Rita Ishengoma, Rose Musimba, Christopher Mwoleka and Alphonse Omolo) in the 1991 First International Consultation on Small Christian Communities on “Small Christian Communities: Rediscovering Community: International Perspectives”, eds. “Outline of Presentation of the African Continental Team,” Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, 8-12 December 1991. 1 page.

East African Participants (Joseph Healey, Rose Musimba, Raphael Ndingi Mwana a’Nzeki, Aylward Shorter and John Waliggo) in the 1996 Second International Consultation on Small Christian Communities, eds. “Our Five Year Journey of SCCs from December, 1991 to October, 1996: The Evolving Sociology and Ecclesiology of Church as Family in Eastern Africa” in Robert S. Pelton, ed., *Small Christian*

Communities: Imagining Future Church. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997: 89-110 and *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)*, 29, 5 (October, 1987): 266-277.

East African Participants (Rita Ishengoma, Rose Musimba, Alphonse Omolo and Jude Shayo with Joseph Healey) in the “1999 Third International Consultation on Small Christian Communities,” eds. “African Continent Report for the 1999 Third International Consultation on Small Christian Communities,” Nairobi, Kenya: Printed Paper, 1999, 45 pages. Sections of the report are published in Robert K. Moriarty, *An Experience of World Church in Miniature: A Report on the 1999 International Consultation on Small Christian Communities*, Hartford: Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities, March, 2001 and *Omnis Terra*, April, 2000 (English, Spanish, and French).

Edele, Andrew, “Community Building in Lusaka,” *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)* 19:2 (March, 1977): 90.

Edele, Andrew, “Establishing Basic Christian Communities in Lusaka, Zambia,” *Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin* 81 (1980), 22.

Edwin, Victor (ed.), *Brother to All: The Life and Witness of St. Charles de Foucauld*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2022.

Charles de Foucauld (died 1916), a modern desert hermit, whose life and witness inspired the foundation of the Little Brothers of Jesus and other communities, was canonized on 15 May, 2022. In *Fratelli Tutti* Pope Francis ends by invoking the memory of this “brother to all” who demonstrated a new model of mission and evangelization based on friendship, solidarity, and witness among the poor. This volume includes original essays by leading theologians and spiritual writers about the significance of his witness. Paperback version and Ebook version available on the Amazon Website starting 8 September, 2022.

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0B4BCVJSX/ref=docs-os-doi_0

Includes the memoir “My 54 Years (1967 – 2021) Journey with Charles de Foucauld” by Joseph Healey.

‘*Enlarge the Space of Your Tent: Document for the Continental Stage (DCS)*, Synod 2021-2024: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission,” General Secretariat of the Synod, retrieved from the Synod Website, 29 October, 2022, [Documento-Tappa-Continentale-EN.pdf \(synod.va\)](https://www.synod.va/content/synod/en/documento-tappa-continentale-en.pdf)

Erisman, Catherine, *Maryknoll Sisters Tanzania 60 Years*. Maryknoll, NY: Privately Printed, 2015.

“ETHIOPIA: 35 People Attend the Workshop on Small Christian Communities,” *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, Issue 037, February 21, 2014, http://amecea.blogspot.com/2014/02/ethiopia-35-people-attend-workshop-on.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=29c836c001-AMECEA+Online+Newsletter+6+5+2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-29c836c001-6746297

L' Experience des Communautés Chrétiennes de Base (CCB) dans L'Eglise Famille de Dieu au Burkina Faso (English: *The Experience of Basic Christian Communities (BCCs) in*

the Church Family of God in Burkina Faso), Ouagadougou: National Council of the Laity of Burkina Faso, Privately Printed, 2015.

Final Document of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization" including the *Report of the Synod* and the *Message*, Vatican Website, 2014,
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/index.htm

Final Document of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment" (October, 2018)
<http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en/fede-discernimento-vocazione/final-document-of-the-synod-of-bishops-on-young-people--faith-an.html>

Final List of Propositions and Message to the People of God of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith," *Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin*, Vatican Website, 2012.
http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012_index_en.html

Final Report (Relatio Synodi) of the Synod of Bishops to the Holy Father, Pope Francis. Synod of Bishops XIV Ordinary General Assembly on the "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World," Vatican Website, 2015, , Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2016,
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20151026_relati-one-finale-xiv-assemblea_en.html

Flannery, Austin (ed.), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Bombay: St. Pauls, 1975.

Flynn, Kieran, *Communities for the Kingdom: A Handbook for Small Christian Community Leaders*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* Nos. 181-182, 2007.

Francis, *The Courage To be Happy: The Pope Speaks to the Youth of the World*, Edited by Robert Ellsberg, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018. Available on Amazon as an Ebook and paperback, retrieved on 20 April, 2018,
https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=The+Courage+to+Be+Happy

Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christ is Alive*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2019. Vatican Website, 2019.
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html

Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of Love (On Love in the Family)*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2016. Vatican Website, 2016.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5FGuFFkfrDvYWJWTKxzYkVIN00/view?pref=2&pli=1>

Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2013. Vatican Website, 2013.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

To download it as [.pdf](#), go to

http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf

Swahili Edition: *Furaha ya Injili*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2014.

Francis, *Walking Together: The Way of Synodality*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2023.

A compendium of Pope Francis' reflections, talks and interventions on "Synodality." Preface by Cardinal Mario Grech. Introduction by Sister Nathalie Becquart, XMCJ.

Fraze, Barb, "Is the Priest Listening To You? Indian Diocese Surveys Families for Synod," *Central Minnesota Catholic* – Magazine of the Diocese of St. Cloud, [OSV News Focus on Faith, Synod 2021–2024](#), 17 [March 2023](#), Central Minnesota Catholic Website. <https://thecentralminnesotacatholic.org/is-the-priest-listening-to-you-indian-diocese-surveys-families-for-synod>

ALAPPUZHA, India. An Indian diocese used its existing Small Christian Communities to train lay leaders to reach out to a wide variety of Catholics — including broken families — ensuring that everyone had a voice in the listening process for the upcoming Synod of Bishops on synodality. Some participants said they already have seen changes. Almost 70% of parishes completed the initial reflection within three days, said Msgr. Joy Puthenveetil, vicar general of the Diocese of Alleppey. "We have tried to let every family have the experience of the synod," he told OSV News in early March. "The process of listening is what is important for the synodal church." The Diocese of Alleppey has about 1,200 Small Christian Communities, and leaders of those communities trained about 70 members of the Diocesan Synod Team.

Fraze, Barb, "Small Christian Communities Contribute to Growth of Church in Africa," *Catholic News Service*, 24 January, 2004, retrieved on the Catholic News Service Website at <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0403501.htm> on 9 March, 2012.

Fraze, Barb, "Small Christian Communities, Prominent in Asia, Latin America, Seen As Model For Whole Church," *OSV News*, 24 October, 2023. Different versions according to the lead photos. *Our Sunday Visitor* Website, retrieved on 24 October, 2023, [Small Christian Communities seen as model for whole church \(oursundayvisitor.com\)](#)

Published in 14 places:

Barb Frazee Linkin Post

The Byzantine Catholic (Pittsburgh Archeparchy)

[Small Christian Communities, prominent in Asia, Latin America, seen as model for whole church | Archeparchy of Pittsburgh \(archpitt.org\)](#)

Carmelite Quotes Twitter Message

<https://twitter.com/carmelitequotes/status/1718433887976652926>

Catholic CR

[Small Christian Communities, prominent in Asia, Latin America, seen as model for whole church - Catholic CR](#)

Catholic Review (Baltimore Archdiocese)

[Small Christian Communities, prominent in Asia, Latin America, seen as model for whole church - Catholic Review](#)

The Florida Catholic (Florida dioceses)

[Small Christian Communities, prominent in Asia, Latin America, seen as model for whole church | World | thefloridacatholic.org](#)

The Monitor (Trenton Diocese)

[Trenton Monitor](#)

New Outlook (Tucson Diocese)

[Small Christian Communities, prominent in Asia, Latin America, seen as model for whole church : Home | New Outlook \(diocesetucson.org\)](#)

Spanish Version

[Comunidades Eclesiales de Base, prominentes en Asia, Latinoamérica, modelo para toda Iglesia :: Home | New Outlook \(diocesetucson.org\)](#)

Northwest Catholic (Seattle Archdiocese)

[Small Christian communities 'bring us together, help us grow spiritually,' member says - Northwest Catholic: Read Catholic News & Stories \(nwcatholic.org\)](#)

Orbis Books Facebook Page

Our Sunday Visitor

The Record (Louisville Archdiocese)

[Small Christian Communities, prominent in Asia, Latin America, seen as model for whole church - The Record Newspaper](#)

Thomas Reese Twitter Message

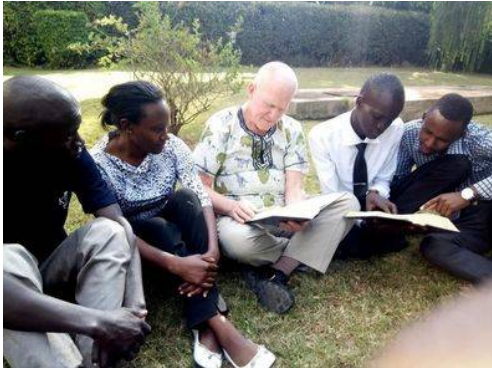
<https://twitter.com/ThomasReeseSJ/status/1717467973823201391>

St. Patrick Roman Catholic Parish Website (Brizbee, Arizona)

<https://www.stpatsbisbee.com/catholicnews>

"Throughout the various stages of the Synod of Bishops on synodality, several church leaders have referred to a new model of church that includes Basic Ecclesial Communities. But what exactly are those? The communities — often referred to as CEBs for their Spanish acronym (Comunidades Eclesiales de Base, also referred to as BECs) or as BCCs for Basic Christian Communities — are prominent in Asia, Latin America [and Africa]. The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa [AMECEA] refers to them as Small Christian Communities and has made them part of the ecclesial structure of the

[Catholic] Church. Some such communities also exist within at least four archdioceses in the United States, primarily within ministry to the Hispanic communities in Baltimore, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles...”



Fraze, Barb, “Virtually There: Small Christian Communities Online in Africa.” *Catholic News Service*, 22 February 2011, retrieved on the Catholic News Service Website at <http://cnsblog.wordpress.com/2011/02/22/virtually-theresmall-christian-communities-onlinein-africa> on 3 March, 2013.

Galvan, Maria Elena and Filipe Miguel Olivera Resende, *An African Journey through Mark's Gospel: A Tool for Small Christian Communities*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006. Also published in the Pökot, Kenya language.

A practical and dynamic method to animate Small Christian Communities. Helps SCC members to reflect on the situations of their everyday lives. 103 lessons based on a continuous reading of St. *Mark's* Gospel that contain: Story from the everyday life of the Pökot people in Kenya. Questions for discussion. Word of God (two or three verses from *Mark*) followed by focused questions. Main themes are: Prayer and Sacrifice, Community, Work and Service, Family Life, Christian Traditions and African Culture, Following Jesus and God's Care and Concern.

Ganda, Emma James Juma, Maureen Kemunto, Cosmas Kinda, Martin Obwar, Joseph Odhiambo, Alphonse Omolo, Rose Owuondo, *The Fish Handbook: A Handbook for Bible Sharing Weekly Meetings*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2020.

Ghislain, Mbilizi, *The Ministry of Godparents and Sponsors: Guidelines for Priests, Catechists and Pastoral Workers*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2018.
Many references to Small Christian Communities:

1.Role of the sponsoring community. “It is rather common that at an infant baptism and mass only the parents and godparents and some few friends are present. And yet most of these infants have been recommended by the Small Christian Communities. The failure of the small community to join in these ceremonies is an indication of the lack of awareness of the role of the sponsoring community on such as occasion. It would be encouraging to see the Small Christian Communities members participating in these masses, expressing their joy as a sign of their concern and their pledge to the faith development of these infants.”

2. How supported the Adult Catechumens would feel if their Small Christian Communities members would attend the mass in which they receive the sacraments [often during the Holy Saturday Vigil Mass]. Another important practice that has been overlooked is that of fasting. How many small community members fast for their catechumens as they are intensively preparing for the sacraments?

Gichuhu, George, *The Spirituality of SCCs in Eastern Africa*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead No.* 185, 1985.

Gobbo, Wilbert, *Critique of the Trinitarian Social Model of Leonardo Boff: Small Christian Communities of the Archdiocese of Tabora in Tanzania, a Case Study*, Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2016. Available on academia.edu at: https://www.academia.edu/25798081/CRITIQUE_OF_THE_TRINITARIAN_SOCIAL_MODEL_OF_LEONARDO_BOFF_SMALL_CHRISTIAN_COMMUNITIES_OF_THE_ARCHDIOCESE_OF_TABORA_IN_TANZANIA_A_CASE_STUDY

The book's main critique is based on Leonardo Boff's argument that the Holy Trinity should inspire and criticize human society. This research is a critique of this argument that is at the center of Boff's Social Trinitarian Model. Can Boff's argument be considered as a mere hypothesis or rather a fundamental axiom, i.e. a verified and accepted argument? The original contribution of this work is not only in the critique of the Social Trinitarian Model (STM) of Leonardo Boff using the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as a case study, but also in the proposition of the Social Trinitarian Model (STM) for Tanzanian society. This Social Trinitarian Model is based on SCCs in relationship to an inclusive Tanzanian spirit of unity and hope. It also includes the human values of 'syn-bios,' 'syn-pathos' and 'syn-hodos.' These human values are related to the Trinitarian life, *koinōnia* and *perichōrēsis*. In fact, in the Social Trinitarian Model, SCCs are like a 'foretaste' (*prolepsis*) of the Kingdom of God. Though this Social Trinitarian Model is based on the SCCs of Tabora in Tanzania, it is not exclusively for Tanzanian society. It can inspire other African societies and other parts of the world.

Gray, Mark, Michal Kramarek and Thomas Gaunt, "Faith and Spiritual Life in the United States," Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., November, 2021.

ADD

Guidelines on Small Christian Communities, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015.
For the Nairobi Metropolitan (dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province of Nairobi):
Kericho, Kitui, Machakos, Military Ordinariate, Nairobi, Nakuru, and Ngong.
Foreword by Cardinal John Njue. Sections on:

1. "Introduction."
2. "Historical Background."
3. "The Current Situation of SCCs."
4. "SCCs Guidelines."
5. "Recommendations."

The Swahili version is *Mwongozo Kuhusu Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2017.

Hawassa Catholic Secretariat: Five Year (2013-2018) Strategic Plan. Hawassa, Ethiopia:

Hawassa Catholic Secretariat, 2013.

Hayes, Diana, *Were You There?: Stations of the Cross*, Paintings by Charles Ndege, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.

Insightful Lenten meditations by a woman theologian with African paintings from a church in Mwanza, Tanzania.

Healey, Joseph, “African Conversational Theology: A New Way Of Doing Theology,” Talk on *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III* during the “Africa Book Matters” Discussion at the Center for African Studies, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 27 September, 2016, *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, Vol. 29 (2017), pp. 181-186. Gumbold Library Website, retrieved on 22 May, 2017, <http://guides.library.duq.edu/c.php?g=590460&p=4082522> Also available thru the Duquesne University Scholarship Collection platform: <https://dsc.duq.edu/beth/>.

Healey, Joseph, “African Conversational Theology: A New Way of Doing Theology,” Talk at the “Africa Matters” Book Discussion on two books: *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III* and *HIV & AIDS in Africa: Christian Reflection, Public Health, Social Transformation*, Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts, 20 September, 2016, Boston: Privately Printed, 2016, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 22 September, 2016, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/north-america/united-states-of-america/377--african-conversational-theology-a-new-way-of-doing-theology.html>

Healey, Joseph, *African Stories for Preachers and Teachers*, Paulines Publications Africa, 2005 (3rd Reprint, 2010, 4th Reprint, 2014, 5th Reprint 2017) . Swahili Edition: *Hadithi za Kiafrika kwa Wahubiri na Walimu*, Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

Healey, Joseph, “African Theologians Are Now Writing Their Own Histories -- Why the *Handbook of African Catholicism* is Important,” Talk at the Book Presentation of the *Handbook of African Catholicism*. 19 July, 2022, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 8 August, 2022, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/african-theologians-are-now-writing-their-own-histories-and-theologies-why-the-handbook-of-african-catholicism-is-important/>

Healey, Joseph, “After College What? Developing Alumni Zoom Small Faith Communities,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 1 October, 2021, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/after-college-what-developing-alumni-zoom-small-faith-communities>

1. Four Case Studies.
2. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website Poll.
3. Three other important resources on University/College Small Faith Communities.

Healey, Joseph, “AMECEA: Timeline of Marehemu Archbishop Odongo’s Involvement in AMECEA’s Key Pastoral Priority of Small Christian Communities,” *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 358, 10 December, 2020, AMECEA Website, [AMECEA: Timeline of Marehemu Archbishop Odongo’s Involvement in AMECEA’s Key Pastoral Priority of Small Christian Communities](#)

Healey, Joseph, (Interview), “Archbishop Calls for Serious Bible Sharing,” *CISA News Africa*, 026, 17 May, 2011, 3-5.

Healey, Joseph G., “Basic Christian Communities in Africa and in Latin America,” *African Ecclesial Review* (AFER), Vol. 26. No 4 (August, 1984), ATLA Religion Database Website, retrieved on 10 June, 2015,
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=10&sid=fbebc85e-4ba4-4c20-a8f7-917a6375a662%40sessionmgr113&hid=107> **CHECK**

Healey, Joseph, “Basic Christian Communities: Church-Centered or World-Centered?” *Missionalia*, 14: 1 (April, 1986).

Case studies of a BCC in Chile and SCCs in Kenya an Tanzania. In comparing the Latin America and Eastern African experiences some clear differences emerge, but they can learn a great deal from each other and mutually enrich the World Church.

Healey, Joseph, *Best One Liners and Other Anecdotes/Stories of (or About) Uncle Joe’s Nieces and Nephews/Grandnieces and Grandnephews (up to October, 2000)*, New Vernon, NJ: Privately Printed, 2000.

These are quotations/comments/sayings/anecdotes/stories of and about my nieces and nephews (and to show my age, my grandnieces and grandnephews) over the years. They are both humorous and thought-provoking, examples of wit and wisdom, and at times, remarkable depth and insight especially from the young. They are cited according to:

- a. Age of my niece or nephew/grandniece or grandnephew when the quote or anecdote occurred.
- b. Context or situation.
- c. Actual quotation and/or anecdote/story.

One example: “22-year-old Megan Healey and I were having a discussion about our favorite things in life. Finally I decided how I could put my three favorite things together: ‘All my nieces and nephews and I would form a Small Christian Community that goes to Notre Dame to watch a football game together.’”

Healey, Joseph, “Beyond Vatican II: Imagining the Catholic Church of Nairobi I,” Nairobi, Kenya, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2015. Chapter in Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator (ed.), *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016 and Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2016. Selection of essays from three Theological Colloquia on Church, Religion and Society in Africa (TCCRSA) in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013-2015.

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the “African Continent” under “Africa” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 6 November, 2021,
<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TCCRSA.pdf>
2. Orbis Books Version on the Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 5 September 2020,
https://www.academia.edu/12816789/Beyond_Vatican_II_Imagining_the_Catholic_Church_of_Nairobi_I

3. Mikado Website, retrieved on 5 September, 2020, <http://www.mikado-ac.info/home-uk.html>
4. Kindle Library, retrieved 5 September, 2020, <https://read.amazon.com/?asin=B01J8VSMU6>
5. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 5 September, 2020, https://.academia.edu/28043817/Beyond_Vatican_II_Imagining_the_Catholic_Church_of_Nairobi_I

This essay treats:

1. "Be Bold and Creative."
2. "Rethinking the Structures and Styles of Governing and Decision-making."
3. "From the Perspective of SCCs in Eastern Africa."
4. "Pastoral Solutions to the Two Meanings of the Eucharistic Famine in Africa."
5. "Integrating African Process and African Content."
6. "Relevance for the Catholic Church in North America and Europe."
7. "Let Us Journey Ahead Together."

Healey, Joseph, *Bishop Patrick Kalilombe and the Lilongwe Diocese, Malawi Mini Synod in 1973-75: One of the Foundations of the AMECEA Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Pastoral Priority Leading Up to the Two "Synod on Synodality" Sessions in 2023 and 2024*, Talk at the Workshop on "Celebrating the Golden Jubilee Year of Small Christian Communities (SCCs): 50 Years (1973 to 2023) from July, 2023 to July, 2024," Lilongwe, Malawi, 21 August, 2023, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 1 September, 2023, [Bishop-Patrick-Kalilombe-and-the-Lilongwe-Diocese-1.pdf \(smallchristiancommunities.org\)](https://smallchristiancommunities.org/Bishop-Patrick-Kalilombe-and-the-Lilongwe-Diocese-1.pdf)

Available also through:

AMECEA Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/Amececa>

Small Christian Communities Facebook Page
<https://smallchristiancommunities.org>

This article as an interesting Case Study on the ongoing Synodal Process in Africa and throughout the world. The article documents the important role of SCCs in three Mini-Synods in Lilongwe Archdiocese, Malawi:

1. 1973—1975.
2. 2004 -- 2006.
3. 2021—2023.

It included feedback from the participants and additional theological reflection and documentation. There are 46 footnotes and 18 Hyperlinks.

Healey, Joseph, "Blog on Synodality," *Maryknoll 2024 Easter Season Reflection Guides*, March, 2024, <https://www.maryknoll.us/Resources/2024-easter>

Short reflections, Sunday by Sunday, on the following themes from the *Synthesis Report* of the First Session of the Synod, 28 October, 2023:

- Equality of Women
- Mercy to All
- Walking Together
- Smell the Sheep
- Union with Jesus Christ
- Joy of the Gospel
- We are All Missionaries
- The Holy Spirit Guides Us

Healey, Joseph, “Brainstorming Draft No. 7 for the “Encounter of College Students Involved in Small Christian Communities,” Venue to be determined in 2017. New Vernon, NJ: Privately Printed, 2016.

Healey, Joseph, “Break-out Sessions: Questions on Mission,” *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission*, 2016/2, pp. 55-59, Tangaza University College Website, retrieved on 25 January, 2019,
https://www.tangaza.ac.ke/theology/img/journals/Tangaza_Journal_2016_2.pdf

Healey, Joseph, “Brief Timeline of the Long History Between LIM and AMECEA,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 15 May, 2023, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/brief-timeline-of-the-long-history-between-lim-and-amecea>

Healey, Joseph, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications – CUEA Press Double *Spearhead* Nos. 199-200 (Print Version 2012 and 1st Reprint 2014). 163 pages. The Online Digital Version, regularly revised and updated from the 2012 print version, is now in its Fourth Revised Edition and available as a free, online Ebook containing 1,554 pages and 1,513 footnotes as of 5 February 2024 on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website:

https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Build_new.pdf (Title Page)

<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/building-the-church-as-family-of-god-evaluation-of-small-christian-communities-in-eastern-africa-2/> (Full version)

NOTE: This is a permanent, universal website address that works on all browsers.

Also available on browsers:

<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/building-the-church-as-family-of-god-evaluation-of-small-christian-communities-in-eastern-africa-2/> (Firefox)

The Second Revised Edition (Ebook and Paperback) – 16 May, 2018.

The Third Revised Edition:

a. Amazon as an Ebook (Kindle Edition and other digital formats) -- 1166 pages, 1488 footnotes, 11 August, 2020: \$6.99. <https://www.amazon.com/Joseph-G.-Healey/e/B001JO5VR8>

b. Amazon as a Print on Demand (POD) paperback in two volumes:

Volume 1: 624 pages, 944 footnotes, 14 September, 2020, Paperback, \$19.99
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08HGNS5RW/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=By+Joseph+G+Healey+MM&qid=1599503618&sr=8-1

Volume 2: 560 pages, 581 footnotes, 14 September 2020), Paperback \$19.99
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08HGTT53P?ref_=pe_3052080_397514860

The Fourth Revised Edition (2024): Volume 1 and Volume 2. **IN PROCESS**

NOTE: If a person has purchased the Print on Demand (POD) paperback, he or she can get the Kindle MatchBook edition for only \$2.99.

Also available on:

Barnes & Noble

[Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa: Revised edition August 2020 by Joseph G Healey MM, Paperback | Barnes & Noble® \(barnesandnoble.com\)](https://www.barnesandnoble.com/?i=9780800839751&w=1)

A hyperlink to the book is also available on:

AMECEA Website
<http://amecea.org>

Catholic University of Eastern Africa -- CUEA (go to: Library Tab>Electronic Resources> Electronic Journals>Scroll to Small Christian Communities (logo on the right at the bottom)
<http://www.cuea.edu>

Don Bosco Utume Salesian Theological College Library. Accessible only on campus on the Library's Computer (go to: Network>SERVER1>Ebooks>Ebook on SCCs. When needed enter username: administrator and password: 1234).

Hekima University College (go to: Hekima University College Library>[Click here to access online](#))
<http://library.hekima.ac.ke/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=422146>

Tangaza University College
<https://tangaza.ac.ke>

Go to: Library>E-Resources (Electronic Resources)>

1. On Campus Access E-Resources>Open Access List>Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa

2. Off Campus Access>Sign In>Ebook>Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa

Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 3 March, 2015,
https://www.academia.edu/9245872/Building_the_Church_as_Family_of_God_Evaluation_of_Small_Christian_Communities_in_Eastern_Africa

ResearchGate, retrieved on 3 March, 2015,
https://www.researchgate.net/pr/Joseph_Healey2/contributions

Google Scholar, retrieved on 26 August, 2015,
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?start=30&q=%22Joseph+G+Healey%22&hl=en&as_sdt=0,31

Today there are over 195,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Catholic Church in the nine AMECEA countries in Eastern Africa. This book treats the following 19 headings:

- “SCCs in the Historical Perspective of 62 Years (1961 to 2023) in the AMECEA Region.”
- “Quantitative Evaluation of the Growth of SCCs in the AMECEA Region.”
- “Qualitative Evaluation of the Growth of SCCs in the AMECEA Region.”
- “Four Case Studies of SCCs in Eastern Africa.”
- “How SCCs Promote Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa.”
- “SCCs’ Contribution to the Praxis and Theology of the Church as Family of God in Eastern Africa.”
- “Evaluation of the Impact of SCCs in the AMECEA Region.”
- “Evaluation of the Influence of AMECEA’s SCCs in Africa and Around the World.”
- “The Future is Now: Using the Internet to Promote SCCs in Africa and Around the World.”
- “Online Small Christian Communities.”
- “Promoting the Missionary Outreach of SCCs in the AMECEA Region.”
- “SCCs’ Involvement in the New Evangelization in Eastern Africa.”
- “SCCs Promote Family and Marriage Ministry in Eastern Africa.”
- “Tracking the Growth of Young People SCCs.”
- “How SCCs Are a New Way of Being/Becoming Church in Eastern Africa.”
- “How SCCs Are a New Pastoral Model of Church in Eastern Africa.”
- “The Role of SCCs in the Synodal Church in Africa”
- “Future Challenges, Priorities and Actions for SCCs in the AMECEA Region.”
- “General Conclusions: The Way Forward.”

Healey, Joseph, “Celebrating 180,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa: Speech at the Annual International Writers’ Conference,” Speech at the Annual International Writers’ Conference, Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) AMECEA Gaba Campus, Eldoret, Kenya, 20 September, 2016, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 22 September, 2016,
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/376-celebrating-180000-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-eastern-africa-speech-at-the-annual-international-writers-conference.html>

Healey, Joseph, "Cell Churches in Africa," *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the Global South*, 2018.

Healey, Joseph, "Collection of, and Commentary on, 436 Sayings on East African Cloth (Misemo Kwenye Khanga na Vitenge vya Afrika Mashariki)" Nairobi: African Proverbs Working Group, 2005, Ebook, African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 5 November, 2017, <http://www.afriprov.org/images/afriprov/books/easayingsoncloth.pdf>. Computer Version updated to 600 sayings, 16 April, 2018.

A number of these sayings are related to SCCs, community values and life and relationships. Example:

"AMECEA – *Mzazi wa Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo. Karibu Tanzania* 2002."
 "AMECEA – Parent of Small Christian Communities. Welcome to Tanzania. 2002."
 "AMECEA Celebrations. 40th Welcome to Tanzania. 40th

Healey, Joseph, "Come Away and Rest a While," Homily at Holy Family Parish, Davidsonville, MD, Saturday, 20 July, 2024 and Sunday, 21 July, 2024. The 10:30 a.m. Mass was livestreamed on the YouTube and Facebook Pages of the Holy Family Parish Website: <https://www.holyfamilychurch.com/watch-mass-online.html> 1:28:31 hours. So far there have been 74 views.

A recent ministry of mine has been teaching a course on [Small Christian Communities](#) (SCCs) at the Tangaza Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya. You know Small Christian Communities better as Small Bible Study Groups and Small Faith Sharing Groups. At our first class the students, all in their 20s, started calling me Mzee (that's the Swahili word for "elder") as a title of respect. You remember that Mzee was the name of the elder lion in The Lion King. But I said, "No. No. Not yet. Not yet. Please give me another name." So the next day they started calling me "a youth from a long time ago." I like that much better.

Part of my present Internet Ministry is moderating the

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website
<https://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>

On the Home Page/Front Page of the website there is a Poll that says: The best part of my Small Christian Community is... followed by six choices. Some of the choices fit in very well with today's Gospel:

- Encourages friendship with Jesus Christ.
- Sacred space to unburden ourselves.
- Community of believers on mission.

Healey, Joseph, "Comparing 'Basic' and 'Small' Christian Communities." *AMECEA Documentation Service* (ADS) 48/284 (8 May, 1984).

Healey, Joseph "Creative Ways of Promoting 'Africa Matters' -- Part II, 2017 Report of the Africa Region to the Orbis Books Advisory Committee Meeting," Maryknoll, NY: privately photocopied, 2017.

Healey, Joseph, Don Bosco Utume Salesian Theological College Nairobi, Kenya Final Annotated Syllabus of Two Credit Course, “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (PET190),” Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2014, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 10 February, 2015,

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/jan2014syllabus.pdf>

Healey, Joseph. “Evolving A World Church from the Bottom Up: An Analysis and Interpretation of 3,500 Different Names, Titles, Terms, Expressions, Descriptions and Meanings for and about Small Christian Communities/Basic Christian Communities in the World with 11 Case Studies from Six Continents,” Background Paper for the International Consultation on “Rediscovering Community -- International Perspectives,” University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, USA, 8-12 December, 1991, Notre Dame: Privately printed, 1991, 33 pages. Sections of the paper are published in:

- Joseph Healey, MM, “Twelve Case Studies of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa,” Radoli, Agatha (ed.), *How Local is the Local Church? Small Christian Communities and Church in Eastern Africa*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* 126-128, 1993. pp. 59-103.
- The newsletter of Latin American/North American Church Concerns (LANACC).

It is presumed that these names refer to small apostolic groups, not just small groups. We purposely avoided the broader and more generic name “small groups” by itself that is used in so many different ways in North America today. We did not research the many types of Small Prayer Groups, Small Self-help Groups and Small Support Groups because they are outside the specific meaning and purpose of Small Christian Communities. Our research did not specifically treat the many names in other Christian Churches including the Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. We did not have the opportunity to document some of the many names used in the fast growing Hispanic Catholic Churches. Small Christian Communities (SCCs) is an umbrella term used in this list and is the most common name worldwide.

NOTE: This research was informally updated in 2015 to include over 5,000 entries with many new Names, Titles, Terms, Expressions, Descriptions and Meanings added. This expresses the rich diversity of this new way of being/becoming church.

Healey, Joseph, *Fall in Love, Stay in Love, and It Will Decide Everything*, Homily, Katie Strong and Mike Cannito Marriage Liturgy, St. Teresa of Avila Parish, Summit, New Jersey, 10 September, 2022.

Our couple have integrated special symbols into the ceremony. As part of our celebration today I asked them to chose one symbol of their marriage to place here on the table. Mike’s “dart” speaks for itself. Katie’s photo of the two of them with our extended family in Martha’s Vineyard is precious.

I would like to use the story of the Pig and the Chicken. The two animals were walking down the street on Sunday morning. They passed a restaurant that advertised “Special Breakfast: Bacon and Eggs.” The pig turned to the chicken and said, “for you it is only a contribution, but for me it is total commitment.” Today Katie and Mike are celebrating their

lifetime commitment to each other in this sacrament of Christian marriage. May many blessings abound.

Healey, Joseph, *A Fifth Gospel: The Experience of Back Christian Values*,¹⁵¹⁷ Maryknoll: Orbis Books and London: SCM Press, 1981. A Special Edition (32 Years Anniversary Edition printed digitally) was published by Orbis Books in 2013. The Swahili version published by Benedictine Publications Ndanda-Peramiho, Peramiho is *Kuishi Injili (Living the Gospel)* and the German version published by Missio, Aachen is *Auf Der Suche Nach Dem Ganzen Leben: Kleine Christliche Gemeinschaften in Tansania*.

Chapter Four (pages 95-150) is on “Small Christian Communities” and contains photographs and eight sections on the life and ministry of SCCs in Nyabihanga Village in Rulenge Diocese in Western Tanzania.

Healey, Joseph, Final Annotated Syllabus of Two Credit Core Course “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (PTC418),” Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2012, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 10 February, 2015, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/syllabus2.pdf>

Healey, Joseph, Final Annotated Syllabus of Two Credit Core Course “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (PTC418),” Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2013, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 2 August, 2013, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/kenya/223-january-to-march-2013-scc-course-syllabus-at-tangaza-university-college.html>

Healey, Joseph, Final Annotated Syllabus of Two Credit Core Course “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (PTC418),” Tangaza University College (CUEA), Nairobi, Kenya, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2015. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 10 February, 2015, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/jan2014syllabust.pdf>

Healey, Joseph, Final Annotated Syllabus of Two Credit Core Course “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (PTC418),” Tangaza University College (CUEA), Nairobi, Kenya, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2016. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 8 May, 2016, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/final_syllabus_tangaza_2016.pdf

¹⁵¹⁷ After publishing this book, I got a complimentary letter from an expatriate missionary priest in Tanzania belonging to the Missionaries of Africa Society. He said that I described the same missionary and pastoral experiences that he has had, but he did not think they were important until he read about them in my book.

I have close ties to my high school – Portsmouth Abbey School in Portsmouth, Rhode Island USA. Following the Benedictine tradition of reading in the rectory during meals they read my book in 1982.

This syllabus has been revised and updated over the past 12 years (2008 to 2019) following the development of SCCs in the changing context of Eastern Africa. For example, the topics/themes of the “internet/social media/social networking” and “mission/evangelization” are now not taught as separate weeks, but are integrated in the content throughout the course and included in the exam questions.

Other changes and updates: More and more of the course is taught online in a participatory, interactive way using the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and Facebook Page and other online materials. Deacons and other pastoral ministers report on their homilies and talks from week to week. The themes of the questions on the Final Exam are listed on the SCCs Website, but change from year to year. The “Opening Solidarity Prayer” is changed from week to week based on the local African context. Five different METHODS of *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection Bible—Life Connections* are explained and practiced in the class in our individual SCCs.

There are now three sections each with its own lecturer. The three lecturers develop together a common syllabus, a common teaching plan, a common exam and a common marking system. The first two periods (mainly lectures and presentations) are all together, the last period is in the separate sections.

If Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are a “New Way of Being (Becoming) Church” and a “New Model of Church in Africa Today” this challenges us to a new way of teaching about SCCs and a new way of learning about SCCs. The traditional model has been for a priest or sister (representing 1% of SCC members) to teach the course. But 99% of the SCC members are lay people. So we see a **new model of team teaching** that would include:

1. Since it is an academic course a qualified person in pastoral theology – a priest, sister, brother, layman or laywoman with the proper academic degree.
2. A layman.
3. A laywoman. **NOTE:** This is essential because our research shows that 75% of the members of SCCs in Eastern Africa are laywoman.

A key challenge is “team teaching” (the lecturers and presenters sit in on each other’s classes and lectures) rather than just “shared teaching” (various lecturers teach one or more classes on a rotation basis).

Healey, Joseph, Final Annotated Syllabus of Two Credit Core Course “Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (PET190),” Don Bosco Utume Salesian Theological College, Nairobi, Kenya, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2016. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 8 May, 2016, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/final_syllabus_salesians_2016.pdf

Students took hold of the importance of starting and promoting specific YSCCs and the pastoral value of SCCs using the social media. In the evaluation they said it was the most practical and pastoral course in the semester. One concrete recommendation: Post the “Provisional Syllabus” of our SCCs Course online under “Kenya” on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website at the beginning of the course and the “Final Annotated Syllabus” at the end of the course.

Healey, Joseph, *Following the Road Less Traveled: Reflections on a 25 Year Journey of Maryknoll Missionary Priesthood*, Maryknoll Language School, Musoma: Privately Published Booklet, 1991.

Healey, Joseph, "Four African Evaluate SCCs in East Africa," *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)* 29:5 (October, 1987): 266-277.

Healey, Joseph, "Go Digital or Die: Online Church," *New People*, 186 (May – June, 2020): 27-30. Reprinted on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 10 June, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/digital-or-die-the-importance-and-use-of-the-internet-and-social-media-in-proclaiming-the-good-news-today>

Reprinted as: "Go Digital or Die: The Importance and Use of the Internet and Social Media in Proclaiming the Good News Today," *Maryknoll News*, July-August, 2020, Maryknoll Intranet Website, retrieved on 2 September, 2020, <https://www.maryknoll.net/html/pubs/Current/MKLNews/default.pdf>

Healey, Joseph, "Gospel Reflection for the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B (15 October, 2023)." Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) Website, 15 October, 2023, retrieved on 16 October 2023. <https://www.maryknollogc.org/resources/scripture-reflections/twenty-eighth-sunday-ordinary-time>

The reflection went live on the MOGC Website on Monday, 9 October, 2023. It was sent by email to the MOGC contacts, and the *Maryknoll* Magazine will publish it on their website and social media.

Are you following the Synod on Synodality that is taking place in Rome right now from 4 to 29 October, 2023? Some people say that it could be the most important event in the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

Matthew 21: 9 -10: "'Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests."

The present 2021 - 2024 Synodal Process encourages us to "enlarge the space of our tent" (*Isaiah* 54:2) so everyone can fit into the Catholic Church including refugees, the homeless, LGBTQ people, people in polygamous marriages, people with special needs, and others. All are invited. We are all walking together. We are inclusive.

Healey, Joseph, "Gospel Reflection for the Second Sunday in Lent Time, Year B (25 February, 2024)." *2024 Lenten Reflection Guide: Care of Creation*, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) Website, 25 February, 2024, retrieved on 19 February 2024. <https://www.maryknollogc.org/files/attachments/lent-2024.pdf>

Sacrifice is an important theme of the Lenten Season and of the scripture readings this Second Sunday in Lent. Jesus Christ makes the ultimate sacrifice of suffering and dying for humankind. In the Gospel, Jesus tells Peter, James, and John "not to relate what they had seen [in the Transfiguration] to anyone until the Son of Man had risen from the dead." In the first

reading, Abraham shows his deep faith in God by being willing to sacrifice his beloved son Issac.

Sacrifice is essential if we are to truly care for creation and emphasize the importance of ecology and the environment. Are we willing to make sacrifices in our lifestyle and convert to simple living? Are we willing to reduce our carbon footprint by driving gasoline cars less often and flying by planes less frequently? Are we actively engaged in advocacy for moving away from fossil fuels?

Healey, Joseph, "Harvesting Some AMECEA Memories and Discerning What the Holy Spirit is Saying to AMECEA Today and in the Future." Farewell Homily at the AMECEA Residence/Office, Nairobi, Kenya. 10 December, 2022.

Healey, Joseph, "Harvesting Some Maryknoll Memories in the Africa Region and Discerning What the Holy Spirit is Saying to Maryknoll Today and in the Future." Reflection for Tanzania District Meeting, Mwanza, Tanzania. 23 November, 2022.

Healey, Joseph, "Historical Development of the Small Christian Communities/ Basic Ecclesial Communities in Africa," in Krämer, Klaus and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Small Christian Communities: Fresh Stimulus for a Forward-looking Church*, Volume 2, "Theology of One World" series of Mission Aachen, Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 2013. German version, "Entwicklungsgeschichte der Kleinen Christlichen Gemeinschaften /Kirchlichen Basisgemeinschaften in Afrika," Krämer, Klaus and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Kleine Christliche Gemeinschaften: Impulse für eine zukunftsfähige Kirche*, ThEW2, Theologie der Einen Welt, Freiburg: Herder, 2012. Missio Website, retrieved on 9 August, 2015, http://www.missio-hilft.de/media/thema/theologie/thew/2/ThEW_2-4-1_Healey.pdf

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the "African Continent" under "Africa" on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 4 February, 2015, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/231-historical-development-of-the-small-christian-communitiesbasic-ecclesial-communities-in-africa.html>
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 26 August, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/15186477/Historical_Development_of_the_Small_Christian_Communities_Basic_Ecclesial_Communities_in_Africa
3. Mikado Website, retrieved on 1 November, 2015, <http://www.mikado-ac.info/home-uk.html>

The very first Small Christian Communities (SCCs)/Basic Christian Communities (BCCs) in Africa started in DRC in 1961. The very beginning of SCCs in Eastern Africa (and all of English-speaking Africa) can be traced back to the parishes of the Luo-speaking Deanery (especially Nyarombo, Ingri and Masonga Parishes) in North Mara in Musoma Diocese in northwestern Tanzania in 1966. The AMECEA Study Conference on "Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s" in Nairobi, Kenya in December, 1973 stated: "We have to insist on building church life and work on Basic Christian Communities in both rural and urban areas. Church life must be based on the communities in which everyday life and work take place: those basic and manageable social groups whose members can experience real inter-personal relationships and feel a sense of communal belonging, both in living and working." This pastoral policy was in the context of the statement: "We are convinced that in these countries of Eastern Africa it is time for the Church to become truly

local, that is, self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting.” This is rooted in the theology that SCCs are not optional, but are the basic unit/basic cell/basic building block/basic foundation/most local expression of the Catholic Church.

The AMECEA Study Conference on “Building Small Christian Communities” took place in Nairobi, Kenya in 1976. The key statement was: "Systematic formation of Small Christian Communities should be the key pastoral priority in the years to come in Eastern Africa." This is the single most important statement made about SCCs. The meeting went on to affirm the essential ecclesial character and characteristics of Small Christian Communities by stating: “The [Small] Christian Communities we are trying to build are simply the most local incarnations of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.”

A major step was the First African Synod in Rome in April, 1994 on the theme "The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission to the Year 2000" with five main topics: "Proclamation of the Good News of Salvation", "Inculturation," "Dialog", "Justice and Peace" and the "Means of Social Communications." Of the 211 interventions during the first two weeks of the First African Synod, there were 29 interventions on SCCs (the fourth highest number after the topics of justice, inculturation and laity).

The last 10 years has seen the increasing involvement of SCCs in promoting forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, justice and peace in Africa. There is considerable documentation on how some of the 20,000 base communities (another name for SCCs) were involved in the reconciliation and healing ministry in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. Research in Kenya, Rwanda and Sudan indicates that women are better in peacemaking than men. Men tend to emphasize power and control while women emphasize personal relationships. The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) in Lusaka, Zambia produced guided reflection pamphlets on justice and peace topics for SCCs to generate faith-based action. The various reflection methods in the Lumko Program especially related to social justice are used throughout Africa.

Today there are over 190,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Catholic Church in the nine AMECEA countries. Tanzania has over 60,000 SCCs and Kenya has over 50,000 SCCs. Since 1973 they have been a key pastoral priority in Eastern Africa as a “New Way of Being (Becoming) Church” and a “New Pastoral Model of Church.”¹⁵¹⁸ The rich experience of the church in Eastern Africa especially pastoral, parish-based SCCs is contributing to the other parts of Africa and to the World Church. SCCs is a pastoral model of church integrally connected to the structures, ministries and activities of the parish. This helps local Catholics feel that “they are the church” and more responsible (“ownership”) for church life and decision making. SCCs are becoming more involved in justice and peace issues.

What is the future? Many African SCCs have emerged from reading the contemporary signs of the times in Africa and responding to today’s reality. Cardinal Polycarp Pengo of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the former President of SECAM, calls SCCs “a special or privileged instrument of evangelization.” Tanzanian theologian Laurenti Magesa emphasizes: “For the future of Christian mission, specifically in Africa, we can say without hesitation that

¹⁵¹⁸ See the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and “Facebook Page”

www.smallchristiancommunities.org

the development of Small Faith Communities is an indispensable requirement.” They can play a major role in the New Evangelization. Already as a new way of being church and a new model of church (closely related to the Church as Family and the Communion of Communities Models of Church) African SCCs are influencing the World Church. SCCs in Africa will continue to develop in the spirit of the Spanish proverb popular with the Base or Basic Christian Communities in Latin America: *We create the path by walking*.

Healey, Joseph, “How African Small Christian Communities Implement the Pastoral and Missionary Vision of Vatican II,” *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission*, 2013/2, pp. 71-102, Tangaza University College Website, retrieved on 4 November, 2017, <http://www.tangaza.ac.ke/theology/img/journals/Tangaza%20Journal%202013-2.pdf> Tangaza University College Digital Repository, retrieved on 4 November, 2017, http://41.89.26.9:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/209/How_African_Small_Christian_Communities_Are_Implementing_the_Vision_of_Vatican_II_Two.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the “African Continent” under “Africa” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 4 February, 2015, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/249-how-african-small-christian-communities-implement-the-pastoral-and-missionary-vision-of-vatican-ii.html>.
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 4 February, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/10496747/How_African_Small_Christian_Communities_Implement_the_Pastoral_and_Missionary_Vision_of_Vatican_II
3. Google Scholar, retrieved on 26 August, 2015, <http://41.89.26.9:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/180>

As we continue to celebrate the 50-year Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, we recall the historical foundations of African Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the People of God Model of Church and in the communion Ecclesiology of Vatican II. A study of five documents of Vatican II reveals that Small Christian Communities are one of the great fruits of the council and an awakening of the church as the People/Nation of God. The founding fathers of AMECEA had a vision of implementing Vatican II’s Ecclesiology of communion in Eastern Africa that focused on the communion (koinonia) and service (diakonia) aspects. Both African Synods built on the foundations of Vatican II and highlighted the pastoral and missionary role of SCCs.

This article integrates the positions of three speakers at the Theological Symposium 2013. Pastoral, parish-based SCCs are part of the “new face” of the parish and a significant part of a new way of being parish from below. The parish is a communion or network of SCCs within the “communion of communities” Ecclesiology. Today there are over 180,000 Small Christian Communities in the nine AMECEA countries in Eastern Africa. Kenya alone has over 45,000 SCCs. We are optimistic that the experience of SCCs as a New Model of Church from the grassroots as witnessed by SCC members in Africa will bring significant changes in new pastoral structures corresponding to our contemporary communion Ecclesiology and the ecclesial reality on the local level.

Spanish translation is “Como Las Pequeñas Comunidades Cristianas Africanas,

Implementan La Pastoral y Visión Misionera Del Vaticano II,” by Alejandro Marina Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 15 March, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/las.pdf>

Healey, Joseph, “How Doors Open,” *Maryknoll in Touch*, November, 2020.



FINAL English_
November 20 MIT.pc

The leaflet describes the door that opened when Online Small Christian Communities (SCCs) started in Kenya in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. It states: “When you celebrate Thanksgiving this year, please know how grateful we are for your love of Maryknoll. The global pandemic has been a challenge we never anticipated. So one door to mission was closed. But thanks to you, our [Online] Small Christian Communities have opened another. We are strong in our faith and committed to witnessing Christ in all we do.”

Healey, Joseph, “How Small Christian Communities Promote Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa,” in *The Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Winter, 2010): 43-60.

Available in different online versions:

1. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 19 July, 2014, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/fall_article.pdf
2. ResearchGate Website, retrieved on 26 February, 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joseph_Healey2
3. Academia.edu Website <https://princeton.academia.edu/JosephHealey>

Today there are over 180,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the nine AMECEA countries in Eastern Africa. Tanzania alone has over 60,000 and Kenya alone has over 45,000 SCCs. Increasingly SCCs are promoting reconciliation, justice and peace, the three main themes of 2009 Second African Synod. This essay treats the following headings: “Tracking the Historical Shifts of SCCs,” “SCCs’ Increasing Involvement in Justice and Peace Issues,” “*Case Study of SCC Involvement in the Kenya Lenten Campaigns 2009 and 2010*,” “Involving Youth in Small Christian Communities,” “SCCs Using the Internet Especially Facebook” and “SCCs as Facilitators of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Africa.” One major change is the increasing use of a Pastoral Theological Reflection Process such as the “Pastoral Circle” (the well-known “See, Discern and Act” methodology starting from concrete experience) to help SCCs to go deeper. Now more and more SCCs in Africa are reflecting pastorally and theologically on their experiences, often using the tools of social analysis.

Healey, Joseph, “How To Reach Catholic Young Adults Today: A Variety of Voices and Quotations,” Online Panel Discussion on “Small Christian Communities on Campus and Beyond” sponsored by *Today’s American Catholic* (TAC), 21 March, 2023, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 20 May, 2023 and Today’s American Catholic Website retrieved on 20 May, 2023

Includes:

- 7 Examples of Catholic Young Adults.
- 8 Research Studies.
- 8 Individual Voices/Quotations.
- 6 Takeaways.

Healey, Joseph, “How and Why Our Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Course at Tangaza Was Different, *The Update*, April, 2016, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website. retrieved on 2 April, 2016, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/SCC_COURSE_DIFFERENCE.pdf

Available in different online versions:

1. “Our Course Was Different,” Tangaza University College Website, retrieved on 2 April, 2016, <http://tangaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Tangazaupdate4-16.pdf?d7c74e>

Healey, Joseph, “Impact of Small Christian Communities in the AMECEA Region” in *National Mirror*, 22:04 (May, 2011): 16.

Healey, Joseph, *Important Quotations Related to African Ecclesiologies Especially from Eastern Africa*, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 2 April, 2016, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/African_Ecclesiology.pdf

Healey, Joseph, “Innovations and New Trends in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Today” in *Hekima Review*, Vol. 40 (May, 2009): 85-100, *Hekima Review* Website, retrieved on 10 July, 2020 <http://journals.hekima.ac.ke/index.php/ojs/issue/view/44/showToc>

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the “African Continent” under “Africa” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 10 July, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/May2009HekimaReviewArticlewithFootnotesonInnovationsandNewTrendsInSmallChristianCommunitiesInAfricaToday.pdf>
2. Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns (MOGC) Website, retrieved on 10 July, 2020 <http://archive.maryknollogc.org/regional/africa/Together-with-Africa/May%202009%20Hekima%20Review%20Article.pdf>
3. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 25 August 2015. https://www.academia.edu/15160038/Innovations_and_New_Trends_in_Small_Christian_Communities_SCCs_in_Africa_Today
4. Semantic Scholar Website, retrieved on 12 July, 2020. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Innovations-and-New-Trends-in-Small-Christian-in-Healey/80a3cb89207185ddc37aeceb5e3ee8429f549fda>

Today there are over 90,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the nine AMECEA countries of Eastern Africa. Kenya alone has over 35,000 SCCs. The past year has seen innovations in the development of SCCs in Africa including Highlights of the SCC Practicum Papers, Case Studies of SCC Involvement in Peacemaking/Peacebuilding and in the Kenyan Lenten Campaign 2009 and Expanding the SCC Global Collaborative Website. A careful assessment of these experiences can help chart new trends in the future of the Catholic Church in Africa. This can lead to deeper theological reflection especially in the context of evolving a contemporary African Christian Theology that includes African Narrative Theology and the Theology of the Church Family of God in Africa.

Healey, Joseph, "Joseph Healey, MM's Articles, Books, Reports, Documents, DVDs/Videos and Workshops/Seminars on Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa and USA – Listed Chronologically," Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 4 March, 2015. 18 pages.

Healey, Joseph, "A Journey with Archbishop James Odongo: Celebrating Our Living AMECEA History," *CANAA Online Newsletter*, 29 January, 2015, retrieved on 31 January, 2015, <http://www.canaafrica.org/index.php/home/16-latestnews/175ugandan-retired-archbishop-to-celebrate-his-episcopal-golde-jubilee> and *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, Issue 078 (January 30, 2015), retrieved on 31 January, 2015, http://amecea.blogspot.com/2015/01/amecea-journey-with-archbishop-james.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=92ea633749-AMECEA+Online+Newsletter+6+5+2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-92ea633749-6746297

Describes the events when Archbishop Odongo was chairman of AMECEA between 1973 and 1979 including: The AMECEA Study Conference on "Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s" in Nairobi, Kenya in December, 1973 that stated: "We have to insist on building church life and work on Basic Christian Communities in both rural and urban areas. Church life must be based on the communities in which everyday life and work take place: those basic and manageable social groups whose members can experience real inter-personal relationships and feel a sense of communal belonging, both in living and working." The AMECEA Study Conference on "Building Small Christian Communities" in Nairobi, Kenya in July, 1976. The key statement was: "Systematic formation of Small Christian Communities should be the key pastoral priority in the years to come in Eastern Africa." This is the single most important statement made about SCCs.

Healey, Joseph, "Learning from Critical Incidents in the Stories and Experiences of SCCs around the World" in Workshop on "International Experiences of SCCs." 2007 National Joint Convocation on Small Christian Communities, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota. 9-12 August, 2007. St. Paul: Unpublished Talk. 2 pages.

Healey, Joseph, "Let the Basic Christian Communities Speak: Some Pastoral Theological Reflections on Portezuelo, Chile and Beyond," *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XI, No. I, (January, 1983),

Available in different online versions:

1. Sage Journals Website, retrieved on 19 June, 2015,

- <http://mis.sagepub.com/content/11/1/15.short>
2. Google Scholar Website, retrieved on 19 June, 2015,
 3. ResearchGate Website, retrieved on 19 June, 2015,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270604379_Let_the_Basic_Christian_Communities_Speak_Some_Pastoral_Theological_Reflections_on_Portezuelo_and_beyond
 4. Academia.edu Website
[file:///C:/Users/Joseph/Downloads/Let_the_Basic_Christian_Communities_Speak_20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Joseph/Downloads/Let_the_Basic_Christian_Communities_Speak_20(2).pdf) **CHECK**

The Basic Christian Community is a growing phenomenon in the Christian Churches today especially in the Roman Catholic Church. Basic Christian Communities (hereafter referred to as BCCs) are variously called Basic Ecclesial Communities, Small Christian Communities, and Popular Christian Communities with different shades of meaning. This article begins with some pastoral theological reflections on the BCCs in Latin America, specifically in the Roman Catholic Parish of Portezuela in Chillan, Chile. The particular experience of Tanzania is introduced to compare the BCCs in Latin America and Africa.

Healey, Joseph, "Levers of Integral Human Development: SCCs as Promoters of Social Justice," *New People*, 184 (2020), 18-20.

Healey, Joseph, "List of My Registered User ID Names, Passwords, Codes, Social Media Platforms and Internet Websites Plus Other Contact Information (as of 7 November, 2021), 22 pages," New Vernon, New Jersey: Privately Photocopied. 2021.

Included key data on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website and other SCCs Documentation.

Healey, Joseph, "Martha's Very Special 'Confession.'" Full version found on the African Stories Database, retrieved on 18 March, 2021, <https://afriprov.org/afri-story/marthas-very-special-confession/> Edited version in the Spring, 2021 *Maryknoll Magazine* under "Missioner Tales." Page 8 in the print version. Page 8 in the Digital Version, retrieved on 18 March, 2021, <MKMG-Spring-2021.pdf> (maryknollmagazine.org) Edited Spanish version in the Primavera, 2021 *Misioneros Magazine* under "Relatos Misioneros." Page 16 in the print version. Page 16 in the Digital Version, retrieved on 23 March, 2021, <https://misionerosmaryknoll.org/2021/03/relatos-misioneros-primavera-2021/>

Used when as a Chaplain to the Maryknoll Young Adult Empowerment Community Bay Area, I shared a story of a time when I was called to listen with my heart to a Tanzanian lay woman who was mute.

Healey, Joseph "My 54 Years (1967 – 2021) Journey with Charles de Foucauld" in Victor Edwin, (ed.), *Brother to All: The Life and Witness of St. Charles de Foucauld*, 11 *Essays on Different Themes Around Charles de Foucauld*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2022.

Healey, Joseph, "My African Journey: Taking the Road Less Traveled By," Coffee and Conversation at The Morristown Club, 5 April, 2024.

African stories from my three Orbis Books.

Healey, Joseph, "My Personal 50 Year Journey (1970 to 2020) with Orbis Books in Africa" in *Hekima Review: Journal of Theology, Governance and Peace Studies*, Vol. 61 (May, 2020). Theme: "The Evolution of African Christian Theology." Full issue: 189 pages pdf. My article: 18 pages pdf. [Hekima review front cover NO.61 blue.pdf - Google Drive](#)
 Under the "African Continent" under "Africa" on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 22 May, 2023, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Joe-Healey-My-Personal-50-Year-Journey-1970-to-2020-with-Orbis-Books-Final-Text.pdf>

This reflection treats the author's personal missionary journey in Africa in the context of the 50 Year anniversary (1970 to 2020) of Orbis Books, the Catholic religious publishing house of the Maryknoll Missionary Society. Topics include: the author's four Orbis books; African and Africanists Authors of Orbis Books; other key Orbis Books; the author's participation in the Orbis Books Advisory Committee; the author's friendships with African Orbis Authors; African Conversation Theology: a Distinct Theological Method; and going digital in religious publishing. The reflection concludes with possible themes for Orbis Books on African Christian Theology in the next 50 years (2020 to 2070).

Healey, Joseph, "The Need for an Effective Bible Reflection Method in SCCs in Africa," 156-59, *Biblical Pastoral Bulletin*, 8 (1989), 28-29. *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)* 37/3 (May, 1995). Another version is Joseph G. Healey, "Finding the African Bait," *New People*, 6-9 (1990), 10-11.

Healey, Joseph, "New Learnings in Animating a Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Model of Church in Africa Today," *African Christian Studies* (CUEA), Vol. 24, No.2 (June, 2008): 7-37. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 16 January, 2016, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/102-new-learnings-in-animating-a-small-christian-communities-sccs-model-of-church-in-africa-today.html>

Major headings as follows:

1. New Method of Teaching/Learning about SCCs
2. Checklist of Activities in SCCs in Africa Today
3. Challenge of Tribalism and Ethnicity in SCCs in Kenya
4. Symbols to Promote Reconciliation and Peacebuilding in SCCs
5. Pastoral Theological Reflection Process in SCCs
6. 22 Criteria to Evaluate a Typical Neighborhood Parish-Based SCC
7. Survey of Catholic Major Seminaries and Institutes of Theology
8. Animators of Small Christian Communities, Not Leaders or Bosses
9. How SCCs in Africa Can Participate in Larger Events of Catholic Church

Available in different online versions:

Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 16 January, 2016, [https://www.academia.edu/20301838/New Learnings in Animating a Small Christian Communities SCCs Model of Church in Africa Today](https://www.academia.edu/20301838/New_Learnings_in_Animating_a_Small_Christian_Communities_SCCs_Model_of_Church_in_Africa_Today)

Healey, Joseph, “New Research on Different Names, Titles, Terms and Expressions for Small Christian Communities (SCCs),” Paper No. 1 for Breakout Session on “One Hand Washes the Other: Sharing the Missionary Outreach of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa,” Mission Congress 2015, Houston: Photocopied Paper, 2015.

Healey, Joseph (compiled), *Once Upon a Time in Africa: Stories of Wisdom and Joy*,¹⁵¹⁹ Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004. Available as a paperback on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Google and Orbis. Available as an Ebook on Amazon (for Kindle), Google and Nook. Also available in different editions in French, Polish, Spanish and Swahili. This title has many variations such as *Once Upon a Time in a Land Far Away...* **NOTE:** In the Orbis Books Office we spent several days deciding on the exact wording of the sub-title. We wanted to capture the deeper meaning and spirit of African storytelling. So after discussing and comparing many words we settled on “wisdom” to express how the elders pass on cultural values from generation to generation and “joy” to express the cheerful and happy African character and personality.

<https://www.orbisbooks.com/once-upon-a-time-in-africa.html>

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00CMC69BS/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1&fbclid=IwAR1vMRbogJefB_B9hxafV-mVyi47pQSbcjiAEM_MIG0yyvIhhAdEsUQtSic
https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=eoeDAwAAQBAJ&hl=en_US&pg=GBS.P1

https://www.thriftbooks.com/w/once-upon-a-time-in-africa-stories-of-wisdom-and-joy/1111263/item/10943177/?mkwid=%7cdc&pcriid=448918240737&pkw=&pmt=&slid=&plc=&pgrid=104755242616&ptaid=pla-927269736418&gclid=Cj0KCOiAhP2BBhDdARIsAJEzXIEIduwoi-CS8Ummh2lDIGlzIT07svaYc9r_spb7doYEaqhiuiWeFEaAhHpEALw_wcB#idq=10943177&edition=3776581

[Once upon a Time in Africa: Stories of Wisdom and Joy by Joseph G Healey, Paperback | Barnes & Noble® \(barnesandnoble.com\)](#)

Healey, Joseph, “Origin and History of the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website (2004 to 2021),” New Vernon: Privately Photocopied, 2015, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 13 March, 2021,
<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Origin-and-History-of-the-Small-Christian-Communities-Global-Collaborative-Website.pdf> and AMECEA Website, retrieved on 13 March, 2021, [Origin-and-History-of-the-Small-Christian-Communities-Global-Collaborative-Website.pdf \(amecea.org\)](#)

Healey, Joseph, “Our Stories as Fifth Gospels”, *Mission Studies*, 4, 2 (1987), *Missiology*, 16,

¹⁵¹⁹ The cover art of the Orbis Books Edition is a red Tanzanian fabric of African animals, birds, trees and symbols designed by Roberta Savage. The cover art of the Spring/Summer 2004 *Catalog of Orbis Books* is a similar green Tanzanian fabric. The testimonials/blurbs on the back cover are by: Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Diana Hayes and Beverly Carroll.

3 (July, 1988), *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)*, 30:3 (June, 1988). Sage Publications Website, retrieved on 22 June, 2022, [Our Stories as Fifth Gospels \(sagepub.com\)](https://www.sagepub.com)

The author proposes that the term “a Fifth Gospel” is a valid metaphor in theology today. “Gospel” and “good news” can be applied to the way that God is revealing God through our human experience and daily lives. In light of the insights of the Story Theology/Theology of Story/Narrative Theology/Palaver Theology/Conversation Theology, our stories of faith are examples of Fifth Gospels. This article examines the history and deeper meaning of the metaphor of “a Fifth Gospel,” looks at these metaphors from the perspectives of the theology of revelation and Christology and narrates three concrete stories (examples) of Africa's Fifth Gospel. The article comments on the original reception given to Joseph Healey, *A Fifth Gospel: The Experience of Back Christian Values*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books and London: SCM Press, 1981. A Special Edition (32 Years Anniversary Edition printed digitally) was published by Orbis Books in 2013. The Swahili version published by Benedictine Publications Ndanda-Peramiho, Peramiho is *Kuishi Injili (Living the Gospel)* and the German version published by Missio, Aachen is *Auf Der Suche Nach Dem Ganzen Leben: Kleine Christliche Gemeinschaften in Tansania*.

NOTE: Because of the many changes in word processing I have not saved in new formats like Microsoft Word .docx articles that I wrote 30 to 40 years ago. However they are now saved on the Cloud. This is a great advance in digital technology. I can access the full text of this article by using my *Missiology* account (subscription) to read back copies.

Healey, Joseph, “Pastoral Responses to the Worldwide Eucharistic Famine,” FutureChurch Presentation, FutureChurch Website, 21 March, 2018.

Has an interesting section on "Evolving the Small Christian Community Model of Church in North America and Europe" that includes:

1. SCCs developed in Eastern Africa following our **local context**: small neighborhood, parish-based communities. SCCs are a pastoral model of church that transforms the parish into a communion of communities and an instrument of evangelization. SCCs combine *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflections* and practical action/outreach. SCC members are called to be missionary disciples. Much of the life of the SCCs and many of their activities take place in the local neighborhood (geographical area) where the SCC members live.

This is very different from the local context in North America and Europe. When I am asked to explain the difference between Africa and the West in one sentence, I say that in Eastern Africa "SCCs are not just a program or project in the parish, but a way of life." So, you have to be bold, creative and imaginative in your **local context**.

2. A final suggestion for North America and Europe: I am reminded of the 16-29 years age range being used for the Synod of Bishops and specifically for the Pre-Synod Meeting going on in Rome right now on the theme “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment.” I feel that there are many young people who are searching for meaning in their lives. They may not be interested in the Institutional Church, but they hunger for a “safe place”/“real space” for discussion/sharing/reflection. They want to meet in small communities by themselves without their parents, teachers and church leaders present. Here

they can share their own journey, their own faith and reflect on their own concerns, doubts, hopes and dreams.

Available in different online versions:

FutureChurch Website, retrieved 23 March, 2018,

<https://www.futurechurch.org/sites/default/files/FutureChurch%20Teleconference%20on%20Eucharistic%20Famine%20on%2021%20March%2C%202018.pdf>

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 23 March, 2018,

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/futurechurchtelcon.pdf>

Healey, Joseph, “Planning Workshop in Burkina Faso Emphasizes Networking among Small Christian Communities,” Nairobi: Privately Photocopied, 2015. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 16 August, 2015, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/340-planning-workshop-in-burkina-faso-emphasizes-networking-among-small-christian-communities.html>

Posted online in different versions:

1. “BURKINA FASO: Small Christian Community Planning Workshop Recommends Formation of SECAM-MISSIO Small Christian Community (SCCs) Networking Team,”

AMECEA Online Newsletter 14 August, 2015, retrieved on 16 August, 2015.

http://amecea.blogspot.co.ke/2015/08/burkina-faso-small-christian-community.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=c7432ca593-AMECEA+Online+Newsletter+6+5+2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-c7432ca593-6746297

2. Don Bosco Onyalla and Joseph Healey, “SECAM Workshop in Burkina Faso Emphasizes Networking among Small Christian Communities in Africa,” 13 August 2015. *CANA News Updates*, retrieved on 16 August, 2015, http://www.canaafrica.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=360:secam-workshop-in-burkina-faso-emphasizes-networking-among-small-christian-communities-in-africa&catid=16:latestnews&Itemid=103&lang=en

Fourteen delegates from six African countries (Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Togo and Zambia) and from Bolivia and Germany participated in a “Planning Workshop on Networking among Small Christian Communities (SCCs)/Base Christian Communities (BCCs) in Africa” in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from 6 to 9 August, 2015. The main “Recommendation for the Way Forward” is summarized as follows:

The consultative meeting that was attended by SECAM and Missio delegates recommended the creation of a SECAM-MISSIO Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Networking Team. It is supposed to be a small team whose membership will be those pastoral agents who are actively involved in the promotion of this ecclesial model.

The Networking Team will promote information and sharing of experiences about the importance of SCCs in the Local Churches of Africa, reciprocal theological reflection with the Department of Theology of Missio in Germany and interaction with other continental bodies where SCCs are seen as a new way of being church.

Healey, Joseph, "Praxis and Palaver," Book Review of *Toward a Synodal Church in Africa: Echoes from an African Christian Palaver*, Today's American Catholic Website, retrieved on 16 May, 2024, <https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/2024/05/praxis-and-palaver>

Also published in: **ADD**

In her essay "Ubuntu and Synodality," Ngalula writes: "The option of Basic Christian Communities (BCCs)/[Small Christian Communities](#) (SCCs) is a deconstructive paradigm at the service of the revitalization of *Ubuntu*, that joins the will of God . . . [SCCs are] an experience of building the church from the grassroots, by listening to God who is speaking to all humanity through Holy Scripture. That is exactly where the People of God, the faithful of Christ, learn and experience from the grassroots the true spirit of the extended family of God, a sense of family that excludes racism, tribalism, [and] ethnocentrism."

Healey, Joseph, "Praxis is Prior to Theology: Theological Foundations of International SCC Twinning," *Mission: Journal of Mission Studies/Revue des sciences de la mission*, XI: 1, 2004, pp. 29-43. Docstoc Website, retrieved on 14 June, 2015, <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/34096200/Praxis-is-Prior-to-the-Theology>

Healey, Joseph, "Promoting SCCs in Africa via the Internet," Chapter 26 in Joseph Healey, and Jeanne Hinton (eds.), *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005; Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006; and Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2006.

Available in different online versions:

1. ResearchGate Website, retrieved on 8 June, 2015, [Promoting SCCs via the Internet.pdf](#)
2. Orbis Books Website, retrieved on 26 August, 2015, <http://www.orbisbooks.com/chapters/1-57075-618-X.pdf>
3. Google Scholar, retrieved on 26 August, 2015, <http://www.orbisbooks.com/chapters/1-57075-618-X.pdf>
4. Academis.edu Website [file:///C:/Users/Joseph/Downloads/Promoting_SCCs_via_the_Internet%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Joseph/Downloads/Promoting_SCCs_via_the_Internet%20(1).pdf)

Healey, Joseph, "Promoting Small Christian Communities in Africa through the Internet" in *International Journal of African Catholicism (IJAC)*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter, 2011), *IJAC* website, retrieved on 8 June, 2015, http://www.saintleo.edu/media/131001/promoting_small_christian_communities_in_africa-1.pdf

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the “African Continent” under “Africa” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 25 August 2015.
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/177-article-in-the-online-journal-internationaljournal-of-african-catholicism-ijac-volume-2-number-1-winter-2011-pp.html>
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 25 August 2015.
https://www.academia.edu/15171767/Promoting_Small_Christian_Communities_in_Africa_through_the_Internet
3. Google Scholar, retrieved on 26 August, 2015,
http://www.saintleo.edu/media/131001/promoting_small_christian_communities_in_africa-1.pdf

Today there are over 90,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs in short) in the eight AMECEA countries in Eastern Africa. Kenya alone has over 35,000 SCCs. The internet (websites specifically about SCCs in Africa, online journals, online learning sites, search engines like Google, social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube, blogs, email messages, etc.) in this digital age can dramatically expand our knowledge and understanding on two levels. First, the internet can help SCCs in Africa to share their experience with the rest of the world. Through the internet and other forms of the new information technology members of African SCCs can feel part of the World Church.

Second, the internet can help people around the world learn about SCCs in Africa. This essay treats the following headings: “Tracking SCCs in Africa,” “History of the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website” www.smallchristiancommunities.org), “Content of the Africa Section of the SCCs Website,” “Small Christian Communities Facebook Pages and Groups,” “Promoting the Voices of Women, Youth and the Marginated” and “The Future is Now for SCCs in Africa.”

Healey, Joseph, "Promoting Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa in the Light of *The Joy of the Gospel*." Chapter in Krämer, Klaus and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Evangelii Gaudium: Voices of the Universal Church*, Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc, 2015. Volume 7 in the “One World Theology Series” published by Aachen, Missio. German translation in Krämer, Klaus and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Evangelii Gaudium: Stimmen der Weltkirche*, TheEW7, Theologie der Einen Welt, Freiburg: Herder, 2015.

This chapter is available in different online versions:

1. Under the “African Continent” under “Africa” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 7 January, 2016,
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/278-promoting-small-christian-communities-in-eastern-africa-in-the-light-of-the-joy-of-the-gospel.html>
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 7 January, 2016,
https://www.academia.edu/9286415/Promoting_Small_Christian_Communities_in_Eastern_Africa_in_the_Light_of_The_Joy_of_the_Gospel
3. Google Scholar, retrieved on 7 January, 2016,
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%22Joseph+G+Healey%22&btnG=&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C31
4. Tangaza University College Digital Repository Website, retrieved on 7 January, 2016,

<http://41.89.26.9:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/183>

Pope Francis is very popular in Africa and his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel* has received an enthusiastic response. Catholic in the Local Churches in Eastern Africa immediately began using the book in private and public prayer, homilies, talks, recollection days, retreats, workshops, seminars and classes in the constituent colleges connected to the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). The pope's pastoral, practical, down to earth style appeals to many people. The book has been very helpful and inspiring to members of the 190,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the AMECEA Region.

This article treats:

1. "Case Study of a SCCs Workshop."
2. "Key Passages in *The Joy of the Gospel*."
3. "An African Theologian Reflects on SCCs."
4. "Pope Francis' Dream of a Missionary Option."

Healey, Joseph, Provisional Syllabus of Two Credit Core Course, "Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today (PTC418)," Tangaza University College (CUEA), Nairobi, Kenya, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2016. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 7 February, 2016, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/syllabus_jan_march2016.pdf

Healey, Joseph, "Recent Activities of Our Maryknoll Society Class of 1966," *Interchange*

Nine classmates of our Maryknoll Society Class of 1966 celebrated the 58th Anniversary of our Maryknoll Missionary Priesthood Ordination at Maryknoll, New York, USA on 11 June, 2024. It was the Feast of St. Barnabas and we felt like a Small Christian Community (SCC). We began at 9:30 am with a "Telling Our Story" Session. We read the first part of the "Story of the Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus" in *St. Luke's Gospel* up to when Jesus says, "What things?" Then we shared our own mission stories, using the Synodal Process of deeper listening to each other. Then we discerned what God is saying in our lives right now. Then we prayed for and with all our classmates living and dead (a total of 26 of our ancestors in Christ).

This was followed by a Concelebrated Mass in the Third Floor C Wing Chapel and a delicious lunch in the Sheridan Room. Afterwards we visited the Columbarium in the crypt where we had a short prayer service and blessing in front of the small vault of ashes of Phil Erbland who died in 2023. We rounded off the day by a photo shoot at our Class of 1966 tree on the lawn in front of the front entrance of the Maryknoll Society Center Main Building.

Healey, Joseph, "The Role of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Implementation of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Africa," AMECEA Consultation on the Second African Synod, Nairobi: AMECEA Office, Unpublished Paper, 15 September, 2009, 5 pages. Available in different online versions:

1. Under the "African Continent" under "Africa" on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 26 August, 2015:

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/132-theroleof-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-theimplementation-of-reconciliation-justiceand-peacein-africa.html>

2. Catholic Peacekeeping Network (CPN), Notre Dame Website, retrieved on 26 August, 2015, <https://cpn.nd.edu/assets/14982/healey2.doc>
3. SEDOS (Service of Documentation and Study) Website, retrieved on 26 August, 2015, http://www.sedosmission.org/web/en/mission-articles/doc_view/1655-amecea-consultation-on-the-second-african-synod

Healey, Joseph (Recueillis), *La Sagesse Africaine: Histoires Vraies, Mythes et Contes*, Kinshasa: Editions Paulines, 2012.

Healey, Joseph, "Saying 'Goodbye...Until We Meet Again.'" Farewell Homily at Maryknoll Society House, Nairobi, Kenya. 11 December, 2022.

Healey, Joseph, "SCCs Workshop Mombasa Archdiocese," *National Mirror* 22:05, June, 2011, 11.

Healey, Joseph, "Second Sunday of Lent, Year B, *Lenten Reflection Guide 2024: Caring for Creation*," English and Spanish, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns Website, <https://maryknollogc.org/files/attachments/lent-2024.pdf>

Healey, Joseph, "Sharing the Missionary Outreach of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa," Paper No. 2 for Breakout Session on "One Hand Washes the Other: Sharing the Missionary Outreach of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa," Mission Congress 2015, Houston: Photocopied Paper, 2015.

Healey, Joseph, "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Around the World Led by the Holy Spirit," Talk at the Kenya Catholic Community in America (KCCA) 13th Annual Convention. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, 9 August, 2024, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 13 August, 2024, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/small-christian-communities-sccs-around-the-world-led-by-the-holy-spirit>

Electronic Resources and Paper/Printed Resources. Two Takeaways on the Importance of Promoting Weekly Lectionary Based Faith Sharing Small Christian Communities in the USA. This is part of Digital Evangelization in the Catholic Church that is being promoted by the Synodal Process.

Healey, Joseph, "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as Agents of Change in the Fight Against HIV AND AIDS in Eastern Africa," African Jesuit AIDS Network, Nairobi: Published Paper, 17 pages, 2015. Published in Jacquineau Azetsop, *HIV and AIDS in Africa: Theological Reflection, Public Health Crises, and Social Transformation*, Orbis Books, 2016.

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the "African Continent" under "Africa" on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 30 March, 2015, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/scc_targets.pdf

2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 30 March, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/11714158/Small_Christian_Communities_SCCs_as_Agents_of_Change_in_the_Fight_against_HIV_AIDS_in_Eastern_Africa

Today there are over 195,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Catholic Church in the nine AMECEA countries in Eastern Africa that have some kind of planned practical action, service and pastoral, social and mission outreach to local problems and challenges such as people with HIV and AIDS. SCC members are important agents of change and transformation in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

The first goal of this paper is to analyze the reality of people with HIV and AIDS in Eastern Africa today. The second goal is to demonstrate that the active involvement of SCC members in reaching out to people with HIV and AIDS as responders, healthcare workers, caregivers, counselors, etc. is a pastoral and social priority. This is the Ministry of Compassionate Accompaniment. SCC members have a special opportunity to minister to families and couples affected by HIV and AIDS in Eastern Africa such as caring for millions of AIDS orphans and counseling discordant couples. Specific stories, case studies and examples are cited to illustrate these goals in the context of developing an African narrative Ecclesiology.

Healey, Joseph, "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as Domestic Church in the Context of African Ecclesiology," Paper delivered at the Theological Colloquium on Church, Religion and Society in Africa (TCCRSA), Nairobi, Kenya. 6 August, 2014. Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 15 pages, in Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E. (ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa Conversations on Ecclesiology*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015.

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the "African Continent" under "Africa" on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 6 June, 2015, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/297-small-christian-communities-sccs-as-domestic-church-in-the-context-of-african-Ecclesiology.html>
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 3 March, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/8022439/Small_Christian_Communities_as_Domestic_Church_in_the_Context_of_African_Ecclesiology
3. Mikado Website, retrieved on 1 November, 2015, <http://www.mikado-ac.info/home-uk.html>

Today there are over 195,000 Small Christian Communities in the nine AMECEA countries. For example, Tanzania has over 60,000 and Kenya over 45,000 SCCs. We can describe an African SCC as the Domestic Church, the church in the neighborhood. SCCs are also called domestic communities of faith. 90% of the SCCs in the AMECEA Region are geographical/territorial, parish-based groups that are an official ecclesial structure in the Eastern African pastoral model of church, an official pastoral policy and an instrument/ vehicle/tool of evangelization.

This article treats four sections:

1. "Historical Perspective of SCCs in Africa."
2. "Reading the Signs of the Times in Africa."
3. "Case Study of SCCs in Family and Marriage Ministry in Africa."
4. "The Way Forward in Eastern Africa."

Healey, Joseph, *Small Christian Communities in the Acts of the Apostles*. Webinar on Zoom for the CCRI Strategy Team. A five-session interactive study, discussion and reflection experience using the See, Judge and Act process or methodology. 15 July, 2020 to 12 August, 2020.

Session 1: Our personal (individual) and communal experiences of *Acts of the Apostles*.

Session 2: Foundational texts of the first SCCs: *Acts of the Apostles* 2: 42-47, 4: 32-35 and 5: 1-31.

How can we concretely apply the first two texts to our lives, our communities and our ministries in our local contexts today?

Acts of the Apostles 15: 28:

"It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us...
"It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us..."

Experience of the Council of Jerusalem. In today's divided Catholic Church can we have a Council of Jerusalem moment/experience?

Session 3: House Churches with lay leadership especially women. Each participant prepares one passage in *Acts of the Apostles* that describes/illustrates the House Church (also called a Small Domestic Church) with women in leadership positions.

To listen to the discussion, click on <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/-J0yHuvI5z1IAY38t0ePS6k8Hdvpaaa81yRKrqcFnQdtf2QBh48SMJfKDVrtqE0>.
Password: 5?%2\$sMR.

Session 4: Importance of the Holy Spirit. Each participant prepares three short inputs:

- A passage in *Acts* about the Holy Spirit that you like.
- Example in your life when you felt the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Example in your life when you **did not feel** the power of the Holy Spirit.

Session 5: St. Paul's call to Hardship and Mission and what it means for us today.

Healey, Joseph, "The Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Pastoral, Ecclesial Model of Church in Africa Today," SCCs Course Outline for Theology for the Laity Certificate Program – 2020, Hekima University College (Jesuit School of Theology), January, 2020. Retrieved 22 December, 2019, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/sccs-course-outline-for-theology-for-the-laity-certificate-program-2020>

Healey, Joseph, "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and the New Way of Being

Maryknoll in Africa.” Maryknoll Society of Fathers and Brothers Africa Regional Assembly, Arusha, Tanzania. May, 1999. Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 3 pages. Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Africa Region Website, Retrieved 27 February, 2015, <http://www.maryknollafrica.org/ComHealeyDocs4.htm>

Healey, Joseph, “Small Christian Communities in Africa,” Breakout Sessions on “Reconciliation, Justice and Peace throughout Africa,” Ignatian Family Teach-in for Justice (IFTJ), Georgetown Hotel and Convention Center, Washington, DC, 2011. Washington, DC: Unpublished Talk, 12-13 November 2011.

Healey, Joseph, “Small Christian Communities in Africa Today (TS48),” Description and Outline of January to April, 2013 Three Credit Seminar Course Course to examine how Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are a New Model of Church and a New Way of Being Church in promoting justice, reconciliation, and peace in Africa today. Nairobi: Hekima University College , Privately Printed 2013. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 2 August, 2013, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/kenya/232-description-of-january-to-april-2013-seminar-course-at-hekima-college-nairobi-kenya.html>

Healey, Joseph, “Small Christian Communities in the AMECEA Region: An Evaluation of Their Growth and Impact” in *The Faculty of Theology of CUEA Celebrates the Golden Jubilee of AMECEA*. General Editor: John Lukwata. 13th Interdisciplinary Theological Session (2011). Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013.

Available in different online versions:

1. Mikado Website, retrieved on 1 November, 2015, <http://www.mikado-ac.info/home-uk.html>

Healey Joseph, “Small Christian Communities in Africa: Histories, Themes, Development and Challenges,” in Stan Ilo, (ed.), *Handbook of African Catholicism*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2022.

An essay that treats:

1. Historical Development of Small Christian Communities/Basic Ecclesial Communities in Africa.
2. Themes of Small Christian Communities in Africa.
 - a. Relationships and Community
 - b. Biblical
 - c. Ecclesiastical
 - d. Pastoral
 - e. Contextual
 - f. Synodality
 - g. Mission
3. Development of Small Christian Communities in Africa.
4. Challenges of Small Christian Communities in Africa.
5. Bibliography

This SCCs material has been published in different forms online and in different books and journals. This particular version contains material from 25 African countries. Available in different online versions and titles:

1. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 26 July, 2022, https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/scc_histories_themes.pdf

2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 13 March, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/36139280/Histories_Themes_Development_and_Challenges_of_Small_Christian_Communities_in_Africa (with a Read Aloud feature¹⁵²⁰)

Healey Joseph, "Small Christian Communities, The Joy of Love," *The Catholic Mirror*, Issue No. 5/16 (May, 2016).

Healey, Joseph, "Small Christian Communities: Lived Faith Creating Contextual Theologies in Africa," Nairobi: Unpublished article, 2012, 17 pages. To be published in the forthcoming book Robert White (ed.), *Practicing Contextual Theology in the Global South: Pastoral Communication in Local Cultures*, Paulines Publications Africa, 2017. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website retrieved 19 July, 2014, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/230-small-christian-communities-lived-faith-creating-contextual-theologies-in-africa.html>

Healey, Joseph, "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Promote Family and Marriage Ministry in Eastern Africa," Nairobi: Published Paper, 2015. Online *International Journal of African Catholicism (IJAC)*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Summer, 2015), 48-156, *IJAC* website, retrieved 11 October, 2015, http://www.saintleo.edu/media/953345/summer_2015_family_edition_final.pdf

Available in different versions:

1. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 16 June, 2015, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/marriage_ministryEA.pdf
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 16 June, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/13028804/Small_Christian_Communities_SCCs_Promote_Family_and_Marriage_Ministry_in_Eastern_Africa
3. *Human Dignity Journal*, No. 2, 2015-2016. Tangaza insert in the Polish Journal *Roczniki Teologiczne – Nauki O Rodzinie (Annals of Theology – Family Studies)*, Tom LXIII, zeszyt 10, 2016.
4. Chapter 12 in Joseph Healey, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*. The Online Digital Online Version is available as a free Ebook containing 862 pages as of 7 January, 2017 on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/ebooks/47-ebooks-.html>
5. Tangaza University College Digital Repository Website, retrieved on 8 September, 2015, <http://41.89.26.9:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/183>

¹⁵²⁰ Uses Microsoft Aria Natural -- Eng. 54 minutes.

6. Mikado Website, retrieved on 1 November, 2015, <http://www.mikado-ac.info/home-uk.html>

The nine AMECEA Countries participated in the III Extraordinary World Synod of Bishops on "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization" in Rome from 5-19 October, 2014. In AMECEA Small Christian Communities (SCCs) were part of the consultation process and answered 11 of the 39 questions in the poll. Research on the 190,000 SCCs in Eastern Africa reveals that SCCs elect lay ministers/animators/coordinators for specific groups such as couples (married and engaged), youth and children and for specific pastoral ministries such as Catechesis, Justice and Peace, Religious Education, Sacraments and Spiritual/Religious Formation. A SCC is a communion of families. The SCC is an important support group for families and promotes a family culture. The SCC is both a place and a path for the pastoral care and evangelization of families and marriages. This praxis of SCCs in Africa is contributing to the development of the theology of the Church as Family of God.

Now SCCs in the AMECEA Region are preparing for the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World" to take place in Rome from 4-25 October, 2015. The meeting will "seek working guidelines in the pastoral care of the person and the family." We are challenged to continue to explore how SCC members and others can accompany families and couples who are wounded. This is the Ministry of Compassionate Accompaniment. This is part of the imperative for all Catholics to go to the margins of society to serve the poor, migrants and those without hope. Pope Francis also emphasizes the importance of welcoming, listening to and accompanying young people today.

After the October, 2015 Synod of Bishops itself there will be an ongoing process involving collegiality and subsidiarity. There will be follow-up meetings and various commissions related to pastoral solutions to the challenges of family and marriage. Ongoing discussion and decision-making will take place on the local level through national episcopal conferences. Pope Francis is expected to issue a *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation* with an ongoing plan of action that includes concrete pastoral solutions. SCCs help to promote this family and marriage ministry.

Healey, Joseph, "Small Christian Communities: "Promoters of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa" in Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (ed.), *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace – the Second Africa Synod*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011 and Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2011: 59-70.

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the "African Continent" under "Africa" on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 26 August, 2015
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/197-small-christian-communities-promoters-of-reconciliation-justice-and-peace-in-eastern-africa.html>
2. Google Books Website, retrieved 25 June, 2015,
https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=z426BgAAQBAJ&pg=PT70&lpg=PT70&dq=small+christian+communities+in+eastern+africa&source=bl&ots=fkjCGcMxig&sig=9lML1C03jsvwhjBL3Hu0Sp6ao34&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=small%20christian%20communities%20in%20eastern%20africa&f=false

The French Translation is: “Les Communautés chrétiennes de base: Promotrices de la réconciliation, de la justice et de la paix en Afrique Orientale.”

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/303-les-communautes-chretiennes-de-base-promotrices-de-la-reconciliation-de-la-justice-et-de-la-paix-en-afrique-orientale.html>

Healey, Joseph, “Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Promote Family Ministry in Eastern Africa,” *Hekima Review*, No. 50 (May, 2014): 54-67, *Hekima Review* Website, retrieved on 10 July, 2020, <http://journals.hekima.ac.ke/index.php/ojs>

Available in different online versions:

1. Under the “African Continent” under “Africa” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 10 July, 2020, https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/family_ministry.pdf
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 10 July, 2020, https://www.academia.edu/11194197/Small_Christian_Communities_SCCs_Promote_Family_Ministry_in_Eastern_Africa
3. Digital Repository, Tangaza University College Website, retrieved on 10 July, 2020, <http://41.89.26.9:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/182> **NOT WORKING**

The nine AMECEA Countries prepared for the III Extraordinary World Synod of Bishops on "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization" that took place in Rome from 5-19 October, 2014. In Eastern Africa Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are part of the consultation process and answered 11 of the 39 questions in the poll. Research on the 180,000 SCCs in Eastern Africa reveals that SCCs elect lay ministers/animators/coordinators for specific groups such as couples (married and engaged), youth and children and for specific pastoral ministries such as Catechesis, Justice and Peace, Religious Education, Sacraments and Spiritual/Religious Formation. A SCC is a communion of families. The SCC is an important support group for families and promotes a family culture. The SCC is both a place and a path for pastoral care and evangelization. This praxis of SCCs in Africa is contributing to the development of the theology of the Church as Family of God.

Healey, Joseph, “Small Christian Communities Promote Themes of the 2009 2nd African Synod” in *Hakimani – Jesuit Journal of Social Justice in Eastern Africa*, Vol. 1 (2009): 4-11. <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/103-small-christian-communities-sccs-promotethemes-of-the2009-second-african-synod.html>

Healey, Joseph, “Small Christian Communities: Second African Synod,” *New People*, No 121, May, 2009: 15-17.

Healey, Joseph, “Small Faith-sharing Groups: Searching for Better Models on College Campuses, New Vernon, New Jersey: Privately Photocopied, 2015. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 4 November, 2016.

http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/small_faith_shairing_groups.pdf

Healey, Joseph, "Small is Beautiful," *Tablet*, 4 November, 2004.

Healey, Joseph, "Stopping to Smell the Flowers in East Africa," "Soul Seeing Column," *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)*, Online from 17 September, 2019.
Sept 20-Oct 3, 2019 print issue.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/soul-seeing/stopping-smell-flowers-east-africa>
<https://www.ncronline.org/authors/joseph-g-healey>

Healey, Joseph, "30 Stories of Peter Hagerty (born 14 December, 1996)," New Vernon, NJ: Privately Printed, 15 June, 2024.

Healey, Joseph (in collaboration with African leaders), "Synodality in the African Context," Third Session to cover the third priority in the document – "Participation, Governance, and Authority," SynodWatch series covering the Working Document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, FutureChurch Zoom Webinar, 12 July, 2023 FutureChurch Video Link on YouTube:
[SynodWatch Session 3: Participation, Governance, and Authority - YouTube](#)
Text on Small Christian Community Global Collaborative Website:
<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/synodality-in-the-african-context>

Healey, Joseph, "Taking the Road Less Traveled By: Memoir by Joseph G. Healey," *Princeton Class of 1960 65th Reunion Yearbook*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University, 2025.

Healey, Joseph, "Talk or Intervention on 'Pastoral Accompaniment Related to Family and Marriage in an African Context,'" Nairobi: Privately Photocopied, 2015, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 16 August, 2015.
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/talk.pdf>

This article treats four sections:

1. "Intervention on "Pastoral Accompaniment."
2. "Some Cardinal John Njue Stories and Examples."
3. "Additional Notes from the Perspective of Africa."
4. "African Proverbs and Sayings Related to Family and Marriage."

Healey, Joseph, "Three Case Studies of African Christology among the Sukuma People in Tanzania," *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission*, 2011/1, pp. 5-26.
Tangaza University College Website, retrieved 3 February, 2020,

http://www.tangaza.org/theology/img/journal_als/Tangaza%20Journal%202011-2.pdf
<http://www.tangaza.org/theology/theology/Tangaza%20Journal%202011-1.pdf>

NOTE: Presently not available on Tangaza Website.

Available in different online versions:

1. African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 19 July, 2014, https://www.afriprov.org/images/afriprov/books/Three_Case_Studies_of_African_Christology.pdf
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 30 March 2015, https://www.academia.edu/9297381/Three_Case_Studies_of_African_Christology_among_the_Sukuma_People_in_Tanzania
3. “Three Case Studies of African Christology” in *L'église en Afrique 50 ans après les indépendances/The Church in Africa 50 Years After States' Independence/A Igreja em África 50 Anos Depois das Independências: Actes du colloque de l'ATA, Nairobi, du 8-12 Nov. 2010*. Ed. par Association of African Theologians/ Associação dos Teólogos Africanos/ Association des Théologiens Africains; éd. par Nathanaël Yaovi Soédé et Ignace Ndongala. Abidjan: Editions ATA, 2013, pp. 241-248. Footnote 3” treats “local Sukuma communities in Tanzania, be they Small Christian Communities (SCCs) or local chapters of our Sukuma Research Committee.” <http://afriprov.org/index.php/bibliography/575-three-case-studies-of-african-christology-among-the-sukuma-people-in-tanzania.html>
4. Google Scholar, retrieved on 21 June, 2015, <http://41.89.26.9:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/212>

My colleague, Donald Sybertz, and I have carried out research among the Sukuma people, the largest ethnic group in Tanzania. This article primarily consists of three case studies of Christology in an African context. The first case study is “Jesus Christ as Eldest Brother/Chief Intercessor. The Sukuma people’s name for Jesus Christ is “Eldest Brother/Chief Intercessor.” It is the eldest brother, the firstborn male who offers sacrifice¹⁵²¹ to one God in the Sukuma Ethnic Group tradition. Compare *Colossians* 1:15: the beloved Son who is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” Jesus Christ is the intercessor to the one God [the Father] who is called the Creator and Source and *Liwelelo* (“God”) in Sukuma.

The second case study is “The African Jesus Teaching in African Parables”. If we truly believe that Jesus Christ is present with us now then the African Jesus encourages us to teach the good news of salvation in African parables. There is a story of the Sukuma called “The Parable of the Two Brothers”. For a story of African origin this “African parable” has interesting parallels with “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” (*Luke* 15:11-32).

The third case study is “An African Reading of the *Bible*.” Jesus Christ taught in parables and stories that were hidden by their very nature. In our ministry with the Sukuma people in Tanzania we asked the local Christians to choose a specific story from the *New Testament* that they like to interpret within their own African culture and values. After a lot of discussion they chose the “Parable of the Friend in Need” in *Luke* 11:

¹⁵²¹ While involved in missionary ministry in Tanzania, I visited the sacred grove off the dirt road leading into Ndoleleji Parish in Shinyanga Diocese and the sacred rock formations in Bujora Parish in Mwanza Archdiocese where the Sukuma people offer sacrifice. *The Light of Sukuma Culture Spreads Throughout Africa* is an oil wall painting by Tanzanian artist Innocenti Ibalabala in the Archives Building of the Sukuma Cultural Museum at Bujora. Scene 1 (top left) portrays a traditional Sukuma diviner-healer praying under a sacred tree near some rocks in a mountainous place.

5-8.

Finally, we examine the “Sukuma People’s Different Way of Doing African Christian Theology. This article is an attempt at describing an evolving Sukuma Christology in Tanzania from below, from the communal experience of the Sukuma people in Tanzania. It is important to look also at the process or methodology of this theology that includes African Palaver Theology or African Conversation Theology. The local Sukuma communities in Tanzania, be they Small Christian Communities (SCCs) or local chapters of our Sukuma Research Committee, are indeed theologizing from their own experience and context. This is the local African Christian community theologizing. Local gatherings of SCCs reflecting on their daily lives in light of the gospel can be a real theological locus or theological moment.

Healey, Joseph, *Take a Chance on Me*, Meditation, Jack Allman and Sophia Juker Wedding Celebration, Greenbrier Chapel White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, Saturday, 22 April, 2023.

Many people have helped in preparing this meditation called *Take a Chance on Me* including those in the Younger Generation – Claire, Sarah, Charlotte, Ginny and Katie. I like stories so I begin with a story. On their first date, Jack and Sophia ended the night at a bar that only played ABBA songs. Here are some ABBA songs and lyrics that fit today’s joyous occasion:

From the song "Take a Chance on Me:"

Take a chance on me
That's all I ask of you honey
Take a chance on me

From the song "I've Been Waiting For You:"

And finally, it seems my lonely days are through
I've been waiting for you
Oh, I've been waiting for you

From the song “Lay All Your Love on Me:”

Don't go wasting your emotion
Lay all your love on me
Don't go sharing your devotion
Lay all your love on me

Healey, Joseph, “Together for Life,” Homily, Peter Hagerty and Katie Maransky Marriage Liturgy, Dahlgren Chapel of the Sacred Heart, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, 10 September, 2022.

Good afternoon and welcome to this Eucharistic Celebration on the joyous occasion of the Catholic Marriage of Peter Hagerty and Katie Maransky. In our immediate family we are blessed with three generations of Catholic Marriages at which I officiated. The First Generation is Tom and Meg Healey in Baltimore, Maryland in 1967. The Second Generation is Megan and John Hagerty in Martha’s Vineyard in 1992 and Jeremy and Megan Healey here at Georgetown in 1998. And today in 2024 Katie and Peter’s Marriage begins the Third Generation. The Maransky Family also has had three generations of Catholic Marriages. Thanks be to God for all of God’s many blessings especially the gift of our Catholic Faith.

This leads me into the Taylor Swift craze. Yes, I am a Swiftie, even though I don't understand many of the lyrics. But some younger family members helped me to find some lyrics and songs that connect to your marriage and your relationship. Some examples:

“You belong with me” from the song *You Belong With Me*.

“You're the one I want” from the song *Paper Rings*.

“All along there was some invisible string tying you to me” from the song *Invisible String*.

I hope I got these right!

Some weeks ago I sent Katie and Peter an email message saying, “don't let the details obscure the mystery.” That's good advice for all of us during these busy, busy days. Yes, the sacrament of marriage is a mystery that we enter into and are always learning about, always discovering the meaning of -- together.

Healey, Joseph, “Tracing the Historical Development of SCCs in AMECEA” in *SCCs@50 Booklet*. 2024.

This article covers two major topics:

- a. The origins and development of SCCs in AMECEA.
- b. What prompted the Bishops of AMECEA to come up with the idea of SCCs.

Healey, Joseph, ed. *Tracing Our Graham Family History: Five Generations from 1771 – 1973*, New Vernon, NJ: Privately photocopied, 2021. Retrieved on the Ancestry.com Website on 6 November, 2021, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/49797539/family/familyview?cfpid=20477523348>

The Life Stories on Ancestry.com of James Graham, Thomas Bolden Graham, Ziba (old Zibe) Graham, Joseph Bolden Graham and Virginia Graham Healey Sheehan. Three Appendices: “Graham Family History Adventures,” “Graham Businesses” and “Graham Surname History.” There are occasional references to the SCC Model of Church and especially House Church Family Masses in person and on Zoom.

Healey, Joseph, ed. *Tracing Our Healey Family History: Four Generations from 1807 – 1947*, New Vernon, NJ: Privately photocopied, 2022. Retrieved on the Ancestry.com Website on 6 November, 2021, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/49797539/family/familyview?cfpid=20477523348>

The Life Stories on Ancestry.com of Daniel (Denis) Healy, Jeremiah Denis Healey, Thomas Jeremiah (Denis) Healey and John Anthony (Jack) Healey. Three Appendices: “Healey Family History Adventures,” “Healey Family Horse Racing” and “Healey Surname History.” There are occasional references to the SCC Model of Church and especially House Church Family Masses in person and on Zoom.

Healey, Joseph. “29 Year (1986-2015) Journey of St. Jude Thaddeus Small Christian Community (SCC) in Tanzania and the World.” Originally published as one of the “Examples of African Narrative Theology and Practical Evangelization” in Chapter Three on “Church as the Extended Family of God” in the book *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (1996). Updated version as of August, 2002 was presented at a

Workshop on International SCC Twinning, National SCC Convocation, San Antonio, Texas, USA on 1 August, 2002. Updated version as of July, 2014 is included in Chapter Four on “Three Case Studies of SCCs in Eastern Africa” in the Ebook on “SCCs in Eastern Africa” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 19 July, 2014.

http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/Build_new.pdf

Healey, Joseph. “Urban and Rural Models of Small Christian Communities (SCCs): A Case Study on Eastern Africa,” Nairobi: Photocopies Paper, 2015, 14 pages. In Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner (Chief Editors), *Anthology of African Christianity*, Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2016. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 3 August, 2015.

http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/urban_rural.pdf

This article treats six sections:

1. “Introduction”
2. “Protestant/Pentecostal Model”
3. “Catholic Model”
4. “Historical Perspective of the Catholic Model”
5. “Findings in Evaluating SCCs in the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa”
6. “New Directions of SCCs in Eastern Africa”

Healey, Joseph, “The Way Forward: We Create the Path by Walking,” in Giuseppe Caramazza and Eleanor Gibson, *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Proceedings of the Symposium sponsored by the Institute of Youth Studies (IYS) and held at Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya, February, 2017. Nairobi: Institute of Youth Studies, 2018.

Available on the:

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website,

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/wayforward.pdf>

The article is the “Conclusion” in a collection of the papers from the Symposium.

Healey, Joseph, “We Create the Path by Walking: Evolving an African Narrative Theology,” in Elias Kifon Bongmba, (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology*, Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2020. Chapter 20 under “Part III: Regional and Emergent Theological Themes.” Available in a Print Version and Online Version (eBook with a Read Aloud feature). See:

VitalSource Online Bookshelf (with a Read Aloud feature)

[VitalSource Bookshelf: The Routledge Handbook of African Theology](#) (Book)

[VitalSource Bookshelf: The Routledge Handbook of African Theology](#) (Chapter)

African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website

http://www.afriprov.org/images/stories/create_path.pdf

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website

https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/create_path.pdf

We create the path by walking goes a well-known universal saying. The same can be said about the development of African narrative theology in its many forms. Africans are writing a narrative contextual theology of inculturation and liberation out of their own experiences and lives.

Healey, Joseph, “We Create the Path by Walking: Reflections on a 50 Year Journey of Maryknoll Missionary Priesthood: 11 June, 1966 – 11 June, 2016, Morristown, NJ: Privately Printed, 2016.

Includes Section 1 on “Promoting the Key Pastoral Priority of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa” that traces the SCCs key pastoral priority as one of the important “signs of the times” in Africa from 1973 to 2016 in the context of the call of Vatican II “to read the signs of the times.”

Healey, Joseph, “We Create the Path by Walking: Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Involvement in Peacebuilding in Eastern Africa,” *The Journal of Social Encounters (JSE)*, August, 2017, College of St. Benedict (CSB)/St. John's University (SJU) Digital Commons, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 29 May, 2017, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/path_walking.pdf

Small Christian Communities (SCCs), a key pastoral priority of the Catholic Bishops in the Eastern Africa Region, officially started in major ecclesial meetings in 1973 and 1976. SCCs in the AMECEA Region evolve in responding to the contemporary signs of the times. We create path by walking. SCCs’ involvement in peacebuilding is growing in Eastern Africa. This essay treats: “The Slow, Winding Journey from Small Prayer Group to Genuine Small Christian Community (SCC).” “The Heart of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa.” “Case Study of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the 2017 Kenyan Lenten Campaign.” “Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Promote Peacebuilding Through the Internet.” A recent study on the SCCs in the AMECEA Region shows that there are over 180,000 SCCs in the nine countries. An estimated 45,000 SCCs are spread out in the Kenya’s 26 Catholic dioceses. To promote Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) we use various social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Zoom and online SCCs.

Healey, Joseph, “We Create the Path by Walking Together/Journeying Together: Developing the Synodal Process in Eastern Africa,”

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 31 January, 2022, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/we-create-the-path-by-walking-together-journeying-together-developing-the-synodal-process-in-eastern-africa/> and “Announcement” on the Small Christian Communities Facebook Page, retrieved on 31 January, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/www.smallchristiancommunities.org>

1. Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI) Website, “Around the World,” retrieved on 3 February, 2022, [We Create the Path by Walking Together/Journeying Together: Developing the Synodal Process in Eastern Africa \(catholicchurchreformintl.org\)](http://www.catholicchurchreformintl.org)
2. AMECEA Online Newsletter, retrieved on 4 February, 2022, [AMECEA: We Create the Path by Walking Together/Journeying Together: Developing the Synodal Process in Eastern Arica](https://www.amecea.org/amecea-we-create-the-path-by-walking-together-journeying-together-developing-the-synodal-process-in-eastern-arica)
3. Diocese of Mangochi Website, retrieved on 4 February, 2022,

[News – Diocese of Mangochi](#)

4. “Together: Developing the Synodal Process in Eastern Africa” ACWECA AMECEA News Blog, retrieved on 4 February, 2022, <https://exterminators24.rssing.com/chan-12970239/latest.php>
5. Tom Reese’s Twitter Page, “Link” retrieved on 5 February, 2022, [Thomas Reese, S.J. \(@ThomasReeseSJ\) / Twitter](#)
6. Joe Healey’s Twitter Page, “Link” retrieved on 6 February, 2022, [Joseph Healey \(@Mwanajumuiya\) / Twitter](#)
7. “Aide aux Églises d’Afrique” (“Aid to the Churches of Africa”) Website,” “News from Africa” (English and French), retrieved on __ February, 2022.
8. “Mission and Migrations (Missions and Migrations) Website,” “Synod Dossier” (English and French), retrieved on __ February, 2022.
9. Serendeputy Website retrieved on 13 February, 2022.
[The Parish articles organized by Serendeputy, newsfeed engine for the open web](#)

Healey, Joseph, “Walking Together in Building a Maryknoll Synodal Family and Missionary Movement,” *US Region Newsletter*, June. 2023.

Healey, Joseph, “What Catholic Young People Really Want to Talk About?” in Kevin Ahern and Christopher Derige Malano, (eds.), *God’s Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018. The chapter can be found online on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: http://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/what_catholic.pdf

Pope Francis’ challenge to bishops and other leaders in the Catholic Church is loud and clear: Be a “Listening Church” first and a “Teaching Church” second. What if we took his advice seriously in relation to young people in the Catholic Church. What if we really listened to youth and young adults – their concerns, needs, doubts, questions, criticisms, burning issues, hopes and dreams. Here are some concrete examples of what Catholic young people really want to talk about in their distinct peer groups without parents, teachers and church leaders present.

Healey, Joseph, “What Is the Way Forward? Where Do We Go from Here? Some Reflections on the Evangelizing Ministry of St. Paul Inside the Walls in Preparing for the Synod of Bishops Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly on the “The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Modern World” in Rome from 4-25 October, 2015 in the Spirit and Vision of Pope Francis.” Madison, New Jersey: Unpublished Paper, 6 December, 2014. 6 pages. Under the “United States of America” under “North America” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/inside_the_wall.pdf

Healey, Joseph, *What Language Does God Speak: African Stories about Christmas and Easter*, Nairobi: St. Paul Publications Africa, 1989. Swahili Edition: *Je, Mungu Anasema Lugha Gani: Hadithi za Kiafrika juu ya Noeli na Pasaka*, Peramiho: Benedictine Publications Ndanda-Peramiho, 1993.

The dedication of this book is: “To the members of Small Christian Communities in East Africa.” The Introduction states: “These 16 real life stories – eight stories about Christmas and eight stories about Lent and Easter – all have a setting in East Africa. Most of these stories come from my grassroots experience of sharing with men, women, youth and

children here in Tanzania and Kenya – listening to, talking with, discussing with and reflecting with ordinary people about African Christianity. In particular, I have learned a great deal from sharing with people in Small Christian Communities (SCCs). In fact, SCC members have helped to write some of these stories out of their own experience.”

Healey, Joseph, “When It Comes To Nurturing Faith, Smaller Is Often Better,” “When Smaller is Better: Small Faith Communities and the Future of the U.S. Church” and “Small Faith Communities and the Future of the U.S. Church,” *America Magazine*, 24 May 2016, *America Media Website*, retrieved on 16 April, 2020, <http://americamagazine.org/issue/when-smaller-better>. Also listed on the bottom of page 25 of the 20-27 June, 2016 paper edition of *America Magazine* under “Digital Highlights” as a WEB EXCLUSIVE: “Small Faith Communities and the Future of the U.S. Church.” Reprinted in:

1. “CHURCH NEWS” Section of the *FADICA* (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities) *June, 2016 E-Update* (Monthly FADICA Update for Members). In his recent *America* magazine article, "[When Smaller is Better](#)," Fr. Joseph Graham Healey, M.M., Maryknoll missionary priest, proposes small groups as a model for change in the Catholic Church. Fr. Healey, brother of FADICA member Thomas Healey, describes Small Faith Groups on Catholic campuses in the U.S. and his experiences of Small Christian Communities in East Africa.

2. “News Articles” Section of the *Leadership Roundtable Meeting of the Board of Directors*, Washington, DC, 2016.

This article treats four sections:

1. The Origins of Small Faith Communities.
2. Taking Hold on U.S. Campuses.
3. Small Groups as a Model for Change.
4. A Course for Action.

Also available on various social media links such as Facebook, Twitter. Followed by online comments and exchanges. Comments (compiled randomly) include:

1. When it comes to nurturing faith small is often better.
2. The Catholic Church in America cannot ignore the success of Small Christian Communities.
3. What can the U.S. church learn from Kenya’s rich history with Small Christian Communities?
4. Our big challenge is finding a new generation of SCCs Leaders (in their 20s and 30s) around the world.
5. Why are small lectionary-based Faith-sharing groups not part of the "mainstream" of American Catholic life? How can we change this?
6. This ministry with SCCs resonates well with our research into how young people in universities come to faith and what they are thinking about the whole idea of religion and spirituality. I enjoyed the article and its insights into young peoples’ perceptions about faith including those who say they don’t go to church except that they do...on Thursdays! Besides shaving an elderly man in a nursing home, another example is being of service to the neighbor in a soup kitchen.

7. It is not too late for all of us to realize that the "future is built today" but without spiritually inspired youth that future does not go beyond a "simple dream."
8. We need to develop leadership to sustain a universal and local growth of SCCs. The moment to inspire youthful generation into SCCs membership and leadership is here! It can only be now!
9. Let us promote Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) in Africa and throughout the world.
10. Gives one a great deal to think about.
11. There are probably hundreds of Centering Prayer Groups around the world that function like the SCC groups talked about in the article. Ours at St. Pius X Church has been on going for over 15 years. Centering Prayer Groups provide an experience of spiritual community seldom found in the larger parishes, especially not at Sunday masses. Our research shows that Centering Prayer Groups are close to the *Lectio Divina* method or style of prayer. We have a very good one in Mwanza, Tanzania.
12. The formation of Intentional Eucharistic Communities is another sign that small groups may be better than big ones, even for Sunday mass. Our research shows that there are many Intentional Eucharistic Communities (IECs) in the USA but they are scattered, and, yes, in terms of American culture, they not part of the "mainstream." The members are very committed. More information can be found at: www.intentionaleucharistic.org
13. The problem of attracting Catholics and engaging them with the Catholic faith is not limited to young people. The issue may be seen as more important to the future of the church if we think of it as one associated with young people, but it affects Catholics of all ages.

This article has generating questions about the difference between specific pastoral, parish-based Small Christian Communities that are a pastoral, ecclesial structure in the Catholic Church and the whole variety of small groups, for example, independent Small Faith-sharing Groups as described in this article and the small formation groups connected to new movements such as the Neocatechumenal Way in Newark Archdiocese¹⁵²² and Paterson Diocese in New Jersey, USA. The Newark Archdiocese Website reports:

¹⁵²² Father Cesar L. Chen, a priest of Newark Archdiocese, was born and raised in Panama. He received a BS in Computer Science, and began his professional career as an IT Manager. He says the Neocatechumenal Way helped him answer the call to the priesthood.

The Neocatechumenal Way has been the reason why my life was significantly improved and my Catholic faith was restored and on which my vocation stands. It is true that I needed my parents and grandparent's faith. But ultimately it has been through the help of my Neocatechumenal Way catechists that the gift of faith given to me in Baptism and was nurtured and brought to maturity.

The Neocatechumenal Way community at St. Agnes Parish gathered at St. Michael Parish Hall on 13 February, 2021 for its weekly meeting. Bishop Kevn Sweeney celebrated the Vigil Mass with the community marking the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. The Neocatechumenal Way is an organization within the Catholic Church that focuses on the formation of Christian adults. At St. Agnes the parish has seven communities that “walk” in Spanish. They meet every Saturday evening. Several parishes around the diocese have Neocatechumenal Way communities.¹⁵²³

For a complete answer please use the Search Feature in the free online *Ebook Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa* on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at: <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/.../47-ebooks-.html>
http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/.../Build_new.pdf

Healey, Joseph, “Your Voice Counts in This Synod,” spoken text of video to introduce the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers “Synod Listening Sessions.” Maryknoll: Center CED. March, 2022, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 23 March, 2022, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/your-voice-counts-in-this-synod/>

For the 5:19 minute video go to: <https://mission.maryknoll.us/en/listeningsessions>

The link to the video on Google:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FnRkkR9_YAqOnvoc834_TyVGISSV7u7S/view?usp=sharing

NOTE: The SCC Model is seen in many ways. I forwarded the text to the IT person at Maryknoll who put it on a teleprompter that operated as a rolling text on an Iphone mounted on a tripod. Then I read the text for a video in English to introduce the “A Time to Talk and Listen: Lent 2022 Synod Listening Sessions” sponsored by the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers that were aired online on 15 March 2022 and 24 March 2022. There were “Small Breakout Rooms” during these Zoom gatherings.

Healey, Joseph, *30 Stories of Peter Hagerty* (born 14 December, 1996), New Vernon, New Jersey: privately printed, 2024.

Healey, Joseph and Jeanne Hinton (eds.), *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005 (Second Printing 2006, New Cover 2014); Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006 (1st Reprint 2011, 2nd Reprint 2012, 3rd Reprint 2017); and Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2006. Available as an Ebook on:

1. Orbis Books Website, retrieved 6 November, 2021,
<https://www.orbisbooks.com/small-christian-communities-today.html>

¹⁵²³Newark Archdiocese Website, retrieved on 4 March, 2024,
<https://rcan.org/?s=Neocatechumenal>

2. Amazon (for Kindle), Amazon Website, retrieved 6 November, 2021
https://www.amazon.com/Small-Christian-Communities-Today-Capturing-ebook/dp/B00CMC69C2/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=Small+Christian+Communities+Today&qid=1573287453&s=books&sr=1-1

3. Google, Google Books Website, retrieved 15 March, 2020,
<https://books.google.com/books?id=YsJ3CAAQBAJ&pg=PP1&dq=Small+Christian+Communities+Today:+Capturing+the+New+Moment&hl=en&sa=X&ei=S9eLVYH3HMW2-AGJo4vADA&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Small%20Christian%20Communities%20Today%3A%20Capturing%20the%20New%20Moment&f=false>

There are chapters on each continent: Latin America, North America, Europe, Africa and Asia and Oceania. Key international chapters include:

Chapter 22: Rita Ishengoma and Joseph Healey, “Re-energizing International SCC Twinning.”

Chapter 23: Joseph Healey, “Promoting SCCs via the Internet.”

https://www.academia.edu/20499272/Promoting_SCCs_via_the_Internet?auto=download

Individual chapters are online:

Robert Moriarty, “Imaging Initiation (RCIA) in Small Christian Communities,”
 Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities (SCC)
http://www.sccquest.org/PDF/imaging_initiation.pdf **NOTE:** Domain name not renewed.

How can churches in America, modeling the oldest Christian communities, renew themselves from within? They can look to examples of thriving Small Christian Communities within their own country and throughout the world. This inspiring book shows what is happening now across six continents to give pastors and lay leaders of every denomination encouragement through useable examples from their counterparts around the world.

The editors have pooled together a wealth of information from different continents and cultures. The book is composed of 26 articles divided into six parts with a very personal “Foreword” by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor. The representatives from different cultures capture the life and spirit of their respective communities. In each culture they work a little differently and, at the same time, one is astonished to see how similar they are. Each community can learn from the other a lot; therefore twinning of communities, also suggested in the book, opens up newer avenues. The various attempts at bringing together the Small Christian Communities through internet are also discussed. In the contemporary world of communication explosion online communities have become a reality.

This book is a timely contribution to the Christian ministry in the 21st Century. Across the world people are looking for a new Pentecost in our Christian churches, and it is going to happen through small communities as well as through than mega churches. This book provides the basic tools for that renewal.

Healey, Joseph and the South Sudan Catholic Refugees in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya led by their catechist and coordinator Simon

Reat Mar, “Homily for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A,” 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR), Sunday, 27 September, 2020.

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 3 August, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/homily-for-the-26th-sunday-in-ordinary-time-year-a/>

“Homily for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2020, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns Website, retrieved on 3 August, 2020

<https://maryknollogc.org/article/homily-world-day-migrants-and-refugees-2020>

German version in PredigtPlus+ series : <https://www.missio-hilft.de/mitmachen/glauben-teilen/gemeindeangebote/predigtplus/>

Healey, Joseph and Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1996 (1st Reprint 1996, 2nd Reprint 1997, 3rd Reprint 2000, 4th Reprint 2005, 5th Reprint 2012) and Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997, (many reprints, New Cover 2012). Available as an Ebook on Amazon (for Kindle) and Google.

Orbis Books Website:

<https://www.orbisbooks.com/towards-an-african-narrative-theology.html>

Paulines Publications Africa Website

<http://e.paulinesafrica.org/index.php/book/bookDetails/223>

Amazon Website:

https://www.amazon.com/Towards-African-Narrative-Theology-Cultures/dp/1570751218/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=Towards+an+African+Narrative+Theology&qid=1579312714&s=books&sr=1-1

Google Books Website:

https://books.google.co.ke/books?hl=en&lr=&id=1JV3CAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT10&dq=%22Joseph+G+Healey%22&ots=gJIQ-PO7C-&sig=wpPLfZZ5RRcEldGWucIa75FEj-&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22Joseph%20G%20Healey%22&f=false

Reflects what traditional African proverbs, sayings, stories and songs used in Christian catechetical, liturgical, and ritual contexts reveal about Tanzania, and about all of Africa. Includes appropriations of, and interpretations of, Christianity in Africa.

Chapter Three on “African Christology” is called “Jesus Chief Diviner-Healer and Eldest Brother-Chief Intercessor” and Chapter Four on “African Ecclesiology” is called “Church as the Extended Family of God.” It includes sections on: “African Metaphors of Church.” “Communion Ecclesiology from An African Perspective.” “Trinitarian Communion Ecclesiology.” “We Are the Church.” “Theology of Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Being Church.” “Ecclesiology of Church as family.” “African Communion Ecclesiology and Pastoral Inculturation.”

From Archbishop Raphael S. Ndingi Mwana a’Nzeki, Archbishop of Nairobi, Kenya’s “Foreword” to the Paulines Publications Africa Edition:

In particular, this book looks at the cultural riches of African Oral Literature such as proverbs, sayings and stories. I hope that these examples and reflections will help African priests, seminarians and other pastoral workers to rediscover their African roots and make connections to their preaching, teaching and evangelization.

From American theologian Father Robert J. Schreiter, CPPS's "Foreword" to the Orbis Books Edition:

This book tackles the challenge of theology in oral cultures head-on. It goes directly to those modes of expression that carry an oral culture's information and values – proverbs, riddles, stories and myths – and proposes how these might become the basis for a local theology shaped in the language of the people... We hope that it will both encourage peoples in oral cultures to develop more boldly theologies out of the richness of their heritage, as well as introduce members of literate cultures to another pathway into the relation of faith and culture.

Healey, Joseph, Rose Musimba and Febian Pikiti, "The Experience of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa (AMECEA Region) in Light of the African Year of Reconciliation (AYR) from 29 July, 2015 to 29 July, 2016," Nairobi: Privately photocopied, 2015. To be published in a booklet by SECAM.

Available in different versions:

1. Under the "African Continent" under "Africa" on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website,
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/342-the-experience-of-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-eastern-africa-amecea-region-in-light-of-the-african-year-of-reconciliation-ayr-from-29-july-2015-to-29-july-2016.html>
2. Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 25 August, 2015
https://www.academia.edu/15032232/The_Experience_of_Small_Christian_Communities_SCCs_in_Eastern_Africa_AMECEA_Region_in_Light_of_the_African_Year_of_Reconciliation_AYR_from_29_July_2015_to_29_July_2016

Part I: "Brief History of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in AMECEA."

Part II: "Practical Examples of How Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Promote Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa."

Part III: "The Involvement of Women in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Promoting Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa."

Healey, Joseph and Nicholas Obiero, "PTC 418: Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today," Description in *Tangaza University College School of Theology Academic Handbook 2018-2019*, Nairobi: Tangaza University College, 2018.

Hebblethwaite, Margaret, *Base Communities -- An Introduction*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993.

- Hebblethwaite, Margaret. *Basic is Beautiful*, London: Fount (Harper Collins Publishers), 1993.
- Heim, Joseph (ed.), *What They Taught Us: How Maryknoll Missioners Were Evangelized by the Poor*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009.
- Henriot, Peter, “Steps Forward and Back,” *Tablet*, 3 December 2011, 11-12.
- Hetsen, Jac and James Holmes-Siedle, *Aspects of Christian Community Building in Africa*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* 75, 1983.
- Hinze, Brad. *Prophetic Obedience: Ecclesiology for a Dialogical Church*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016.
- Hirmer, Oswald, *Our Journey Together: 47 Catechetical Sessions for Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, St. Paul Publications Africa (later Paulines Publications Africa), 1998, 2006. The Swahili version is *Safari Yetu Pamoja*. The Swahili version adapted to Marsabit Diocese, Kenya is *Safari Yetu Pamoja Jimbo Letu*.
- This practical handbook (*vademecum*) of Catechetical Sessions for the Adult Catechumenate (RCIA) in Africa has been translated into (alphabetically): Anuak (Dha Anywaa), Arabic, Nuer and Sukuma.
- Hirmer, Oswald, *Our Joy in Being Catholic: Our Catholic Customs and Beliefs*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2007.
- Holland, Joe and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983.
- Holmes-Siedle, James, “A Look at 17 Years of SCCs in Eastern Africa, *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)*, 32:6 (December, 1990): 359-362.
- Hope, Anne and Sally Timmel, *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers*, 3 volumes, Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1984.
- How To Be a Missionary Synodal Church*, “Instrumentum Laboris” (Working Document) for the Second Session (October 2024), XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, Rome, Italy, Synod Website, 9 July, 2024
<https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/assembly2024/il/ENG-INSTRUMENTUM-LABORIS-A4.pdf>

No. 7. Synodality works through the community listening to the Word of God.

No. 29. Men and women who exercise the ministry of coordinating a Small Church Community.

No. 89. The contributions submitted by the Episcopal Conferences speak of Parishes, Base Christian Communities and Small Christian Communities as contexts of communion and participation in mission... The parish is understood as a community of communities in the service of missionary creativity.

No. 94. Creating networks of Pastoral Councils at the level of Base Christian Communities, Small Christian Communities, Parishes and Deaneries right up to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

How to Run the Alpha Course: Getting Started. Africa Edition. London: Alpha International, 2010.

Hurteau, Robert, *A Worldwide Heart: The Life of Maryknoll Father John J. Considine*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013.

Igboanyika, Sylvester, *Effective Pastoral Planning for Building Small Christian Communities in Africa*, Doctoral Dissertation, Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 2002.

Ilo, Stan, (ed.), *Handbook of African Catholicism*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2022. An African Edition was published in two volumes by Limuru, Kenya: Kolbe Press, 2023. Includes Joseph Healey, "Small Christian Communities in Africa: Histories, Themes, Development and Challenges," Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 3 August, 2022, [scc_histories_themes.pdf \(smallchristiancommunities.org\)](http://smallchristiancommunities.org/scc_histories_themes.pdf)

Imani na Matendo: Sera, Maazimio na Matamko ys Sinodi ya Kwanza ya Jimbo la Musoma (Swahili), Publisher: Jimbo la Musoma: Haki ya Kunakili, 2014. Printer: Dar es Salaam: Moccony Printing Press, 2014. Reprinted 2017. mocconyprinting@gmail.com

Sections 54-56 are on *Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo (JNNK)*. Highlights are:

1. JNNK are centers (the hub of the wheel)/origin of inculturation in the Catholic Church.
2. JNNK is one of the pastoral priorities of our diocese so:
 - a. The Pastoral Department should have a Priest Coordinator of SCCs in the diocese.
 - b. Guidelines concerning SCCs should cover the structures, prayer, finances and community services in SCCs.
 - c. All the services/ministries of the sacraments should pass through the SCCs.

Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document) for the Synod of Bishops III Extraordinary General Assembly, *The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2014. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20140626_instrumentum-laboris-familia_en.html

Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document) for the Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice and Nairobi Paulines Publications Africa, 2012. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.pdf

Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document) for the Synod of Bishops XIV Ordinary General Assembly, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice and Nairobi Paulines Publications Africa, 2015.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20150623_instrumentum-xiv-assembly_en.html

Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document) for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly, *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice and Nairobi Paulines Publications Africa, 2018.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20180508_instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html

Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document) for the Synod of Bishops First Special Assembly for Africa, *The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000: "You Shall Be My Witnesses" (Acts 1:8)*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1993.

Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document) for the Synod of Bishops Second Special Assembly for Africa, *The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice and Nairobi Paulines Publications Africa, 2009.

Isenjia, Silas, "Align Small Christian Community Programs to the Word of God: Catholic Nun in Kenya," *ACI Africa Online Newsletter*, 20 January, 2022, ACI Africa Website, retrieved on 20 January, 2022, [Align Small Christian Community Programs to the Word of God: Catholic Nun in Kenya \(aciafrica.org\)](https://www.aciafrica.org/news/10499/amecea-chairman-on-how-to-foster-synodality-in-families-small-christian-communities)

Isenjia, Silas, "AMECEA Chairman on How to Foster Synodality in Families, Small Christian Communities," *ACI Africa Online Newsletter*, 16 March, 2024, ACI Africa Website, retrieved on 16 March, 2024, https://www.aciafrica.org/news/10499/amecea-chairman-on-how-to-foster-synodality-in-families-small-christian-communities?utm_campaign=ACI%20Africa&utm_medium=email&hsmi=298491076&hsenc=p2ANqtz--mgnX2z1jMmzQ5qLqPi8lEzV6WdTdeLpLONOfvn57pY04UWV2_k1yviofp7svYJgndl8dPOOaVN_xGBxpdsTFPBqZeWQ&utm_content=298491076&utm_source=hs_email

Speaking at a Thursday, [March 14 virtual conference](#) that AMECEA organized in partnership with the [Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa \(ACWECA\)](#), the [African Synodality Initiative \(ASI\)](#), and the Pan-African Episcopal Committee for Social Communications (CEPACS), an entity of the [Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar \(SECAM\)](#), Bishop [Charles Sampa Kasonde](#) also explained how engaging in missionary activities and striving for "a deepened spirituality" can contribute to the fostering of Synodality among family and SCC members in Africa.

Isenjia, Silas, "Malawi Bishops Call For 'Reflective Moments' Ahead of Small Christian Communities Jubilee," *ACI Africa Online Newsletter*, 7 July, 2023, ACI Africa Website, retrieved on 7 July, 2023, [Malawi Bishops Call for "reflective moments" ahead of Small Christian Communities Jubilee \(aciafrica.org\)](https://www.aciafrica.org/news/10499/amecea-chairman-on-how-to-foster-synodality-in-families-small-christian-communities)

The event to be launched on Sunday, 20 August, 2023 in all the Catholic Dioceses of Malawi and conclude in July, 2024. The SCCs Golden Jubilee celebrations, the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) Secretary General says, aim to highlight four fundamental characteristics of this model of being church, which include *Bible*-centeredness, the communion of the people, having outreach to the people, and promoting the principle of

subsidiarity. Includes an excellent photo of a meeting of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) region. Credit: Meru Diocese.

Ishengoma, Rita, *Akamwani: The Challenges of Bible Sharing in Small Christian Communities*, Dar es Salaam: Old East Africa Ltd, 2009.

International Theological Commission (ITC), *Synodality in the Life and the Mission of the Church*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice 2018, 121 paragraphs and 170 Notes, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html

During its 9th Quinquennium, the International Theological Commission undertook a study of synodality in the life and mission of the Church. The work was carried out by a specific sub-committee, whose president was Mgr. Mario Ángel Flores Ramos and whose members were Sr. Prudence Allen RSM, Sr. Alenka Arko of the Loyola Community, Mgr. Antonio Luiz Catelan Ferreira, Mgr. Piero Coda, Rev. Carlos María Galli, Rev. Gaby Alfred Hachem, Prof. Héctor Gustavo Sánchez Rojas SCV, Rev. Nicholaus Segeja M'hela and Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III OP.

General discussions on this theme took place during the meetings of the sub-committee and during the Plenary Sessions of the commission itself, held between 2014 and 2017. The present text was approved by the majority of the members of the commission during its 2017 Plenary Session, by means of a written vote. It was later approved by the President, His Eminence Cardinal Luis F. Ladaria SJ, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who authorized its publication on 2 March 2018, after receiving a favorable response from Pope Francis.

James, Thomas, Innocent Maganya, Joseph Healey, Reginald Nalugala, Marita Grudzen, Mary Aktay and Sterling Harwood (eds.), *Building Human Solidarity in the Light of Pope Francis' Encyclical Fratelli Tutti*, Publisher: Gerald Grudzen Global Ministries University, 2022. Available on the Amazon Website, retrieved on 2 February, 2022, [Building Human Solidarity in the Light of Pope Francis' Encyclical Fratelli Tutti: Grudzen, Gerald, James, Thomas, Maganya, Innocent, Healey, Joseph, Nalugala, Reginald, Grudzen, Marita, Aktay, Mary, Harwood, Sterling: 9798419810426: Amazon.com: Books](https://www.amazon.com/Building-Human-Solidarity-Light-Pope-Francis-Encyclical-Fratelli-Tutti-Grudzen-Gerald-James-Thomas-Maganya-Innocent-Healey-Joseph-Nalugala-Reginald-Grudzen-Marita-Aktay-Mary-Harwood-Sterling-9798419810426/dp/B09Y8L8L8L)

A collection of the documents, transcriptions, recaps of speaker presentations and discussions, PowerPoint presentation links and video links for this global, inter religious conference that took place from 19-21 August 2021. More than 3,000 people from 19 countries across Europe, Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands and the Americas participated. The conference was inspired by the Abu Dhabi Declaration on the Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together (2019) jointly signed by Sheik Ahmed el-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and Pope Francis and by the Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (2020) of His Holiness Pope Francis.

James, Thomas, "Inculturation Versus Acculturation: Small Christian Communities in Africa," North American College Thesis, Gregorian University, 1991.

Jassy, Marie-France Perrin, *Basic Communities in the African Churches*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973.

Jassy, Marie-France Perrin, *Forming Christian Communities*, Kampala: *Gaba Pastoral Paper* No. 12, 1970.

Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection (JCTR) Publications including the *JCTR Bulletin*, Lusaka, Zambia.

John Paul II's Encyclical Letter *The Mission of the Church*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1991.

John Paul II, Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortation, *The Church in Africa (Ecclesia in Africa)*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995.

Join-Lambert, Arnaud, "Synodes Diocésains, 'Parasynodes' et Conciles Particuliers dans Église Catholique Depuis le Concile Vatican II: Liste, Bibliographie, Ressources," Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 10e édition mise à jour (11 October, 2022). 113 pages. [Les synodes diocésains parasynodes et co.pdf](#)

The document presents a list of more than 1000 diocesan synods celebrated since 1965. Included are "parasynods" as a significant form of synodality. This term refers to alternative forms, forums or diocesan assemblies that are very similar to a diocesan synod from the phenomenological and ecclesiological point of view. Particular councils, both plenary and provincial, have also been added, as well as national processes with a similar dynamic. There are also active links to certain documents on the Internet. A bibliography is given at the national and diocesan levels. This is followed by a general bibliography on the whole question of diocesan synods.

Journey of 10 Years Achievements. Catholic Diocese of Machakos. Bishop Martin Kivuva, Machakos: Privately Printed, 2014.

Kahiu, Magdalene, "Kenya-Based Small Christian Community Facilitates Aid to Victims of Floods, Landslides," [ACI Africa Online News](#), 11 December, 2019, https://www.aciafrica.org/news/533/kenya-based-small-christian-community-facilitates-aid-to-victims-of-floods-landslides?_hsenc=p2ANqtz--JRLPAcu916vZ4n2b-zJ0CtdcYPge0TRubMFT25Qkj4ZlaqIIOrXUkZnsDjmBE1oQDV8vsLDCmcts7wuj4_juy3qft_w&_hsmi=80609138

Kahiu, Magdalene, "Small Christian Communities True Experience of Synodality' for Church in Africa: Priest," [ACI Africa Online News](#), 26 August, 2021, <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/4142/small-christian-communities-true-experience-of-synodality-for-church-in-africa->

Father Rafael Simbine, a member of the Clergy of Mozambique's Xai-Xai Diocese and Deputy Secretary General of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), explains very clearly how the way of being church through membership in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa portrays a true experience of communion and collaboration – the theme of the October, 2023 Synod of Bishops in Rome. "This is the true experience of synodality that has been lived out in the SCCs: experience of communion, participation and mission, evangelizing themselves and bringing the Good News to others. It is precisely because of the SCCs that many lay people, men, women and youth in particular have become quite dynamic, both in the Catholic Church and in the society."

Kalilombe, Patrick, *Christ's Church in Lilongwe --Today and Tomorrow: Our Diocesan Pastoral Planning Project*, Pastoral Letter, Lilongwe: Likuni Press, 1973. This 39 page booklet was reprinted in 1976 and 1979.

This Pastoral Letter introduces the Mini-Synod in Lilongwe Diocese, Malawi that took place from 24 November, 1973 to 24 August, 1975. Kalilombe was the first bishop in Eastern Africa to start a diocesan pastoral plan of Small Christian Communities on the grassroots level. Kalilombe called upon all the laity to be actively involved in the whole life and mission of the church. He thought that this would be possible if there could be small communities/groups in various places where ideas of how to improve and develop the church could be suggested and implemented at a higher level. Such small communities/groups are called *Miphakati* in Chewa (“Small Christian Communities”). This Pastoral Letter and the beginning of the Lilongwe Diocesan Synod predate the *AMECEA Plenary: Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s* that took place in December, 1973.

Reprinted as Chapter 1 in *Doing Theology at the Grassroots: Theological Essays from Malawi*

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Doing_Theology_at_the_Grassroots/7QFgDwAAQB_AJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

Kalilombe, Patrick, *Doing Theology at the Grassroots: Theological Essays from Malawi*, Kachere Series, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999. Muzuzu: Luviri Press: Luviri Reprints No. 2, 2018.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Doing_Theology_at_the_Grassroots/7QFgDwAAQB_AJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

Kalilombe, Patrick, *From Outstations to Small Christian Communities: A Comparison of Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese*, Doctorate Dissertation, Berkeley: University of California, 1983.

Kalilombe, Patrick, *From Outstations to Small Christian Communities*. Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* 82-83, June-October, 1984. Reissued as Bishop Patrick Augustine Kalilombe, *From Outstation to Small Christian Communities: A Comparison Between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese (1902-1975)*, edited by Gerard Chigona, Balaka: Montfort Media, 2016.

The editor states the importance of getting this original and unprecedented work of research published and available to the Catholic Church in Malawi and all people interested in understanding Kalilombe's thought. This helps us understand the vision and practice of one of the founders of SCCs in Eastern Africa. Two Pastoral Systems are compared and contrasted:

1. The Outstations System.
2. The System of Small Christian Communities.

Kalimba, Sam, “MALAWI: Forty-five Small Christian Communities Epitomize Jubilee in Synodality,” *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 552: 12 July 2024. Retrieved on the AMECEA Website, 13 July, 2024

<https://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2024/07/12/malawi-forty-five-small-christian-communities-epitomise-jubilee-in-synodality/>

The AMECEA Region is still in its Golden Jubilee Year celebrating 50 years of the life of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) while journeying together in synodality. Over 3,000 members of the 45 SCCs that form St. Andrew Kaggwa Parish in the Archdiocese of Lilongwe, Malawi all came together in one place on Sunday, 7 July 7, 2024 to honor the parish's patron saint and epitomize the jubilee celebrations.

St. Andrew Kaggwa Parish was opened on 1 January 1993 by the late Bishop Mathias Chimole who was the bishop of Lilongwe. It started with 600 Christians and 200 catechumens. The 2013 Diocesan census indicated that St. Andrew Kaggwa had over 17,000 Christians in 10 outstations. In 2023 the Archdiocese of Lilongwe made two of the outstations into a stand-alone parish leaving the parish with four outstations (church centers) of St. Kizito, St. John Maria Vianney, St. Mark and St. Andrew Kaggwa.



A cross-section of uniformed lay Christians with the clergy and the religious at the celebration.

Kamara, Ronald, "The Role of Small Christian Communities in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS with Specific Reference to Uganda" in Marco Moerschbacher, Joseph Bitole Kato, Pius Rutechura (eds.), *A Holistic Approach to HIV and AIDS in Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2008.

Kamati ya Utafiti wa Utamaduni Bujora, *Kugundua Mbegu za Injili: Hekima ya Kisukuma na Lugha Mbalimbali juu ya Familia na Ndoa -- Kitabu cha Pili*, Peramiho: Benedictine Publications Ndanda -- Peramiho, 1993. The English translation is *Discovering Seeds of the Gospel: The Wisdom of Sukuma and Different Languages on Family and Marriage – Book II*.

Kaombe, Stefano, *Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo: Changamoto Kuelekea Ukomavu* (Swahili for "Small Christian Communities: The Challenge to Head towards Maturity"), Dar es Salaam: Privately Printed, 2006.

Kasusura, Didas. *Bukiriro...Injili ya 5* ((translated in English as *Bukiriro...A Fifth Gospel*), privately printed, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 11 February, 2024, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/BUKIRO-0000002.pdf>

This Swahili poem – *Bukiriro...Injili ya 5* (translated in English as *Bukiriro...A Fifth Gospel*) – is written by Father Didas Kasusura, a diocesan priest of Rulenge-Ngara Diocese in Western Tanzania. It is very timely as we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa (1973 – 2023). Bishop Christopher Mwoleka, then Bishop of Rulenge Diocese, Tanzania, was one of the Bishop-Founders of SCCs in the AMECEA Region. At the time he lived part time very close to the local people in Nyabihanga Village, a part of Bukiriro Outstation of Rulenge Parish. Now Bukiriro is a parish. As the poem narrates Mwoleka spearheaded the development of Small Christian Communities (*Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo* in Swahili). He built on the theology and practice of the Second Vatican Council. The term “A Fifth Gospel” has a long history with many books written about it. It is a valid metaphor in theology today. “Gospel” and “good news” can be applied to the way that God is revealing God through our human experience and daily lives. In light of the insights of the Story Theology/Theology of Story/Narrative Theology/Palaver Theology/Conversation Theology, our stories of faith are examples of Fifth Gospels. So the faith experience of the Christians of Bukiriro Parish today are a living Fifth Gospel.

Kato, Joseph (ed.), *Evangelization through Holistic Development of Nomadic Communities in AMECEA Countries: AMECEA Pastoral Research Report 2008-2010*. Nairobi: AMECEA Secretariat, 2011.

Kaufa, Andrew, "AMECEA: Online Small Christian Communities, Sure Way to Give One Another Social-Spiritual Support During Unprecedented Times of Coronavirus," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 322, AMECEA Website retrieved on 27 March, 2020, https://amecea.blogspot.com/2020/03/amecea-online-small-christian.html?fbclid=IwAR3r3tyeW1yo0UJSRCaEuAh7nJwjRBNkcJBzKJHSbOeJprzWR_udKDT_h0#!/2020/03/amecea-online-small-christian.html

SCCs Website, retrieved on 6 April, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/amecea-online-small-christian-communities-sure-way-to-give-one-another-social-spiritual-support-during-unprecedented-times-of-coronavirus>

Kaufa, Andrew, "AMECEA: WhatsApp Small Christian Community Meetings in the Context of Covid-19," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 323, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 4 April, 2020, <https://amecea.blogspot.com/2020/04/amecea-whatsapp-small-christian.html?fbclid=IwAR2QVGR6g15583iCchN7a-IUefgdAHH4yQ56iVjqmXS2sc55TDKsf9ReRg#!/2020/04/amecea-whatsapp-small-christian.html>

SCCs Website, retrieved on 6 April, 2020,

<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/amecea-whatsapp-small-christian-community-meetings-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

Kaufa, Andrew, "VATICAN SYNOD:: What is Unique to The Lay Out of Synod Hall?" *AMECEA Online News*, 6 October, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 15 October, 2023, [VATICAN SYNOD: What is Unique to The Lay Out of Synod Hall? | AMECEA NEWS](#)

Speaking as an African from Eastern Africa, I can agree that this is a new grammar in so far as the synod is concerned. However, it is not a new grammar when it comes to being a church in the Eastern Africa (AMECEA) and Southern Africa (IMBISA) regions of the Church in Africa where the ecclesiology of the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) has become the way of being a church. Coincidentally, the AMECEA region is also celebrating 50 years of the SCCs. The image of a Small Christian Community is that of a community of baptized men and women, youth including the religious men and women as the priests together sharing in a set of a circle, with the *Bible* as the center of their spiritual conversation about their life experiences and their mission to the world around them.

Keane, James, "These African Theologians Are All In On the Synod—and Want To Make It A Permanent Part of the Church," *America Magazine*, 26 June, 2024, retrieved on the America Website, 18 July, 2024, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2024/06/26/african-synodality-conference-nairobi-248241>

"Religious practice -- defined not only as mass attendance, but participation in sodalities, Small Christian Communities and other forms of religious expression -- is far more robust in the Catholic Church in Africa than most of the Catholic world." As Keane states, the sodalities are most common in Nigeria and Ghana, the Small Christian Communities are most common in Eastern Africa, DRC and select African countries and other forms of religious expression are seen throughout the continent.

Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) General Secretariat, *Relatio Synodi 2015 – Pastoral Guidelines for a Process of Discussion and Action*. Nairobi: Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015. Online Version: *Family and Marriage in Kenya Today: Pastoral Guidelines for a Process of Discussion and Action*, <http://www.kccb.or.ke/home/news-2/pastoral-guidelines-for-a-process-of-discussion-in-action>

Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), "Results of the Consultation in Kenya on the 46 Questions in the *Lineamenta* on *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World*, Nairobi: Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops Unpublished Report, 2015.

Kenya: New Book Challenges Church on SCCs," *Christian Telegraph*, 13 June, 2012, (Issue 16533), Christian Telegraph Website, http://72.30.186.176/search/srptcache?ei=UTF-8&p=small+christian+communities+in+kenya&xa=Lc7Hffn4bwOs7_aokGMeSw--%2C1362399838&fr=yfp-t-900-s&rs=6&u=http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=small+christian+communities+in+kenya&d=4530383994817236&mkt=en-US&setlang=en-US&w=2HbasfqfhNQMLk7qsKTpL44rVQKtGe5W&icp=1&intl=us&sig=3OCeevp

[U.bCLIW2UnwXybQ--](#)

Khokhar Ashiknaz, Alloys Nyakundi and Joseph Healey, "We Create the Path by Walking: Online Spiritual Retreat for Young Adult Seekers on 'Go Apart with Jesus Christ,'" Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 8 April, 2023, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/we-create-the-path-by-walking-online-spiritual-retreat-for-young-adult-seekers-on-go-apart-with-jesus-christ/>

Kilaini, Method, "Small Christian Communities: Sharing the Tanzania Pastoral Experience," Mwanza: Printed Paper, 2014. The Swahili version is *Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo (JNNK): Uzoefu wa Kichungaji wa Tanzania*. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 15 July, 2022, https://smallchristiancommunities.org/small-christian-communities-sharing-the-tanzanian-pastoral-experience/small_christian.pdf (smallchristiancommunities.org)

Kimambo, Emmanuel, *Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo: Shule ya Imani na Uinjilishaji*, in collaboration with Sister Rita Ishengoma (Tanzania) and Father Joseph Healey (Kenya),

Kleissler, Thomas A, Margo A. Lebert and Mary C. McGuinness, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century*, Mahweh: Paulist Press, 2002.

Korgen, Jeffry Odell, *Solidarity Will Transform the World: Stories of Hope from Catholic Relief Services*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007. The powerful Rwandan Case Study called "Forgiving the Unforgivable: Peacemaking in Rwanda" documents how some of the 20,000 base communities (another name for SCCs) were involved in the reconciliation and healing ministry in Rwanda, a neighbor of Eastern Africa, after the 2004 genocide.

Krämer, Klaus and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Kleine Christliche Gemeinschaften: Impulse für eine zukunftsfähige Kirche*, ThEW2, Theologie der Einen Welt, Freiburg: Herder, 2012.

It has five chapters on Africa including:

1. Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator, "Kleine Christliche Gemeinschaften als neuer Weg, Kirche zu werden – Gegenwart, Fortschritte und Zukunft."
2. Joseph G. Healey, "Entwicklungsgeschichte der Kleinen Christlichen Gemeinschaften /Kirchlichen Basisgemeinschaften in Afrika," Missio Website, retrieved on 9 August, 2015, http://www.missio-hilft.de/media/thema/theologie/thew/2/ThEW_2-4-1_Healey.pdf
3. Pius Rutechura, "Die pastorale Vision der Christlichen Basisgemeinden."

Volume Two in German: *Small Christian Communities - Fresh Stimulus for a Forward-looking Church* (PDF, 1.83 MB) <https://www.missio-hilft.de/de/themen/theologie/thew-1/kleine-christliche-gemeinschaften.html>

Krämer, Klaus and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Small Christian Communities: Fresh Stimulus for a Forward-looking Church*, Volume 2, "Theology of One World" series of Mission

Aachen, Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 2013.

It has five chapters on Africa including:

1. Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator, "Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Becoming Church: Practice, Progress and Prospects;"
2. Joseph G. Healey, "Historical Development of the Small Christian Communities/Basic Ecclesial Communities in Africa;"
3. Pius Rutechura, "The Pastoral Vision of Basic Christian Communities/Ecclesial Communities."

Volume Two in English: *Small Christian Communities - Fresh Stimulus for a Forward-looking Church* (PDF, 1.83 MB) <https://www.missio-hilft.de/de/themen/theologie/thew-1/kleine-christliche-gemeinschaften.html>

Krämer, Klaus and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Evangelii Gaudium: Stimmen der Weltkirche*, ThEW7, Theologie der Einen Welt, Freiburg: Herder, 2015.

It has four chapters on Africa including Joseph G. Healey, "Promoting Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa in the Light of *The Joy of the Gospel*."

Volume Seven in German: *Evangelium Gaudium - Voices of the Universal Church* (PDF, 4.84 MB) <https://www.missio-hilft.de/de/themen/theologie/thew-1/evangelii-gaudium.html>

Krämer, Klaus and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Evangelium Gaudium - Voices of the Universal Church* Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2015.

It has four chapters on Africa including Joseph G. Healey, "Promoting Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa in the Light of *The Joy of the Gospel*."

Volume Seven in English: *Evangelium Gaudium - Voices of the Universal Church* (PDF, 4.84 MB) <https://www.missio-hilft.de/de/themen/theologie/thew-1/evangelii-gaudium.html>

Kunda, Sandra, "ZAMBIA: Bishop Benjamin Phiri Urges SCCs to Reach Out to Inactive Catholics," *AMECEA Online News*, 22 March, 2024, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 23 March, 2024, <https://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2024/03/22/zambia-bishop-benjamin-phiri-urges-sccs-to-reach-out-to-inactive-catholics>

Bishop Benjamin Phiri of Ndola Catholic Diocese in Zambia has urged Small Christian Communities (SCCs) to reach out to inactive Catholics, encouraging them to return to the Catholic Church. He emphasized the importance of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) reaching out to Catholics who are no longer practicing their faith and have stopped attending mass. Highlighting the need for SCCs to not only engage with active members but also with dormant ones, Phiri stressed the significance of understanding the reasons behind their absence and actively encouraging them to reconnect with the church.

Kunda, Winfield, ZAMBIA: Bishops Conference Launches Small Christian Communities Jubilee Celebrations. *AMECEA Online News*, 6 October, 2023 AMECEA Website, retrieved on 10 November, 2023, [ZAMBIA: Bishops Conference Launches Small Christian Communities Jubilee Celebrations \(amecea.org\)](https://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2023/10/06/zambia-bishops-conference-launches-small-christian-communities-jubilee-celebrations)

This article has three insights/challenges:

1. Use of the term “Synodal Church.”
2. Danger of reducing Small Christian Communities to social fundraising groups.
3. Absence of men.

Kyaruzi, Damian, *Mwongozo wa Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo*, Bukoba: Rumuli Press, 1990.

Leadership Roundtable, “Leadership Formation Tip: Encourage Prayer Methodologies that Connect Faith and Life,” Leadership Formation Series, January, 2018.

Lee, Bernard, *The Catholic Experience of Small Christian Communities*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000.

This Lily-funded research study found that participants in SCCs tend to be far more connected to their parishes (75%-85% attending weekly Eucharist) than the general Catholic population (of which only 32% go to Mass once a week). They also tend to accept Catholic Church teaching more readily than the general Catholic population. Against the odds, despite a plethora of materials designed to politicize these groups and make them independent of the church, SCCs seem to be doing a great job of fostering the faith. Lee and D'Antonio certainly take the research seriously and do not find the data comforting. They conclude that Catholic SCCs must develop their "public life" - addressing "systemic issues of justice" - just as they have their "inner life" of prayer, study and fellowship. Rather than turning to their pastors for guidance and direction, Lee and D'Antonio believe that SCCs must also work at producing an independent, "adult" leadership.

Lee, Bernard and Michael Cowan. *Gathered and Sent: The Mission of Small Church Communities Today*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003.

In this visionary book, Lee and Cowan reflect on the importance and influence of Small Christian Communities in the Catholic Church today -- how they sustain their own members in faith and carry their mission to the larger society. They propose here a mode of doing theology within Small Christian Communities that is marked by conversation and active participation by all -- a practical theology where people reflect on their whole lives, personal and social, in the light of Christian faith. Lee and Cowan state: “Our conviction rooted in both theology and sociology, that a [Small Christian] Community is both gathered and sent. As gathered, it attends to the conversation of its inner life. As sent, it carries on a conversation with the larger world beyond its immediate constituency.”

Lima, Eduardo Campos, “With Pope's Support, Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil Show Signs of Revival,” *La Croix International*, 28 July, 2023, *La Croix International* Website, retrieved on 31 July, 2023, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/world/with-popes-support-basic-ecclesial-communities-in-brazil-show-signs-of-revival/18212>

Once a powerful force in the Brazilian Church (and in Latin America as a whole), the Basic Ecclesial Communities – known as CEBs in Portuguese and Spanish – saw a continuous decline in the country since the 1990s. Now, with Pope Francis' support and a fresh interest from the younger generation, their members want to grow again. Some 1,000 Basic Ecclesial Communities leaders from all parts of Brazil gather to discuss the most pressing issues in the nation, including the need to bring more young Catholics to join them.

At the peak of the CEBs' presence in the Brazilian Church, they numbered at least 50,000, Celso Carias said. Now he estimates there are around 20,000 of them. Bishop Luiz Fernando Lisboa of Cachoeiro do Itapemirim in Espírito Santo state, was one of the 50 members of the Brazilian episcopate who attended the gathering in Rondonópolis. He celebrated the fact that so many bishops and priests took part in the meeting, but emphasized that "there is a huge resistance among many in the Catholic Church to accept the CEBs model."

Lineamenta (Preparatory Document) for the Synod of Bishops Second Special Assembly for Africa. *The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

Lineamenta (Preparatory Document) for the Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly. *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2011. Includes the Answers to the 30 Questions from the National Episcopal Conferences in the AMECEA Region.

Lineamenta (Preparatory Document) for the Synod of Bishops III Extraordinary General Assembly. *The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization*, 2013.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20131105_iiiassemblea-sinodo-vescovi_en.html

Lineamenta (Preparatory Document) for the Synod of Bishops XIV Ordinary General Assembly. *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2014. Includes the Answers to the 46 Questions from the National Episcopal Conferences in the AMECEA Region.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20141209_lineamenta-xiv-assembly_en.html

Lineamenta (Preparatory Document) for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly. *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2018.

Liturgical Calendars and Diaries with the Scripture References to the Daily Lectionary Readings.

Lobinger, Fritz, *The Empty Altar: An Illustrated Book to Help Talk about the Lack of Parish Priests*, Crossroad Publishing Company, originally copywritten in 2010, released on Amazon on 15 September, 2017.

A 141-page study on the shortage of priests and the future of the Catholic Church. In the context of the Eucharistic Famine especially in the Global South, Lobinger proposes the ordination of a team of local elders. This book makes a prophetic proposal, respectful of church teaching, that addresses the growing deficiency of priests in the Catholic Church. Based on sound theology and firsthand experience, this book is presented in an illustrated and easily digestible form and was written by an author with decades of experience who has studied the situation as a theologian and developed realistic solutions as a pastor and bishop.

Lobinger, Fritz, Response to J. Healey "Basic Christian Communities: Church-centered or World-centred," *Missionalia*, Vol. 14, No 1 (April 1986).

Lobinger, Fritz "What SCCs and CEBs Can Learn from Each Other," *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 2013/3.

"The Lobinger Model," retrieved on 30 December, 2016,
<http://files.constantcontact.com/7f9bce08001/9ccb623b-3847-4f4b-8666-862ddaee84f3.pdf>. Source: https://www.amazon.com/Like-His-Brothers-SistersOrdaining/dp/0824518500/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8
 Also available on the Future Church Website, <https://www.futurechurch.org>

"The Logical Strategic Framework for the Revitalization and Strengthening of SCCs as a Way of Being Church as Family in the AMECEA Region" (April, 2014 – March, 2017), Nairobi: AMECEA Secretariat, 2014.

López, Marisela de los Santos, "Liturgical, Pastoral and Spiritual Formation Program for the Pastoral Parish Councils for the Triennium 2013 – 2015 at the Palica Center, Diocese of Wau, South Sudan," Wau: Unpublished Paper, 2012.

Luciani, Rafael, "From the Synod on Synodality to the Synodalization of the Whole Church: Towards a New Ecclesial Reconfiguration in the Light of Synodality," *Iglesia Viva*, No. 287 (July to September, 2021), Iglesia Viva Website, retrieved 12 November, 2022, [Rafael Luciani \(Synod-Synodality-Synodalization\) Iglesia Viva 2021 \(ENG\).pdf](#)

Lumko Institute Resources and Publications on Small Christian Communities such as *Training for Community Ministries*. Delmenville, South Africa. 1978 on.

Lupande, Joseph M., Joseph G. Healey, MM and Donald F. Sybertz, MM, "The Sukuma Sacrificial Goat and Christianity: A Basis for Inculturation in Africa," *African Christian Studies*, 12, 1 (March, 1996), *Worship* 70, 4 (July, 1996) and *AFER (African Ecclesial Review)*, 40:4 (August, 1998). The updated version is on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved on 21 June, 2017, <http://afriprov.org/bibliography/347-qthe-sukuma-sacrificial-goat-and-christianity-a-basisfor-inculturation-in-africaq-.html>

While this article is not about Small Christian Communities as such, it reflects the method or process of the "local community as theologian" -- a small community theologizing together on an African theme on the local level. The Sukuma examples of the sacrificial goat (based on a Sukuma proverb) and the self-reliant orphan lamb (based on a Sukuma thanksgiving song and proverb) can be applied to Jesus Christ and the Eucharist. This is a concrete step toward an inculturated Christianity in Africa.

Lushombo, Léo, Book Review of *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III Theological Studies*, March, 2018 (79:1), 222-223.

This review has this very challenging statement:

If the model or paradigm of the future is that of Small Christian Communities, as the book argues, then there is a need for the SCCs to

undertake consistent theological formation because the laity do not have opportunity to access theological formation in many African countries.

Maduku, Ignace Ndongala, "African Palaver and Interpretation of the Word of God with and for the People of God: A Case for the Dialogical Construction of the Homily in the Small Christian Communities in Africa," in Ikenna U. Okafor, Joséé Ngalula, Nicholaus Segeja and Stan Chu Ilo (eds.), *Toward a Synodal Church in Africa: Echoes from an African Christian Palaver*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2024.

A good example of living synodally, the Synodal Process and the Synodal Church is this Case Study from Saint-Trinité Parish in Saint Alphonse Deanery in Kinshasa Archdiocese in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A priest prepares his Sunday Homilies in Lingala (the liturgical language of Kinshasa Archdiocese) with members of a Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) -- also called a Small Christian Community (SCC) -- in the parish. This is described as "from a homily for the People of God to a Homily with the People of God." This is an experience of pooling a popular reading of the Word of God with an exegetical reading. The General Introduction states: "In line with the decolonisation of theological knowledge and the co-construction of knowledge in the sense of a *pastorale d'engendrement* (pastoral generation), Ignace Ndongala reports how a synodal shift from a monological authority of interpretation of the Word of God to a polyphonic praxis in homiletics in tune with the culture of *palaver* and fraternal dialogue associated with the Church Family of God has yielded good results at the grassroot level of the Basic Ecclesial Communities."

Magesa, Laurenti, "Endless Quest: The Vocation of an African Christian Theologian" in Jesse Mugambi, and Evaristi Magoti (eds.), *Endless Quest: The Vocation of an African Christian Theologian. Essays in Honor of Laurenti Magesa*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2014, 7-34.

Magesa, Laurenti, "A Panoramic View of 25 Years of African Theology in East Africa: Foundations, Developments and Prospects," in *Hekima Review*, Vol. 40 (May, 2009), 16-33. See especially Laurenti Magesa, "Theological Reflections on the Future of Mission in Africa."

Magesa, Laurenti and Michael Kirwen (eds.), *Exploring the Future of Mission in Africa: In Celebration of Maryknoll's 100 Years in Mission*, Nairobi: MIAS Books, 2012.

Magesa, Laurenti, *The Post-Conciliar Church in Africa: No Turning Back the Clock*, Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2016.

Magesa, Laurenti, *What is Not Sacred? African Spirituality*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013 and Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2014.

The title is a West African proverb. Magesa says: "Consequently, there are no movements in the indigenous traditions of black Africa that distinguish the "sacred" from the "profane" or "secular." For, indeed, just what is not sacred?"

Maithya, Cosmas, "Participation of Youth in Small Christian Communities." Part of the 1995 CUEA Theological Session on "Family Life in AMECEA Countries." *African Christian Studies*, Volume 11, No. 2 (June, 1995), 54-58.

Makunde, Anthony, "Message of AMECEA at the Second Pan-African Congress on Theology, Society and Pastoral Life" in Ikenna U. Okafor, José Ngalula, Nicholas Segeja and Stan Chu Ilo (.eds), *Toward a Synodal Church in Africa: Echoes from an African Christian Palaver*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2024.

In the welcome message of AMECEA Makunde highlights the pastoral structure of well-organized Small Christian Communities (SCCs). This corresponds to the vision of the Synodal Process to reach out and listen to the forgotten voices.

Makusanya, Edwin, *Efficient Management of Economic Resources in Parishes as a Way to Achieve Self-Reliance: A Case Study of Tabora and Sikonge Parishes, Archdiocese of Tabora, Tanzania*, MA Thesis in the Institute of Social Ministry in Mission, Nairobi: Tangaza University College, 2014.

"MALAWI: ECM Hosts National SCCs Workshop," *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, Issue 037, December 19, 2013, http://amecea.blogspot.com/2013/12/malawi-ecm-hosts-national-sccs-workshop.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=29c836c001-AMECEA+Online+Newsletter+6+5+2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-29c836c001-6746297

Marina Alejandro, "Como Las Pequeñas Comunidades Cristianas Africanas, Implementan La Pastoral y Visión Misionera Del Vaticano II," Spanish translation of Joseph Healey, "How African Small Christian Communities Implement the Pastoral and Missionary Vision of Vatican II," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 15 March, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/las.pdf>

Marina, Alejandro, "Comunidades Eclesiales de Base -- CEBs (Small Christian Communities) in Argentina," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 15 March, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Comunidades.pdf>

The Spanish is *Las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base en Argentina*, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 15 March, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/CEBs.pdf>

Marins, José, *Basic Ecclesial Community: Church from the Roots* (Quito: Colegio Tecnico Don Bosco, 1979).

Key book on CEBs in Latin America. Has the valuable distinction that *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* (CEBs)/Basic Ecclesial Communities/Small Christian Communities "are not a Movement in the Catholic Church, but the Church on the Move." Marins states: "The BEC is the whole church in a concentrated form. Or to put it another way, it is a germ or a seed which has within itself all the essential elements of the Church of Jesus." Marins identifies five features or components central to the CEBs dynamic in Latin America: Prayer; Reflection on Reality; Discernment and Decision; Action [Mission]; and Celebration. In his research Marins has the insight that you cannot compare and contrast the CEBs in Latin America country by country. The diversity is too great. You have to evaluate diocese by diocese, for example, Mexico.

Massawe, Jesca and James Alex Mhangwa, "Factors Affecting Young People Participation in Small Christian Communities: Insights from Interview Data Collected from Five Small Christian Communities at Virgin Mary Mother of Our Savior Parish, Kipawa, Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 10 February, 2024, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/factors-affecting-young-people-participation-in-small-christian-communities-insights-from-interview-data-collected-from-five-small-christian-communities-at-virgin-mary-mother-of-our-savior-parish-ki/>

Abstract

The research examines the factors affecting youth participation in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Kipawa Parish, Tanzania despite having a youthful population. There has been a decline in their engagement with SCCs. The study uses structured questionnaires to gather insights from participants in five specific SCCs. The findings reveal that there is a significant gap between the perceived importance of SCCs for nurturing faith and the actual involvement of youth within these community structures. Various barriers hindering youth participation are identified, including time constraints, lack of passion for religious activities, and misaligned priorities. The study recommends multifaceted strategies to address these challenges, such as strengthening the role of families in fostering spiritual growth and creating specialized Youth SCCs within existing structures.

The research advocates for efforts that emphasize the holistic importance of SCCs for all age groups, emphasizing unity, shared experiences, and spiritual growth. It highlights the potential impact of external factors such as technological influences and the surrounding environment on youth engagement in SCCs, urging an integrated approach to pastoral initiatives. The study concludes that addressing the observed decline in youth participation requires a strategic amalgamation of pastoral efforts that foster family-centric spiritual practices, tailor SCCs structures to accommodate youth preferences, and implement targeted awareness campaigns to instill a renewed appreciation for the intrinsic value of SCCs among the youth demographic. In summary, this research identifies barriers hindering youth participation in SCCs in Kipawa Parish, Tanzania. It recommends multifaceted strategies such as strengthening family-centric spiritual practices and creating specialized Young People SCCs within existing structures to address these challenges. The study emphasizes the holistic importance of SCCs for all age groups and highlights external factors that impact youth engagement in SCCs. It concludes that addressing the observed decline in youth participation requires a strategic amalgamation of pastoral efforts that foster family-centric spiritual practices tailored to accommodate youth preferences while implementing targeted awareness campaigns to instill renewed appreciation for the intrinsic value of SCCs among young people

Massawe, Leodegard, *Kanisa la Nyumbani: Utume wa Familia (Swahili for Domestic Church: Apostolate of the Family)*: Moshi Lutheran Printing Press, 2014. A clear, simple explanation of the meaning of the family as the Domestic Church including the responsibility of parents in raising their children in the Catholic faith and the close connection to SCCs.

Massawe, Leodegard, *Utaratibu wa Ibada kwa Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo, Marangu-Moshi*: Habari Maalum Press, 1983.

Materanya, Prisca, "Basic Ecclesial Communities In DR Congo Told To Reinvent

Themselves To Attract Youth,” La Croix International Website, 25 June, 2025, retrieved on 25 June, 2024,

https://international.la-croix.com/religion/basic-ecclesial-communities-in-dr-congo-told-to-reinvent-themselves-to-attract-youth?at_source=piano&at_medium=email&at_campaign=11588&pnespid=HbAlqhsD4DpPkEuT9IiLS18VvQMmzah98ghDDKYZMsvKEYBfuDIHLo4f2ZD6fiTyzO5mf1phmQ

Kinshasa Archdiocese celebrated its special day for Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECS) with Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo encouraging these communities to reconnect with the youth and young people. Cardinal Ambongo was speaking during a Mass on 22 June 2024 at the Notre-Dame du Congo Cathedral for the bayangeli (parish leaders) from the approximately 2,000 Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) in the archdiocese in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)’s national capital. Cardinal Ambongo asked the faithful not to consider priests as "bosses." "In pastoral work, in synodality, there are no bosses," stressed the cardinal. "The priests are spiritual guides." He also asked priests to regularly participate in BEC meetings like all other members, not as masters or lecturers. The BEC is a grassroots evangelization mission entrusted to the laity by the Catholic Church.

Matua, Aquinas (ed.), “FORUM: Seminarians’ Involvement in SCCs,” *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission*, 2016/2, pp. 150-155.

If SCCs are not introduced as a major course in the theology curriculum, many seminarians adopt the mentality that SCCs do not occupy an essential place in the life of the Catholic Church in Africa.

McCoy, Terrence, Photos by Alexandre Cruz-Noronha, Videos by Deyse Cruz, “The Judgment of São Miguel: A Catholic Priest, an Evangelical Pastor and the Battle for Souls in the Deepest Amazon,” *Washington Post* Website, text and audio, retrieved on 24 February, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../brazil-amazon-catholic...>

This is a dramatic story about the challenge of the Eucharistic Famine in Brazil. The Catholic parish priest visits the 88 small separate communities/river villages along the Purus River in the deepest Amazon Forest only once a year for Mass and the sacraments. Meanwhile Evangelical Protestant pastors live full time in these river villages and are winning over many Catholics. There is a marked retreat of Catholicism across Latin America, where Evangelical Protestants are increasingly challenging its historic dominance.

McDonald, Fintan, “Pastoral Experiment in Kalenjin,” *Mirror*, February, 1972, 2.

McGarry, Cecil (ed.), *What Happened at the African Synod*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995.

McGoldrick, Terence, “Episcopal Conferences Worldwide on Catholic Social Thought in Theory and Praxis – An Update,” *Theological Studies* 75, No. 2 (June, 2014), 376-403.

After noting significant developments around the world since 1998, the article focuses on Case Studies of three countries of the Global South (India, Kenya, Brazil), showing a trend toward more social activism and fewer statements. It then argues that those developments not only refine CST but that CST cannot be understood apart from the

communities that live it in theory and practice. The article traces the involvement of SCCs in social activism and advocacy in Kenya.

McLaughlin, Janice, *The Color of the Skin Doesn't Matter: A Missioner's Tale of Faith and Politics*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2021 and Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2021.

Sister Janice McLaughlin (1942-2021) was a remarkable woman, an American Maryknoll nun who dedicated her life to the twin causes of education and justice. This memoir, completed just before her death, tells her story with refreshing candor. Acknowledging her naivety, which so often gives sustenance to idealism and the drive for a better world, she wanted to be a part of the struggles for freedom and independence in Africa. Trained as a journalist, she first began work in East Africa in 1969. Eight years later, she came to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), to work as press secretary for the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace at the height of the liberation war. Here, her outrage at the brutality of the Rhodesian regime led her to be denounced as a “terrorist sympathizer.” She was imprisoned and deported. This defining incident led her to the ZANLA camps in Mozambique where she worked as an educator.

Sister Janice spent four decades of her life in Africa, mainly in Zimbabwe. Celebrating the country's independence in 1980, she was consistently committed to work in social justice with the newly developed ZIMFEP schools, at Silveira House and with marginalized communities. As Bishop Dieter Scholz points out in his “Foreword,” she did not evade the hard truth that after 40 years the new regime has not fulfilled its promises to create greater equality of opportunity for the disadvantaged; she continued to work for a better, kinder and happier world.

In the “Preface” she writes: “The title of this memoir, therefore, expresses an ideal, a dream of a society without barriers to achievement; a society where racism, sexism, classism and other forms of prejudice which divide us are abolished.”

McLaughlin, Janice, *Ostriches, Dung Beetles and Other Spiritual Masters: A Book of Wisdom from the Wild*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009.

Mejia, Rodrigo, *The Beatitudes Road to Happiness*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2017.

Bishop Mejia has written several books on and about SCCs. Now he is writing books on spirituality and the Christian life “for” SCCs members.

Mejia, Rodrigo, *Church in the Neighborhood: Meetings for the Animation of Small Christian Communities*, Nairobi: St. Paul Publications Africa, 1992. The Swahili (Eastern and Central Africa) version is *Kanisa la Kimazingira*. Nairobi: St. Paul Publications Africa, 1992. The Chewa (Malawi) Version is *Mpingo M'Dera Lathu*. Zomba: Montfortian Itinerant Team, 1993.

Mejia, Rodrigo (ed.), *The Conscience of Society*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995.

Mejia, Rodrigo, “Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa 26 Years On: Lights and Shadows” in Patrick Ryan (ed.), *New Strategies for a New Evangelization*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002.

- Mejia, Rodrigo, *We Are the Church: Sharing in Small Christian Communities*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009.
- Message of the Synod and Homily of Pope Benedict XVI*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2012.
- Méthodes d'Animation et d'Organisation des Communautés Chrétiennes de Base*, Ouagadougou: Archidiocèse de Ouagadougou, Service diocésain de la formation permanente, 2012.
- Methodology for the Working Groups According to the Regulations of the Assembly*, Synodal Process during the Synod in Rome, 5 October 2023. [ENG-Methodology.pdf \(synod.va\)](https://www.vatican.va/synod.va/ENG-Methodology.pdf)
- The Synodal Process develops a prayerful pathway of spiritual discernment. The true protagonist is the Holy Spirit. Key elements are silence and careful listening to the contributions of others around the table.
- Mjigwa, Richard, “Mkutano Mkuu wa 20 wa AMECEA: Jumuiya Ndogondogo za Kikristo,” Vatican Radio, 13 July, 2022, 6:10 minutes, Text on Vatican Radio Website, retrieved on 20 November, 2022, <https://www.vaticannews.va/sw/church/news/2022-07/mkutano-mkuu-20-amecea-2022-jumuiya-ndogondogo-kikristo-1974.html>
- Mkulima, Eligius, “Building SCCs as a Method for New Evangelization” in *Spiritual Mission to the Maasai in the Archdiocese of Arusha in Tanzania: A Pastoral Approach in the Light of the New Evangelization*, Arusha: Candid Press, 2014.
- Mobiala, John, “Genèse et Situation Actuelle des Communautés Ecclésiales Vivantes de Base (CEVBs) dans L'archidiocèse De Kinshasa,” Academia.edu Website, retrieved on 8 March, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/36100468/John_MOBIALA_Gen%C3%A8se-situation_actuelle_CEVB_%C3%A0_Kinshasa.pdf
- Moerschbacher, Marco, “For Fifty Years on the Road: The Importance of the Base Communities in Africa's Local Churches,” Proceedings of the International Symposium on *In the World of Today? The Church on Her Way in Basic Christian Communities*, Tuebingen, Germany, 17-20 January, 2012, retrieved on 12 October, 2016, <http://www.con-spiration.de/texte/english/2013/moerschbacher-e.html> *Herder Korrespondenz*, 4/2013, 200-204.
- Moerschbacher, Marco (ed.), Proceedings of the International Symposium on *In the World of Today? The Church on Her Way in Basic Christian Communities*, Tuebingen, Germany, 17-20 January, 2012, posted on the University of Tübingen Website at <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/en/faculties/catholic-theology/lehrstuehle/religionspaedagogik/basisgemeinden-symposium/praesentationen-der-vortraege.html>
- Monahan, Lynn, “Ahead Of Coronavirus, Starvation Stalks East Africa: Maryknoll Priests Work to Feed Those Left Without Food in COVID-19 Lockdowns,” *Maryknoll*

Magazine July – August, 2020, *Maryknoll Magazine Website*, retrieved on 8 June, 2020, <https://maryknollmagazine.org/2020/05/ahead-of-coronavirus-starvation-stalks-east-africa>

https://maryknollmagazine.org/2020/05/ahead-of-coronavirus-starvation-stalks-east-africa/?fbclid=IwAR2C443BykopQitBo1gUPsiN29SU2GuNCEl0_o1g7PTqHPcRUzphETdUVOc

Monahan, Lynn, “Opening a Digital Window,” *Maryknoll Magazine*, September-October, 2020. *Maryknoll Magazine Website*, retrieved on 1 September, 2020, <https://www.maryknollmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/mk-mag-sept-oct-2020.pdf>

A Maryknoll Priest helps Small Christian Communities in Kenya get online during COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Monahan, Lynn, “Go Digital or Die: A Maryknoll Priest Helps Small Christian Communities in Kenya Get Online During Pandemic Crisis,” *Maryknoll Magazine Website*, retrieved on 6 June, 2020, <https://maryknollmagazine.org/2020/06/go-digital-or-die>.

Reproduced as:

“Kenya's Small Christian Communities Get Online During Pandemic” by Lynn F. Monahan, *Catholic News Service (CNS)*, 17 June, 2020, retrieved on 18 June, 2020, <https://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2020/kenyas-small-christian-communities-get-online-during-pandemic.cfm>

“Kenya's Small Christian Communities Get Online During Pandemic” by Lynn F. Monahan, *CRUX: Taking the Catholic Pulse News Service*, 17 June, 2020, retrieved on 18 June, 2020, <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-africa/2020/06/kenyas-small-christian-communities-get-online-during-pandemic/>

Can also be tracked through: <https://www.newsbreak.com>, <https://news.google.com> and TheCatholicSpirit.com

Monahan, Lynn, “Abriendo una Ventana Digital: Sacerdote Maryknoll Ayuda a Pequeñas Comunidades Cristianas en Kenya a Conectarse en Línea en medio de la Pandemia,” *Misioneros*, Septiembre-Octubre, 2020, Pequeñas Comunidades Cristianas: “Digitalizarse O Morir,” retrieved on the Misioneros Maryknoll Website, retrieved on 2 September, 2020, <https://misionerosmaryknoll.org/2020/09/pequenas-comunidades-cristianas-digitalizarse-o-morir>

Mondo, Paulino, “During This 2012-2013 Year of Faith Encourage Every Baptized Catholic to Become an Active Member of a Small Christian Community in the Neighborhood,” July, 2013, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/uganda/255-during-this-2012-2013-year-of-faith-encourage-every-baptized-catholic-to-become-an-active-member-of-a-small-christian-community-in-the-neighborhood.html>

- Mondo, Paulino, “The Jubilee of St. Paul, the Missionary Animator and Father of Small Christian Communities,” *The Faculty of Theology of CUEA Celebrating the Jubilee of St. Paul: Apostle, Missionary and Martyr*, 11th Interdisciplinary Theological Session at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi: Unpublished paper, 2009.
- Mondo, Paulino, *Small Christian Communities: An Ideal Means for Renewing the Church Within AMECEA Countries*, Eldoret: Unpublished Paper, 2009.
- Mondo, Paulino, Summary of the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*, Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 2012.
- Mondo, Paulino and John Webootsa, Holy Trinity Catholic Parish Kariobangi (compilers), *Looking with an African Eye at the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Africae Munus “Africa’s Commitment,”* Nairobi: Kutoka Networks Books, June, 2012.
- Moriarty, Robert K., *An Experience of World Church in Miniature: A Report on the 1999 International Consultation on Small Christian Communities Cochabamba, Bolivia, November 1-6, 1999*, Hartford: Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities, March, 2001.
- Moschetti, Daniel, *Urban Ministry in Africa: Need for New Models*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* Nos. 145-147, 1997.
- Mringi, Augustine, *Communio at the Grassroots: Small Christian Communities*, Bangalore: Indian Institute of Spirituality, 1995.
- Mugambi, Jesse and Evaristi Magoti (eds.), *Endless Quest: The Vocation of an African Christian Theologian. Essays in Honor of Laurenti Magesa. A Festschrift for Professor Laurenti Magesa*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2014. Includes articles: Laurenti Magesa, “Endless Quest: The Vocation of an African Christian Theologian;” Joseph Healey, “The Future of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa;” and Philomena Mwaura, “African Instituted Churches as Expressions of African Christianity,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/246-the-future-of-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-africa-praxis-and-theology.html>.
- Muiño, Marcos, “Muchos Grupos O Pocas Comunidades? Hacia Una Síntesis Eclesial de Base por la Justicia y la Paz,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 15 March, 2020, https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/cebs_argentina.pdf
- Mukuka, Mwenya, “AMECEA: Fr. Joseph Healey, MM: A Guide in the Journey of Small Christian Communities,” *AMECEA Online News*, Special Issue 502, 1 September, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 2 September, 2023, [AMECEA: Fr. Joseph Healey, MM: A Guide in the Journey of Small Christian Communities](#)

As the sun sets over the vibrant city of Lilongwe, Malawi history, faith, and community converge in a remarkable celebration—the Golden Jubilee Year of Small Christian Communities (SCCs). This jubilee, held from July 2023 to July 2024, commemorates 50 years of SCCs’ existence, their growth, and their transformative impact on

the Local and Universal Church. As the Universal Church gathers in Rome for the Synod on Synodality, the journey of SCCs finds resonance in the theme “Communion, Participation, and Mission.” This theme aligns seamlessly with the essence of SCCs that have demonstrated that a Catholic Church rooted in local communities can effectively foster communion, participation, and mission.

Mukuka, Mwenya, “AMECEA PLENARY: AMECEA Bishops Award Regional Pioneer Trainer of Social Communications,” *AMECEA Online Newsletter* 13 July, 2022, AMECEA Website, retrieved 14 July, 2022, [AMECEA PLENARY: AMECEA Bishops Award Regional Pioneer Trainer of Social Communications](#)

Healey suggests that the award also be dedicated to the AMECEA first generation pioneer Bishop Founders for their vision and planning.

Mukuka, Mwenya, “ZAMBIA: SCCs in Zambia’s Livingstone Diocese, Transforming Lives through Faith and Fellowship, ,” *AMECEA Online News*, " Issue 499, 25 August, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 29 August, 2023, [ZAMBIA: SCCs in Zambia’s Livingstone Diocese, Transforming Lives through Faith and Fellowship \(amecea.org\)](#)

This article is an interesting Case Study of how 504 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Livingstone Diocese in Zambia are celebrating the Golden Jubilee (1973 to 2023) of SCCs in the AMECEA Region. Father John Rurangwa, the Pastoral Coordinator in Livingstone Diocese, reports that the celebration will be on Saturday, 2 December 2023. The occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebration will be being used to reflect upon the SCCs’ journey, their impact on the community, and their ongoing mission of evangelization. Each SCC will celebrate its Patron Saint with a sense of unity and mirror the ongoing Synod of Bishops on Synodality to ensure that no one is left behind. Ongoing formation in leadership, biblical and liturgical understanding and enhanced participation of youth and children will all be central to the jubilee celebration.

Mukunzu, Harrison Mativo, *The Fight against HIV and AIDS: A Call for New Approaches to Catechesis and Small Christian Communities*, Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2015.

Mulongo, Jane Frances, “Small Christian Communities as Opportunities for Teaching and Living CST” in “Pedagogical Reflections by East African Women Religious Alumnae of the Loyola Institute for Ministry,” *Journal of Moral Theology*, Vol. 11, Issue 2, 2022, 146--165. *Journal of Moral Theology* Website, retrieved on 29 July, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.55476/001c.37349>.

The article describes the author’s experiences in sharing Catholic Social Teaching with young people and adults in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Kenya. There are three Case Studies: St. Don Bosco Youth SCC, St. Francis of Assisi SCC and the Catholic Women Association.

Muninzwa, Maximillia, “Living Cells: Small Christian Communities,” *New People*, No. 181 (July-August, 2019), 20-22.

Muse, Abel and Tenagnework Haile, “The African Family from the Experience of a Catholic

Couple in Ethiopia,” Addis Ababa: Unpublished Paper, 2015, to be published in *International Journal of African Catholicism (IJAC)*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer, 2015). Available on the *IJAC* website at: **ADD**

Muuna, Lawrence Murori, “2016 Report of the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Catholic Diocese of Meru, Kenya,” Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 17 January, 2017, http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/murori_2016.pdf

Mwakhwawa, Vincent, *Improving Participation of the Laity in Small Christian Communities: A Pastoral Challenge in the Archdiocese of Lilongwe*, Nairobi: Unpublished Master’s Thesis, CUEA, 2012.

Mwanache, Pascal, “TANZANIA: TEC Secretary General Calls on Small Christian Communities to Become Centers of Christian Witness,” *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, 28 January, 2022, retrieved on 29 January, 2022, <http://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2022/01/28/tanzania-tec-secretary-general-calls-on-small-christian-communities-to-become-centres-of-christian-witness/>

Mwoleka, Christopher. *Do This! The Church of the Third Millennium – What Face Shall It Have?* Peramiho: Benedictine Publications Ndanda-Peramiho, 1988.

The author proposes a new face for the church -- evangelical lay communities -- that are unions of member families, single people, priests, and religious who bind themselves in a covenant. The apostolate of forming such evangelical lay communities ought to be the number one pastoral priority of the Catholic Church throughout the world.

Mwoleka, Christopher and Joseph Healey (eds.), *Ujamaa and Christian Communities*, Eldoret, Kenya: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* 45, 1976.

Ndegwah, David J., *Biblical Hermeneutics as a Tool for Inculturation in Africa: A Case Study of the Pökot People of Kenya*, Nairobi, Kenya: Creation Enterprises, 2007.

Ngalula, Joséé, “History, Development and Statu Quo of Basic Christian Community (BCC) in Africa,” in Moerschbacher, Marco (ed.), Proceedings of the International Symposium on *In the World of Today? The Church on Her Way in Basic Christian Communities*, Tübingen, Germany, 17-20 January, 2012, Academia.edu Website, retrieved 20 August, 2014, https://www.academia.edu/6456909/HISTORY_DEVELOPMENT_AND_STATU_QUO_OF_BASIC_CHRISTIAN

Ngona, Dieudonné, “The Small Christian Communities and the Internal Organization of the Local Churches: A Juridical Point of View,” *African Christian Studies* Vol. 19, No. 3 (2003).

Ngona, Dieudonné, *Small Christian Communities, A Source of Renewal for Parish Life: A Theological-Canonical Approach*, Nairobi: St Joseph Printing Press, 1995.

1983 Code of Canon Law, Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983.

Njoroge, Rose, "Effectiveness and Challenges in Evangelization in the Small Christian Communities in the Catholic Church in Vihiga County, Kenya, " *EAS (East African*

Scholars) Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Volume 1, Issue 4, July-August, 2019, retrieved 13 July, 2020,
https://www.easpublisher.com/media/articles/EASJHCS_14_222-227_c.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1STQtWqPz9tKMvEyMnhVVVIWn2UwHLhLMUhsCbCLX4DuHlqj0JMbTWKQ

South Asian Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Volume 1, Issue 2, August-September, 2019, retrieved 13 July, 2020,
https://sarpublication.com/media/articles/SARJHSS_12_173-178_UFm9sDb.pdf?fbclid=IwAR04mOJr8qFWIyFKGHPV_KK_1iLSMLZHKD4P3d9m40OImK4wX793wTZHBM0

Njuguna, Francis, “Book Review of *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*,” June, 2012, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website,
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/book-reviews/204-book-review-of-building-thechurch-as-family-of-god-evaluation-of-small-christian-communities-in-eastern-africa.html>

Also printed in Francis Njuguna in *Catholic Mirror*, 03/15 (April, 2015), p. 6.

Njuguna, Francis, Book Review of *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa -- Conversations on Ecclesiology*, 2015, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website,
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/book-reviews/339-the-church-we-want-foundations-theology-and-mission-of-the-church-in-africa-conversations-on-ecclesiology.html>

Also printed in *The Catholic Mirror*, No 07/15 (August, 2015), p. 16.

Njuguna, Francis, “Christians Urged to Embrace Small Christian Communities,” *Catholic Mirror*, 12:16—1:17 (December, 2016-January, 2017), 20.

Njuguna, Francis, “From Negotiating Dowry to Buying Wedding Rings: SCCs Role in Fostering Families,” *Catholic Mirror*, 4:15 (May, 2015), 20.

Njuguna, Francis, “Promoting Lay People’s Involvement in Small Christian Communities and Mission in Africa,” March, 2016, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/kenya/363-promoting-lay-peoples-involvement-in-small-christian-communities-and-mission-in-africa.html>

Also posted in:

“News/Events,” School of Theology Page, Tangaza University College Website,
http://www.tangaza.org/theology/img/Promoting_Lay_People_Active_Role_in_SCCs_and_Mission_in_Africa.pdf

AMECEA Pastoral Department Sub-domain, AMECEA Website,
<http://ameceapastoral.amecea.org/index.php/promoting-lay-peoples-involvement-in-small-christian-communities-and-mission-in-africa/>

- Njuguna, Francis, "Religious Women Take a Leading Role in SCCs Programs," *Catholic Mirror*, 1:10 (October, 2012), 16.
- Njuguna, Francis, "Saint Kizito SCCs: An Example of What SCCs Can Do," *Catholic National Mirror*, 24:3 (April, 2012), 16.
- Njuguna, Francis, "SCC of Dandora Parish Worth to Be Emulated by Others" *Catholic National Mirror*, 24:4 (May, 2012), 20.
- Njuguna, Francis, "SCCs...In Efforts to Honor Cardinal Otunga," *Catholic National Mirror*, 1:4 (April, 2013), 18.
- Njuguna, Francis, "SCCs and the Future of Pastoral Mission," *Catholic National Mirror*, 1:5 (May, 2013), 14.
- Njuguna, Francis, "Small Christian Communities Best for Civic Education on Elections," *Catholic Mirror*, 5:17 (May, 2017), 13.
Also posted as "Small Christian Communities Well Placed to Promote Peace in Kenyan Elections in August, 2017," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 14 May, 2017,
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/kenya/418-small-christian-communities-well-placed-to-promote-peace-in-kenyan-elections-in-august-2017-.html>
- Njuguna, Francis, "Small Christian Communities Now Meet on Facebook," *The Seed*, December, 2012 (Volume 24, No. 12, Issue 252), pp. 12-13. Retrieved on 28 December, 2012, <http://www.consolatamissionarieskenya.co.ke/?p=468>
- Njuguna, Francis and Joseph Healey, "Case Study of the Small Reflection Group on 'Small Faith Sharing Communities,'" Symposium: "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment," *Tangaza Journal of Theology & Mission*, 2019/1-2, 91-92.
- Also posted on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 5 August, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/summary-of-small-reflection-groups-during-tangaza-symposium-in-february-2019/>
- Nkea, Andrew, "Small Christian Community Is a Backbone of the Church in Africa," *CISA News Service*, 28, March 2023, retrieved on 9 April, 2023
https://mailchi.mp/af5721b8b522/issue-no-212-april-25-702877?e=d472cebc36&fbclid=IwARIn6VF6L24bjtOkukFGGeGinRntOGgKOLJBcsBdTIY_HgkU5SS-k2q5jWyQ#3

"I must emphasize that the Small Christian Community is a backbone of the church in Africa. In Europe because of individualism, like the Holy Father said, it could be difficult but here we have the structures and it is something that is woven into our culture. And so, the Small Christian Communities, the mission stations, the parishes, the deaneries, and the dioceses are all structures through which consultations can be done. And I think that when you get the Small Christian Communities walking the church is vibrant because everybody knows everybody in the neighborhood."

No Peace Without Justice Based on the 2nd African Synod: "In the Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace," The Word of God for Our Small Christian Communities, Lusaka: CARITAS Zambia and Biblical Desk, Catholic Secretariat, 2011.

- Nsanzurwimo, Marc *Here We Are: 70 Years of Evangelization and Social Concern. Regiment Parish: St. Charles Lwanga Catholic Church (1939-2009)*, Ndola, Mission Press, 2013.
- Nunes, José, *Pequenas Comunidades Cristãs: o Ondjanco e a Inculturação em África/ Angola*, Monografia, Porto, Portugal: Univ. Católica Portuguesa: 1991.
- Nyaketcho, Immaculate, "The Impact of Small Christian Communities on Youth: A Qualitative Case Study in Our Lady Consolata Catholic Church, Riara Ridge," Nairobi: Unpublished Long Essay in the Institute of Youth Studies, Tangaza University College, 2014.
- Nyakundi, Alloys, "Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Communities As Part of the 2021-2023 Synodal Process," Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved on 12 August, 2022, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/online-young-adult-seekers-small-christian-communities-as-part-of-the-2021-2023-synodal-process/>
- Nyakundi, Alloys, "We Create the Path by Walking: Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) in Eastern Africa," Paper at the Tangaza University College Institute of Youth Studies Symposium 2017 on "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment," 16 September, 2017, retrieved 29 January, 2020, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/?s=Nyakundi>
<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/powerpoint-presentation-by-alloys-nyakundi-on-we-create-the-path-by-walking-youth-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-eastern-africa/>
- Nyakundi Alloys, Nancy Njehia, Evelyn Nyaituga and Brian Omondi, "We Create the Path by Walking: Youth Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa" in Kevin Ahern and Christopher Derige Malano, (eds.), *God's Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018. Translated into German as Alloys Nyakundi, "Neue Wege Schaffen: Kleine Christliche Jugendgemeinschaften in Kenia," in *Forum Weltkirche*, No. 4 (July-August, 2018).
- Nyakundi Alloys and Joseph Healey, "Petites Communautés Chrétiennes en Afrique de l'Est." Textes recueillis et traduits par Jean-Pierre Schmitz, *Les Réseaux des Parvis*, November, 2022.
- Nyanto, Salvatory S., *Ujamaa, Small Christian Communities, and Moral Reform in Western Tanzania, 1960s–1990*, *The Catholic Historical Review*, Volume 106, Number 2, Spring, 2020, pp. 312–334, The Catholic University of America Press, retrieved on 25 March, 2024, file:///C:/Users/Father%20Joe/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/SWA1A1SR/CHR_Spring_%202020.pdf

This article examines the efforts of Small Christian Communities (in Swahili, *Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo*) to carve out a separate space of moral reform and regulation beyond the spheres of *Ujamaa* and state authority between the 1960s and 1990. These communities served

as platforms for expressing ideas and addressing social concerns arising from members. They also controlled converts' demeanours and adjudicated issues related to moral laxity, marriage conflicts, and conjugal relations where *Ujamaa* policies and the state had little to do with these issues. Nonetheless, like *Ujamaa* villages, Small Christian Communities faced numerous challenges leading to the collapse of some of these communities in western Tanzania. This study builds on the scholarship which provides a model for understanding historically and culturally constructed institutions within their specific settings to show how socio-cultural and political environments shaped Small Christian Communities, but also to understand the limits of *Ujamaa* as well as its influence.

Nzeki, Raphael Ndingi Mwana'a , "Basic Communities: the African Experience" in *A New Missionary Era*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982, 100.

Nzisi, Bernadette Mwikali, *Leadership in Small Christian Communities and Its Effect on Parish Strategy: A Case of St Francis Catholic Church In Kasarani, Nairobi County*, Research Project Report, Nairobi: United States International University – Africa, 2017.

<http://erepo.usiu.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11732/3515/BERNADETTE%20MWIKALI%20NZISI%20MBA%202017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Obunga, Joseph, *The Small Christian Communities in the AMECEA Region Today and Tomorrow Particularly in Kampala Archdiocese, Uganda*, Doctorate Dissertation, Brussels: Catholic University of Louvain, 1993.

Treats grassroots SCCs in East Africa.

Obunga, Joseph. *Obubondo: Ekibiina Eky'Abaseekimu Mu Kristu Yezu (Efez 4:1-16)*, Tuzimbe Eklezia Omulamamu, Kampala: Privately Printed, 2003.

Explanation of the SCCs Model of Church in Luganda, a major language of Uganda.

Ochora-Peralta, Daniela and James O'Brien, "CLC and Youth: Community Encounters on the Path of Wisdom," *Jesuits: Accompanying Young People*. The Society of Jesus in the World 2023, pp. 50 – 52.

"Good Case Study of Synodality/the Synodal Process:"

The Jesuits report that when Christian Life Community (CLC) Young Adults gather throughout the world, they reflect on their joys and challenges in Small Local Communities (SLCs) using the reflect, listen and share process. Through two or three rounds of authentic sharing and deep listening, the young CLCers share how they are traveling, reflect on their prayer and notice God's action in their daily experience. The community experience of God's goodness equips the young people to face life's tough times with hope.

CLC is a caring space to celebrate life. It is a familiar space free from judgment and discrimination, where God's presence may be named. It is a home for welcoming and including everyone, walking together as friends and sharing life with one another.

Ogunu, Oseni, Collector and editor, *The African Enchiridion: Documents and Texts of the*

Catholic Church in the African World, Bologna: Ed. Missionaria Italiana (EMI), four volumes, Paperback, CD and Ebook, 2005.

O'Halloran, James, *Living Cells: Vision and Practicalities of Small Christian Communities and Groups*, Dublin: Columba Press, 2010.

O'Halloran, James, *Small Christian Communities: A Pastoral Companion*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books and Dublin: Columba Press, 1996.

Okafor, Ikenna, José Ngalula, Nicholas Segeja, and Stan Chu Ilo (eds.), *Journeying Together for a Synodal Church in Africa: Echoes from an African Christian Palaver*, Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Studies Series No. 2, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2023.

This book strikes one as being highly ambitious, innovative in method, daring in scope and vision. Its ground-breaking combination of theological, pastoral and socio-cultural resources in search of a Pan-African agenda for nurturing Christian growth grounded in *Ubuntu*, the African ethos of synodality and dialogical inclusivity, and its courage to critique anti-Gospel practices in the Catholic Church are highly commendable. This African Edition costs only \$10 compared to the Orbis Edition that is \$50.

Okafor, Ikenna, José Ngalula, Nicholas Segeja, and Stan Chu Ilo (eds.), *Toward a Synodal Church in Africa: Echoes from an African Christian Palaver*, Orbis Books, 2024.

Pope Francis has convoked a Synod on Synodality. He says: "Synodality is a style, it is a walk together, and it is what the Lord expects from the Catholic Church of the third millennium." This challenging invitation has initiated countless dialogues in Local Churches throughout the world. In this fine volume, African theologians and pastoral agents contribute their contextualizations, reflections, and proposals.

Okoth, Jecinter, "AMECEA: Family Life and SCCs, Ecclesial Models that Promote Synodality in AMECEA Region, Says AMECEA Chairman," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 535, 15 March, 2024, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 16 March, 2024, <https://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2024/03/15/amecea-family-life-and-sccs-ecclesia-models-that-promote-sydonality-in-amecea-region-says-amecea-chairman>

The foundation of synodality in the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) is the recognition of the significance of family life and the existence of well-established Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the region, the AMECEA chairman said during a webinar session held on Thursday, March 14. The webinar aimed to reflect on the experience of the themes that emerged during the first phase of the synodal journey that was held last year October in Rome.

Okoth, Jecinter, "AMECEA: Goal of the SCCs Golden Jubilee is to Reawaken Spirituality, says AMECEA's Chairman for Pastoral Department," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 499, 25 August, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 29 August, 2023, <https://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2023/08/25/amecea-goal-of-the-sccs-golden-jubilee-is-to-reawaken-spirituality-says-ameceas-chairman-for-pastoral-department/>

Okoth, Jecinter, "AMECEA Launches Golden Jubilee Year for SCCs, Prelate Emphasizes a Period of Reflection and Discernment," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 499, 25 August, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 28 August, 2023, [AMECEA Launches Golden Jubilee Year for SCCs, Prelate Emphasizes a Period of Reflection and Discernment](#)

The region of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) in Dedza, Diocese, Malawi on Saturday, 19 August 2023, launched a year-long celebration of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) since its establishment, where Archbishop George Desmond Tambala of Malawi's Lilongwe Archdiocese encouraged reflection and discernment moments as a way to understand deeply SCCs. "Small Christian Community is a great tool for the Church, actually we cannot think of the Catholic Church without the Small Christian Communities as we launch 50 years in the region."

Okoth, Jecinter, "AMECEA: "Other Christian Churches and Continents Treasure Small Christian Communities in AMECEA *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 499, 25 August, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 29 August, 2023, [AMECEA: Other Christian Churches and Continents Treasure Small Christian Communities in AMECEA](#)

Okoth, Jecinter, "AMECEA: Prepares to Launch Golden Jubilee for Small Christian Communities Ecclesial Model in Region," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 488, 9 June, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 12 June, 2022, [AMECEA: Prepares to Launch Golden Jubilee For Small Christian Communities Ecclesial Model in Region](#)

In remembrance of 50 years existence of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), the region that is comprised of eight National Conferences and two affiliate countries, the AMECEA Secretariat through its Pastoral Department is preparing to launch a one-year celebration of pastoral solidarity through SCCs. In the very first meeting of the preparations on Tuesday 6, June that brought together a team from AMECEA and representatives from the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), the coordinator of AMECEA's pastoral department Emmanuel Chimombo, clarified the need for the jubilee celebration saying, "Participants in the meeting are to help brainstorm and reflect on how best 50 years existence of Small Christian Communities can be marked in the region."

Okoth, Jecinter, "AMECEA: Small Christian Communities is Anchored on the Word of God: AMECEA's Pastoral Coordinator," "AMECEA Online News, Issue 500, 1 September, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 2 September, 2023, [AMECEA: Small Christian Communities is Anchored on the Word of God: AMECEA's Pastoral Coordinator](#)

Okoth, Jecinter, "Grants for Small Christian Communities Go Beyond Catholic Families: Subsidy Administrator," *ACI Africa Online News*, 20 September, 2019, <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/158/grants-for-small-christian-communities-go-beyond-catholic-families-subsidy-administrator>

Okoth, Jecinter, KENYA, "Kenya-based Maryknoll Missionary Appreciates Growing number of African Theologians in the Church," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 442, 5 August, 2022, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 6 August, 2022, [KENYA: Kenya-based Maryknoll Missionary Appreciates Growing number of African Theologians in the Church \(amecea.org\)](#)

Okoth/Olweny, Jecinter and Sandra Kunda, ZAMBIA: “Pivotal Role of Small Christian Communities in Evangelization,” *AMECEA Online News*, Special Issue 500, 2 February, 2024, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 2 February, 2024, <https://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2024/02/02/zambia-pivotal-role-of-small-christian-communities-in-evangelization/>

Okumu, Joseph, “Synthesis of the Hybrid Maryknoll Kenyan Affiliate Chapter’s Response to Pope Francis’ Call to the Synodal Process 2021-2023,” *Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website*, retrieved on 12 August, 2022,

Oluoch, Lourine, “Why *Jumuiyas* Form the Backbone of Kariobangi Parish,” *Seed*, Vol. 26, No. 12, Issue 272 (December, 2014), pp. 12-13.

Oluwadare Michael, "Eucharistic Deprivation in the Western Part of Nigeria: Toward an Inculturated Theology and Celebration of the Eucharist," Unpublished Licentiate Thesis, San Francisco: Santa Clara University, 2022.

One of the challenges confronting the Catholic Church worldwide is the shortage of priests. Because of this, many parishes, especially in the rural areas, gather for Sunday worship without the Eucharist. This thesis will explore the rural areas in the western part of Nigeria that are faced with the problem of the shortage of priests, economic instability, lack of basic amenities and poverty. Due to this, the people in this part of the country feel deprived, isolated, and marginalized. The thesis will propose a commission of lay ministers to preside at the Communion Service, Liturgies of the Word, and sacramental preparation in the absence of a priest.

Therefore, the thesis uses constructive narrative criticism. This method is personal based on my experiences in rural western Nigeria. It will narrate the situation of the Catholic faithful living in the rural and urban settings, and from this perspective, a model of Sunday Celebration will be introduced. An example of such a model is gathering the assembly with a lay presider who shares the Word in the absence of a priest. The presence of lay ministers in the rural Church will bridge the disparity between rural and urban settings. That way the communities continue to see one another as the People of God.

1983 Code of Canon Law, Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983.

Omolo, Alphonse, “Small Christian Communities as Gathered and Sent: A Case Study of Two Online Small Christian Communities Courses at the Loyola Institute for Ministry, Loyola University, New Orleans, USA,” *Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website*, retrieved on 12 August, 2022, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/small-christian-communities-sccs-as-gathered-and-sent-a-case-study-of-two-online-sccs-courses/>

Omolo, Alphonse, “Small Christian Community Model of Parish Church: A Case Study of Training SCC and Parish Leaders in Kisumu Archdiocese, Kenya,” *Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website*, retrieved 7 June, 2022, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/small-christian-community-model-of-parish-church> Revised version dated June, 2023.

To claim authentically the title “SCC” is to integrate the inner (gathered) and public (sent) dimensions of SCCs. It is like moving through the world with the “*Bible*” in one hand and the “Newspaper/Radio/Television/Smartphone,” etc. on the other. Being in an SCC demands a high level of relationship and task orientation. Consequently, SCCs must provide a strong sense of belonging to members as well as be able to address questions of justice and mercy. Members of the SCCs must explore and realize their own power to change their living conditions by popularising action-oriented Bible reflections (Omolo 2005). In addition, mutuality and conversation should remain at the heart of the inner life and the public life of the SCCs. This can then awaken the question, how can groups of Catholic faithful organize around a common good? And with this occurrence, a safe and favorable environment is created not only for the membership of the SCCs but also for their neighborhood communities, and beyond.

The keenness to this SCCs training assignment on the part of the facilitator, the parish priest, and the parish lay leaders cannot be emphasized well enough. It must be a compelling desire on the part of the parish priest and the parish lay leaders to realize functioning SCCs in their parish. It is only such enthralling aspirations that can navigate the actualization of the planning and implementation of the training outcomes at the SCCs and the parish levels. The opportunity, warmth, and support that was availed by the parish priests and the parish lay leaders of the three parishes involved in the training cannot be taken for granted. The incomparable obligation and interest in realizing efficacious SCCs cannot go without recognition and earnest appreciation.

This was intensive one-day training for each sub-parish and at the parish levels. Over and above, is a recommended training for a parish team of facilitators for select members and leaders of the SCCs for not less than three days. These individuals must be selected from leaders and members of the SCCs who have shown great commitment to the setting up and promotion of SCCs, individuals who are inherently facilitators. These teams of trainers can ensure the continuation of training and formation at the SCCs and at the parish levels. Similarly, a team of SCCs trainers can be trained at a diocesan, national, and regional bishop’s conference levels. Such teams of SCCs facilitators must be inclusive and should receive continuous capacity building and refresher training.

Omolo, Alphonse, “Small Communities Light up Neighborhoods in Kisumu” in Healey and Hinton, *Small Christian Communities Today*, pp. 110-116. Retrieved from the Google Books Website on 3 June, 2017,

<https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=YsJ3CAAQBAJ&pg=PT117&lpg=PT117&dq=Alphonse+Omolo&source=bl&ots=myTvwHAg6F&sig=ACfU3U3GTVAkR7zhIybCdj-Ypybs6gBZIQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjSu8PTxuTpAhVDyhoKHUFEDlcQ6AEw>

https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=YsJ3CAAQBAJ&pg=PT117&lpg=PT117&dq=Alphonse+Omolo+Small+Christian+Communities&source=bl&ots=mxPyDErg3F&sig=Yoi50QjFESycFehgNuK2Z2tXJto&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Alphonse%20Omolo%20Small%20Christian%20Communities&f=false

Onyalla, Don Bosco, “Africa: Essay on Development and Challenges of Small Christian Communities to be Part of Resource Book for Use Globally,” *CANAA News Updates*, 12 March, 2018.

http://www.canaafrica.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1187:essay-on-development-and-challenges-of-small-christian-communities-in-africa-to-be-part-of-a-resource-book-for-use-globally&catid=16:latestnews&Itemid=103&lang=en

Onyalla, Don Bosco, “Synod: Church in Africa Called to “Theological, Pastoral Discernment on Polygamy Issue, *ACI Africa*, 28 October 2023.

[Synod: Church in Africa Called to “theological, pastoral discernment” on Polygamy Issue \(aciafrica.org\)](https://www.aciafrica.org/synod-church-in-africa-called-to-theological-pastoral-discernment-on-polygamy-issue)

Under “Matters for Consideration” under the topic “For a church that listens and accompanies”, the synod delegates encourage the People of God across the globe to enhance [Small Christian Communities](#) (SCCs), a new way of being Church that the leadership of the Church in Africa has included in its evangelization structures. “Widespread in many parts of the world, grassroots or Small Christian Communities foster listening practices of and among the baptized,” the synod delegates say in their 42-page document, adding, “We are called to enhance their potential, including exploring how they can be adapted to urban contexts.”

In Eastern Africa the Catholic Church has fostered SCCs for five decades. In August, 2023 the [Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa](#) (AMECEA) [launched the Golden Jubilee Year of SCCs](#) to assess the status of this new way of being church in the region. “By December 2023, it will be 50 years since the Small Christian Communities were adopted by the AMECEA Region as a pastoral priority,” Bishop [Rogatus Kimaryo](#) of Tanzania’s Same Diocese and Chairman for [AMECEA Pastoral Department](#) said in his key address during the launch that was held in Malawi’s Dedza Diocese. Bishop Kimaryo added that the Pastoral Departments of Bishops’ Conferences in the AMECEA region will be spearheading the yearlong Golden Jubilee celebrations, “not as an event, but a process comprising of several strategic activities involving all AMECEA Member Conferences.”

Under “Matters for Consideration” under the topic “Participating Bodies” the synod delegates also address the reality of SCCs. Referring to this new way of being church in Africa, the synod delegates say, “Synodality grows in the involvement of each member in processes of discernment and decision-making for the mission of the Church: in this sense we are edified and encouraged by many Small Christian Communities in emerging churches, which live a daily fraternal “body to body” around the Word and the Eucharist.”

Still under the topic of “a church that listens and accompanies”, the synod delegates pose the question of what needs to “change so that those who feel excluded can experience a more welcoming church” and go on to affirm, “Listening and accompaniment are not just individual initiatives, but a form of ecclesial action. This is why they must find a place within the ordinary pastoral planning and operational structuring of Christian Communities at different levels, also valuing spiritual accompaniment.”

Opondo, Elias and Paul Bere (eds.), *African Theology in the 21st Century: A Call to Baraza*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2021.

The Swahili word *baraza* refers to both the meeting place and the meeting/conversation itself. A theological *baraza* that is not afraid of raising questions and

exploring new ways of doing theology is critical to the advancement of African Theology. The conversational framework proposed in the *baraza* approach is one that lists down matters “for conversation” and elaborates their importance. It selects the key participants to the conversation and draws the principles of the *baraza* dialogue that lean on respect, open mindedness, critical thinking, spiritual perception of the course of action, and pastoral enunciation of the applicability. This methodological approach to *baraza* encounters opens up a wider possibility for building momentum towards a church that is present to the realities of the daily lives of the people, with a theological framework that is contextualized and responsive to pastoral challenges of the day.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E. (ed.), *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2016.

Part One: “The Francis Effect and the Church in Africa.”

Part Two: “Critique of Theological Methodology and Ecclesial Practice.”

Part Three: “A Church that Goes Forth with Boldness and Creativity.”

Africa continues to experience great religious ferment, not only in the enormous growth of Christianity over the past century but also in the robust intellectual output of African theologians and pastoral agents all over the continent. This volume brings together Africa’s theological elders with new and emerging voices to bring analysis and reflection on what John L. Allen Jr. has called “the most dynamic corner of the Christian map.” The volume is a treasure for anyone with an interest in theological reflection from an African perspective, and a necessary resource for theologians, scholars and pastoral agents working in a church that is steadily moving its center to the Global South.

Includes a chapter “Beyond Vatican II: Imaging the Catholic Church of Nairobi I” by Joseph G. Healey, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 1 November, 2019, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TCCRSA.pdf> Has a section on “From the Perspective of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa.”

Available as an Ebook at:

Amazon Kindle. https://www.amazon.com/Church-We-Want-African-Catholics/dp/1626982031/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1469731962&sr=1-1&keywords=Orobator

Barnes and Noble Nook. <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-church-we-want-a-e-orobator/1123831368?ean=9781626982031>

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E. (ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa Conversations on Ecclesiology*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E., *The Church as Family: African Ecclesiology in its Social Context*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E., *From Crisis to Kairos: The Mission of the Church in the Time of HIV AND AIDS, Refugees and Poverty*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2005.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E. (ed.), *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace – the Second African Synod*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011 and Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2011. Chapters in French published separately.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E., *Religion and Faith in Africa: Confessions of an Animist*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E., “The Sky is Wide Enough: A Historical-Critical Appraisal of Theological Activity and Method in Africa,” *Hekima Review*, 40 (May, 2009): 34-44.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E., “Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Becoming Church: Practice, Progress and Prospects,” Marquette University e-Publications, 1-1-2013, Marquette University Website retrieved on 7 June, 2022, [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article](https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article)

Published version. "Small Christian Communities as a New Way of Becoming Church: Practice, Progress and Prospects," in *Small Christian Communities: Fresh Stimulus for a Forward-looking Church*. Eds. Klaus Krämer and Klaus Vellguth. Diliman 1101 Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2013: 113-125. Publisher Link. © 2013 Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E. (ed.), *Theological Reimagination: Conversations on Church, Religion and Society in Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2014.

Orobator, Agbonkhianmeghe E., *Theology Brewed in an African Pot*, Maryknoll, New York, USA: Orbis Books, 2008; Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2008.

Osiek, Carolyn. Margaret Y. Macdonald with Janet H. Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity*

Ouko, Joachim Omolo, “How SCCs Is a True Experience of Synodality in Africa,” *News Dispatch*, 7 January 2022.

Father Joe Healey’s passion for championing the growth of Small Christian Communities in AMECEA and beyond describes how Small Christian Communities (SCCs) is a true experience of Synodality in Africa.

Owaa, John Oballa, “Make Small Christian Communities Shine,” *Catholic Mirror* (October, 2015)

Key points include:

1. SCCs seek how to put the Word of God into practice to witness to the Gospel of Christ.
2. Catholic Christians come together as families in the neighborhood.
3. SCC members reach out to the marginalized of the community and mediate conflicts.
4. A major challenge [problem] is that some people think that they are avenues for Harambee.

5. To meet youth where they are, we could create Youth SCCs.

Pastoral Coordinator's Office, Arua, Uganda, *Towards a Community Church, Gospel Sharing: The 7-Step Method, God Renews the World Through Us, The Christian Community and its Leaders, Our Journey Together, Together As One*, Arua: Arua Diocese Publications, 2013. Also available in Lögbara, Alur and Madi.

Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities (SCCs), *MERCYQUEST: Celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy: Reflections for Small Groups*, Archdiocese of Hartford, 2016.

A full color four session booklet for general parish use designed around four parables of mercy. *MercyQuest* is useful for small groups, parish organizations and individuals. For SCCs in Africa two ways to use this booklet are:

1. Use as a four-week module during this 2016 Jubilee Year of Mercy.
2. Use the write-up of one of the four parables when that particular Gospel appears in the Lectionary Cycle.

Pastoral Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Nairobi 2013, Nairobi: Archdiocese of Nairobi, 2013.

Padila, Estela, "SCCs in Africa, Latin America and Asia and their Reception of Vatican II," Manilla: Unpublished Paper 2014.

Pattison, Mark, "Maryknoll Sister Who Ministered in Africa For Nearly 40 Years Dies at 79" *Catholic News Service*, 10 March, 2021, republished/recirculated in *Crux* and other Catholic News Services, [Maryknoll sister who ministered in Africa for nearly 40 years dies at 79 \(cruznw.com\)](https://www.cruznw.com/maryknoll-sister-who-ministered-in-africa-for-nearly-40-years-dies-at-79/)

The uniqueness (the "new normal") of this article is that it quotes twice from my Personal [Joseph G. Healey Facebook Page](#) and is one of the Catholic news stories that is republished/recirculated by a consortium of Catholic News Agencies.

Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Africae Terrarum*, 29 October 1967, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (AAS) 59(1967)1073-1097.

Paulines Editorial Team, *New Media for Everyone*, Civic Education Series No. 6, Media Training in Africa Series, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2013.

Peace Without End Based on the 2nd African Synod: "In the Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace," The Word of God for Our Small Christian Communities, Lusaka: CARITAS Zambia and Biblical Desk Catholic Secretariat, 2011.

Pelaji, Sarah, "TANZANIA: Easter is Continued Celebration of SCCs Jubilee in AMECEA, and the Construction of a Synodal Church," *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 538, 4 April, 2014, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 6 April, 2024, <https://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2024/04/05/tanzania-easter-is-continued-celebration-of-sccs-jubilee-in-amecea-and-the-construction-of-a-synodal-church>

Easter Celebration is a continuation of the journey of reflection on the construction of the Synod Church guided by the slogan “For the Synod Church: Unity, Participation and Mission. “This Easter is celebrated in conjunction with the 50th Jubilee of Small Christian Communities in AMECEA countries under the slogan “Small Christian Communities: 50 Years of Building the Church as Family of God in AMECEA countries.” Bishop Flavian Kassala says that the Church as the Family of God in AMECEA countries finds its origin in the ecclesial model of Small Christian Communities (SCCs). Policies, plans and strategies of pastoral activities in the Synod and in the Small Christian Communities bring peace and light to the believers and to the whole world.

Pelaji, Sarah, “TANZANIA: Pastoral Coordinator Calls AMECEA Counties to Promote Small Christian Communities,” *AMECEA Online News*, Issue 296, 3 September, 2019, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 4 September, 2024, <https://amecea.blogspot.com/2019/09/tanzania-pastoral-coordinator-calls.html#!/2019/09/tanzania-pastoral-coordinator-calls.html>

Reprinted as “Small Christian Communities, Model of Evangelization” in the *Fides International New Service*, 17 September, 2019 – adapted from the *AMECEA Online News*.

NOTE: More and more, the Vatican is publishing stories on SCCs in Eastern Africa. They like our SCCs Pastoral Model with a missionary outreach.

Pelton, Robert S., *Bob Pelton Legacy – Collected Documents and Papers*, Notre Dame Archives, 505 items, University of Notre Dame: Notre Dame Archives, 2021.

Organized into three sections: Pelton, Small Christian Communities, Romero.

Pelton, Robert S., *From Power to Communion: Toward a New Way of Being Church Based on the Latin American Experience*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994.

Pelton, Robert S. (ed.), *Small Christian Communities: Imagining Future Church*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

Pierre, Pedro, “CEBs in the Synthesis Document,” unpublished document, Basic Ecclesial Communities, Guayaquil, Ecuador, November 2023. Posted on our Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, 7 November, 2023, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/comunidades-eclesiales-de-base-cebs-in-the-2023-synod-synthesis-document1-english-translation>

The Synthesis Document of the recent Synodal Assembly meeting in the Vatican in October, 2023 makes us see that yes, the CEBs (*Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* in Spanish) are “a seed” that has become “a big bush.” This article documents the references directly and indirectly to CEBs in the “Synthesis Document.” The CEBs that the Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Mexico in 2021 described as a “synodal Church experience” have a particular responsibility in this Synodal Process to set in motion another way of being church as we have begun to be. The article suggests reflections and questions to work on in our CEBs.

The original Spanish article *Las CEBs en el Documento de Síntesis* is also posted on our the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, 7 November, 2023, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/las-cebs-en-el-documento-de-sintesis>

Pikiti, Febian, “Small Christian Communities: A Key Pastoral Priority for the Church in the AMECEA Region.” Mwanza: Printed Paper, 2014.

A Pocket Companion To Synodality: Voices from Africa, African Synodality Initiative, Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar, Nairobi, 2022, [FINAL ENGLISH ASI AMENDED \(jesuits.africa\)](#)

Members of the African Synodality Initiative (ASI) Theological Working Group developed reflections on some key synodality themes from an African perspective that were published as a collection of short essays. As a resource material, this publication is meant to promote and support a wide and inclusive listening of all the People of God in keeping with the vision of Pope Francis of synodality as “a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn.” This publication is available in both English and French.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2005.

“Post Workshop Report: Workshop on How Small Christian Communities in Africa Receive and Implement Magisterial Documents,” St. Joseph’s Spiritual Center, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya, 24-30 September, 2012. Supported by Missio, SECAM and AMECEA, Accra and Nairobi: Privately Printed, 2014. Under the “African Continent” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/274-post-workshop-report-workshop-on-how-small-christian-communities-in-africa-receive-and-implement-magisterial-documents.html>

Preparatory Document for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly on *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2017. Vatican Website. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20170113_documento-preparatorio-xv_en.html
<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/01/13/0021/00050.html#EN>

Online questionnaire on the synod's official website:
youth.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/it.html.

It is open to any young person, regardless of faith or religious belief. Click here to start the survey in English.

Preparatory Document for the Synod of Bishops XVI Ordinary General Assembly on “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission,” Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2021. Vatican Website. [Documento-Preparatorio-A4-EN.pdf \(synod.va\)](#)

The Synodal Path (Path of Synodality) will solemnly open on the 9 – 10 October 2021 in Rome and on the following 16-17 October, 2021 in each Local Church (diocese). One

fundamental stage will be the celebration of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in October 2023 that which will be followed by the implementation phase that will again involve the Local Churches (cf. EC, arts. 19-21).

ADD

Pre-Synodal Meeting's Final Document for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly on *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2018.

<https://zenit.org/articles/pre-synodal-meetings-final-document>

Procedures and Guidelines for Small Christian Communities in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Lusaka: Pastoral Department of Lusaka Archdiocese, 2014.

Procedures for Meetings, Bible Sharing, Bible Study and of Praying with the Scriptures at All Levels in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Lusaka: Pastoral Department of Lusaka Archdiocese, 2013.

Proctor, Gerry, *A Commitment to Neighborhood: Base Ecclesial Communities in Global Perspective*, Doctorate Dissertation, Liverpool: University of Liverpool, 2012.

Radio Ichengelo, "ZAMBIA: Ndola Archdiocese Closes Celebrations for Small Christian Communities," *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, Issue 555, 2 August, 2024, retrieved on the AMECEA Website, 2 August, 2024,

[ZAMBIA: Ndola Archdiocese Closes Celebrations for Small Christian Communities \(amecea.org\)](http://amecea.org)

After a year-long celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) Region, the Archdiocese of Ndola, Zambia has officially closed this period that was [launched](#) in Malawi in 2023. Archbishop Benjamin Phiri led the celebration of Mass for the closure at Pamodzi Parish in Ndola that coincided with the Diaconate Ordination where three seminarians were raised to the order of the diaconate. During Mass all the SCCs that won the Deanery *Bible* quiz were recognized and awarded for their outstanding performance. During the celebration of 50 years of existence of SCC in the AMECEA Region, SCCs were encouraged to intensify Biblical Studies as a way of deepening faith. The SCC is a model that was created in December 1973 as a pastoral priority in the region.

Radoli, Agatha (ed.), *How Local is the Local Church? Small Christian Communities and Church in Eastern Africa*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* 126-128, 1993.

The first of two *Spearheads* that contains the papers of the Research Project and Symposium sponsored by AMECEA and Missio, Aachen on "The Reception of the *Communio* Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council" in Nairobi, Kenya from 18-26 September, 1993. Section Two on "Pastoral Praxis of Small Christian Communities" has three papers:

- Joseph Healey, MM, "Twelve Case Studies of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa," pp. 59-103.

"Zwölf Fallstudien Kleiner Christlicher Gemeinschaften in Ostafrika" in *Alternativen zur traditionellen Pfarrstruktur: Die Communio-Ekklesiologie und ihre Rezeption in Afrika, Ozeanien und Europa* by Hrsg. von Ludwig Bertsch, Hermann Janssen und Marco Moerschbacher. - Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1997 (Forum Weltkirche; 7), S. 72-94.

- Rodrigo Mejia, SJ, "The Pastoral Priorities of the Local Church in Eastern Africa," pp. 104-119.
- John Mutiso-Mbinda, "Ecumenical Challenges of Small Christian Communities and the African Synod of Bishops,"

Other relevant papers:

- Laurenti Magesa, "The Church in Eastern Africa: Retrospect and Prospect," pp. 3-35.
- Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike, LSOSF, "The Role of Women in Small Christian Communities," pp. 181-202.

These papers are especially relevant as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Vatican II (1965-2015) on 8 December, 2015.

Radoli, Agatha (ed.), *The Local Church with a Human Face*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* 140-141, 1996.

The second of two *Spearheads* that contains the papers of the Research Project and Symposium sponsored by AMECEA and Missio, Aachen.

Rahner, Karl, *The Shape of the Church to Come*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1974.

Ramos, Belza Elia, *Reflections on My Journey of Faith: Moving Closer to My Destination*, Xulon Press, 2020. Available on the Amazon Website, https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/166280198X?pf_rd_r=ADB14M7PJM5M5ADJ95W9&pf_rd_p=a712d25e-094e-4a8b-b495-0be41c4dbcc9

Belza is one of the USA networkers of the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website. She is a dedicated member of our St. Isidore of Seville SCC that meets online on Skype ever Tuesday. She writes:

Psalm 127:1a: "Unless the LORD build the house, they labor in vain who build." This is the story of my journey of faith. I am a cradle Catholic who grew up with God, family and community as the moral compass points in my life in a small town where everyone knew each other. I conflated obeying God with obeying parents and cultural norms until I ventured out into the world. Sadly, I married outside the Catholic Church, my faith and culture, all of which taught marriage is forever. God was ever calling me back to my faith, immature and unschooled as it was, but the world tugged in another direction and I stayed frozen in the situation. With a clear promise from God that He would not leave me an orphan, I took a leap of faith and left with my two children. With God at its center, my life has been an incredible journey of learning to grow in faith and do His work. The Angels that surround me re-anchor

me. This is my personal response to God. I leave you, the reader enough room to build your own response. That you are reading this book is the reason God was prompting me to share it. Belza Elia Ramos was born in 1940 in Salineño, Texas, USA and grew up in Corpus Christi. There she pursued her dream of being a nurse. Her life is full of "firsts" as a Hispanic woman, with few Hispanic women role models. She writes to encourage others to be resilient, have faith in God and themselves. Past experiences often help forge new careers. She enjoys being with family and she is looking forward to her first great-granddaughter! Writing with the hindsight of an adult helps her understand life better and she gets to laugh and cry all over again!

Ramos, Belza Elia, "State of the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) at St. Brigid Catholic Church, San Antonio, Texas (USA), June, 2021," Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 24 June, 2021, [June-2021-Belza-Ramos-State-of-the-SCCs-Report-for-2021.pdf \(smallchristiancommunities.org\)](https://smallchristiancommunities.org/June-2021-Belza-Ramos-State-of-the-SCCs-Report-for-2021.pdf)

"I am sharing the following report/evaluation that I made to my pastor in San Antonio, Texas with you, knowing that we all faced and are still facing the challenges that COVID-19 brought to our Small Christian Community lives, not only health-wise, but in fulfilling our mission as a SCC Model of Church. My prayer is that you all are doing well, individually and as SCCs. Also I hope that you will be called to share your own experiences during these trying times, on this website, so that we can learn from each other. God be with all of us."

Rayappan, Arockia, "Basic Ecclesial Communities: Fertile Ground for Social and Religious Harmony," *Journal of the Council for Research on Religion (JCREOR)*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Fall/Winter 2022), retrieved on 9 April, 2024, [file:///C:/Users/Father%20Joe/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/SWA1A1SR/Basic%20Ecclesial%20Communities_FINAL%20TYPESET%20VERSION_April%204th%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Father%20Joe/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/SWA1A1SR/Basic%20Ecclesial%20Communities_FINAL%20TYPESET%20VERSION_April%204th%20(1).pdf)

Rayappan, Arockia, "Basic Ecclesial Communities: Pathways for Ecumenical Collaboration," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection (VJTR)*, 88:6 (2024), <file:///C:/Users/Father%20Joe/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/JVJO7TUY/Basic%20Ecclesial%20Communities%20-%20Pathways%20for%20Ecumenical%20Collaboration.pdf>

The Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs), being centered on the Sacred Scriptures, visibly manifest the essential elements of the ecumenical fraternity. The article illustrates their historical development and theological foundations. Then it analyses the ecumenical initiatives inspired by the Decree on Ecumenism. Further, it invites the readers to view them as expressions of ecumenically diversified unity on the essentials and promotes the dialogue of life, action, discourse, spirituality, and proclamation at the grassroots. The article explores practical, resourceful, and sustainable ways to foster social and religious harmony through Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) in the contemporary Indian multi-cultural, pluri-religious, social, economic, and political milieu.

Rayappan, Arockia, *Laity Retrieving The Lost Heritage: A Scientific Study on the Effectiveness of SCC in the Archdiocese of Bombay*, Degree of Masters in Pastoral Management Dissertation, Institute of Pastoral Management, 2012.

Reader for the Network Small Christian Communities Africa – Fifth Workshop (Réseau des

Communautés Ecclésiales de Base en Afrique – Cinquième Atelier), Theme: “A New Way of Being Church for Young People? Small Christian Communities and the Youth” (Theme: “Une nouvelle manière d’être Église pour les jeunes? Les Communautés Ecclésiales de Base (CEB) et les jeunes,” Aachen: Missio, Privately Printed, 2018.

Reese, Tom, “[Francis Wants the Synod in Every Parish. Here's How To Bring It To Yours.](https://religionnews.com/2023/10/23/francis-wants-the-synod-in-every-parish-heres-how-to-bring-it-to-yours)” *Religious News Service*, 23 October, 2023, <https://religionnews.com/2023/10/23/francis-wants-the-synod-in-every-parish-heres-how-to-bring-it-to-yours> Also available on audio.

Reprinted in *National Catholic Reporter*

[Francis wants the synod in every parish. Here's how to bring it to yours. | National Catholic Reporter \(ncronline.org\)](https://www.ncreporter.org/francis-wants-the-synod-in-every-parish-heres-how-to-bring-it-to-yours)

and

America

[Pope Francis wants the synod in every parish. Here’s how to bring it to yours. | America Magazine](https://www.americamagazine.org/francis-wants-the-synod-in-every-parish-heres-how-to-bring-it-to-yours)

No document will convey the result of the synod. It will not be enough to read any document that comes from the synod; Catholics must experience the synod, must do synod. The best place to do this is in your parish. Some of the African participants at the synod report that they are already doing it. They have Small Christian Communities (SCCs) that meet weekly to converse about the Sunday Scriptures. They pray together and share their reflections. This provides the groundwork for a Synodal Parish. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, Austria acknowledged that the European Church is lagging behind on such practices. Every parish in America can have its own synodal experience by adapting the Synodal Process as described in “Methodology for the Working Groups” published by the General Secretary of the synod.

“Report on Consultation on Methods of Research to Find Out How the *Bible* is Being Used in Small Christian Communities in Africa,” sponsored and organized by BICAM, Nairobi: Privately Printed, 1989. Includes “The Coming of Small Christian Communities to Eastern Africa” by Joseph Kelly and “Towards an Effective Bible Reflection Method in African SCCs” by Joseph Healey.

RENEW Africa Resources and Publications on Small Christian Communities in South Africa. <http://www.renewintl.org>

Roberts, James, “Building the Family of God: What Do Young People Look for in Church?: Just-completed Surveys of Young Africans and Americans Have Highlighted the Challenges Facing the Youth Synod Taking Place Later This Year,” *The Tablet* Website, 7 January 2018, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/8357/building-the-family-of-god-what-do-young-people-look-for-in-church->¹⁵²⁴

¹⁵²⁴ This online story had a different title, was longer and had three hyperlinks as compared to the printed article in the “NEWS: the Church in the World” section had a different title and was shorter. The whole paper (printed) issue is also online on *The Tablet* Website.

Reprinted in:

1. "Tangaza Lecturer's Work Gets Covered by The Tablet -UK." Tangaza Blog under "UNIVERSITY NEWS & EVENTS," 8 January, 2018. <http://tangaza.ac.ke/tangaza-lecturers-work-gets-covered-by-the-tablet-uk>

2. "African Youth Want To See More Space for Women and LGBT People." FutureChurch Email Message, 11 January, 2018.

3. "Building the Family of God: What Do Young People Look for in Church?" Catholic News Agency for Africa (CANAA), 15 January, 2018. http://www.canaafrica.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=archive&year=2018&month=1&lang=en

Plus links on other news bulletins.

Roberts, James, "United States/Eastern Africa: Surveys Seek 'Real Voice' of Young People" *The Tablet*, 13 January, 2018 paper (printed) issue, page 26, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/downloadpdf/130118issue.pdf>

Rôle des Responsables dans les Communautés Chrétiennes de Base, Ouagadougou: Archidiocèse de Ouagadougou, Service diocésain de la formation permanente, 2014.

Rugambwa, Protase, *Ministry and Collaboration in Small Christian Communities: Communities in Rulenge Diocese, Tanzania, a Case Study*, Rome: Lateran University, 1998.

Rutechura, Pius, "The Experience of the AMECEA Region with Small Christian Communities, Pastoral Priority since the 1970s," 27th Theological Week of Kinshasa on "The Experience of Basic Living Ecclesial Communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives After 50 Years," Kinshasa: Unpublished Paper, 22 February, 2011, 13 pages.

Rwechungura, John Joseph, *Mjue Askofu Christopher Mwoleka: Mtume wa Upendo Upeo wa Yesu*, Karagwe: Privately Printed, 2012.

Ryan, Patrick (ed.), *New Strategies for a New Evangelization*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002.

Samasumo, Paul, "Zambia: On Being a Missionary of Synodality," *Vatican News*, 2 August, 2024, Vatican Website, retrieved on 2 August, 2024, [Zambia: On Being a Missionary of Synodality - Vatican News](https://www.vaticannews.va/en/africa/zambia-on-being-a-missionary-of-synodality-2024-08-02)

From Father Cletus Mwiila, Parish Priest of St. Mary's Choma Parish in Monze Diocese in Zambia on the *Vatican News*:

In Zambia, we already have a strong history of Small Christian Communities (SCCs), so I share the message of making the SCCs become communities of change in the light of

Synodality. The message promotes active participation in the Catholic Church, listening to one another and making sure no one is left behind, promoting a self-sustaining church lived in communion and the use of leadership as a service rather than the power of domination. My message also facilitates the discovery and use of charisms, vocations and ministries in the communities and among members.

Among the Synodal messages is the call to weave ties and build communities for change. Over the last 50 years, in Zambia and the AMECEA Region, the church has attempted to build and promote the image of the Church as Family. This was also given accent at the 1994 African Synod. But the reality on the ground sometimes remains challenging. There is a gap, or there are still some gaps, for example, between parents, youth and children. Some of these are cultural in that most African societies clearly define the roles of parents, adults and children. So, as we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of SCCs in the AMECEA region [1973-2023], the celebration should be enlightened by the Synod on Synodality.



Sangu, James, “Report on the Experiences of the Church in the Work of Evangelization in Africa,” Fourth Synod of Bishops on “On Evangelization in the Modern World,” in *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)*, 10: 1 (January 1968): 71-84, 86 and Raymond Hickey (ed.), *Modern Missionary Documents and Africa*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982.

“SCCs Holdings” as part of the “Rev. Robert S. Pelton Latin American Collection,” Moreau Seminary, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2019.

Schreiter, Robert, *Constructing Local Theologies*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985. 30th Anniversary Edition, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015.

Schreiter points out that local theologies can be constructed with the local community as theologian:

The experience of those in the Small Christian Communities who have seen the insight and power arising from the reflections of the people upon their experience and the Scriptures has prompted making the community itself the prime author of theology in local contexts. The Holy Spirit, working in and through the believing community, gives shape and expression to Christian experience. Some of these communities have taught us to read the Scriptures in a fresh way and have called the larger church back to a fidelity to the prophetic Word of God.

Scott, Eileen, "Verbum Dei: Graduate Students, Young Professional Enjoy Study Group," *Christian Union*, Spring, 2016.

Interesting Case Study of a SCC connected to the Harvard Catholic Center/St.Paul's Parish in Boston, Massachusetts, US. The 18 members consist of young professionals with careers in Boston and graduate students (American and international students) at Harvard University. They gather each Sunday to read and reflect on the Sunday readings (the relevancy of *Old* and *New Testament* readings to their life and career) and to share and pray about finding God in everyday life. One member, a second-year Harvard graduate student said: "I certainly think that a small group based on *Bible Study* is an essential part of any Christian life. I would hope to find and encourage this kind of prayerful group engagement with scripture wherever I end up."

Segeja, Nicholas, *An Ecclesiology of Reverential Dialog in the Family (Shikome)*. Nairobi: Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, CUEA, 2010.

Segeja Nicholas, "Family-Centered Parish Through Small Christian Communities: A Parish Model for the New Evangelization" in Nicholas Segeja and Emmanuel Wabanhu, (eds.), *The Echo of Amoris Laetitia in Africa: Towards Living the Joy of Love Experienced by Families in the Church*, Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2017.

Segeja, Nicholas, "Reverential Dialog-based Evangelization in Africa: A New Icon Towards Fully Human Person Liberation," *African Christian Studies*, 26: 4 (December, 2010), 25-41.

Segeja, Nicholas, "Small Christian Communities: A Vital Icon for New Evangelization," *African Christian Studies*, 27: 4 (December, 2011): 7-38.

Segeja, Nicholas, "Summary Notes" on *The Development and Ecclesiology of Small Christian Communities (SCCS) in AMECEA Countries*, Nairobi: Unpublished Course Notes at CUEA, 2010.

Segeja, Nicholas, "Syllabus of Course on 'Small Christian Communities in Africa' B-PT 111," First cycle – Baccalaureate, Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), 2017.

Under Methodology: "As theology, at best, must respond to the joys, sorrows, hopes and fears of the community of faith which the theologian represents, the lecturer in this course envisions the student's primary audience and always encourage him or her to do theology *with* the people and not simply to do theology for the people."

Shijinga, Inviolata, "Small Christian Communities: The Ultimate Support System," *The*

Basilican, 1:6 (2016): 46-48.

Excellent description of the life of a SCC. More than a support group, more than a prayer group, more than a *Bible* study group. SCC members are always there for one another. They help each other to grow in the social, family, and most importantly, spiritual life. A special achievement is to help couples get married in the Catholic Church and receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

Sirabahenda, Léon, *Eglise Famille de Dieu: Les Ressources Spirituelles de L'Image Référence pour L'évangélisation en Afrique*, Rome: Gregorianum Univeristy 1996. This Ph.D Dissertation treats the spirituality of BECs/SCCs.

Sivalon, John (ed.), *The Buffaloes: A Story Commemorating Maryknoll Society's 50 Years in Tanzania, 1946-1996*, Dar es Salaam, privately printed, 1996. Maryknoll Africa Region Website and African Proverbs, Saying and Stories Website, retrieved on 16 November, 2022, <https://afriprov.tangaza.ac.ke/?p=7473>

“Small Christian Communities,” Dossier in *New People*, No. 149, March-April, 2014, 20-26. Includes Laurenti Magesa, “The Joy of Community in Small Christian Communities;” Joseph Healey, “Pope Francis: SCCs: Word of God, Social Commitment, New Lay Services and Education in Faith;” and Joseph Healey, “The Role of the Youth in the SCCs.”

“Small Christian Communities in the Light of the African Synod,” AMECEA *Documentation Service* (ADS), 7/No. 453/1996 (1 April, 1996), 8 pages.

Small Christian Communities Marching Towards the African Year of Reconciliation (also in French and Portuguese), Accra: SECAM Office, Privately Photocopied, 2015.

Small Christian Communities (SCCs)-- Diocese of Meru, Meru Diocese, Kenya: Privately Printed, 2017.

The Seven Steps of Lumko in three languages: English, Meru and Swahili.

“Small Christian Communities: 20 Years Later,” AMECEA *Documentation Service* (ADS), 10-11/No. 472/1997 (June/July, 1997), 20 pages.

Small Groups Field Guide: A Smarter Way to Build Your Small Groups Program. Produced by Michael St. Pierre and the Catholic Campus Ministry Association (CCMA) in the USA. 2017. Available as a printed book and an Ebook. [iBooks Version for iPhone & iPad](#). [PDF Version: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/578cce236a49638ee359e17b/t/59e7bf7bd74cffd56e0dea38/1508360141336/Small+Groups+Field+Guide+PDF.pdf](#)
[Small Groups Discussion Guide](#)

Small Groups Field Guide: A 22-page resource from the Catholic Campus Ministry Association in the USA. Small groups (also called Small Christian Communities -- SCCs) on college and high school campuses are an essential ingredient to any Catholic campus ministry program. This guide explains the details of small groups and provide motivation to utilize them on your campus. This guide provide useful information and suggested steps to planning gatherings, resources to use during small group sharing, etc. This book is available for download with iBooks on your Mac or iOS device. Multi-touch books can be read with

iBooks on your Mac or iOS device. Books with interactive features may work best on an iOS device. iBooks on your Mac requires OS X 10.9 or later.

Spadaro Antonio, *WEB 2.0: Relationships in the Internet Age*, Media Training in Africa Series, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2014.

Ssentamu (Joseph Healey), Review of [Handbook of African Catholicism](#). Reviewed in the United States on August 3, 2022, Amazon Website, retrieved on 6 August, 2022, [“Small Christian Communities \(SCCs\) in Africa: Histories, Themes, Development and Challenges.” \(amazon.com\)](#)

“Summary Notes” on *The Development and Ecclesiology of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in AMECEA Countries*, Nairobi: Unpublished Course Notes, 2010.

“Statement (Position Paper) from Bishops of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) Who Are Delegates to the Synod of Bishops’ Second Special Assembly for Africa in Rome in October, 2009. Nairobi: Unpublished Paper, 29 September, 2009, 5 pages. Published online by Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) *Email News Bulletin*. Issue No. 096, Tuesday, September 29, 2009. Available online: [http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:4KIc04Qm0LkJ:www.africamission-mafr.org/cisa18_synod_africa.htm+%22Bishops+of+the+Association+of+Member+Episcopal+Conferences+of+Eastern+Africa+\(AMECEA\)+Who+Are+Delegates+to+the+Synod+of+Bishops%E2%80%99+Second+Special+Assembly+for+Africa%22&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk](http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:4KIc04Qm0LkJ:www.africamission-mafr.org/cisa18_synod_africa.htm+%22Bishops+of+the+Association+of+Member+Episcopal+Conferences+of+Eastern+Africa+(AMECEA)+Who+Are+Delegates+to+the+Synod+of+Bishops%E2%80%99+Second+Special+Assembly+for+Africa%22&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk)

Steffen, Paul, *Centres of Formation and Evangelizing Ministry: Pastoral Institutes in Oceania and Africa*, Studia Instituti Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini Nr. 102, Siegburg: Franz Schmitt Verlag, 2014.

Steffen, Paul, “Lumko Institute: Towards Building a Participatory Church,” *East Asian Pastoral Review* 51:2 (2014): 109-139 and *Sedos Bulletin* 47:1-2 (2015): 3-17.

Steffen, Paul, “A Reflective Book Review: A New Way of Being Church. The Beginning and the Spread of Small Christian Communities and Bible Sharing in Africa and Asia” by Klaus Vellguth, *SEDOS Bulletin*, 2015.

[\(54\) \(PDF\) Klaus Vellguth A Reflective Book Review: A New Way of Being Church. The Beginning and the Spread of Small Christian Communities and Bible-Sharing in Africa and Asia | Paul Steffen - Academia.edu](#)

Stinton, Diane (ed.), *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations*, London: SPCK International Study Guide 46, 2010.

Sybertz, Donald, *Tears of Joy: African Story about Heroes and Monsters*. With editions in Sukuma and Swahili. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Mathews Bookstore & Stationers, 2006.

Nanetya Foundation: Ethnic Stories in Mother Tongues Website
<http://nanetya-foundation.org>
<http://nanetya-foundation.org/sukuma-shisoji-ja-buyegi>

Sukuma Legacy Project Website

<https://sukumalegacy.org>

<https://sukumalegacy.org/2017/04/28/shisoji-ja-buyegi>

This is probably the most famous Sukuma story and is found in many versions. Some examples:

“Lishing’weng’we na Masala Kulangwa” in Kamati ya Utafiti wa Utamaduni Bujora, *Imani za Jadi za Kisukuma Katika Misemo, Hadithi, Methali na Desturi za Maisha* (Paris: Cid éditions, 1988), 296-305.

Section 2 on “Sukuma Redeemer and Savior Figure” in Chapter 2 on “Jesus, Chief Diviner-Healer and Eldest Brother-Chief Intercessor” in Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz (eds.), *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1996 and Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997. Available as an Ebook on Amazon (for Kindle), Google and Barnes and Noble (for Nook).

Sybertz, Donald and Joseph Healey. *Kueneza Injili Kwa Methali: Hekima ya Kisukuma na Lugha Mbalimbali juu ya Chakula -- Kitabu cha Kwanza*, Peramiho: Benedictine Publications Ndanda -- Peramiho, 1984. The English translation is *Proclaiming the Gospel Through Proverbs: The Wisdom of Sukuma and Different Languages on Food – Book I*.

Taketa, Carolyn, *Why Small Groups? The Reason Behind Intentional Christian Community* Small Groups Website, retrieved on 21 April, 2016,

http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2012/why-small-groups.html?utm_source=buildingsmallgroups-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=9077722&utm_content=431367207&utm_campaign=email

Tertrais, Max. *The Clever Young Man and the Monster: The Sukuma Myth of Shing’weng’we and Masala Kulangwa*. Paulines Publications Africa, 2000. The Swahili version is *Kijana Mwerevu na Shing’weng’we: Hadithi ya Kisukuma ya Shing’weng’we and Masala Kulangwa*. With accompanying eight-page booklet *The Clever Young Man and the Monster: Comments on the Book*.

African Stories Database on the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website:

a. “Masala Kulangwa and the Monster Shing’weng’we.”

[http://www.afriprov.org/resources/storiesdatabase.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=238](http://www.afriprov.org/resources/storiesdatabase.html?task=display2&cid[0]=238)

b. “The Clever Young Man and the Monster.”

[http://www.afriprov.org/resources/storiesdatabase.html?task=display2&cid\[0\]=156](http://www.afriprov.org/resources/storiesdatabase.html?task=display2&cid[0]=156)

While this article is not about Small Christian Communities as such, it reflects the method or process of the “local community as theologian” -- a small community of the Ndoleleji Research Committee in Shinyanga, Tanzania theologizing together on an African theme on the local level. The Sukuma myth narrated in a long song (in chant style) of the clever young man Masala Kulangwa and the monster Shing’weng’we can be applied to Jesus Christ as redeemer and savior. This is a concrete step toward an inculturated Christianity in Africa.

Tesfamariam, Menghhesteab, "The Role of the Church," *New People*, No. 135, November-December, 2011: 13.

"Three Testimonies from Members of the Maryknoll Small Communities, Sal y Luz (Salt and Light)", Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 7 June, 2022, [Three Testimonies from Members of the Maryknoll Small Communities, Sal y Luz \(Salt and Light\) – Small Christian Communities.](#)

"1961-2015 Timeline in the History and Development of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Especially Eastern Africa," 2014, Nairobi, Unpublished Paper, 12 June, 2014, 55 pages. This timeline has proven very useful to many people and is quoted in books, articles and reports, Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 12 June, 2014.
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/293-1961-2015-timeline-in-the-history-and-development-of-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-africa-especially-eastern-africa.html>

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/images/stories/pdf/timeline.pdf>

Ugeux, Bernard and Pierre Lefebvre, *Small Christian Communities and Parishes*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999.

Ulrich, Megan, "Carrying Each Other's Burdens," Today's American Catholic Website, 24 April 2023, retrieved 27 April, 2023, [Carrying Each Other's Burdens by Megan Ulrich - Today's American Catholic \(todayamericancatholic.org\)](#)

Uzukwu, Elochukwu, *A Listening Church, Autonomy and Communion in African Churches* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996. Reprinted: Eugene, OR: Wif and Stock Publishers, 2006.

Presents the problems and challenges facing the Catholic Church in Africa today. Nigerian Spiritan missionary priest Father Elochukwu Uzukwu, CSSP briefly describes the historical development of the church in the period of colonialism, but focuses his primary attention on how the church can respond today to African needs. AIDS, famine, ethnic strife, refugees, poverty, debt, environmental degradation -- these form the wounded face of Africa today, the reality confronting the Catholic Church in Africa. To heal Africa, Uzukwu argues that the church in Africa must become a credible and effective agent of change by making full use of African resources (natural and socio-historical) including traditional patterns of social organization. In order to renew itself, the church must remember that it does not exist for itself but for the people -- to bear witness in Africa to the risen Lord. Focusing on the Catholic Church in Africa today, *A Listening Church* proposes a fresh approach to Ecclesiology. Following closely on the First African Synod of Bishops, Uzukwu proposes the initiation of serious theological discussion on the structure of the church in Africa that came out of that historic occasion. Simply speaking, the African churches must listen to their people, and the church in Rome must listen to the churches in Africa. *A Listening Church* is a voice deserving to be heard in the ongoing discussions of world ecumenical and church outreach issues.

This book is enjoying a new life/resurgence in the light of Pope Francis emphasizing that we should first be a Listening Church and second a Teaching Church.

Young, Randy, *Catholic Campus Ministry: Fifteen Profiles in Achievement*, NJ, 2020. Ebook and paperback, Amazon Website, retrieved on 21 August 2021.

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08HZFBNQ5/ref=pe_385040_118058080_TE_M1DP

Catholic Campus Ministry plays a crucial role in helping to shape the lives and deepen the faith of young adults. At a time of widening social, political, and spiritual unrest, campus ministries on colleges and universities around the USA are developing student-leaders to become agents for positive change in their communities, the Catholic Church and future professions. *Catholic Campus Ministry: Fifteen Profiles in Achievement* celebrates the work of Catholic ministries as a whole and, just importantly, the success of a laudable core group on very diverse campuses that has consistently found imaginative new ways to connect with and impact young people at a formative period in their lives. Some of these 15 campuses emphasize Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs).

Youth of Dandora Parish, "An Overview Structure of Holy Cross Catholic Parish Dandora Youth Ministry in Nairobi Archdiocese Including a Case Study of St. Perpetua SCC," Nairobi: Unpublished Reports, 2015, 2018.

Vademecum **ADD**

Vandenakker, John Paul, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish: An Ecclesiological Analysis of the North American Experience*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995.

Villemure, Elizabeth, "Youth and Small Christian Communities in Kangemi Parish," *Newsletter Archdiocese of Nairobi*, November, 1993: 4-5.

Insightful historical article on 45 committed youth in four Junior Small Christian Communities (JSCCs) or *jumuiya ya vijana*. Base youth communities organized according to the neighborhood. Two animators ("wakolezaji" in Swahili) on the Parish Pastoral Team coordinate and give formation to the JSCCs.

Waliggo, John Mary, "The Church as Family of God and Small Christian Communities," *AMECEA Documentation Service*, No. 429 (1 December, 1994).

Wall, Barbara and Massimo Faggioli (eds), *Pope Francis: A Voice for Mercy, Justice, Love and Care for the Earth*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019.

<https://www.orbisbooks.com/pope-francis.html>

Wambua, Nzilani Mary, *Enhancing the Spirit of Communion in Small Christian Communities: A Case Study in the Archdiocese of Mombasa, Kenya*, Nairobi: Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Privately Printed, 2015.

Wasswa, Joseph, "The Next Step Ahead for the Existing SCCs," Tororo, Uganda: Unpublished Paper, 2015.

White, Robert, "Reaching Our Non-practicing Catholics and the Unchurched with Lay Evangelizing Teams," Nairobi: Unpublished Article, 2013.

Whitehead, Evelyn and James. *Community of Faith: Models and Strategies for Developing Christian Communities*. iUniverse, 1982. ISBN-13: 978-0-595-198-085 Available at

iUniverse

Wiesendanger, Alex Tindal, *Seeds of Justice: Organizing Your Church to Change the World*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2020. <https://www.orbisbooks.com/seeds-of-justice.html>

Refers to a House Meeting, a type of SCC. Five to 20 people get together for uninterrupted conversation. These meetings can be in people's houses, a church basement, a park, a backyard, a local coffee shop or a McDonald's. Drawing on long experience working in faith-based communities, churches, congregations and neighborhoods around issues of social justice using this House Meeting Model, Wiesendanger offers a handbook to translate a commitment to social justice into effective action. Beginning with the need to move beyond charity to justice, he then guides readers from being activists to becoming agents of transformation within their church and the world. This involves learning how to build power through relationships and listening. Finally, it means developing faith-based communities, churches, congregations and neighborhoods capable of wielding power in the public sphere. Contains a "Sample House Meeting Agenda with Justice Bible Study."

Wijsen, Frans, Peter Henriot and Rodrigo Mejia (eds.), *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005 and Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

Wojcik, Michael "Clifton Students Help Young Kenyans Sow Seeds of Faith and Ecology with Tree-planting Project." *The Beacon*, 8 February, 2024, *The Beacon* Website, retrieved on 10 February, 2022. <https://evergreen.mydigitalpublication.com/publication/?m=32257&i=814921&p=6&ver=html5>

Why this article is a model of good journalism/good writing;

- Clear, informative headline.
- Creative link between faith and ecology.
- Colorful photo and clear caption.
- Lot of facts about Small Christian Communities and Africa.
- Includes the Mission Office of Paterson Diocese and the Synodal on Synodality.
- Quote from a 7th Grader.
- Quote from the Principal of the school.
- Quote from a member of the Young People Seekers Small Christian Community.
- Link to SCCs Website.

Wojcik, Michael, "Missionary Priest Shares African Culture With Students," *The Beacon*, 13 October, 2022, *The Beacon* Website, retrieved on 14 October 2022.

<http://www.evergreeneditions.com/publication/?m=32257&i=764707&p=2&ver=html5>

15

*Working Document*¹⁵²⁵ for the Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly. *Young*

¹⁵²⁵ The Vatican is still slow to "get it." Young people have pleaded with Vatican officials to use English (or other vernacular languages) rather than Latin. Good news: The *Lineamenta* came as the *Preparatory Document*. Bad news: we are going backwards again with Latin

People, Faith and Vocational Discernment, Liberia Editrice Vaticana and Paulines Publications Africa, 2018. Vatican Website.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20180508_instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html

“ZAMBIA: ZEC Hosts National Youth SCCs Workshop on the Theme ‘Youth SCCs Embrace the Word of God,’” *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, Issue 037, December 6, 2013, http://amecea.blogspot.com/2013/12/zambia-zec-hosts-national-youth-sccs.html?utm_source=AMECEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=29c836c001-AMECEA+Online+Newsletter+6+5+2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_85fa866553-29c836c001-6746297

Zemale, Terese Josephine, *Christian Witness through Small Christian Communities*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, *Spearhead* No. 121, 1992.

Zengarini, Lisa, “Pope Upholds Brazilian BECs' Commitment To Promote An Outgoing Church,” Vatican Website, 21 July, 2023, retrieved on 21 July, 2023, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-07/pope-upholds-becs-commitment-to-promote-an-outgoing-church.html>, with a 1:57 minutes audio report. Republished on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 22 July, 2023, <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/pope-upholds-brazilian-becs-commitment-to-promote-an-outgoing-church>

Report on the 15th Inter-ecclesial Meeting of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) in Brazil from in 18--22 July, 2023 on the theme “Basic Ecclesial Communities: An Outgoing Church Pursuing the Full Life For All Men and Women.” Discussions focused on five thematic areas including: Synodality and Power in the Church; the Political and Social Dimension; the Economy of Francesco; Integral Ecology and Education. Brazilian BECs held their first national inter-ecclesial meeting in 1975.

Zulu, Stella, “AMECEA To Celebrate 50 Years of Small Christian Communities,” *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, 18 August, 2023, AMECEA Website, retrieved on 18 August, 2023, UGANDA: AMECEA To Celebrate Small Christian Communities Golden Jubilee **ADD and FIX**

Zulu, Stella, “MALAWI: Families and Small Christian Communities Urged to Care for the Elderly,” *AMECEA Online Newsletter*, 9 August, 2024, retrieved on the AMECEA Website, 15 August, 2024, **ADD No.** <https://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2024/08/09/malawi-families-and-small-christian-communities-urged-to-care-for-the-elderly>

Families and Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Malawi are being urged to love and care for the aging members of families and the Catholic Church, recognizing the contributions they have made during their active years. This call was made by Bishop Yohane Suzgo Nyirenda, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Mzuzu, Malawi during Mass for

(*Instrumentum Laboris*) used rather than English (*Working Document*) in the official document from Rome. The Daughters of St. Paul wisely shifted to English in their local publication.

the national celebration of the fourth World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly, held at St. John's (Mzambazi) Parish in the Mzuzu Diocese.

Zwack, Daniel, "Christian Community--African Style," *Channel*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn, 1967).

Zwack, Daniel, *Nyarombo Mission Diary*, Nyarombo, Tanzania: Privately Printed, 27 March, 1967 and January, 1968.

CDs/DVDs/Videos/Webinars/Podcasts/Masses/Talks/Reports/Powerpoints/
Presentations/Audio-Visual Resources (128)¹⁵²⁶

Africa Matters: A Book Discussion. Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology (CWCIT). DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois. 29 September, 2016
<https://vimeo.com/185504777>

The African Synod Comes Home. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1995.

AMECEA Family of God: Celebrating a Golden Jubilee of Evangelization in Solidarity. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2011.

Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) -- DADITAMA¹⁵²⁷ 50 Year Experience., Davao: Pastoral GKK Davao, 7 July, 2020,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2OD8lknDH0&fbclid=IwAR0FOYeUpOb5veqHgsP--Y_rcKJym0lGMSvneX6eiEB0pBH4zua_4VXmEY

Gamay'ng Khristohanong Katilingban (GKK) is the English translation/abbreviation of the Visayan name for “Small Christian Community.” The video portrays the journey of faith, hope and charity of 6427 BECs in Davao Archdiocese and three dioceses in Philippines in 50 years (1969 to 2019). The PIME Missionaries arrived in 1937 and the Maryknoll Missionaries arrived in 1959. The video narrates experiences of the Dididame BEC Church.

The Bible Alive (Swahili Version is *Biblia Hai*). Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1988.

Bird's Eye View of the LUMKO Way of Being Church. By Ephigenia Gachiri. Nairobi: Powerpoint Presentation. 2014.

Bishop Patrick Kalilombe and the Lilongwe Diocese, Malawi Mini Synod in 1973-75: One of the Foundations of the AMECEA Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Pastoral Priority Leading Up to the Two “Synod on Synodality” Sessions in 2023 and 2024. By Joseph G. Healey. Workshop on “Celebrating the Golden Jubilee Year of Small Christian Communities (SCCs): 50 Years (1973 to 2023) from July, 2023 to July, 2024.” Lilongwe, Malawi. 21 August, 2023. Lilongwe: Powerpoint Presentation.

¹⁵²⁶ A number of these resources can be found online such as on YouTube and other websites. Then they can be classified as “Digital Resources” or “Digital Media” described as:

Any media that are encoded in a machine-readable format. Digital media can be created, viewed, distributed, modified and preserved on computers. Computer programs and software; digital video; web pages and websites, including social media; data and databases; digital audio, such as mp3s; and e-books are examples of digital media. Digital media are frequently contrasted with print media, such as printed books, newspapers and magazines, and other traditional or analog media, such as film or audio tape.

Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia Website, retrieved on 24 July, 2013,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_media

¹⁵²⁷ The acronym for the Davao Metropolitan of: *Davao Archdiocese, DI, Tagum, Mati Diocese*

2023. [21 August 2023 Talk at SCCs Workshop in Malawi Final Version.pptx](#)

Betty Graham Headley 1930s Home Movie with Titles. Titles by Jonathan Oglesby. 17.41 minutes. 680 MB. Available on Google Docs (Cloud).

[Betty Graham Headley 1930s Home Movie with Titles.mp4 - Google Drive](#)

CARA, *Faith Group Activity among Catholic Young Adults: Many Living the Faith Outside of the Parish*, Powerpoint Presentation. 2021.

[Faith Group Activity among Catholic Young Adults \(georgetown.edu\)](#)

Case Study of How We Started Prisca and Aquila Companions Online Small Christian Community, by Valerie Stroud, 13:47 minutes (from 42:12 minutes to 56:01 minutes) in “Towards Pentecost 2023 -- Signs of the Spirit with companions Kevin Gallagher, Nicholas Postlethwaite and Valerie Stroud,” Scottish Laity Network Webinar, [Towards Pentecost 2023 ~ Signs of the Spirit with companions Kevin Gallagher, Nicholas Postlethwaite - YouTube](#). Thursday 18 May, 2023, 1 hour and 28:23 minutes.

For this Towards Pentecost 2023 program the three presenters again reflected on their Synodal Submission and, in the light of their recommendations, sought to discern where there are possible “Signs of the Spirit.” This third session on Thursday 18 May, 2023 -- “Where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them” -- was an opportunity to explore how our discipleship can develop through coming together in Small Groups either face to face or online. Kevin, Nicholas and Valerie shared how the current development of Small Ecclesial Groups (SEGs) is located in the “change of era” as affirmed by Pope Francis. There is also a renewed appreciation of the dynamic of Small Group encounters in Scripture. During the conversation ways of setting up and facilitating Small Groups were shared but it was stressed that there is no one model and it depends on the composition of the group and how the Spirit guides and empowers it.

Valerie’s Case Study’s full title was: “Patrons: Prisca and Aquila *Acts 18*: A Small Community in Cyberspace in the Catholic Christian Tradition, but welcoming everyone.” Her excellent powerpoint describes the creation of the SCC step by step. It meets weekly on Tuesdays on Zoom and communicates regularly through Google Group. 15 companions with 6- 8 each week on Zoom. Lectionary readings are the foundation. Exploring the readings on a Tuesday adds value to the following Sunday celebration of the Word and Eucharist.

[Celebrating 180,000 Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa: Msgr. Thomas Kleissler Award](#). Plainfield, NJ: Renew International, 2013. Available on the SCC Website and on the YouTube Website,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqkhWgOwTRE>

Celebrating Service to Mission: The Maryknoll Journey (1911-2011 Worldwide and 1946-2011 Africa). Nairobi: Creativecamera Ltd, 2011.

Charles Ndege’s Religious Paintings, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Africa Region Website, retrieved 24 July, 2014, <http://www.maryknollafrica.org/HealeyAlbum2.htm> and the African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website, retrieved 2 July, 2022, [African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories – African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories \(tangaza.ac.ke\)](#)

The Church in Africa Will Never Walk Alone. Part I. By Joseph G. Healey. Radio Podcast in the “African Catholic Voices” series sponsored by the Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN), 28:26 minutes. retrieved 27 September, 2022, Part 1 (buzzsprout.com). Video Podcast in the “African Catholic Voices” series, 29:04 minutes, retrieved 1 October, 2022, YouTube Website *The Church in Africa will never walk alone : Fr Joseph G. Healey (Part I) - YouTube*

Maryknoll missionary, theologian, professor, and communication expert, Fr. Joseph G. Healey speaks on the renewal and reform of the Catholic Church in Africa. His favorite song is “You’ll Never Walk Alone” from the 1945 American Broadway Musical *Carousel*. At 84 and after 56 years as a priest, Joseph G. Healey exudes a freshness of perspectives, a depth of knowledge, and an arresting humility that are both compelling and inspirational. After more than 50 years of pastoral work in Africa, he carries the institutional memory of the post-Vatican II Church, and theology in Africa. He is considered the father of Small Christian Communities in Africa and is one of the pioneers of African Narrative Theology. In this first part of our dialogue with *Mwanajumuiya* (“Member of a Small Christian Community”) as he likes to be called, he shares with us his love for Africa, his enduring passion and commitment for the renewal and reform of the Church and for grassroots evangelization in inclusive African communities of faith. Fr. Healey is very proud of AMECEA's Social Communications Department that he pioneered in the early days of his priesthood and looks back in time in this episode. He leaves us with a very hopeful message that Africa and the world will never walk alone because the God of our ancestors is always with us.

The Church in the Neighborhood: Small Christian Communities (with Swahili and Arabic Versions). Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1995. Segment I: “Life and Activities of SCCs.” Segment II: “Services (Ministries) in the SCC.”

[Discussion on Global Small Christian Communities Especially in Africa: Small Christian Communities in Africa and Beyond: A Conversation between Sr. Marie Cooper and Fr. Joe Healey, MM](#). Plainfield, NJ: Renew International, 2012. Available on the SCCs Website and on the YouTube Website, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR1ypNUEaAg>

Climate Justice in Kenya. Maryknoll Global Solidarity Webinar. 19 November, 2020. 56.30 minutes. Available on the Google Drive of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Website (<https://www.maryknoll.us>). The link is: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1q4-3FH8or7HpRcnLbsLxu3optP9WcvED/view>

The presenters were Alphonse Omolo (Powerpoint Presentation: Case Study of Fish Youth Group in Kisumu, Kenya) and Joe Healey (Case Study of. The facilitator was Stephanie Luna -- capable, smiling and a young adult!

The rate that our climate is changing is alarming and destructive, with the greatest impacts on communities who are poorest around the world. Dr. Alphonse Omolo and Fr. Joe Healey, M.M. share what’s happening in Kenya as hundreds of families living along the shores of Lake Victoria are displaced by recent floods. There is a Case Study of St. Kizito SCC in Nairobi’s ecology and environmental activities. We discuss how our faith helps us understand our call to act for climate justice and draw inspiration from the youth of the world that are demanding action and working to enact God’s love.

A Coordination of Charisms. Synod Report/Vatican Press Conference on 20 October, 2023. See the talk by Sister Mary Theresa Barron, OLA, President of the International

Union of Superiors General (UISG) [Women]. Vatican Website on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDv25cbXlgA>

Barron is an Irish missionary sister. Picking up on a theme that was introduced yesterday by Archbishop Anton Dabula Mpako of South Africa, she spoke of how her experience with Small Christian Communities (SCCs) has informed her understanding of synodality. Barron's work as a missionary took her to Eastern Africa, which she called "my first introduction to a synodal church." She described a parish structure in a rural parish in Shinyanga Diocese in Tanzania that comprised 35 villages. It was half the size of Ireland. Each village had an "outstation" with a catechist. "There were only two priests to serve the entire parish," she explained. "It was such a synodal process," she said. "We listened to each other. The decisions were taken together. The outstation fed into the center, which fed into the parish, which then fed into the diocese."

Barron said that the Rome Synodal Assembly reminds her of the weekly meetings of these Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa, particularly the way that everyone is given a chance to contribute regardless of rank, position, or educational status.

"I think the experience of sitting around the tables in Paul VI Hall brings me back again to East Africa. The setting is extremely different. I imagine myself outside a mud hut where we met every Sunday for our Basic Christian Community meetings — a small gathering of people, maybe 10 families in the Christian community. We sat around and shared our faith rooted in the Gospel of that Sunday. But the key was that we had to decide how we wanted to live that faith as a community and take an action. What was beautiful for me: "We shared our faith from the depths of our hearts and we came to a decision together," she said. "Every voice was the same around that Small Christian Community."

This witness talk/testimony is a very good description of the SCCs Model of Church from the grassroots up. Communion Ecclesiology work hand in hand with synodality (walking together).

Doing the Will of God: The Story of the Servant of God Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga (1923-2003). Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2013.

Experiences in East Africa. Hybrid (in-person and on Zoom) Talk at the Old Guard of Summit, NJ Meeting in New Providence, New Jersey on 20 September, 2002. By Joseph G. Healey. 1:01:08 hours. Available on the YouTube Website: ["Experiences in East Africa" -- Fr. Joseph Healey - YouTube](#)

The invited speaker at the September 20, 2022 meeting of the Old Guard of Summit NJ was Fr. Joseph Healey, who has lived in East Africa, largely Kenya, since 1968 as a Maryknoll missionary (www.Maryknollsociety.org).

Facilitation Skills in Small Christian Communities. By Alphonse Omolo. Nairobi: Powerpoint Presentation, 2017.

Content:

1. Facilitation.
2. Characteristics of the members of SCCs.
3. Role of SCC facilitator.

4. Basic values and principles of facilitation in SCCs.
5. Core facilitation skills.
6. Listening skills.
7. The SCCs gathering setup.

Fr Joe Healey Speaks on African Theology, Calls for Married Priests in Africa To Meet the Eucharistic Hunger in Africa, and a Welcoming African Church for Same-Sex Persons, Part II. By Joseph G. Healey. Radio Podcast in the “African Catholic Voices” series sponsored by the Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN), 43:10 minutes. retrieved 15 October, 2022, Fr Joe Healey speaks on African theology, calls for Married Priests in Africa to meet the Eucharistic hunger in Africa, and a welcoming African Church for Same-Sex Persons (buzzsprout.com). Video Podcast in the “African Catholic Voices” series, 43:10 minutes, retrieved 15 October, 2022, YouTube Website African Theology, Married Priesthood, Same-Sex Marriage and the Future of Africa Catholicism (II) - YouTube

In this concluding discussion, Maryknoll priest, professor, communicator and small Christian community pioneer in Africa, Fr Joe Healey, celebrates the development and achievement of African theology. He calls for a more creative church in Africa and hopes for a day when the Catholic Church in Africa will begin to ordain married men as priests. He sees this as an important item to be discussed in the synodal encounter of the African continent in Addis Ababa. He also bemoans the plight of same-sex persons in Africa and calls on the Church in Africa to welcome them rather than deny their existence in Africa.

Fr. Michael Martin, Duke Catholic Center, 15-minute CCMA Leadership Podcast (audio interview), 2018, <https://soundcloud.com/.../fr-michael-martin-duke-catholic-ce...>

Future Directions and Agenda for Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Globally. Talk in the Loyola Institute of Ministry (LIM), Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA Summer, 2019 online specialization course on Small Christian Community Formation: “The Public Face of Small Christian Communities.” Published on 18 June 2019 by Thomas Ryan. Available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8G36kpxJ9Y&feature=youtu.be>

Global Solidarity During A Pandemic: Kenya, South Sudan, And Uganda. Maryknoll Global Solidarity Webinar. 19 April, 2020. 1:19:30 hours. Available on the Google Drive of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Website (<https://www.maryknoll.us>). The link is:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11Zb3yoRSbJEMgqYP1IU4ueK9Mi8kQtwv/view>

In this video, we hear how our brothers and sisters in East Africa are experiencing the impacts of the coronavirus. Join Maryknoll missionaries Mike Bassano, John Barth and Joe Healey, SCC leader Bernard Mberere and members of local Small Christian Communities in Kenya and the Malakal UN Protection of Civilians Refugee Camp in South Sudan and Uganda as they share their realities and enrich our reflection on where we are finding God in these difficult times. Join us digitally as we come together in global solidarity as missionary disciples with hope!

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/videos/404-the-importance-of-lay-involvement-in-the-missionary-outreach-of-sccs-in-eastern-africa.html>

50 Years of AMECEA. Lusaka: Catholic Media Services, 2011.

The Fish Group. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1990.

History of the Development of Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Diocese of Tagum and Mati [Philippines]. Manila: San Jose Seminary seminarians from the Dioceses of Mati and Tagum. 18 minutes. 2017

History of the Kenya Lenten Campaign and Explanation of the Theme and Materials for the 2014 Campaign. Nairobi: Powerpoint Presentation. 2014.

How to Form and Participate in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Virtually/Online/Digitally. Facilitated by Joseph G. Healey, MM. Coordinator: Debbie Northern, MLM. Maryknoll Lay Missioners Information Session Zoom Webinar. 16 October, 2020. Video Recorded on 16 October, 2020. Time: 1:24:20. Available on the Maryknoll Lay Missioners Website at:
<https://mklm.zoom.us/rec/share/654v16cT2x1HYAK8lu3uy-NICHzBrlri-VndtXq8N1mF5qsXwB4LGX4fa-vL0Swz.3iKouHSa1IRCMBCY> The Passcode: Q\$YLN\$4f

The outline of the Zoom Webinar on *How to Form and Participate in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Virtually/Online/Digitally* on 16 October, 2020 can be found on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at:
<file:///C:/Users/Father%20Joe/Downloads/16-October-2020-MLM-Missioner-Information-Session-on-Online-SCCs-002.pdf>

Imagine That: Small Christian Communities. Notre Dame: Fatima Media Ministry and Buena Vista, Inc., 1996. 22-minute video on the “Second International Consultation on Small Christian Communities” at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA, October, 1996. Notre Dame: Fatima Media Ministry and Buena Vista, Inc., 1996.

The Importance of Lay Involvement in the Missionary Outreach of SCCs in Eastern Africa. By Alphonse Omolo. Nairobi: Powerpoint Presentation, 2017.

1. “The Missionary Spirit and Outreach of the Fish Youth Group in Kisumu Archdiocese.”
2. “Small Communities Light Up Neighborhoods in Kisumu.” (Chapter 16 of *SCCT*).
3. “St. Isidore of Seville International Online SCC.”

The Importance of Small Groups on Your Campus. Interviews (two men, two women) with campus ministers at Duke, Michigan State, Seton Hall and Westchester. Focus on small group ministry in the USA. Produced by Catholic Campus Ministry Association (CCMA). 2.32 minutes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQvmTHF6MAg>

Inner Life of Small Christian Communities. Including Podcasts (digital audio files) on “Overview of SCCs Around the World Today” and “Breaking Open the Word in SCCs.” New Orleans: Loyola Institute for Ministry, 2017.

Introduction: Walking Together in Building a Synodal Maryknoll Family and Missionary Movement. By Joseph Healey. Session on Synodality/Synodal Process. US Regional

Assembly. Maryknoll, NY. 7 June, 2023.

It's a Small Church After All (Spanish Version is Ven Con Nosotros). 46-minute video on the “Third International Consultation on Small Christian Communities” in Cochabamba, Bolivia, USA, November, 1999. Notre Dame: Fatima Media Ministry and Buena Vista, Inc., 2000.

Kariobangi -- A Parish Dynamo. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1985.

Lobinger Model for Parish Leadership and Ministry. Talk by Robert D. Duch. Future Church Emerging Models for Community Life and Leadership Teleconferences Series. 8 November, 2017. 50 minutes.
on Dropbox
https://www.dropbox.com/l/scl/AACubiuTJF7Adq6ccGHn_huWV77GJosmyEk
Download the Spoken Presentation (talk) and Conversation

Lost in Encyclical Translation: Christus Vivit and the Dramatic Differences Between the Spanish Text and the English Translation. OSV Innovative Talk by Brenda Noriega, 24 September, 2020, YouTube Website, 19:50 minutes, retrieved on 17 October, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0GfHK7U0Ew>

When we speak our native language, our vocabulary insists on nuances unique to our own experiences. It is no wonder why Pope Francis wrote his encyclical *Christus Vivit* in Spanish. His understanding of serving the young church came from his own experiences. To truly understand this, however, we must be diligent in examining interpretations of his words. This talk breaks down major cultural differences in the English and Spanish of *Christus Vivit* and opens channels of dialogue for future creative ministry strategies. In Francis’ experience the traditional Step Two in the Pastoral Theological Reflection Process called “Judge” is better explained as “Discern.”

“Maryknoll Fr. Joe Healey's Reflections on Small Christian Communities.” Podcast on Loyola Institute of Ministry Facebook Page. 16 October, 2016. 16:03 minutes.
<https://soundcloud.com/user113783834/joe-healey-small-christian-communities-interview>

“Maryknoll Fr. Joseph Healey Speaks about Small Christian Communities in Africa.” Interview on the Vatican Radio Website. 6 May, 2013.
http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2013/05/06/maryknoll_fr._joseph_healey_speaks_about_small_christian_communities/en3-689689

Methodology of Social Transformation: Training for Civic and Development Educators. Nairobi: Institute of Social Ministry in Mission, Tangaza University College, 2015. *Manual* with 10 DVDs (videos). Adapted for use in local communities by Jacob Jeketule Soko.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE AND METHODOLOGY
2. INTRODUCTION TO THE PASTORAL CYCLE
3. HISTORY OF THE PASTORAL CYCLE
4. DEFINING INSERTION
5. CONDUCTING INSERTIONÉ
6. SOCIAL ANALYSIS
7. PROBLEM TREE

8. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
9. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS
10. ACTION

Never Again! Never Again Should Kenya Walk the Path of the 2007-2008 Post-election Violence. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2011.

Njia Mpya ya Kuishi na Kueneza Injili: Jumuyia Ndogo za Kristo (Swahili for A New Way of Living and Proclaiming the Church: Small Christian Communities). Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1985.

Presents 12 Case Studies of SCCs in East Africa as a “Teaching” Video. One is “The Missionary SCC” about a SCC in Iramba Parish in Musoma Diocese, Tanzania that regularly visits Christians that have drifted away from the Catholic Church and encourages the starting of new SCCs.

Online Spiritual Retreat for Young Adult Seekers on "Go Apart with Jesus Christ," Video Recording, 2023. YouTube Website, <https://youtu.be/FslUssUnMRQ> (2 hours and 10 minutes)

Online Small Groups: Best Practices for Building and Maintaining Momentum. Video Recording of a Zoom Webinar: Four-person Panel Discussion sponsored by SmallGroup.com. Time: 1:07 hours.
<https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2020/online-small-groups-best-practices-for-building-maintaining.html>

Virtual small groups have become an essential element of discipleship and fellowship for our church members during this pandemic. Over the past few months, many small groups have adopted this digital format. And in the coming months many will try it out for the first time. Our panel explores the ins and outs of creating a successful online small groups ministry.

Opening a Door on African Theology and Music. Portrays the story of Father Don Sybertz, MM and life and ministry of Ndoleleji Research Committee in Shinyanga, Tanzania. Ndoleleji, Tanzania: YouTube Website, 2011. 8:01 minutes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kf6HC67CbD8&feature=youtu.be>

Our Gracious Cardinal: Reflections of Cardinal Otunga as He Celebrates His 50 Years of Priesthood. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2001.

Parables Alive! Series of seven Scripture Music Videos. One example is “The Good Muslim” that retells the classic Good Samaritan story in a contemporary African setting and context. Nairobi: Paulines Africa Books and Audiovisuals, 2011.

Pastoral Responses to the Worldwide Eucharistic Famine by Joseph Healey, FutureChurch Podcast, presentation, and the transcription of the question and answers, 21 March, 2018. Specific link to the digital audio file or program -- Podcast (mp3 file) is: <https://www.futurechurch.org/podcasts>

“Photo Gallery” on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, 2012-2014. <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/photo-gallery.html>

Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s. Nairobi: AMECEA Office: Sound-Slide Show Privately Produced, 1973.

Rediscovering Community -- International Perspectives. 45-minute video on the “First International Consultation on Small Christian Communities” at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA, December, 1991. Notre Dame: Fatima Media Ministry, 1992.

Reflecting on Holy Week Around the World with Fr. Daniel Kim and Fr. Joseph Healey, “Among the People” podcast, 14 April, 2022, Available on:

YouTube Website

Spreaker Website

<https://www.spreaker.com/user/amongthepeople/3-1-atp>

This is a special episode of “Among The People” with Fr. Joe Veneroso. Fr. Joseph Healey and Fr. Daniel Kim as they reflect on the celebration and meaning behind the Lent and Holy Week season in East Africa and Hong Kong, how it is celebrated across different cultures our missionaries work in, and how we as people of faith can use this Holy Week to help us all during the challenging times in 2022.

RESOURCES

Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa and Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books).
<https://www.amazon.com/Towards-African-Narrative-Theology-Cultures/dp/1570751218>

Diana Hayes, *Were You There?: Stations of the Cross*, Paintings by Charles Ndege, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books
<https://www.amazon.com/Were-You-There-Stations-Cross/dp/1570752788>

“Root & Branch DIY: Why We Stay -- Sharing Signs Of Hope.” Interview with Nicholas Postlethwaite, CP on Root & Branch Website. 28.29 minutes.
[Synod 2021 | Root & Branch Synod \(rootandbranchsynod.org\)](https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/)

In this fourth video scrolling down, English Passionist priest, Nicholas Postlethwaite, CP speaks encouragingly about starting Do It Yourself (DIY) Small Groups and how this is the way forward for our church. Nicholas reminds us of Pope Francis' words that he felt Jesus was knocking on the church door to get out, not on the outside waiting to get in. We need to learn to combine two key essential human roles to move forward:

1. The role of undertaker (to know when something is coming to an end and how to lay it down respectfully and sensitively and gently but nonetheless not to try and prolong it beyond where it has come to).
2. The role of midwife (where is new life being born. How do we help this new life into its new birth and nurture it and sustain it).

“SCCs in Eastern Africa.” Interview on “Thy Kingdom Come Program” on Radio Maria, 2008. <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/resources/116--radio-program-on-sccs.html>

Small Christian Communities. Interview with Joseph Healey in “Anchor” Program (CCRI Podcast Episode No. 1). 4 September, 2019. 28:39 minutes. Father Joe Healey explains the explosion of Small Faith Communities (SFCs) spreading around the world. He describes how they are conducted and how to join or begin one.

Available on:

[Anchor](#)

[Google casts](#)

[Spotify](#)

[Breaker](#)

[Pocket casts](#)

[Radio Public](#)

[Overcast](#)

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/05Ni7DFg5IdHuTXRTC3V6a>

Small Christian Communities: The Heart of the Church. Lusaka: Catholic Media Services TV Studios, 2008.

Small Christian Communities: Africa and Asia. Maryknoll, NY: Common Table Series of Videos, n.d.

Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website by Caroline Adams, Joe Healey, Bob Pelton, Belza Ramos and Xavier Thelakkatt at the National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities (NAPRC) Conference in Erie, Pennsylvania, USA on 25 July, 2009. Erie: Powerpoint Presentation. 2009.

<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/25July2009PresentationontheSCCsGlobalCollaborativeWebsiteFinalVersion.pdf>

Small Christian Communities in the Acts of the Apostles. Webinar on Zoom for the Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI) Strategy Team. Facilitated by Joseph G. Healey. A five-session interactive study, discussion and reflection experience using the See, Discern and Act process or methodology. 15 July, 2020 to 12 August, 2020.

Session 1: Our personal (individual) and communal experiences of *Acts of the Apostles*.

Session 2: Foundational texts of the first SCCs: *Acts of the Apostles* 2: 42-47, 4: 32-35 and 5: 1-31.

a. How can we concretely apply the first two texts to our lives, our communities and our ministries in our local contexts today?

b. *Acts of the Apostles* 15: 28: Council of Jerusalem. In today’s divided Catholic Church can we have a Council of Jerusalem moment/experience?

Session 3: House Churches with lay leadership especially women. Each participant prepares one passage in *Acts of the Apostles* that describes/illustrates the House Church (also called a Small Domestic Church) with women in leadership positions.

To listen to the discussion, click on <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/-J0yHuvI5z1IAY38t0ePS6k8Hdvpaaa81yRKRqcFnQdtf2QBh48SMJFkDvrtqE0>. Password: 5?%2\$sMR.

- Session 4: Importance of the Holy Spirit. Each participant prepares three short inputs:
- A passage in *Acts* about the Holy Spirit that you like.
 - Example in your life when you felt the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Example in your life when you **did not feel** the power of the Holy Spirit.

To listen to the discussion, click on https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/1PBHP5Kh0V5OAZXj0G-EBYw9XaW4X6a8gHVI_aYMxUk8Yw1hjrR0Pcbo2zGsOPU0. Password: eqNLYE&5.

- Session 5: St. Paul's call to Hardship and Mission and what it means for us today.
- How does St. Paul's response hardships in *Acts* inspire you in your life today?
 - How does St. Paul's missionary zeal in *Acts* inspire you in your life today?

To listen to the discussion, click on <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/x5E2C5j57H9LYoXQzxn7QacwJLzXea8hncfrPpYzEbFdDqFAPn87tyXCe3IyFzG>. Password: n6hm#!\$*.

Small Christian Communities in Tanzania, Sound-slide Show of 94 color slides converted into a video, Nairobi: SONOLUX Media, Africa Service, and Maryknoll: VIDCOM, 1978.

Small Christian Communities on the Move around the World. SCCs Webinar (Web Conference) originating at the University Notre Dame, South Bend Indiana, USA on 12 February, 2014. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, <https://nd.webex.com/nd/ldr.php?RCID=33c6a241cda474ea3d78a705d1451a12>

Small Christian Communities Promote Climate Justice in Kenya. Ten minute presentation by Joseph Healey. Nova Community Webinar. Theme: "What Communities and the Larger Society Can Do To Promote Climate Justice." 11 February, 2021. 57:16 minutes. YouTube Website, retrieved on 16 February. 2021, <https://youtu.be/eCY5b47HDA>

Includes part of *The Hill We Climb*, the 2021 Inauguration Poem by Amanda Gorman. Ben Wanjala joined from Kenya at 1 am and described the tree planting activities of St. Kizito SCC in Nairobi.

Sowing the Seed: New Evangelization. St. John Paul II Parish Evangelizing Teams, Nairobi: Creativecamera Ltd, 2011.

The Social Media Revolution 2014.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eUeL3n7fDs>

Social Media Video 2013: The Social Media Revolution 4. Written by Erik Qualman.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUCfFchwlw>

Stand Strong in Faith...Do Not Be Afraid: Pope Francis' Pastoral Visit in Kenya. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2017.

St. Austin's Church Way of the Cross 2015 by Members of the Junior Youth, Nairobi: A

Josphat Mulinya Video Production, 2015.

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/videos/327-st-austins-church-way-of-the-cross-2015.html>

St. Austin's Church Way of the Cross 2015 by Members of the Small Christian Communities, Nairobi: A Josphat Mulinya Video Production, 2015.

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/videos/327-st-austins-church-way-of-the-cross-2015.html>

Synodality in the African Context. Reform group FutureChurch-sponsored Zoom Webinar on the topic "Participation, Governance, and Authority," the third in the SynodWatch series covering the "Working Document" of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. 1 hour and 8:36 minutes. The 10:22 minute talk on "Synodality in the African Context" by Joseph G. Healey (in collaboration with African leaders) can be found on YouTube from the 30:58 minute mark to the 41:20 minute mark. Video Link on YouTube: [SynodWatch Session 3: Participation, Governance, and Authority - YouTube](#)

Text on [Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website](#)

<https://smallchristiancommunities.org/synodality-in-the-african-context>

Synod of Hope, Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1993.

17th AMECEA Plenary Assembly and Golden Jubilee Celebrations. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2011.

"Tracking Changes (or the lack thereof) in the Catholic Church Worldwide." Presentation at the Maryknoll *Laudato Si* Focus Group on Zoom. 1 February, 2021. Dropbox Link.

Uncle Joe's 12 April, 2020 Easter Sunday Livestreamed Mass. Zoom Meeting. Nairobi, Kenya. 54 minutes. YouTube Website, https://youtu.be/HUzCI_LH5Tc.

Follows the plan of our Small Christian Communities (or *Jumuiya*) Masses via Zoom. Follows the style of our multi-generational or inter-generational Extended Healey Family Home Masses that we have been celebrating in the USA for over 50 years. The Maryknoll seminarians in Nairobi, Kenya coordinated the music. Jonathan Oglesby in Germanstown, Maryland, USA was Host and Technical Coordinator.

Uncle Joe's 4 April, 2021 Easter Sunday Livestreamed Mass. Zoom Meeting. Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Kenya. 55 minutes. YouTube Website, <https://youtu.be/YZGe0wZVCT0>

Follows the plan of our Small Christian Communities (or *Jumuiya*) Masses via Zoom. Follows the style of our multi-generational or inter-generational Extended Family Home Masses that we have been celebrating in the USA for over 50 years. I am sent the YouTube link directly to everyone who made a contribution:

Host and Technical Coordinator: Jonathan Oglesby

Music: Charlotte Hagerty

Reader: Matthew Oglesby

Shared Homily of 13 minutes, 9 seconds. 8 reflections: Grace Healey, Charlotte Hagerty, Sam Stanton, Lizzie Lynch, Uncle Joe Healey, Belza Ramos, Jeremy Healey, Ginny Hagerty.

Prayer of the Faithful (6): Andrew Oglesby, Cate Healey, Grace Healey, Alphonse Omolo, Uncle Joe Healey, Tom Healey (Gramps).

One footnote: A participant later thanked me for 9 and ¾ quarters year old Grace Healey's profound reflection when she said: "Following Mary Magdalene we should run and tell others of the Risen Christ."

Three-year-old Joey Slomkowski said it best at the very end: "Happy Easter."

Uncle Joe's 24 December, 2020 Christmas Eve Livestreamed Mass. Zoom Meeting. New Vernon, New Jersey, USA. 57 minutes. YouTube Website, https://youtu.be/UF_RzfMsc

Uses three Christmas Carols, the readings of the Christmas Mass at Midnight, Shared Homily and spontaneous "Prayer of the Faithful." Follows the plan of our Small Christian Communities (or *Jumuiya*) Masses via Zoom. Follows the style of our multi-generational or inter-generational Extended Family Home Masses that we have been celebrating in the USA for over 50 years. Charlotte and Ginny Hagerty in New Vernon coordinated the music. Jonathan Oglesby in Germanstown, Maryland, USA was Host and Technical Coordinator.

United and Peaceful Kenya...The Change I Want To See: 2013 Lenten Campaign Launch, 9th February 2013, Nyayo National Stadium, Nairobi. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2004.

Various DVDs on the "Life of Jesus Christ," the Apostles, Books of the *Bible* and the History of the Catholic Church (both film and animation). One outstanding example is *The Chosen*.

The Vatican II Experience in Sub-Sahara Africa, by Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, Creighton University Center for Catholic Thought "Catholic Comments" Podcast on 30 June, 2014. 16:03 minutes.
<http://cucatholicctr.org/2014/06/the-vatican-ii-experience-in-sub-saharah-africa>

Walking with the Eastern African Church in Mission. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 2004. A video of the life and missionary ministry of Maryknoll priest Father Joseph Healey.

When Ukweli Video in Nairobi, Kenya produced a DVD in 2004 on my missionary ministry in Eastern Africa from 1968 to 2004 called *Walking with the Eastern African Church in Mission*, I used the Gospel text – *Mark* 1:38: "Jesus said to them, 'Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also; for this purpose have I come.'" that is very similar to *Luke* 4:43: "Jesus said to them, 'I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because for this purpose I was sent/have been sent.'" -- to trace a visual chronological line on a map of East Africa of my missionary journeys or travels to other towns and places in Kenya and Tanzania: Starting in Nairobi, Kenya and traveling to Rulenge, Tanzania to Iramba, Tanzania to Makoko, Tanzania to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

There is a section in the video on my ministry with Small Christian Communities (SCCs).

During the Buzz Groups *Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection* on this passage in our SCCs Class at Tangaza University College on 5 February, 2015 I connected this passage to our daily lives and mentioned the internet towns that are not geographical but situational. I used this passage in my homily at my 50th Anniversary of Maryknoll Missionary Priesthood (Golden Jubilee) Mass at the Maryknoll Society House in Nairobi on 14 January, 2016. I shared that the new “town or place” for me is not a physical or geographical place, but a virtual or existential or situational place --the internet, social media and social networking. So mission for me means going to the “towns” of Facebook, Zoom, Skype, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram. I mentioned that I meet and interact with Kenyan young people not outside the church after the Sunday Mass, but in the social media on the internet.

Walk Together: Father Joe Healey, “Frontiers of Faith” Podcast, Pontifical Mission Societies, 24 May, 2024, 26:31 minutes. Available on Buzzsprout, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, the Pontifical Mission Societies Website and Today’s American Catholic Website.

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2187895/14906693-walk-together-father-joe-healy>
<https://audio.buzzsprout.com/14yg0aph7fci1ys6zhehtzrzvzk7?response-content-disposition=inline&>

Maryknoll Missionary priest Joe Healey shares his passion for the 195,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa and discusses how this successful global model can be effectively applied within the U.S. SCCs are not a program and project in the parish, but a way of life. Ideally SCCs are Eucharistic Communities. He applies the SCCs to the Gospel of Trinity Sunday (*Matthew* 28: 16-20, Year B). As Pope Francis says: In evolving the Synodal Church (“walking together”) we are all missionary disciples. We are called to be disciples of Christ and we are sent as missionaries and apostles. In final verse of the gospel Jesus says: “I am with you always even until the end of the world/the end of the age.” The podcast suggests actionable insights and encourages the listeners to foster deeper community connections in their our own local areas.

We Are The Church -- Lay Involvement in the Church. Nairobi: Ukweli Video Productions, 1998.

We Are the Church: The Life and Activities of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa Including Highlights of the RENEW Gala 2013 in New Jersey, USA. New Vernon, NJ: Powerpoint Presentation, 2013. Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/north-america/united-states-of-america/251-renew-gala-pdf--final.html>

Welcome to a Presentation by Chishimba Chishimba on Small Christian Communities in the Catholic Church. Lusaka: Powerpoint Presentation, 2015.

Young People Small Christian Communities. Interview with Joseph Healey in “Anchor” Program (Catholic Church Reform Int'l -- CCRI Podcast Episode No. 6). 18 September, 2019. 29:05 minutes. Father Joe Healey explains the growth of Small Communities of Young People. Often the starting point is not the *Bible* or faith but their present life experiences. We need to tap into young people’s hunger for community and their passion for social justice issues like climate justice, gun control and diversity.

A vast number of young people are moving away from the Institutional Church and

finding that the best expression of their values and their Christianity is much more through social justice, climate justice, and environmental issues. They want to share their experiences in some kind of small community setting. The future of the Catholic Church for today's Millennials and Generation Z may well become some model of Young People Small Christian Communities (YPSCCs).

Available on:

[Anchor](#)
[Google Podcasts](#)
[Spotify](#)
[Breaker](#)
[Pocket casts](#)
[Radio Public](#)
[Overcast](#)

<https://podcasts.google.com/?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly9hbmNob3IuZm0vcy9kNzQ2MDhjL3BvZGNhc3QvcnNz&episode=YjcyZWxZGYtOWZhYi1jN2E4LTk4NzEtNDZhOGMzN2VjNjQx>

<https://anchor.fm/rene-reid/episodes/Interview-with-Fr--Joe-Healey-on-Young-Peoples-Small-Christian-Communities-e5eli7>

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0kK9lDKLlLcaDq0EEIWWYE>

Young Seekers: An Informal Conversation with an International Small Christian Community Based in Kenya led by Alloys Nyakundi from Kenya with Kristiana Aurel from Indonesia, James Mhangwa from Tanzania, Ashiknaz Khokhar from Pakistan, Collins Ongoma from Kenya, Alexandro Rolandi from Pakistan and Mary Wahome from Kenya. Spirit Unbounded Video Clip, Spirit Unbounded YouTube, 22:06 minutes (from 1:14:57 to 1:37:03). [3 3 Ways of Being Church - Different Rhythms - YouTube](#) and https://youtu.be/T74SFrUo7PY?si=xklvTRoqrM_67c45

In a conversation with Maggi Conway members of the Online Young Seekers Small Christian Community describe their online SCC. These are 20 young adults (women and men) from four countries (Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan and Tanzania) who meet online every two weeks. See Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Community (Kenyatta University) Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/875453985953421>

Your Voice Counts in This Synod, Spoken Text and Video to introduce the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers “Synod Listening Sessions.” Maryknoll: Center CED. March, 2022.

For the 5:19 minute video go to: <https://mission.maryknoll.us/en/listeningsessions>

The link to the video on Google:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FnRkkR9_YAqOnvoc834_TyVGISSV7u7S/view?usp=sharing

NOTE: The SCC Model is seen in many ways. This is the text that was read on a teleprompter for a video in English to introduce the “A Time to Talk and Listen: Lent 2022 Synod Listening Sessions” sponsored by the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers that were aired

online on 15 March 2022 and 24 March 2022. There were “Small Breakout Rooms” during these Zoom gatherings.

Internet Resources/Websites/Apps/E-Resources (216)

Academia.edu

<https://princeton.academia.edu/JosephHealey>

ACIAfrica (Association for Catholic Information in Africa) *Africa Online News Service* (a service of EWTN News)

<https://www.aciafrica.org>

Acton Publishers

www.acton.co.ke

Africabib -- Africana Periodical Literature Bibliographic Database

<http://www.africabib.org>

African Catholic Voices

[African Catholic Voices \(buzzsprout.com\)](http://AfricanCatholicVoices.buzzsprout.com)

Celebrating the stories of faith in action and the voices of Christians from the African heartland, the new center of gravity of World Christianity.

African Ethnologue (Home Standard monthly version)

<https://www.ethnologue.com/world> (limited/restricted automatic login)

<https://www.ethnologue.com/language/suk>

African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories (including the “African Stories Database”)

<https://afriprov.org/old> -- Joomla for temporary reference

African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website

<https://afriprov.tangaza.ac.ke>

Our window into African Oral Literature and African culture in general from a Christian perspective. Over these 26 years (1998 – 2024) this has been a joint ecumenical project (different churches, religious denominations and religious groups) and a joint academic project (with educational institutional partnerships).

In 1998 we started the African Proverbs Working Group (APWG). Through the help of the Urban Ministries Serving God (UMSG) Office based in Nairobi, Kenya, we started our [Internet Website](#), then later our [Facebook Page](#) and now other social media such as WhatsApp (including the “Afriprov Working Group”). Over the last 26 years we have continued to develop our database including our collection of proverbs from 49 different African nations. 149 African Languages are represented in the 297 “African Proverbs of the Month.” A key feature is the [Endangered African Proverbs Collections](#) – over 60 collections of 100 proverbs each in lesser known African languages under Ebooks on our website.

Update

African SCCs Networking

<https://africansccsnetworking.org>

African Synodality Initiative
Website: in production
Alexa Web Information Company
<http://www.alexa.com>

Amazon
<https://www.amazon.com>

Amazon Author Page
<https://www.amazon.com/author/josephghealey>

AMECEA (Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa)
(including the sub-domains of Communications, Integral Human Development and Pastoral)
<https://amecea.org>

Copyright is 1999-2024 and shows that it was ahead of the curve and ahead of its time. This website sets an example for all of the AMECEA countries and the SECAM countries for internet use. Menu at top of the Home Page shows the rich variety of departments and activities.

AMECEA News Blog/AMECEA Online Newsletter
<http://amecea.blogspot.co.ke>

AMECEA Gaba Publications
<https://amecea.org/ggaba-publications>

AMECEA Pastoral Institute (Gaba)
<https://amecea.org/ggaba-pastoral-institute>

America Media
<http://www.americamagazine.org>

America Online
<http://www.aol.com>

American Society of Missiology
<https://www.asmweb.org/>

Ancestry
<http://www.ancestry.com>

APO Group
[APO Group | Leading Pan African Communications Consultancy \(apo-opa.com\)](http://www.apo-opa.com)

Pan-African communications consultancy and press release distribution service.

Ascension Catholic Community Parish
<https://www.ascensioncatholic.net>

Ask
<http://www.ask.com>

Association of United States Catholic Priests (AUSCP)

<https://auscp.org>

The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests was founded in 2011 to be the pastoral and collegial voice of our member priests, all in good standing in dioceses and religious communities. Inspired by the teachings of Vatican II and by the call of Pope Francis to synodality, we invite the participation of all the members of the People of God.

Mission: Serving as a home for the People of God, offering mutual support and a collegial voice within our pilgrim Church and world, through contemplation, dialogue and prophetic action.

Vision: *A pastoral voice of compassion, hope and joy in mission as disciples of Jesus Christ.*

Core Values:

1. Gospel teaching of Christ through spirit/lens of Vatican II
2. Promoting human dignity
3. Synodality, contemplation, collegiality, collaboration with our bishops and with people on the margins.

Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary Parish

<https://assumptionparish.org>

Attracta Search Visibility Technology

www.attracta.com

Ave Maria University

<https://www.avemaria.edu>

Baltimore Archdiocese

<https://www.archbalt.org>

Baltimore Carmel

<https://www.baltimorecarmel.org>

Weekly *Lectio Divina* on the following Sunday readings with small breakout sessions.
Monthly Contemplative Prayer Group for Young Adults (18-40).

Barnes & Noble

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com>

The Beacon

<https://rcdop.org/the-beacon>

BibleGateway (32 searchable versions of the *Bible* in English)

<http://www.Biblegateway.com>

Bing

www.bing.com

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

<https://www.bbc.com>

Includes the African Proverb of the Day.

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA)

<https://cara.georgetown.edu>

Cardinal Otunga Servant of God

<http://www.cardinalotunga.org>

[CARDINAL OTUNGA Servant of God](http://www.cardinalotunga.org)

Catholic Campus Ministry Association (CCMA)

<https://www.ccmanetwork.org>

CCMA is a leading voice in the field of college campus ministry. As we *lead, link* and *leverage* influence in both higher education and in the Catholic Church, campus ministry expands. Our goal is to elevate the profession of campus ministry so that more students will be led to Christ. We make a difference in the lives of campus ministers through the following actions:

Engage the spiritual lives of campus ministers such that their relationship with Christ is vibrant, healthy and strong.

Link campus ministers to one another.

Equip campus ministers with action research and useful data.

Value the unique role that campus ministers have in the Church.

Advocate for campus ministry within the Church and in higher education.

Teach the essential skills needed for successful and sustainable campus ministry.

Establish standards of care for campus ministers.

Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI)

<https://catholicchurchreformintl.org>

A Global Network of more than a hundred reform groups and individuals from 65 countries that seeks renewal of the Catholic Church and continuing on the path set by Vatican II. Contains content on SCCs around the world. There are special sections on the Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Community and the 2021-2024 Synodal Process.

Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) News Africa

<http://www.cisanewsafrika.com>

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) – Kenya **expired**

<http://www.cjpckkenya.org>

Catholic Media Network in Kenya (CMNK)

<https://catholicmedia497322637.wordpress.com>

Catholic Mirror

<http://www.kccb.or.ke/home/?s=Catholic+Mirror>

Catholic News Agency for Africa (CANAA) (including *CANAA Blog*, *CANAA News Updates* and *CANAA Online Newsletter*)

www.canaafrica.org

Catholic News Service (CNS)
<https://www.catholicnews.com>

Catholic Search Engine
<http://www.catholicsearch.net>

Catholic Standards for Excellence Forum
<http://catholicstandardsforum.org>

Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) including Library E-Resources
<http://www.cuea.edu>

Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) AMECEA Gaba Campus, Eldoret
<http://www.cuea.edu/gaba>

Catholic Women Preach
<http://www.catholicwomenpreach.org>

Catholic Women Preach offers the Catholic Church the faith and voices of Catholic women preaching on the weekly scriptures.
 Christ the Teacher Parish, Kenyatta University, Kenya

<http://www.kucatholic.or.ke>

Christian Life Communities (CLC) Small Group Resources
<https://www.scu.edu/cm/get-involved/clc/resources>

Christ the King Parish, New Vernon
<https://churchofchristtheking.org>

The Chosen App, internet and TV
 Version 1.2.135

<https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen>
 “The Shepherd:” <https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen/watch?vid=the-chosen-shepherd-trailer-with-cta-season-1&ap=true>

Church of the Nativity Parish, Baltimore
<https://www.churchnativity.com/groups>

Very successful Small Group Model of Church. States: “Everyone can be in a group. Small Groups is where our large church gets small. Groups are 6-12 people who meet to discuss faith, go deeper in the weekly message, and support one another in their relationship with Jesus Christ. This is the place to care for others and be cared for; a place to impact our community and the world.” Both Online Small Groups and In Person Small Groups. Includes the book *Rebuilt*.

I admire the dynamism of the parish and its success, but I have reservations about its Small Group Model. It is borrowed from the Rick Warren Model in California that is top

down. I have written about this in my online ebook. Our Eastern Africa SCCs Model is bottom up, from the grassroots – very synodal. Quite different.

La Croix International

<https://international.la-croix.com>

Independent Online Catholic Daily News Service. Insightful articles on the Catholic Church and the world.

Commonweal Magazine

<https://www.commonwealmagazine.org>

Corpus Christi Parish, New Jersey

<https://corpuschristi.org>

CRUX

<https://cruxnow.com>

Daily Gospel

<https://dailygospel.org/AM/gospel>

<http://dailygospel.org>

(a service from evangelizo.org)

DB Utume Blog including the Jambo You(th) weekly online newsletter

<http://dbyouthbook.blogspot.com>

Diocesan and archdiocesan websites can be found at the beginning of Chapter 9.

Emmah's Garden

<https://emmahsgarden.org>

Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM)

www.ecmmw.org

Esteem

Esteem | The Church's Future. Now. (esteemleadership.org)

Eternal Word Broadcasting Network

<https://www.ewtn.com>

Ethnologue

<https://www.ethnologue.com> (NOTE: Must be entered through Google)

<https://www.ethnologue.com/user/14731/subscription>

Detailed information on the 2,140 African languages among the world's 7,111 known living languages). Categorized as: Institutional: 197, Developing: 533, Vigorous: 909, In Trouble: 366, Dying: 135.

EWTN

<https://www.ewtn.com>

Facebook (33)

<http://facebook.com> including:

African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/afriprov>

This Facebook Page serves as a forum for an exchange of ideas on African Proverbs, Sayings, Stories and African Culture and to promote dialog on these topics. The page has sections for “Like,” “Comment” and “Share.” It is classified as a society and culture page. We welcome any and all feedback, contributions, African Culture materials, etc.

African Wisdom and Biblical Parallels Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/African-Wisdom-Bible-Parallels-240971163508820/>

AMECEA

<https://www.facebook.com/Amecea>

American Society of Missiology

https://www.facebook.com/American-Society-of-Missiology-130557736998449/?ref=page_internal

Archdiocese of Lusaka Youth Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/groups/196941513776884/334481956689505/?notif_t=group_activity

CCMA (Catholic Campus Ministry Association)

[CCMA \(Catholic Campus Ministry Association\) | Facebook](#)

Cardinal Maurice Michael Otunga

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=cardinal%20maurice%20michael%20otunga>

Holy Cross Youth Dandora Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/113631995367088>

Jambo Youth Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/124330554391106>

Joseph Healey Facebook Page (African audience African shirt photo)

[Joseph Healey | Facebook](#)

Joseph G. Healey Facebook Page (USA audience, Ravens shirt photo)

<https://www.facebook.com/joseph.g.healey>

JPII Evangelizing Teams Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/JPII-Evangelizing-teams/1477925152465530>

Kerry Family History Society

[Kerry Family History Society | Facebook](#)

Kilgarvan Parish Church

[Kilgarvan Parish Church | Facebook](#)

[kilgarvan church - Search Results | Facebook](#)

KUCC Youth Small Christian Communities (YSCCs) Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1549609615274202>

Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM)
<https://www.celam.org>

Loyola Institute for Ministry (LIM)
<http://cnh.loyno.edu/lim>

Loyola Institute for Ministry (LIM) Facebook Page
[Loyola Institute for Ministry | Facebook](#)

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/maryknollsociety>

Maryknoll Lay Missioners
<https://www.facebook.com/MaryknollLayMissioners>

Maryknoll Magazine
<https://www.facebook.com/maryknollmagazine>

Maryknoll Mission Education
<https://www.facebook.com/Maryknoll.MEP.West>

Maryknoll Missioners Class of 1966
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/584645881713413>

Leo Shea created the Facebook Group “[Maryknoll Missioners Class of 1966](#)” on 22 April 2016.

Maryknoll Young Adults Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/MaryknollYA>

North American Forum for Small Christian Communities (NAFSCC)
[Small Christian Communities - NAFSCC - Home | Facebook](#)

**Young People Seekers Small Christian Community (Kenyatta University)
Facebook Page (Private Group)**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/875453985953421>

This Facebook Page was formed to help young people develop a personal relationship with one another, grow their relationship with the Lord, network young people through Small Christian Communities, support the marginalized in our local communities and help young people develop a sense of pride. It is connected to the twice monthly Zoom Gatherings. The Young Seekers come from Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda and the United States.

Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Community Facebook Page (Public Group)
[Online Young Adult Seekers Small Christian Communities | Facebook](#)

This Facebook Page was formed to help young people develop a personal relationship with one another, grow their relationship with the Lord, network young people through Small Christian Communities, support the marginalized in our local communities and help young people develop a sense of pride. It is connected to the twice monthly Zoom Gatherings. The Young Seekers come from Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda and the United States.

Orbis Books Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/orbisbooks>

Portsmouth Abbey School Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/PortsmouthAbbeySchool>

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/www.smallchristiancommunities.org>

This Facebook Page was formed to share Small Christian Communities (SCCs) information, events, materials, news, videos and photos for each of the six continents. It serves as a forum for an exchange of SCCs ideas and to promote dialog on SCC topics. The page has sections for “Like,” “Comment” and “Share.” It is classified as a society and culture website. We welcome any and all feedback, contributions, SCCs materials, etc

St. Bakhita SCC Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/groups/169604069738674/736909729674769/?notif_t=group_activity

St. Dominic SCC Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/249820865098204/>

St. Gonzaga Gonza SCC Youth Group Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gonzagagonzasc>

St. Martin de Porres SCC Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/134661419922238/>

St. Matthew's Catholic Church Amukoko, Apapa, Lagos Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1110930425603859/?multi_permalinks=1695691967127699¬if_id=1509843777013867¬if_t=group_activity

St. Vincent Pallotti Church Youth Information Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/110531205762326>

Tangaza Maryknoll Centre for African Studies

<https://www.facebook.com/Tangaza-Maryknoll-Centre-for-African-Studies-100591298333641>

FADICA

www.fadica.org

Faith Circles

<https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/faith-circles>

FaithND Daily Reflection¹⁵²⁸

<http://faith.nd.edu/s/1210/faith/interior.aspx?sid=1210&gid=609&pgid=10751>

<https://faith.nd.edu> (Click on Daily Gospel Reflections)

Father Eamon Tobin Website

[Father Eamon Tobin](#)

Eamon Tobin was an Irish-born diocesan priest in Orlando Diocese, Florida, USA who died on 1 January, 2021. He was a great animator and promoter of Small Christian Communities. He was a prolific writer who had his own Website. He wrote: “As the pastor of a large, active Catholic parish I have been called to write many documents, letters and reflections over the years. I have collected and published many of them here on my website. Most of these writings have been previously published on the [Ascension Catholic Church of Melbourne Florida website](#). You will also find information on the books I have published and links to purchase these books. “Small Christian Communities Commentaries” follow the three year Liturgical Cycle (available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese). There you will find faith-sharing questions that seek to connect the readings to daily lives, as well as a link to [Guidelines for Facilitators](#).

Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC)

<https://fabc.org>

Federation of Christian Ministries (FCM)

<https://www.federationofchristianministries.org/index.php/about-fcm>

Fides

<http://www.fides.org>

Fresh Expressions

<http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk>

FutureChurch Website

<http://www.futurechurch.org>

FutureChurch works for:

- just, open and collaborative structures for Catholic worship, organization and governance
- a return to the Catholic Church's earliest traditions of both married and celibate priests
- a return to Jesus' inclusive practice of recognizing both female and male leaders
- regular access to the Eucharist, the center of Catholic life and worship

Gaba Pastoral Institute **CHECK**

Under CUEA

¹⁵²⁸ Many people read this reflection as the first activity that they do upon waking up each morning as a kind of Morning Prayer -- even setting their smartphone wake up time to begin the day with this reflection.

Global Ministries University
<https://www.globalministriesuniversity.org>

Google
<http://www.google.com>

Google Scholar
<https://scholar.google.com>
http://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%22Joseph+G+Healey%22&btnG=&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C31

Hallow Prayer App
<https://hallow.com>

Hekima University College including Library E-Resources
<https://www.hekima.ac.ke/>

Hekima Review
[Hekima Review](#)

Holy Family Church
www.holyfamilychurch.com

ICONN Look Up
whois.icann.org

Instagram
<https://www.instagram.com>

Intentional Eucharistic Communities
<http://www.intentionaleucharistic.org>

Interchange: Password: PriceWalsh
www.interchange.website

A newsletter for alumni of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll). Plenty of Archival Material.

JCAM (Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar)
[Home - Jesuit Conference Of Africa and Madagascar: JCAM \(jesuits.africa\)](http://www.jesuits.africa)

Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection (JCTR)
<http://www.jctr.org.zm>

Kenya Catholic Community in America (KCCA)
<https://kcca2012.org/index.html>

Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) especially the Catholic Justice and Peace Department and Commission, Pontifical Missionary Societies, Family Life Program and “News” Pages

<http://www.kccb.or.ke>

KCCB Commission for Social Communications National Communications Network News
<https://www.kccb.or.ke/home/commission/13-commission-for-social-communications>

Laudete

<https://laudate.en.softonic.com>

Leadership Roundtable

<https://leadershiproundtable.org>

<https://summit.leadershiproundtable.org>

Loyola University -- Loyola Institute for Ministry (LIM)

<http://cnh.loyno.edu/lim>

Maryknoll (landing page)

<https://www.maryknoll.org>

Maryknoll Affiliates

<https://www.maryknollaffiliates.org>

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Africa Region (maintenance mode)

<https://maryknollafrika.org>

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Mission Education

<https://www.maryknoll.us>

Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS) **fix**

<http://www.mias.edu>

Maryknoll Intranet

<https://www.maryknoll.net>

Maryknoll Lay Missioners

<https://mklm.org>

Maryknoll Magazine

<https://maryknollmagazine.org>

Maryknoll Mission Archives including a Blog

<http://maryknollmissionarchives.org>

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

<https://www.maryknollogc.org>

Maryknoll Sisters

<https://www.maryknollsisters.org>

Maryknoll Society of Priests and Brothers

<https://maryknollsociety.org>

Maryknoll YA Bay Area (What'sApp) Community
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/DuySSUqKSSaD4mTYqNMBKs>

Mikroi: TAC's Initiative on Small Christian Communities
[Mikroi - Today's American Catholic \(todaysamericancatholic.org\)](https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org/mikroi)

In 2022 Today's American Catholic (TAC) launched an initiative to advance the work of Small Christian Communities. As part of this initiative, we are hosting Online SCC gatherings via Zoom. While these are not a substitute for in-person gatherings, they offer participants opportunities for faith-sharing, dialogue, and study that might not be otherwise available. If you are interested in joining one of our emerging SCC groups, please get in touch using the contact form on our website. We are also happy to share resources and guidance with those interested in starting their own SCC, either in their own location or through our online platform. We have established this page as a home for all of our SCC-related resources. *Mikroi* (μικρός) is a key term in *Matthew's* gospel that means "little ones" or "the least of these."

Mikado Mission Library and Catholic Documentation Center (Missio, Aachen, Germany)
https://www.missio-hilft.de/suche/?tx_solr%5Bq%5D=Mikado

Missio (Germany)
www.missio-hilft.de

Missio (The Pontifical Mission Societies -- USA)
<https://www.missio.org>

Moodle (Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya) Virtual Learning Environment.
 Course on "Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today"
 (PTC418)
<http://moodle.tangaza.org/course/view.php?id=589>

Nairobi Archdiocese
<https://archdioceseofnairobi.org>

Nanetya Foundation
<http://nanetya-foundation.org>

The mission of this foundation is to enable children around the globe, who belong to small, endangered or unknown ethnic groups to read stories in their mother tongue and by that preserve the stories and traditions of these ethnic group cultures.

National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities (NAPRC)
[NAPRC – National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities](https://www.naprc.org)

The National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities (NAPRC) is an alliance of parishes committed to a new vision of parish based on the purpose of building an atmosphere in which ordinary people help each other regularly connect their faith and life. This is achieved in two ways:

1. Doing the things that we do differently.
2. Forming Small Church Communities (SCCs).

A key is that parishes are restructured into parish-based SCCs that are a “communion of communities.”

NAPRC offers workshops, conferences, and resources towards this goal.

National Advisory Team for Catholic Young Adult Ministry (NATYAM)

<https://www.usccb.org/topics/youth-and-young-adult-ministries/national-advisory-team-young-adult-ministry>

National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM)

<https://nfcym.org>

National Catholic Register (NCR)

<https://www.ncregister.com>

National Catholic Reporter (NCR)

<https://www.ncronline.org>

Newark Archdiocese

<https://www.rcan.org>

<https://www.rcan.org/Synod2023>

<https://www.youtube.com/NwkArchdiocese>

<https://www.facebook.com/NwkArchdiocese>

New People Media

<https://www.facebook.com/newpeoplemedia>

New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com>

North American Center for Marianist Studies

<https://www.nacms.org>

Under E-Publications see:

The Best of Quest: Liturgical Year A



The Best of Quest is a lectionary-based resource for use by Small Christian Communities. Drawing upon a rich corpus of almost 30 years from *Quest*, a publication produced by the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, USA this installment of *The Best of Quest* focuses on Liturgical Year A.

Year B (coming)

The Best of Quest: Liturgical Year C



The Best of Quest is a lectionary-based resource for use by Small Christian Communities. Drawing upon a rich corpus of almost 30 years from *Quest*, a publication produced by the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, USA this installment of *The Best of Quest* focuses on Liturgical Year C.

North American Forum for Small Christian Communities (NAFSCC)

<http://www.nafsc.org>

password, effective 1 July 2021, to each page of the “members access”: 2022NAFSCC.

Nova Catholic Community

www.novacatholic.org

NOVA is...

- A Progressive and Inclusive Catholic Community drawing from Northern Virginia and the Greater DC area.
- Committed to Social Justice & Peacemaking through our personal lives, communal worship and activities.
- Lay-led and inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- Celebrating 52 years of faithful witness and always welcoming to visitors and new members.

Opera Mini

<http://www.opera.com>

Orbis Books: discount of 40% using promotion code: MKLFAM

Orbis Books: discount of 30% using promotion code: CON30 time barred

<https://www.orbisbooks.com>

<https://orbisbooks.com>

[Orbis Books](#)

Orbis Books Catalog in Flipdiox format

Origins Online CNS Documentary Service

<http://www.originsonline.com>

Our Sunday Visitor (OSV)

<https://www.osv.com>

<https://www.osvnews.com>

Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN)

<https://pactpan.org>

Parish without Borders

<http://www.parish-without-borders.net>

Paterson Diocese

<https://rcdop.org>

Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities (SCCs) -- Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, USA (closed)

<http://www.sccquest.org>

Paulines Africa Books and Audiovisuals

<http://www.paulinesafrica.org>

Peacock Streaming Platform (Livestreaming)

<https://www.peacocktv.com>

The People Speak Out Website

<https://www.thepeoplespeakout.org>

Local Voices Connecting Globally. Contains a lot of SCCs resources.

Pontifical Missionary Societies (PMS) – Kenya

<http://www.pmskenya.org>

Portsmouth Abbey School

<https://www.portsmouthabbey.org>

Presentation Ministries

<http://presentationministries.com/community/community.asp>

Raskob Foundation

<https://www.rfca.org>

Religious News Service (RNS)

<https://religionnews.com>

RENEW International especially RENEW Africa

<http://www.renewintl.org>

ResearchGate

<https://www.researchgate.net>

<https://www.researchgate.net/home.Home.html>

Sacred Space

<http://www.sacredspace.ie>

San Bernadino Diocese, California

<https://www.sbdioocese.org>

The Office of Small Faith Communities closed because of budget cuts and the ministry is now folded in under the Ministry Formation Institute. (909-475-5387 Amanda Alexander)

San Diego Diocese, California

<https://sdcatholic.org>

Santa Clara University

<https://www.scu.edu>

Scottish Laity Network (SLN)

<https://www.scottishlaitynetwork.org.uk>

The Scottish Laity Network (SLN) seeks to enable Scottish laity to come together as disciples of Jesus and through prayer, dialogue and discernment to find ‘new ways’ of being Church in Scotland in the 21st Century. We are rooted above all in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Gospel. We are inspired by the principles of Vatican II seeking to make the Gospel values a lived reality in the world today, and by the encyclical letter *Laudato Si’*, the vision of Pope Francis to listen and respond to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. We trust the Holy Spirit to guide us as we make this journey.

The Scottish Laity Network has a YouTube Channel with 89 recent videos/events. It is now focusing on the SLN Synod Journey 2020 –2024.

SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar).

<https://secam.org>

SEDOS (Service of Documentation and Study)

<https://sedosmission.org>

Semantic Scholar

<https://www.semanticscholar.org>

Skype (including the St. Isidore of Seville International Online SCC)

<https://www.skype.com/en>

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative
[Small Christian Communities – Small Christian Communities](#) without www

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative
<https://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>

This website was started in 2004 with a vision to establish a global collaborative networking website for Small Christian Communities (SCCs) worldwide. We share SCCs contact information, events, materials, news, videos and photos for each of the six continents. Special features on the Home Page include a “SCC Poll,” “What’s New” and a “Calendar of Events.” We welcome any and all feedback, contributions, SCCs materials, etc.

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Documents of the 2009 Synod of Bishops Second Special Assembly for Africa” in “Timeline in the History and Development of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Especially Eastern Africa Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 13 March, 2013.
<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/107-timelinein-thehistory-and-development-of-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-africa-especially-eastern-africa.html>:

Small Groups
[Small Groups.com](#)

Solidarity with South Sudan
<http://www.solidarityssudan.org>

Solwezi Diocese, Zambia
<http://www.solwezidiocese.org.zm>

Spirit Unbounded
<https://spiritunbounded.org>

St. Cloud Diocese, Minnesota
<https://stcdio.org>

St. Patrick’s Church/Kilgarvan Parish
<https://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/parish/kilgarvan>

St. Petersburg Diocese Website
[Small Christian Communities - Diocese of Saint Petersburg \(dosp.org\)](#)

The Small Christian Communities Office:

- Promotes, develops, supports and trains Small Christian Communities and their leadership.
- Assists parishes and Catholic entities in building communities that regularly engage in connecting life and faith through reflection and relationship building in all activities.
- Contains links to many SCCs Resources.

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, Metuchen Diocese
<https://www.sainthomasob.com/index>

The Synodal Times

<https://www.synodaltimes.com/>

As we share Synodal Resources the monthly 32-page Catholic newspaper called *The Synodal Times* produced by *The Irish Times* in Dublin, Ireland is excellent. Good articles and commentary. I have not seen a similar publication in the USA. *The Synodal Times* is a monthly publication that provides news, features, and commentary on the ongoing 2021 – 2024 Synod. The Synod on Synodality aims to bring people to a deeper experience of “being Church together.” Its goal is to ensure that the magisterium exercises its function as the facilitator of dialogue and communion within the Catholic Church. Print and digital subscriptions are available.

Traditional Legacy Research Society Website (Sukuma Legacy Project)

<https://sukumalegacy.org>

The Traditional Legacy Research Society promotes the history, culture, oral literature — Proverbs, Sayings, Riddles, Stories, Myths and Songs — and visual representations of the Sukuma People in Tanzania in East Africa. There are various examples of SCCs and community values. Includes a Blog (comments on the Sukuma Legacy Project).

Tablet

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk>

Provides an occasional article on SCCs/BCCs/BECs/CEBs around the world and valuable background information on the Global Church and the “context” of small communities. Online “Latest News” updates every day. An occasional article on Africa.

Tangaza Maryknoll Centre for African Studies (TAMCAS) Website

Tangaza University College including Library E-Resources and Digital Repository

<https://tangaza.ac.ke>

Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC)

<https://tec.or.tz>

Father Eamon Tobin Website

[Father Eamon Tobin](#)

Eamon Tobin was an Irish-born diocesan priest in Orlando Diocese, Florida, USA who died on 1 January, 2021. He was a great animator and promoter of Small Christian Communities. He was a prolific writer who had his own Website. He wrote: “As the pastor of a large, active Catholic parish I have been called to write many documents, letters and reflections over the years. I have collected and published many of them here on my website. Most of these writings have been previously published on the [Ascension Catholic Church of Melbourne Florida website](#). You will also find information on the books I have published and links to purchase these books. “Small Christian Communities Commentaries” follow the three year Liturgical Cycle (available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese). There you will find faith-sharing questions that seek to connect the readings to daily lives, as well as a link to [Guidelines for Facilitators](#).

Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC)

<https://fabc.org>

Federation of Christian Ministries (FCM)

<https://www.federationofchristianministries.org/index.php/about-fcm>

Fides

<http://www.fides.org>

Fresh Expressions

<http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk>

FutureChurch Website

<http://www.futurechurch.org>

FutureChurch works for:

- just, open and collaborative structures for Catholic worship, organization and governance
- a return to the Catholic Church's earliest traditions of both married and celibate priests
- a return to Jesus' inclusive practice of recognizing both female and male leaders
- regular access to the Eucharist, the center of Catholic life and worship

Gaba Pastoral Institute **CHECK**

Under CUEA

Global Ministries University

<https://www.globalministriesuniversity.org>

Google

<http://www.google.com>

Google Scholar

<https://scholar.google.com>

http://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%22Joseph+G+Healey%22&btnG=&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C31

Heart of the Church: Journeying Together

[Home \(heartofthechurch.org\)](http://www.heartofthechurch.org)

To become the *Ecclesia* God is calling us to be. First belong -- then believe, share and serve. Small Communities are the Heart of the Church. This website is designed primarily to enable our Small Christian Community, dedicated to Prisca and Aquila, to keep a record of our discoveries as we walk the Christian road together. You are welcome to look around and hopefully be inspired to start your own small group. Has a link to the SCCs Facebook Page.

Hekima Review

<http://journals.hekima.ac.ke/index.php/ojs>

<http://library.hekima.ac.ke/journals/index.php/hekimareview> XX

Hekima University College including Library E-Resources

<https://www.hekima.ac.ke/>

ICONN Look Up
whois.icann.org

Intentional Eucharistic Communities
<http://www.intentionaleucharistic.org>

JCAM (Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar)
[Home - Jesuit Conference Of Africa and Madagascar: JCAM \(jesuits.africa\)](http://www.jesuits.africa)

Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection (JCTR)
<http://www.jctr.org.zm>

Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) especially the Catholic Justice and Peace Department and Commission, Pontifical Missionary Societies, Family Life Program and “News” Pages
<http://www.kccb.or.ke>

KCCB Commission for Social Communications National Communications Network News
<https://www.kccb.or.ke/home/commission/13-commission-for-social-communications>

Laudete
<https://laudate.en.softonic.com>

Leadership Roundtable
<https://leadershiproundtable.org>
<https://summit.leadershiproundtable.org>

Liturgical Press
<https://litpress.org>

Sells Ebooks.

Loyola University -- Loyola Institute for Ministry (LIM)
<http://cnh.loyno.edu/lim>

Maryknoll (landing page)
<https://www.maryknoll.org>

Maryknoll Affiliates
<https://www.maryknollaffiliates.org>

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Africa Region (maintenance mode)
<https://maryknollafrica.org>

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Mission Education
<https://www.maryknoll.us>

Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS) **fix**
<http://www.mias.edu>

Maryknoll Intranet
<https://www.maryknoll.net>

Maryknoll Lay Missioners
<https://mklm.org>

Maryknoll Magazine
<https://maryknollmagazine.org>

Maryknoll Mission Archives including a Blog
<http://maryknollmissionarchives.org>

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
<https://www.maryknollogc.org>

Maryknoll Sisters
<https://www.maryknollsisters.org>

Maryknoll Society of Priests and Brothers
<https://maryknollsociety.org>

Maryknoll YA Bay Area (What'sApp) Community
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/DuySSUqKSSaD4mTYqNMBKs>

Mikroi: TAC's Initiative on Small Christian Communities
[Mikroi - Today's American Catholic \(todaysamericancatholic.org\)](http://Mikroi - Today's American Catholic (todaysamericancatholic.org))

In 2022 Today's American Catholic (TAC) launched an initiative to advance the work of Small Christian Communities. As part of this initiative, we are hosting Online SCC gatherings via Zoom. While these are not a substitute for in-person gatherings, they offer participants opportunities for faith-sharing, dialogue, and study that might not be otherwise available. If you are interested in joining one of our emerging SCC groups, please get in touch using the contact form on our website. We are also happy to share resources and guidance with those interested in starting their own SCC, either in their own location or through our online platform. We have established this page as a home for all of our SCC-related resources. *Mikroi* (*μικρός*) is a key term in *Matthew's* gospel that means "little ones" or "the least of these."

Mikado Mission Library and Catholic Documentation Center (Missio, Aachen, Germany)
<http://www.mikado-ac.info/homeuk.html>

Missio (Germany)
www.missio-hilft.de

Missio (The Pontifical Mission Societies -- USA)
<https://www.missio.org>

Moodle (Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya) Virtual Learning Environment.
 Course on "Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Church in Africa Today"
 (PTC418)

<http://moodle.tangaza.org/course/view.php?id=589>

Nairobi Archdiocese

<https://archdioceseofnairobi.org>

Nanetya Foundation

<http://nanetya-foundation.org>

The mission of this foundation is to enable children around the globe, who belong to small, endangered or unknown ethnic groups to read stories in their mother tongue and by that preserve the stories and traditions of these ethnic group cultures.

National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities (NAPRC)

[NAPRC – National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities](#)

The National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities (NAPRC) is an alliance of parishes committed to a new vision of parish based on the purpose of building an atmosphere in which ordinary people help each other regularly connect their faith and life. This is achieved in two ways:

1. Doing the things that we do differently.
2. Forming Small Church Communities (SCCs).

A key is that parishes are restructured into parish-based SCCs that are a “communion of communities.”

NAPRC offers workshops, conferences, and resources towards this goal.

National Advisory Team for Catholic Young Adult Ministry (NATYAM)

<https://www.usccb.org/topics/youth-and-young-adult-ministries/national-advisory-team-young-adult-ministry>

National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM)

<https://nfcym.org>

National Catholic Register (NCR)

<https://www.ncregister.com>

National Catholic Reporter (NCR)

<https://www.ncronline.org>

National Eucharistic Congress

<https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/>

<https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/>

<https://rcdop.org/nec>

Neocatechumenal Way

<https://neocatechumenaleiter.org/en>

Newark Archdiocese

<https://www.rcan.org>

<https://rcan.org/?s=Synod>
<https://www.youtube.com/NwkArchdiocese>
<https://www.facebook.com/NwkArchdiocese>

New People Media
<https://www.facebook.com/newpeoplemedia>

New York Times
<https://www.nytimes.com>

North American Center for Marianist Studies
<https://www.nacms.org>

Under E-Publications see:

The Best of Quest: Liturgical Year A



The Best of Quest is a lectionary-based resource for use by Small Christian Communities. Drawing upon a rich corpus of almost 30 years from *Quest*, a publication produced by the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, USA this installment of *The Best of Quest* focuses on Liturgical Year A.

Year B (coming)

The Best of Quest: Liturgical Year C



The Best of Quest is a lectionary-based resource for use by Small Christian Communities. Drawing upon a rich corpus of almost 30 years from *Quest*, a publication produced by the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, USA this installment of *The Best of Quest* focuses on Liturgical Year C.

North American Forum for Small Christian Communities (NAFSCC)

<http://www.nafsc.org>

password, effective 1 July 2021, to each page of the “members access”: 2022NAFSCC.

Nova Catholic Community

www.novacatholic.org

NOVA is...

- A Progressive and Inclusive Catholic Community drawing from Northern Virginia and the Greater DC area.
- Committed to Social Justice & Peacemaking through our personal lives, communal worship and activities.
- Lay-led and inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- Celebrating 52 years of faithful witness and always welcoming to visitors and new members.

Opera Mini

<http://www.opera.com>

Orbis Books: discount of 40% using promotion code: MKLFAM
 Orbis Books: discount of 30% using promotion code: CON30 time barred

<https://www.orbisbooks.com>
<https://orbisbooks.com>
[Orbis Books](#)

Orbis Books Catalog in Flipdox format
https://view.flipdocs.com/?ID=10027394_448352

Origins Online CNS Documentary Service
<http://www.originsonline.com>

Our Sunday Visitor (OSV)
<https://www.osv.com>
<https://www.osvnews.com>

Paulist Press
<https://www.paulistpress.com>

Sells Ebooks.

Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN)
<https://pactpan.org>

PACTPAN provides a forum for conversation and collaboration for African Christian scholars, clergy, religious and pastoral, health, and social justice workers who are interested in working towards a better future for the African continent.

PACTPAN emerged from the African Catholicism Project of the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology, DePaul University, Chicago, USA under the leadership of Father Stan Chu Ilo (Nigeria). The African Catholicism Project was launched in November 2015 as an international collaborative effort with an overarching goal to expand the production and distribution of scholarly and pastoral resources by African Catholic scholars. The African Catholicism Project has these objectives:

- Foster collaboration among Catholic scholars working in Africa and between scholars working in Africa and those working in the United States and Europe;
- Support the work of African scholars teaching in under-resourced institutions in Africa;
- Encourage interdisciplinary work among scholars studying African Catholicism; Produce written resources, both in print and online, serving both the scholarly community and the pastoral needs of the Catholic Church in Africa;
- Ensure the continuity of African scholarship through the mentoring of the next generation of African Catholic scholars.

These objectives are now being continued and expanded through PACTPAN.

Parish without Borders
<http://www.parish-without-borders.net>

Paterson Diocese

<https://rcdop.org>

Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities (SCCs) -- Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, USA (closed)

<http://www.sccquest.org>

Paulines Africa Books and Audiovisuals (Paulines Publications Africa)

<https://www.paulinesafrica.org>

Peacock Streaming Platform (Livestreaming)

<https://www.peacocktv.com>

The People Speak Out Website

<https://www.thepeoplespeakout.org>

Local Voices Connecting Globally. Contains a lot of SCCs resources.

Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) USA

One Family in Mission

www.OneFamilyinMission.org

Pontifical Missionary Societies (PMS) – Kenya

<http://www.pmskenya.org>

Portsmouth Abbey School

<https://www.portsmouthabbey.org>

Presentation Ministries

<http://presentationministries.com/community/community.asp>

Raskob Foundation

<https://www.rfca.org>

Religious News Service (RNS)

<https://religionnews.com>

RENEW International especially RENEW Africa

<http://www.renewintl.org>

ResearchGate

<https://www.researchgate.net>

<https://www.researchgate.net/home.Home.html>

Sacred Space

<http://www.sacredspace.ie>

San Bernadino Diocese, California

<https://www.sbdiocese.org>

The Office of Small Faith Communities closed because of budget cuts and the ministry is now folded in under the Ministry Formation Institute. (909-475-5387 Amanda Alexander)

San Diego Diocese, California
<https://sdcatholic.org>

Santa Clara University
<https://www.scu.edu>

Scottish Laity Network (SLN)
<https://www.scottishlaitynetwork.org.uk>

The Scottish Laity Network (SLN) seeks to enable Scottish laity to come together as disciples of Jesus and through prayer, dialogue and discernment to find ‘new ways’ of being Church in Scotland in the 21st Century. We are rooted above all in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Gospel. We are inspired by the principles of Vatican II seeking to make the Gospel values a lived reality in the world today, and by the encyclical letter *Laudato Si’*, the vision of Pope Francis to listen and respond to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. We trust the Holy Spirit to guide us as we make this journey.

The Scottish Laity Network has a YouTube Channel with 89 recent videos/events. It is now focusing on the SLN Synod Journey 2020 –2024.

SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar).
<https://secam.org>

SEDOS (Service of Documentation and Study)
<https://sedosmission.org>

Semantic Scholar
<https://www.semanticscholar.org>

Skype (including the St. Isidore of Seville International Online SCC)
<https://www.skype.com/en>

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative
[Small Christian Communities – Small Christian Communities](https://www.smallchristiancommunities.org) **without www**

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative
<https://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>

This website was started in 2004 with a vision to establish a global collaborative networking website for Small Christian Communities (SCCs) worldwide. We share SCCs contact information, events, materials, news, videos and photos for each of the six continents. Special features on the Home Page include a “SCC Poll,” “What’s New” and a “Calendar of Events.” We welcome any and all feedback, contributions, SCCs materials, etc.

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the Documents of the 2009 Synod of Bishops Second Special Assembly for Africa” in “Timeline in the History and Development of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Especially Eastern Africa Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, retrieved 13 March, 2013.

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent/107-timelinein-thehistory-and-development-of-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-africa-especially-eastern-africa.html>:

Small Groups

[Small Groups.com](http://SmallGroups.com)

Solidarity with South Sudan

<http://www.solidaritysudan.org>

Spirit Unbounded

<https://spiritunbounded.org>

St. Cloud Diocese, Minnesota

<https://stcdio.org>

St. John XXIII Catholic Church Website

<https://johnxxiii.net>

St. Patrick's Church/Kilgarvan Parish

<https://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/parish/kilgarvan>

St. Petersburg Diocese Website

[Small Christian Communities - Diocese of Saint Petersburg \(dosp.org\)](http://SmallChristianCommunities-DioceseofSaintPetersburg(dosp.org))

The Small Christian Communities Office:

- Promotes, develops, supports and trains Small Christian Communities and their leadership.
- Assists parishes and Catholic entities in building communities that regularly engage in connecting life and faith through reflection and relationship building in all activities.
- Contains links to many SCCs Resources.

St. Paul Inside the Walls

<https://insidethewalls.org>

Tablet

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk>

Provides an occasional article on SCCs/BCCs/BECs/CEBs around the world and valuable background information on the Global Church and the “context” of small communities. Online “Latest News” updates every day. An occasional article on Africa.

Tangaza Maryknoll Centre for African Studies (TAMCAS) Website

Tangaza University College including Library E-Resources and Digital Repository

<https://www.tangaza.ac.ke>

<https://tangaza.ac.ke>

Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC)

<https://tec.or.tz>

Today's American Catholic (TAC) Online Newsletter
[Today's American Catholic \(campaign-archive.com\)](http://www.todayamericancatholic.com)

Today's American Catholic (TAC)
<https://www.todaysamericancatholic.org>

Includes Mikroi (*Mikroi* (μικρός) is a key term in *Matthew's* gospel that means “little ones” or “the least of these.”) – TAC’s initiative on Small Christian Communities. Sections on:

- News and Articles.
- Opportunities to join.
- Additional Resources:
 1. Documents.
 2. Organizations.
 3. Colleges and Universities.

Traditional Legacy Research Society Website (Sukuma Legacy Project)
<https://sukumalegacy.org>

The Traditional Legacy Research Society promotes the history, culture, oral literature — Proverbs, Sayings, Riddles, Stories, Myths and Songs — and visual representations of the Sukuma People in Tanzania in East Africa. There are various examples of SCCs and community values. Includes a Blog (comments on the Sukuma Legacy Project).

Twitter
<https://twitter.com>
<https://twitter.com/search?q=Orbis%20Books&src=tyah> (for *God's Quad*)

1994 First African Synod
http://secretariat.synod.va/content/synod/en/synodal_assemblies/1994-first-special-assembly-for-africa--the-church-in-africa-and.html

2009 Second African Synod

Tübingen University Library Database (Tübingen, Germany)
www.ub.uni-tuebingen.de
www.uni-tuebingen.de/en/facilities/university-library.html

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Africa's Commitment (Africae Munus)*
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africaemunus_en.html

Message of the Bishops of Africa to the People of God
http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_23_ii_specialeafrica-2009/02_inglese/b30_02.html

Final List of [57] Propositions of the 2009 Synod of Bishops Second Special Assembly for Africa. The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin, October, 2009.

http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_23_ii_specialeaffrica-2009/02_inglese/b33_02.html

2018 Synod on “Young People”

Synod on Young People Website

<http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en.html>

Synod2018 on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/synod2018>

Synod2018 on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/synod2018>

2021-2024 Synod on “Synodality” <https://www.synod.va/en.html>

Pope Francis has proclaimed a Synod 2021-2024 and describes it as a "walking together, a journeying together." Everyone participates – young and old, women and men, lay people, priests, Sisters, Brothers, Bishops. Everyone has a voice. The theme is “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.” The purpose is to listen to peoples’ concerns, questions and recommendations for changes and then to renew and reinvigorate the Catholic Church around the world. Everyone is invited to participate in the Synodal Process. The Synod Office in Rome, Italy has a wonderful website with online resources from every continent in the world. Maryknollers have contributed to this website.

Walking Together – Sharing Resources for the Synod

[Resources - Sharing synodal resources \(synodresources.org\)](https://synodresources.org)

For a Synodal Church Online Newsletter

[#ForASynodalChurch - Newsletter \(mailchi.mp\)](https://mailchi.mp/forasynodalchurch)

Access to the sites of the seven individual continental gatherings and reports

Portal

<https://synod2023.org>

Africa Synodal Continental Assembly

[Africa - 2023 Synodal Continental Assembly | \(synod2023.org\)](https://synod2023.org)

“North American Final Document for the Continental Stage of the 2021-2024 Synod: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission”

[North-American-Final-Document_EN.pdf \(synod.va\)](https://synod.va)

A Synodal Church in Mission, 42-page English text of the “Summary Report” of the First Session of the Sixteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. 29 October, 2023. [2023.10.28-ENG-Synthesis-Report_IMP.pdf \(synod.va\)](https://synod.va)

Towards the 2024 Assembly

[Towards the 2024 Assembly \(synod.va\)](https://synod.va)

Ukweli TV Kenya

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoxv34YQP8MTpFvZrvTrkqw>

<https://www.facebook.com/casmiro/videos/10219010869156852/>

Universal Calendar

[Calendar – Spirit Unbounded](#)

University of San Diego

University of Notre Dame

<https://www.nd.edu>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

<http://www.usccb.org>

Ut Fidem (“Keep the Faith”) program at Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines, Iowa

<https://www.dowlingcatholic.org/ut-fidem>

Vatican

www.vaticannews.va (Online News)

www.vatican.va (The Holy See)

<http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html> (for English)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/index.htm (Synod of Bishops)

Vatican Radio

<http://en.radiovaticana.va>

Yes, Africa Matters

<http://sites.google.com/site/yesafricamattersorg>

Yahoo

<http://www.yahoo.com>

Young Adult Empowerment Community

[Missionary Disciples - Young Adult Empowerment Community \(maryknoll.us\)](http://www.maryknoll.us/home/young-adult-empowerment-community)

<https://www.maryknoll.us/home/young-adult-empowerment-community>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com>

YouTube Channels

SCC Channel

<https://youtube.com/shorts/DXAcfhewvEB?feature=share> **Video unavailable**

You Version of the *Bible* (hundreds of versions of the *Bible* in different languages) – through the United Bible Society

<https://www.bible.com>

We Are Church Ireland

<https://wearechurchireland.ie/>

What Apps Applications/Platforms (23)

<https://web.whatsapp.com>

African Proverbs Research

African Proverbs Working Group

BBC News

Eastern Africa SCCs Training Team

Hekima Theology Class 2018

Hekima Theology Class 2019

Holy Cross Youth Family

JPII Evangelizing Teams

KUCC (Kenyatta University Christian Community) -- Christ the Teacher Parish

Laudate

Many individual SCCs

Maryknoll YA Bay Area

Missio

Network SCC Africa

New Evangelization Africa

Nuer Small Christian Community in Kenya

RIP Fr. Richard J. Quinn

SOG Communication

SOG Maurice Michael Otunga

St. Augustine Graduate Fellowship SCC

St. Kizito SCC Waruku

United Airlines

The Pope App

Whispers in the Loggia

<http://whispersintheloggia.blogspot.com>

Valuable summary of Catholic Church news, photos, and documentation on various social media produced by American Catholic lay chronicler/journalist/correspondent/analyst Rocco Palmo.

Whois

<https://lookup.icann.org/lookup>

<https://whois.icann.org/en/about-whois>

<https://lookup.icann.org>

Domain Name Registration data lookup.

Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

NOTE: I would update and revise the *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia, entry on "Basic Ecclesial Community" to read:

Basic Ecclesial Communities, also called Basic Christian Communities and Small Christian Communities is not a Christian movement in the church as such, but the church on the move (see José Marins quote). Some feel that this initiative has its origin and inspiration from Liberation Theology in Latin America. Many regard the emergence of this initiative as part of the concrete realization of the communitarian model of the Catholic Church (as Communion and as People of God) promoted by the Second Vatican Council. The communities are considered as a new way of "being the Church"— the Catholic Church at the grassroots, in the neighborhood and villages. The earliest small communities emerged in Brazil in 1956, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 1961 and in Tanzania and the Philippines in the late 1960s and later spread to other parts Africa and Asia and in recent times in Australia and North America.

WordPress

WorldCat Website

<https://www.worldcat.org>

"Word to Life" Sunday Scripture Readings (CNS Blog) XX

<https://cnsblog.wordpress.com/category/word-to-life>

Practical, concrete examples of daily life followed by several challenging questions.

Zambia Episcopal Conference

<https://catholiczambia58.com>

ZENIT

<http://www.zenit.org>

Zoom Applications/Platforms (10)

Center at Mariandale

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81607099744>

Meeting ID: 816 0709 9744

John Eybel/Africa Group

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8638025609?pwd=YVlzcjB5Y01GcEJibG85ZkYvYUJSQT09>

Meeting ID: 863 802 5609

Passcode: 1911

Marita Grudzen

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81462228942>

Rene Reid

<https://zoom.us/j/2429500175>

password: spirit

Joseph Healey

Zoom Personal Meeting ID (PMI): 719-876-1799

Kerry Robinson

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88506480810>

Meeting ID: 885 0648 0810

Bob Short

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83405470212?pwd=RnBwOHNTUjlLVVVRVVZ4dE1jTzBsdz09>

Meeting ID: 834 0547 0212

Passcode: 346503

Meeting Recording:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/fbdh6x_zDRTbi8qGeILGmQsvJ9ghgcDDUXnLYfaRLTwlQfSUMOhSkFFAgyr1cV2Z.LTVb8ClaziX3vIk5

Access Passcode: Ai1=8BDF

Rene Reid (CCRI)

<https://zoom.us/j/2429500175>

password: spirit.

Bob Short

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83405470212?pwd=RnBwOHNTUjlLVVVRVVZ4dE1jTzBsdz09>

Meeting ID: 834 0547 0212

Passcode: 346503

Meeting Recording:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/fbdh6x_zDRTbi8qGeILGmQsvJ9ghgcDDUXnLYfaRLTwlQfSUMOhSkFFAgyr1cV2Z.LTVb8ClaziX3vIk5

Access Passcode: Ai1=8BDF

John Sivalon

<https://scranton.zoom.us/j/93546139230>

Gene Toland/Laudato Si Zoom Focus Group

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88144360410?pwd=dU9CL3lmZ3daNXhZaUsyWmxicmhz09>

Meeting ID: 881 4436 0410
Passcode: 767352

About the Author

Father Joseph G. Healey, MM is an American Maryknoll missionary priest who came to Kenya in 1968 and founded the Regional Catholic Bishops Association (AMECEA) Social Communications Office based in Nairobi, Kenya. He was a lecturer at Tangaza University College (CUEA) and at Hekima University College (CUEA) in Nairobi. Over many years he has taught courses on the “Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Model of Church.” He is a member of the AMECEA Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Training Team. He facilitates SCC Workshops and animates SCCs in Eastern Africa. He is an ordinary member of the St. Kizito Small Christian Community in the Waruku Section of St. Austin’s Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese and the St. Isidore of Seville Online Small Christian Community. During the Covid-19 pandemic he started full time in Internet Ministry and now focuses on promoting Online SCCs, the Synodal Process and digital evangelization. He is now based in New Vernon, New Jersey, USA. Email address: JoeHealey@jghealey.com

He co-edited *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment* (Orbis Books and Paulines Publications Africa) and is the Moderator of the [Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website](#). He co-authored *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Orbis Books and Paulines Publications Africa) and is the Moderator of the [African Proverbs, Sayings and Stories Website](#). He co-edited *Strengthening the Growth of Small Christian Communities in Africa -- A Training Handbook for Facilitators* (the Swahili is *Kuimarisha Ukuaji wa Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo katika Afrika*).

An ongoing book is *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications – CUEA Press Double *Spearhead* Nos. 199-200 (2012). The book is updated every month and is available as a free online digital (electronic) Ebook. 1,706 pages and 1,517 footnotes as of 22 August, 2024 on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website at:

<http://smallchristiancommunities.org/building-the-church-as-family-of-god-evaluation-of-small-christian-communities-in-eastern-africa-2/>

http://smallchristiancommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Build_new.pdf

On sale on Amazon (Kindle Edition and other digital formats) and Google as an Ebook and on Amazon as a Print on Demand (POD) paperback in two volumes.

He has contributed the following recent chapters and articles in books and journals and talks in podcasts and webinars as follows:

1. “Promoting SCCs in Africa via the Internet,” in Joseph Healey and Jeanne Hinton (eds.), *Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment* (Orbis Books). 2005.
2. “New Learnings in Animating a Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Model of Church in Africa Today” in *African Christian Studies* (CUEA). Reproduced on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website, 2008.
3. “Innovations and New Trends in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Africa Today.” in *Hekima Review*. Reproduced on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website. 2009.

4. "Small Christian Communities: Second African Synod," *New People*. 2009.
5. "Small Christian Communities Promote Themes of the 2009 2nd African Synod" in *Hakimani – Jesuit Journal of Social Justice in Eastern Africa*. 2009.
6. "How Small Christian Communities Promote Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa" in *The Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, 2010.
7. "Three Case Studies of African Christology among the Sukuma People in Tanzania," *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission*, 2011.
8. "Small Christian Communities: Promoters of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa" in Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (ed.), *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace – the Second African Synod* (Orbis Books and Acton Publishers). 2011.
9. "Historical Development of the Small Christian Communities/Basic Ecclesial Communities in Africa" in Klaus Krämer, and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Small Christian Communities: Fresh Stimulus for a Forward-looking Church* (Herder and Claretian Publications). 2013.
10. "How African Small Christian Communities Implement the Pastoral and Missionary Vision of Vatican II" in *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission*. 2013.
11. "Small Christian Communities in the AMECEA Region: An Evaluation of Their Growth and Impact" in *The Faculty of Theology of CUEA Celebrates the Golden Jubilee of AMECEA*. General Editor: John Lukwata. CUEA Press, 2013.
12. "Promoting Small Christian Communities in Africa through the Internet" in *International Journal of African Catholicism (IJAC)*. IJAC website. 2014.
13. "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Promote Family Ministry in Eastern Africa" in *Hekima Review*. Reprinted on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website. 2014.
14. "Promoting Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa in the Light of *The Joy of the Gospel*" in Klaus Krämer, and Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), *Evangelii Gaudium: Voices of the Universal Church* (Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation). 2015.
15. "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Promote Family and Marriage Ministry in Eastern Africa," in online *International Journal of African Catholicism (IJAC)*, IJAC website. 2015
16. "Beyond Vatican II: Imagining the Catholic Church of Nairobi I" in Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (ed.), *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III* (Orbis Books and Acton Publishers). 2016.
17. "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as Agents of Change in the Fight Against HIV AND AIDS in Eastern Africa" in Jacquineau Azetsop, *HIV and AIDS in Africa: Theological Reflection, Public Health Crises, and Social Transformation* (Orbis Books). 2016.
18. "Urban and Rural Models of Small Christian Communities (SCCs): A Case Study on Eastern Africa," in Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner (Chief Editors), *Anthology of*

African Christianity (Regnum Books International). Reproduced on the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website. 2016.

19. "We Create the Path by Walking: Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Involvement in Peacebuilding in Eastern Africa" in *The Journal of Social Encounters* (JSE). 2017.
20. "The Way Forward: We Create the Path by Walking," in Giuseppe Caramazza and Eleanor Gibson, (eds.), *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*. 2018.
21. "What Catholic Young People Really Want to Talk About?" in Kevin Ahern and Christopher Derige Malano, (eds.), *God's Quad: Small Faith Communities on Campus and Beyond* (Orbis Books). 2018.
22. "Cell Churches in Africa," *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the Global South*. 2018.
23. "Pastoral Responses to the Worldwide Eucharistic Famine," FutureChurch Podcast (presentation and the transcription of the question and answers). 2018.
24. "Small Christian Communities." Interview with Joseph Healey in "Anchor" Program (CCRI Podcast Episode No. 1). 2019.
25. "Young People Small Christian Communities." Interview with Joseph Healey in "Anchor" Program (Catholic Church Reform Int'l -- CCRI Podcast Episode No. 6). 2019.
26. "Go Digital or Die: The Importance and Use of the Internet and Social Media in Proclaiming the Good News Today," in *New People*. Reproduced on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website and in the *Maryknoll News*. 2020.
27. "We Create the Path by Walking: Evolving an African Narrative Theology" in Elias Kifon Bongmba, (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology* (Routledge). 2020. (with a Read Aloud feature)
28. "SCCs in the Historical Perspective of 59 Years (1961 to 2020) in the AMECEA Region." Produced on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website. 2020.
29. "My Personal 50 Year Journey (1970 to 2020) with Orbis Books in Africa," in *Hekima Review*. Reproduced on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website. 2020. **MEMOIR**
30. "Small Christian Communities in the *Acts of the Apostles*." Webinar on Zoom for the CCRI Strategy Team. Facilitated by Joseph G. Healey. A five-session interactive study, discussion and reflection experience using the "See," Discern/Judge" and "Act" process or methodology. 15 July, 2020 to 12 August, 2020.
31. "Origin and History of the Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website (2004 to 2021). Posted on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website. 15 February, 2021.
32. "After College What? Developing Alumni Zoom Small Faith Communities." Posted on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website. 1 October, 2021.

33. “We Create the Path by Walking Together/Journeying Together: Developing the Synodal Process in Eastern Africa.” Posted on the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Global Collaborative Website. 29 January, 2022.
34. “Small Christian Communities in Africa: Histories, Themes, Development and Challenges” in Stan Ilo, (ed.), *Handbook of African Catholicism* (Orbis Books, 2022). (with a Read Aloud feature).
35. “My 54 Years (1967 – 2021) Journey with Charles de Foucauld” in Victor Edwin, (ed.), *Brother To All: The Life and Witness of St. Charles de Foucauld* (11 Essays on Different Themes Around Charles de Foucauld) (Orbis Books, 2022). **MEMOIR**
36. *Your Voice Counts in This Synod*, Spoken Text and Video to introduce the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers “Synod Listening Sessions.” Maryknoll: Center CED. March, 2022.
37. “African Theologians Are Now Writing Their Own Histories -- Why the *Handbook of African Catholicism* is Important.” Talk at the Book Presentation of the *Handbook of African Catholicism* at CUEA in Nairobi, Kenya.
38. “Four African Theologians Assess the SCCs Model of Church,” Talk at the Virtual Book Presentation of the *Handbook of African Catholicism* at De Paul in Chicago, Illinois, USA.
39. “Case Study of Retracing the Footsteps of St. Isidore of Seville Weekly Lectionary-based International Online Small Christian Community (SCC).”
40. “Harvesting Some Maryknoll Memories in the Africa Region and Discerning What the Holy Spirit is Saying to Maryknoll Today and in the Future.” Reflection for Tanzania District Meeting, Mwanza, Tanzania.
41. “Harvesting Some AMECEA Memories and Discerning What the Holy Spirit is Saying to AMECEA Today and in the Future.” Farewell Homily at the AMECEA Residence/Office, Nairobi, Kenya.
42. “Saying ‘Goodbye...Until We Meet Again.’” Farewell Homily at Maryknoll Society House, Nairobi, Kenya.
43. “Bishop Patrick Kalilombe and the Lilongwe Diocese, Malawi Mini Synod in 1973-75: One of the Foundations of the AMECEA Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Pastoral Priority Leading Up to the Two “Synod on Synodality” Sessions in 2023 and 2024.”
44. “The Participation of SCCs in the Synodal Church in Africa” in *Mission Studies and Practical-Contextual Theology, Studia Missiologici SVD, 2024*. **IN PRODUCTION**
45. “The Participation of SCCs in the Synodal Church in Africa” in *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission, 2024*. **IN PRODUCTION**
46. “Tracing the Historical Development of SCCs in AMECEA.”
- c. The origins and development of SCCs in AMECEA
 - d. What prompted the Bishops of AMECEA to come up with the idea of SCCs

SCCs@50 Booklet. AWAITING PRINTING

47. “Small Christian Communities and the Ongoing Synodal Process.” *Journal of Social Encounters* Deadline: 2025. Essays should be 15-25 pages double-spaced typed in the APA format, and include a 100-150 word abstract. **IN PRODUCTION**

48. Response to Mary Getui paper – for the Second Laurenti Magesa's Memorial Lecture.

49. “Small Christian Communities (SCCs) Around the World Led by the Holy Spirit.” Talk at KCCA Convention. 9 August, 2024.

He has helped to produce a number of videos, DVDs and podcasts on SCCs as well as coordinate radio and TV programs.

Contact the author at:

Rev. Joseph G. Healey, MM
P.O. Box 574
New Vernon, New Jersey 07976-0574
USA

Rev. Joseph G. Healey, MM
555 Van Beuren Road
Morristown, New Jersey 07960-6463
USA

+ 1 973-216-4997 (AT&T, USA)
Email: JoeHealey@jghealey.com
WhatsApp: 1+ 973-216-4997
Skype: joseph-healey
Zoom Personal Meeting ID (PMI): 719-876-1799

Online Digital (Ebook or Electronic Book) Version updated as a free Ebook: 22 August, 2024.

1,706 pages