



### **Vatican Secretary to the Dicastery for Culture and Education Visits Tangaza**

Tangaza University recently received the Secretary to the Dicastery for Culture and Education, Msgr. Giovanni Cesare Pagazzi. He was accompanied by the Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya and S. Sudan H.E. Rev. Hurbertus Van Megen.

Speaking to the university sponsors, he observed that Tangaza is not only playing a pivotal role in the Church, but also in the Kenyan society at large. The university, he added has in fact developed from being a formative institute for religious only, to a full-fledged university where students from all over Africa, religious and laity alike, find a home.

The Msgr. stressed on the importance of the presence of Catholic institutions of higher learning like Tangaza in an era where secularism is evermore dominating in the public sphere, saying that they are not only relevant but essential. At the heart of a Catholic university lies a commitment to moral and ethical values, he said.

“These institutions are grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ, which emphasize love, compassion, and justice.” The Msgr. Observed.

The Secretary, who is also in charge education went on to explain that in a secular society where, moral relativism can sometimes prevail, Catholic universities serve as beacons of ethical clarity, guiding students to discern right from wrong based on enduring principles.



Catholic universities are different from Public Universities in their dual focus on intellectual and spiritual development he added. They encourage students to explore the depths of human knowledge while also nurturing their spiritual lives. This holistic approach ensures that graduates are not only well-versed in their fields of study but also possess a deep sense of purpose and meaning.

In addition to that, one of the core missions of Catholic education is to promote social justice. Catholic universities instill in their students a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate and marginalized. It is here that the faculty on social transformation comes in, but also the relatively new concept of service-learning: learning at the service of society.

He noted that a Catholic university must then also be responsible for providing education that is accessible for the poor, and for members of other socially and economically disadvantaged groups.



In fact, Catholic universities provide a platform for a continuous dialogue with society, fostering an environment where diverse perspectives are respected and valued. This commitment to inclusivity helps bridge divides and promotes mutual respect and understanding in a pluralistic society with different believe systems and different cultural values.

The Catholic university works toward that end and toward the betterment of society through the lives and careers of its students. Catholic education is “the ground of promise in the future,” as a way to address “the wrongs of the oppressed.”

He explained that Catholic social teaching as taught in Catholic university, recognizes the dignity of the human person and the interdependence of humanity, challenges the oppression of racism and bigotry, and

works for social and economic justice. It calls upon people of good will to defend human rights, to participate in society at all levels, and to take action to serve the poor and vulnerable.



He referred to the letter written by Pope Francis in 2015 to the Grand Chancellor of the Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina, saying: “Do not settle for a desktop theology. Your place for reflection is the frontier. Do not fall into the temptation to embellish, to add fragrance, to adjust them to some degree and domesticate them. Even good theologians, like good shepherds, have the odor of the people and of the street and, by their reflection, pour oil and wine onto the wounds of mankind. Theology is an expression of a Church which is a ‘field hospital’, which lives her mission of salvation and healing in the world.”

He explained that Mercy is not just a pastoral attitude, but it is the very substance of the Gospel of Jesus. He encouraged them to study how the various disciplines — dogma, morality, spirituality, law, and so on — may reflect the centrality of mercy.

“Without mercy our theology, our law, our pastoral care run the risk of collapsing into bureaucratic narrow-mindedness or ideology, which by their nature seeks to domesticate the mystery. Understanding theology is understanding God, who is Love”. He added.



## **Towards Africa University Network on FAIR Open Science**

Tangaza University last week hosted Dr. Goitom Tegen from the Thomas Moore University in Belgium. The university has strong roots in Leuven University that is well known in Tangaza University for offering study opportunities to students.

Dr. Goitom is part of the team created by Tangaza University to work towards the Africa University Network on FAIR Open Science. The network aims at building partnership with universities across the African continent, and other similar networks across the world.

Among some of the aims of the network is to collaborate in research, and student and staff exchange. This, is key in a globalizing world partnership, and are key in harnessing resources.

During the launch of this network at Leiden University, Netherlands in August this year, Prof Patrick Mwanja presented Tangaza to the gathering as a university that prides herself in core values built around teaching minds, touching hearts and transforming lives.



Tangaza University brings to the network a vision on academic excellence, service orientation and commitment to social transformation in line with faith-based gospel values. Tangaza prepares servant leaders with strong ethical and moral values, and prides in fostering innovation and creative thinking.

Other key members of the Network are Mekelle University in Ethiopia, Equator University of Science and Technology in Uganda, University of Nairobi, the Great Zimbabwe University, the Grand Bassa University in Liberia and other universities that have applied for membership like Witwatersrand in South Africa, Dar es Salaam University, Aruppe University and many others.



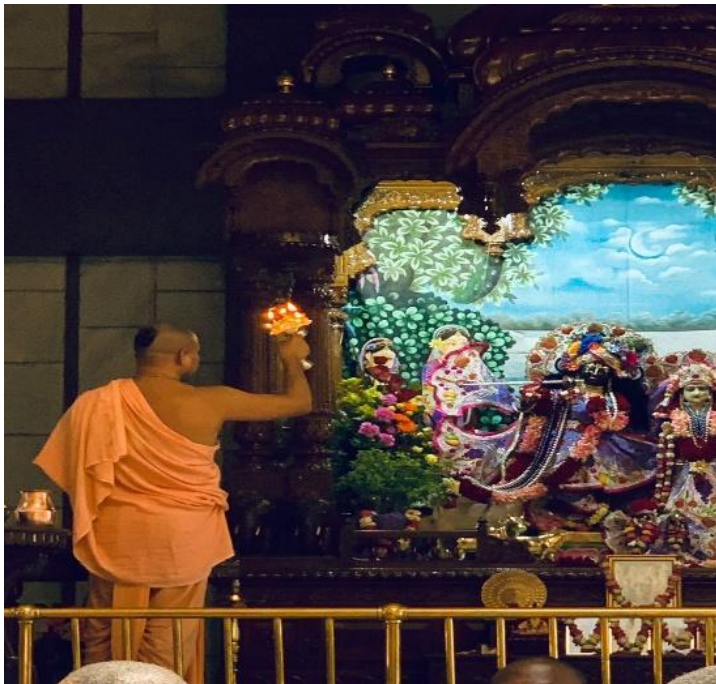
The network officials are the Tangaza University VC Rev Prof Patrick Mwanja who is the interim Vice president, while Prof Eyasu Yazew is the interim president. The office of the VC and DVC Academics will keep updating members on the progress.

## **Tangaza Philosophy Students Visit the Hare Krishna Hindu Temple**

The third-year students from the Institute of Philosophy, Tangaza University last week visited the Hare Krishna Hindu Temple at Ngara, Nairobi.

The academic trip, organized for learning and experiential purposes is part of the requirements of Introduction to Oriental Philosophy unit in the Institute of Philosophy. The trip is expected to give the students an opportunity to see, learn and experience the rich religious and philosophies of the East, represented by one of the major world religions, Hinduism.

Hare Krishna temples, which are part of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), serve as spiritual centers for the teachings of Bhakti Yoga and the ancient Vedic texts, like the Bhagavad Gita. Followers practice devotion in the temples, meditation, and community service,



*Hindu priest performing religious ritual*

For philosophy students, who are potential pastors in the Church, such an environment offers a real experience of concepts often discussed theoretically in the classroom setting. The academic visit is therefore meant to deepen student's understanding of Eastern Philosophy and to broaden their horizons in the area of philosophy.

A vital part of the visit included a session on the key teachings of Bhagavad Gita, one of the most celebrated texts in Indian philosophy, which holds significant appeal for philosophers worldwide due to its deep exploration of duty, morality, and the nature of existence. Further, the visit helped the students gain a broad, balanced, and comprehensive view, on cultural and religious insights.

For most of the students, the visit to the Hare Krishna temple was a humbling reminder that philosophy is not confined to the western world only. It hence developed their capacity to become effective mediators between and within diverse societies, in complex and demanding environments and situations.



*Priest Govinda speaks to Tangaza University students of Philosophy at the Hare Krishna Hindu Temple*

It had a powerful impact on experiential learning, immersing them in a philosophy as practiced by others, offering valuable insights into human

behavior, belief, and spirituality. This exposure is expected to deepen their understanding of Eastern philosophies, and inspire them to appreciate the diversity of thought and practice in spiritual traditions, as philosophy, at its best, is a bridge between thought and action.

The Temple priest gave a lecture on key teachings of Hare Krishna Movements and engaged them in discussions about dharma (duty) and karma (the law of cause and effect), which are core elements of Indian philosophical thought. The students were able to draw many parallels with Christian teachings.

The excursion to the Hare Krishna temple provided more than just an educational experience to the students. It offered them an encounter with a tradition that values devotion, service, and personal transformation, qualities that inspire and inform their own paths in the world of philosophy.



*A group photo with two Hindu priests, Mr. Nyaga and the 3rd year students of philosophy*

The trip was of great gain for the students who have trained in western philosophy, to have an exposure that challenges their common ideas and assumptions on Hindu religious beliefs and philosophies. For example, thinking erroneously that Hindus worship idols because of the presence of many gods and goddesses in their temples.

The visit also broadened the students' philosophical horizons, who, having being trained in the western way of thinking, were introduced to other different ways to search for knowledge and reach the ultimate truth.

Finally, they were able to correct some erroneous thought claiming that eastern philosophy is not a philosophy, but wisdom drawn from cultural and religious practices of eastern cultures. The students were accompanied by their lecturer, Mr. Anastasio Nyaga, who teaches at the Institute of Philosophy.