



Holy Ghost Schools-Makueni: Evangelising through schools

By Arnold Neliba

Three strong pipes clearly marked, “Kenya Pipeline Company,” hold up a 30-year-old church bell at St Joseph the Worker Catholic Parish, Sultan Hamud.

An old letter at the parish office indicates that the pipes were donated by the company to the church through Fr Adriano Bonfanti, a Comboni Missionary priest famed with evangelizing the area.

Today St Joseph the Worker is a fully fledged parish, established on February 2014 and run by the Spiritans, who also run the neighbouring Holy Ghost Schools- Makueni.

Interestingly, the Spiritans were invited to Sultan Hamud by retired Major General Joseph Musomba, who despite being an Anglican, was impressed by the work the Catholic Church was doing in the education sector.

The Major General, who owns an impressive tract of land in Sultan Hamud had the idea of putting up a project together with the local community, to address the need of a secondary school in the locality.

He was willing to donate a piece of his land for the project and envisioned a school that would offer quality education like his late son (who the neighbouring St. Christopher Memorial Girls Secondary School is named after) had received at St. Marys School- Nairobi.

In 2008, Musomba consulted a nun, Sr Catheriene Wanza of the Little Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi with a proposal to her congregation to begin building and setting up the institution. 



Photo by Stephen Mukhongi 2017

The three-year old parish at Sultan Hamud, a living testimony of the achievement of the Holy Ghost Fathers. Beside the church is a bell erected on pipes donated by Kenya Pipeline Company.

Sr Catherine passed on the offer to Fr Alphonse Malinda and Fr John Mbinda CSSp to suggest the project to the Spiritans Foundation of Kenya.

The Spiritans, have a history of being educators in Kenya having founded and managed prominent schools such as St. Marys School-Nairobi, Kabaa High School in Machakos and Mangu High School in Kiambu.

The spiritans picked the idea and Major General Musomba donated 40 acres of land to build the school.

The congregation linked the project to BlackRock College School in Ireland through which efforts began towards building the school at Sultan Hamud.

When the Spiritans approached Archbishop Martin Kivuva, then Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Machakos to request permission to establish the school, he agreed and even laid the foundation stone on July 31, 2013 but insisted that they run a parish alongside the school and St. Joseph the Worker, an outstation of Kasikeu to be elevated to a parish for that purpose.

Nine outstations were scrapped off Kasikeu and two from Kiongwani parishes to constitute 11 outstations for St Joseph the Worker Parish--Sultan Hamud. It was the Bishop's desire that the coming of the school influences the growth of faith in Sultan Hamud.

On May 11, 2014, the outstation became a parish just a day after the Bishop officially opened the school. Fr Paul Kamau was appointed parish priest while Fr John Wambo became the school



Photo by Stephen Mukhongi 2017
director.

Painting of the badge of the Holy Ghost schools on a building within the school.



Photo by Stephen Mukhongji 2017

Fr Mutisya the Parish priest of St. Joseph the Worker Parish at Sultan Hamud during an interview with The seed at his office. He says the coming of education has assisted him in evangelisation.

▶ The Holy Ghost Schools—Makueni today has a population of 282 students and 17 teachers a big improvement from the 65 students 65 boys the school started off with in 2014.

According to the Deputy Principal, Mr Haggai Barasa, 48 students out of the 65 were sponsored by the congregation and well-wishers, a culture the school keeps to date to ensure children from the locality are able to access the school.

“Initially, students were forced to walk for a long distance to school. This condition made most of them to drop out of school,” Mr Barasa tells *The Seed*.

The Blackrock College, in collaboration with Mellon Educate program has helped in construction of the school.

Today, the school has twelve classrooms, two laboratories, two hostels, kitchen and dining hall. It also has a chapel whose construction was succeeded by donation from the Irish family. The sponsorship under Black Rock Mission Fund is currently constructing a new hostel which is expected to be due end of 2017.

The sponsors further implemented Blackrock Outreach Programme, an agreement between the college and the Holy Ghost Schools-Makueni, that

sees groups of college students travel to Sultan Hamud every year to engage in an internship program which entails construction in the School.

Through implementation of the program, the school cuts costs that that would be incurred on personnel making it possible to run the expensive school at an affordable rate.

Holy Ghost schools - Makueni is not the only school that has been put up in Sultan Hamud. While he was parish priest at St Joseph the Worker, Father Paul Kamau, oversaw the construction of a primary school at Kawese outstation.

Previously pupils would have to trek over nine kilometres to get to Kalimbini primary school.

“Through the coming of the schools, children within the locality are supported which encouraged their parents to come to church. Consequently, it has effected growth on their faith,” Father Mutisya notes.

In three years, St Joseph the Worker parish has seen a constant increase in number of parishioners. The number is currently at 500 with approximately 70 people being baptised annually