THE STAR HERALD BULLETIN

ALOKOLUM NATIONAL MAJOR SEMINARY

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50 YEARS
UGANDA MARTYRS' NATIONAL MAJOR SEMINARY
ALOKOLUM - GULU
1973 - 2023
GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS
ROOTED IN FAITH, GROWING IN HOPE AND BEARING FRUITS

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Editorial Message

Dear Esteemed readers,

Welcome to this month's edition of the STAR HERALD Bulletin. As our Golden Jubilee draws near, we journey under the theme "Rooted in Faith, Growing in Hope and Bearing Fruits." Inside, find news and reflections. May you enjoy reading this publication more than we enjoyed preparing it.

Henry Mary Ddamulira
President, Writer's Club



Phones and the Crisis of Community Life

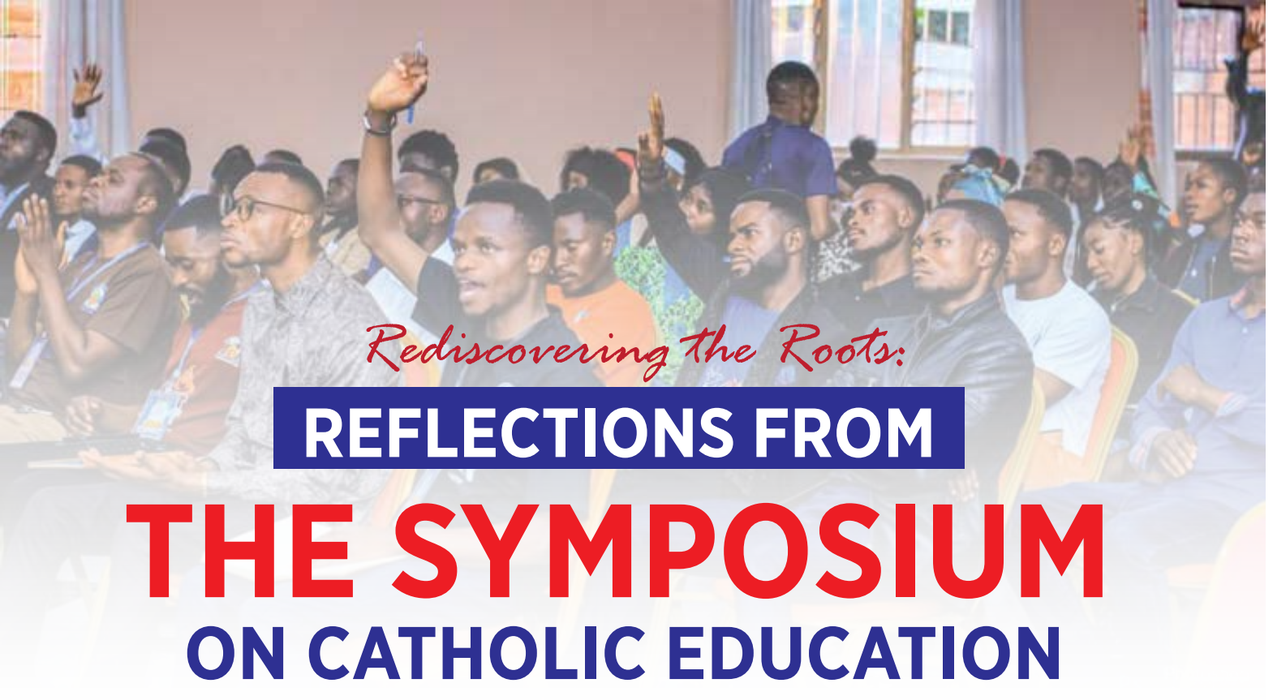
Seminary formation is built on community. Seminarians are called to pray together, study together, share meals, and grow as brothers on the way to the priesthood. Yet the growing use of phones is quietly threatening this way of life.

Too often, recreation time is spent with heads bowed to screens instead of faces turned toward one another. Meals lose their conversation, and even times meant for silence and prayer are interrupted by notifications. Members of a community may be physically together while their minds are elsewhere.

This is a crisis because community life depends on presence. Friendship, forgiveness, and fraternal correction cannot flourish through a screen. A lonely or struggling brother can easily go unnoticed when everyone is absorbed in their own device.

Phones are not evil. They help people keep in touch with family, access study resources, and even pray with the Scriptures. But when they rule us instead of serving us, they rob us of silence, attention, and the discipline that formation requires.

Every seminarian is therefore invited to use phones with moderation and purpose. Let us put them down, look up, and rediscover the gift of the brother beside us. **ANONYMOUS.**



Rediscovering the Roots:

REFLECTIONS FROM THE SYMPOSIUM ON CATHOLIC EDUCATION

(The Writer is a Seminarian of Uganda Martyrs National Major Seminary, Alokolum who attended the Symposium on Catholic Education at St. Thomas Aquinas National Major Seminary Katigondo.)

From the 4th to the 6th of June 2026, St. Thomas Aquinas Katigondo Seminary in Masaka Diocese played host to a rich and thought-provoking Symposium on Catholic Education, organized by the St. John Henry Newman Institute (SJHNI). As a seminarian privileged to attend, I return to my Alma Mater to share some little insights from a renewed conviction: that the future of the Church, and indeed of the salvation of souls, is inseparable from the education we offer the young.

Education as a Path to Heaven

The symposium opened with introductory reflections from Rev. Fr. Joseph Lugalambi, PhD, who reminded participants that Catholic education is, at its heart, an act of evangelization aimed at the salvation of souls. "If you want to kill a culture, kill education," he warned, echoing the ancient truth that education is the vessel through which the best of a culture its faith, virtues, and wisdom is handed down from one generation to the next. Drawing on Simone Weil's image of roots and flowers, Fr. Lugalambi cautioned that without deep roots, the flowers of any renewal will inevitably wither.

Naming the Crisis

Mr. Zachary Good, Director of Formation at SJHNI, did not shy away from naming the crisis facing Catholic education today: a culture increasingly confused about the dignity of life, marriage, and identity; a Church where, in the American context, only a small fraction of Catholics practise their faith fully; and Catholic founded schools that are closing at an alarming rate even as the Catholic population grows. Citing Russell Kirk, he observed that society has been "living off its educational capital" for three centuries without replenishing it.

His proposed antidote Perennial Catholic Education rests on seeing the human person as made in the image of God, and on five structural pillars: the Transcendentals (Truth, Goodness, Beauty), the Liberal Arts (the Trivium and Quadrivium), the Virtues, the Humanities, and proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. True teaching, he insisted, is an art rooted in love, centred on Christ the Logos, and ultimately ordered toward the restlessness St. Augustine spoke of hearts that find no rest until they rest in God.

The Church's Enduring Wisdom

A historical survey traced how the Church, for nineteen centuries, instinctively formed saints as Mother and Teacher long before formal doctrines on education existed from Pope Leo XIII's Spectata Fides (1885) through Vatican II's Gravissimum Educationis to Pope Leo XIV's recent reflections in Drawing New Maps of Hope (2025) and Magnifica Humanitas (2026). Five marks were offered as the litmus test of an authentically Catholic school: it must be inspired by a supernatural vision, founded on a Christian anthropology, animated by communion, imbued with a Catholic worldview, and sustained by Gospel witness.

Christ the Teacher, and the Means of Formation

Dr. Jeffrey S. Lehman of the Augustine Institute offered two dense but deeply pastoral sessions on "Following Christ the Teacher." Education, he argued, begins and ends in abiding with Christ, friendship with God and the perfection of human nature through a "harmony of well-ordered loves." He then turned to the practical means: teachers animated by love of God, truth, and students; a curriculum unified around Christ rather than fragmented into disconnected subjects; and a school community: parents, teachers, and pastors woven together around the liturgical life.

Forming the Moral Imagination

In a particularly memorable session, Mr. Good returned to speak on forming the moral imagination through nature, art, work, and above all, story. Fairy tales, he said, are a child's first "morality play," clearing the way as Ethel Pochocki put it for sanctity.Through Chesterton's reading of Jack the Giant Killer, Cinderella, and Beauty and the Beast, we were reminded that stories teach children not only what is true, but who they are called to become.

Number, Beauty, and the Liturgy

The symposium also explored the Quadrivium geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music as a "dialogue with nature" that trains the mind to perceive the ratio and proportion woven into creation, visible in works as varied as the Vitruvian Man and St. Peter's Basilica. The final session turned to liturgy as the sustaining fuel of Catholic formation, closing with the searching words of Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard: "If the priest is a saint, the people will be fervent... but if the priest is only decent, the people will be godless."

For those of us being formed for priesthood at Alokolum, this symposium was more than an academic exercise. It was a summons. If, as Chautard reminds us, the spiritual life of a people mirrors that of their priest, then our own formation intellectual, human, and spiritual is itself the seed of whatever renewal our schools and parishes will one day need. Perennial Catholic Education is not simply a philosophy for classrooms; it is an invitation to every future shepherd to first let Christ form him, so that he may, in turn, help form others.

Cor ad Cor Loquitur **- Heart speaks to Heart. (St. John Henry Newman)**

Henry Mary Ddamulira. Yr.III



TRIBUTE TO THR LATE REV. FR. VIATORY MUVUNYI

Rev. Fr. Viatory Muvunyi (July 17, 1992 – June 21, 2026) was a humble and committed Roman Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Kampala. Born in Kiziba Parish and formed at Sacred Heart Seminary, Mubende, and Uganda's national major seminaries; Alokolum and St. Mary's Ggaba, he was ordained on August 13, 2022, and first served as Assistant Parish Priest at Naggulu Parish and Mitala Maria before becoming a formator and teacher at Uganda Martyrs' National Major Seminary, Alokolum. He passed away on June 21, 2026, at the age of 33, and his Requiem Mass was celebrated at Kisubi Minor Seminary on June 23, 2026, where hundreds of clergy and laity gathered to honor his four years of faithful pastoral and formative ministry.

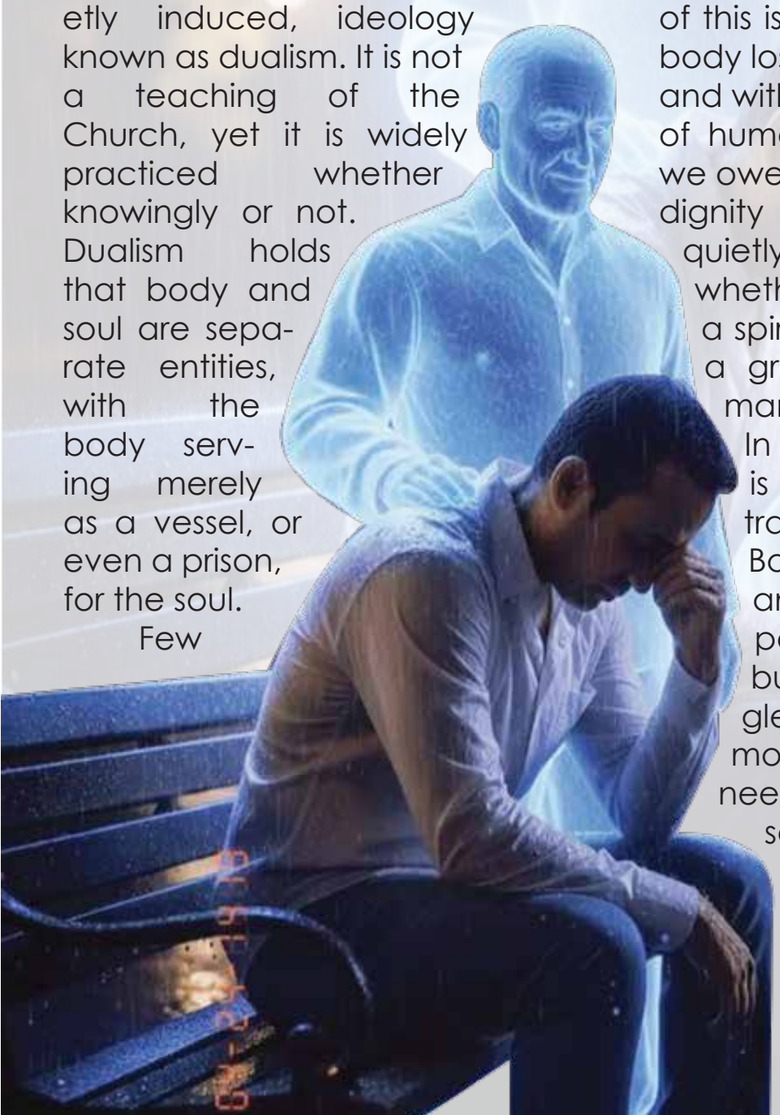
MAY THE SOUL OF FR. VIATORY REST IN PERFECT HAPPINESS.

SOUL AND BODY:

THE EFFECT OF DUALISM ON BELIEVERS.

The body (corpus) and the soul (anima) have long been central concerns of philosophy. This near perpetual reflection on the nature of the human person drives deeper inquiry across generations. That philosophical debate, however, is a matter for another time here I want to address the spiritual dimension of the question.

My concern is a more pressing reality: a popular, and perhaps quietly induced, ideology known as dualism. It is not a teaching of the Church, yet it is widely practiced whether knowingly or not. Dualism holds that body and soul are separate entities, with the body serving merely as a vessel, or even a prison, for the soul.



Few people consciously hold this belief as a philosophy, yet it shapes how many actually live. This lived dualism stands in direct contradiction to the Apostles' Creed, which affirms the resurrection of the body not its abandonment. We see the effects in the carelessness with which many Christians guard their purity: one prays on Sunday, then lives the rest of the week with no real regard for bodily dignity. The clearest symptom of this is bondage to sexual sin. The body loses its dignity,
and with it, perhaps, our basic sense of human dignity both the dignity we owe ourselves and the
dignity we owe others. The soul is quietly elevated above the body, whether in a philosophical or a spiritual sense, and in doing so, a grave abyss opens beneath many souls.

In the end, this way of thinking is not just imprecise, it is contrary to the Church's teaching. Body
and soul belong to one person. It is not body or soul, but body and soul. Never neglect
mortification, because you need it. Purity is not reserved for saints; it is asked of all of us.

JUDE CASPER TAMALE.
PHIL.I



Pioneers

FIFTY YEARS ON:



Visit of Cardinal Nsubuga Emmanuel in the middle to Alokolum major Seminary. Other ringfenced Seminarians ~~were~~ and now Rev. fr. Inya, Rev. fr. Vincent Kiraba and Rev. fr John Mary Biri Bukenya.

There is a particular kind of anticipation that settles over an institution as it approaches any celebration like that of fifty years. This is not the loud excitement of a new beginning, but the quieter, weightier joy of a community that has endured, and is now asking what its endurance has been for. This is where Alokolum National Major Seminary stands today: on the threshold of our Golden Jubilee, looking back at five decades of formation and looking forward, with sober hope, to what the next fifty years might demand of us.

It is no accident that this Jubilee season comes with a theme that sounds almost like a summary of the seminary's own history: Rooted in Faith, Growing in Hope and Bearing Fruits. A jubilee, after all, is not simply a celebration of survival. From the Biblical perspective, the Jubilee year was a time of restoration, of returning to first principles, of remembering whose the land truly was, of resetting relationships that had drifted out of balance. Alokolum's fiftieth year invites the same kind of reckoning: not nostalgia, but renewal.

Rooted: The Discipline of Memory

No tree bears fruit in a season it did not spend, unseen, sending roots into the dark. Alokolum's roots run through decades of priests, bishops, formators, and ordinary seminarians whose names may never appear in any official history, but whose fidelity built the ground on which today's community stands. To be "rooted in faith" as we approach this Jubilee is to take seriously the debt we owe to those who came before, the founding formators who had far less than we do now, the Bishops of the U.E.C. who believed a seminary in this part of Uganda was worth the sacrifice, the seminarians who persevered through years of uncertainty and, in some cases, real danger.

A Jubilee that forgets its roots becomes mere spectacle. Alokolum's task this year is to remember well - not as an act of sentimentality, but as an act of formation. Those of us preparing for priesthood today are being asked to inherit something real, and inheritance requires knowledge of what one has received.

Growing: The Courage to Change

Yet roots alone do not make a jubilee worth celebrating. A tree that only roots itself deeper without rowing upward has simply buried itself. The second movement of our Jubilee theme - growing in hope - is the harder discipline, because it requires the seminary to ask not only "what have we preserved?" but "what must we still become?"

Fifty years ago, the pastoral, cultural, and even technological landscape into which Alokolum's sons have been ordained looks nothing like the one they serve in today. A Jubilee that is honest with itself must ask hard, astute questions: Is our formation preparing men for the Church and the world as they actually are, not as they were in 1973? Are we growing in the intellectual rigor, pastoral sensitivity, and spiritual depth that this new half-century of ministry will demand? Hope, rightly understood, is not passive optimism: it is rather the theological virtue that permits an institution to change without losing itself.

Bearing Fruits: The Only Real Measure

Ultimately, no jubilee is judged by how well an institution remembers itself or how eloquently it speaks of the future. It is judged by fruit: by the priests and other Old boys that Alokolum has formed and sent out, by the parishes strengthened, the Dioceses served, the countless quiet acts of pastoral care that trace back, however invisibly, to formation received on this sacredgreenCampus. The fruit of a seminary is never fully visible from within its own walls; it ripens elsewhere, in confessionals and sickrooms and homes across the region and beyond.

As we move toward this Golden Jubilee, then, the most fitting way to prepare is not merely through ceremony, but through the daily, unglamorous work of formation done well, prayer taken seriously, studies pursued with rigor, fraternity practiced with patience. Fifty years from now, someone will write about this current generation of Alokolum in exactly the terms we now use for those who built it.

A Community, Not Spectators

Perhaps the most astute thing to be said about this Jubilee is this: it does not belong to a planning committee, nor to the alumni who will return for the celebrations, nor even to the bishops who will preside over them. It belongs to everyone who has ever called Alokolum formation their own and to everyone currently within its walls being formed today. The theme asks each of us, then, a personal question disguised as an institutional one: Where are you rooted? What are you growing toward? What fruit will your own life bear?

Fifty years is a long time for an institution. It is also, providentially, exactly long enough to prove that faith, hope, and fruitfulness are not mere slogans but they are what remains when everything else has been tested.

Henry Mary Ddamulira. Phi III



HIS EXCELLENCY MOST REV. TOMASZ GRYSA

The new Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, arrived in the country on 2nd September 2026. He was received by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Joseph Antony Zziwa, Chairperson of the Uganda Episcopal Conference; Most Rev. Paul Ssemogerere, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kampala and Georges Kwami Kouwonou- the Charge' d'Affaires a.i. It should be noted that the Apostolic Nuncio's arrival coincided with the 60th Anniversary of the formal establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Uganda (2nd September 1966). Until his appointment as Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, His Excellency Most Rev. Tomasz Grysa has been Apostolic Nuncio to Madagascar, Seychelles and the Republic of Mauritius, and Apostolic Delegate to Comoros and La Réunion. Poznån Born on 1 6 th October 1970 in Poznån (Poland), he was ordained priest for the Archdiocese of on 25th May 1995. The new Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda has a doctorate in Canon Law. He entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See on I St July 2001. Having served in different Pontifical Representations — Russian Federation, India, Belgium, Mexico, Brazil, UN Permanent Mission (New York), Israel and Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem and Palestine, he was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Madagascar and Apostolic Delegate to Comoros and La Réunion on 27 th September 2022. Subsequently he was also appointed Apostolic Nuncio to the Seychelles on 9 th February 2023 and then to the Republic of Mauritius on 21st March 2023. The new Nuncio, apart from Polish, he knows Italian, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian.

KABALE DIOCESE *awaits*
THE EPISCOPAL ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF THE
NEW ORDINARY.



MSGR. BONAVENTURE BOSCO GUBAZIRE, M.AFR.
BISHOP-ELECT

Bishop-elect MSGR. BONAVENTURE BOSCO GUBAZIRE, M.AFR. , will be ordained and installed as the fifth Bishop of Kabale Diocese on Saturday, October 3, 2026, at Our Lady of Good Shepherd Rushoroza Cathedral. Born on March 3, 1974, in Kitumba, Rushoroza Cathedral Parish, he is a priest of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), ordained in 2003, with advanced studies in philosophy and theology in Uganda, France, Ireland, and the Philippines, and extensive pastoral, academic, and formation ministry across Africa, Europe, and Asia. Since 2021 he has served as Dean of Studies at Spiritan University College in Ejisu, Ghana, and as Rector of the St. Martin of Tours Formation House, while also serving on the Provincial Council of the Ghana–Nigeria Province of the Missionaries of Africa. His appointment follows Pope Leo XIV's acceptance of the resignation of Bishop Callist Rubaramira, who has served as ApostolicAdministrator since July 15, 2026, after leading the diocese for 23 years. We are invited to pray for Bishop-elect Msgr. Gubazire as he prepares to assume this new responsibility.

October 3, 2026

Our Lady of Good Shepherd Rushoroza Cathedral

A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body: Existential Reflections on Sports at ANMS

In Alokolum, when the evening bell rings, cassocks are folded and jerseys worn. The pitches and courts not only become places of play but also places of philosophy. "Mens sana in corpore sano" a healthy mind in a healthy body. This ancient maxim, drawn from Juvenal yet rooted in Greek philosophy, insists that true human flourishing requires the harmonious cultivation of body and soul. At Alokolum National Seminary, sports and games are far more than recreation. They become existential encounters in which the seminarian confronts the reality of his embodied existence and discovers that intellectual and spiritual growth cannot be separated from the discipline of the flesh. Aristotle taught that "eudaimonia" demands the proper actualization of both body and intellect; the virtues of courage, temperance, and perseverance support the higher life of the mind. Plato, in his Republic, required that the guardians train the body so that the soul might be free for contemplation of the Good. Christian philosophy deepens this insight: the Incarnation affirms the dignity of the body, for the Word became flesh. We do not merely "have bodies"; we "are" our bodies. Maurice Merleau-Ponty reminds us that consciousness is always embodied consciousness. On the fields and courts of seminary, fatigue, teamwork, victory, and defeat reveal the self as finite, free, and relational. Sartre's radical freedom is exercised in choosing fair play and rising after loss. Camus saw in the athlete's repeated effort a quiet revolt that creates meaning against the absurd. In the intense rhythm of seminary life—prayer, study, and pastoral formation long hours risk tilting the soul toward abstraction. Sport restores balance. It teaches humility in dependence on others, solidarity that binds a community, and perseverance that strengthens the will. The disciplined body learns to serve the spirit; the refreshed mind returns to theology and Scripture with greater clarity and vigour. Fair play becomes ethics in motion; the acceptance of defeat cultivates detachment and resilience. Thus, the games and sports at Alokolum seminary form the whole person for the priesthood. If the body is the primary site where freedom, finitude, and community are first experienced, how does the disciplined engagement with sports at Alokolum shape the existential authenticity of the seminarian's response to the call of Christ?

Namulembwa Emmanuel Phi III

Academic Year 2026/2027 — PROMISING TALENTS



Agaba Benedict
Music



Gombe Martin
Football



Kamukama Eduine
Volleyball



Mutaawe Micheal
Basketball

"Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separetes the talented individual from the successful one is hard work"

Stephen King

A GLIMPSE INTO THE ALOKOLUM SEMINARY DIARY

WHEN!	WHAT!
August 19th, 1931	Arrival of the first group of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Uganda. (These are the founders of the formation House of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart that occupied the Alokolum Premises before the H.S.C and the Seminary itself.)
1953	Construction of the granary with a ground and first floor. (it now houses the stores next to the workshop and garage)
1955	The garage and the workshop were constructed next to the granary
December 25th, 1955	The first fruits of the Brother's formation were realized. (Six African Brothers pronounced their first vows in the Institute)
1955 – June 5th 1956	The first of the main buildings was constructed inform of a massive letter "I". This building now corresponds to; (WESTERN WING) - the reception, Secretary's office, accountants' office and the Rector's office, (EASTERN WING) – Dean of Studies' office, Vice Rector's office and the now tailoring room. The middle section currently holds some visitor's rooms and the Year II and Year III class rooms. This building was a work of Brother Felician.
December 25th, 1961	Enthroning of the statue of the Sacred Heart. (Bishop Cesana was present on this ceremony)
1962	Brother Lionel erected the Chapel.
December 19th, 1964	The Alokolum Chapel was dedicated by Bishop Cesana of Gulu Diocese.
1968	The Brothers of the Sacred Heart decided to discontinue recruiting due to lack of aspirants and given the conditions of the time that were not in their favour. This eventually led to the closure of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Formation Centre of the Brothers at Alokolum.
Tuesday October 8th, 1968.	A meeting was held in Kisubi by the Bishops of Uganda and other religious Superiors to discuss the possibility of establishing an inter community and Diocesan H.S.C. (The first site that was suggested for this college was Kisubi Mt. St. Theresa and eventually Alokolum was aslo thought of).
December 28th, 1968	The standing Committee whose membership included; Bishop J. Willigers, Bro. A. Roy, Bro. A. Greenwood and Fr. Ceasar Buwule visited Alokolum to assess its suitability for a H.S.C College.
Friday May 15th, 1970	Uganda Martyrs' College, Alokolum was officially opened by His Excellency Msgr. Bellotti by then Apostolic Pronuncio in Uganda.
October 25th, 1972	The Board Of Governors discussed the closure of Uganda Martyrs' College, Alokolum.
November 30th, 1972	This was the official date when Uganda Martyrs' College, Alokolum was closed.
February 6th, 1973	The Uganda Episcopal Conference decided to have a third National Major Seminary established at Alokolum - Gulu.
May 5th, 1973.	It was the proposed date for the official opening of Alokolum National Major Seminary though it was delayed by some circumstances.
May 22nd, 1973.	**Official opening of Uganda Martyrs' National Major Seminary, Alokolum. It was officiated by Bishop Cypriano Kihangire (Bishop of Gulu Diocese by then) with Fr. Nazareno Inya as the First Rector.**

February 1974	Official opening of Alokolum National Major Seminary Library.
By May 1975	St. Kizito House construction had been completed and opened for use while Lwanga house was completed in the following year of 1976.
October 11th, 1976	The seminary Chapel was burnt in the course of forcing out the bees that had colonized the ceiling of the Seminary Chapel. Its reconstruction started in January 1977 and completed in 1979. It is after the reconstruction that the Zairean stations of the Cross now in the Seminary Chapel as well as the big cross above the Tabernacle and the Sanctuary furniture now in use were ordered.
April 1977.	Arrival of Fr. Egidio Nkaijanabwo (now Bishop) as the second Rector of Alokolum Seminary.
September 9th, 1982	The Seminary received a TATA Lorry though it was unfortunately later lost to the bandits who looted it in 1987.
March 1983	The Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate (of Gulu) opened up a convent at the Seminary following the completion of their House.
May 1983	Fr. Deogratias Byabazaire (Later Bishop) was appointed as the third Rector of Alokolum National Major Seminary. (Fr. Deo led the Seminary through one of its most difficult periods in History which was the first exile to Katigondo in 1987.
November 1983	The students' refectory was blessed and officially opened by Bishop Cyprian Kihangire.
1984	The Seminary Farm was established with some 9 dairy cattle.
February 8th, 1987 at 3:00 p.m.	The UPDA (Uganda People's Democratic Army) on a looting spree appeared on the Campus of Alokolum Seminary shooting at random and paralysing the Seminary community. They carried away all they wanted and this increased fear within the Seminary community.
May 18th, 1987.	The Seminary transferred to St. Monica Tailoring Centre in Gulu Town bag and baggage, thence to her new temporary home to continue the noble work of Priestly formation in Northern Uganda. ***(Alokolum fled into exile)***
September 21st, 1987	The Support and Friendship committee (S.P.C.) was formed to establish a link with the Seminary in exile and for coordination purposes.
July 4th, 1988	The new Rector Fr. John Baptist Odama (now Archbishop emeritus) visited the Seminary on a familiarization visit.
June 11th, 1989	The Seminary Library ceiling was combed in search for property to steal. In the process, ceiling boards caught fire and developed into an inferno that completely destroyed the Library to ruins. ***(By any judgment, this is the greatest loss on record to the Seminary)***
October 2nd, 1989	Government and Gulu District officials visited Alokolum Seminary for "on-the-spot" assessment of the situations at hand.
September 27th, 1992	**ALOKOLUM CAME BACK FROM EXILE AND RE-OPENED HER DOORS TO CONTINUE WITH THE NOBLE TASK OF FORMING SHEPHERDS AFTER THE HEART OF CHRIST.**
1993	The Foster parents Association was established.
1998	**ALOKOLUM SEMINARY CELEBRATED HER SILVER JUBILEE.**

...to be continued in our next publication.....

(Credit to Augustine Mugarura, Jino Mwaka and Celestino Lanek authors of A History of Priestly Training in Northern Uganda: Twenty-Five Years of Alokolum National Major Seminary through which we have accessed most of the above information)