

Brother Yemanu Jehar Kiar, FSC 1944 – 2012



Our former Brothers living in Europe and America have an association and communication with us and among themselves. The last two weeks, they have been exchanging the news about their former teacher, formatter and colleague, Brother Yemanu, and were expressing their condolences to us and to each other. From their different expressions, I was particularly touched by the following description of Br. Yemanu.

“Yemanu is a gifted leader, someone with photographic memory, an orator, a linguist, a scholar, a great story teller, and an icon. . . . Yemanu is a legend! His ability to connect with people at interpersonal level was remarkable. ”

That is an honest testimony and a perfect description of Brother Yemanu Jehar!

Yemanu was born on the 7th of June 1944 in Keren, Eritrea. He joined the Keren Junirate program in 1955. After a year, Yemanu was sent to Italy by the Italian missionary Brothers to advance his education and discern his vocation in the formation houses.

Yemanu completed his Junior and High school studies there and had begun his novitiate in 1961, at Tore Del Greco Napoli and professed his first profession on the 2nd of October 1962.

In preparation for the mission, Brother Yemanu studied pedagogy and earned Diploma from Collegio La Salle – Roma. Later he got his BA in Pedagogy and MA in Psychology from Salve Regina University – USA

Brother Yemanu had served the District and the institute in different capacities and responsibilities. He served as a teacher and Director at St. Joseph’s school Keren, Collegio La Salle Asmara, St. Joseph Addis, St. Joseph Nazareth and Bisrate Gabriel Diredawa. He is a pioneer in founding the Catholic Secretariat in Asmara. He had also a significant role as the head of CRS in Eritrea.

Brother Yemanu had also a tremendous contribution in the formation houses of the Lwanga District of Africa. He had served as the Director of the Scholastics in Asmara, Director of the Postulants in South Africa, the Director of the Juniors in Nazareth and the Director of Novices in Nairobi.

From 1981 – 1986 Brother Yemanu had served as the President of the Delegation of Ethiopia and Eritrea. From 2000 – 2006, he served the Institute as the General Councilor for the region of Africa (RELAF)

Br. Yemanu had returned to Eritrea in the year 2007 and was assigned to Hagaz Agro technical School. However, his health was deteriorating and it was impossible for him to carry out his new responsibilities. He was suffering from high blood pressure, memory lapse and glaucoma.

Brother Yemanu was sent to Nairobi for comprehensive medical checkups and treatment. In spite of all the effort and medical attention, his condition could not be improved. He survived two minor strokes and a need rose for more follow up. A nurse was visiting Brother Yemanu on daily basis. The Brothers in Keren community had done a wonderful job in taking care of him.

Unfortunately, Brother Yemanu encountered a third stroke that left him very weak and partially unconscious. It is this time that he needed a twenty four hours attention. As a result, he was taken to the Italian Community Geriatric Center - Asmara for better follow up and further diagnosis.

Brother Yemanu was initially responding well, but this did not last long. His conditions had begun deteriorating every day. He lost his courage and fighting spirit. It was painful to see Brother Yemanu losing his deep, powerful and commanding voice. It became evident that Brother Yemanu was joining St. Paul in saying ***“I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith ...”*** 2Tim4:7

The precious and great asset of Lwanga District and former General councilor, Brother Yemanu Jehar has been promoted to eternal glory on the 26th of March 2012 at 4:00 AM and his body was moved to Orotu Hospital Mortuary – Asmara.

Funeral Ceremony

On the 28th of March 2012, at 4:00 PM, the body of Brother Yemanu was moved from Orotu Morgue to the Holy Savior parish at Villagio. Many members of religious congregations, Brothers, former students and relatives were gathered for special memorial ceremony and prayer service. His Grace, the Most Reverend Abune Mengsteab Tesfamariam, Bishop of Asmara, had presided over the ceremony.

The body remained in the church for viewing and many Sisters and Brothers kept the vigil at the Holy Savior.

On the 29th of March, at 5:00 AM, the body departed From Villagio to Keren for burial. Keren is a town where Yemanu was born, grew up, met the Brothers and served for the first time as a Brother. Again many religious and friends accompanied the body during the the journey to Keren that took three hours.

At Keren, the Sector Brothers, the student and staff of St. Joseph’s school, the St. Ann’s Sisters with the representatives of their school students and may other residents of keren had lined up to welcome the body. The line covered two kilometers long on both sides of the main road. A calm mood with reflective prayer and a slow move characterized the procession from the center of the town to St. Joseph’s School chapel.

His Grace, the Most Reverend Abune Kidanemariam Yebiyo, Bishop of Keren, led the burial ceremony at Keren. The Bishop is the alumni of St. Joseph’s School and the former student of Brother Yemanu.

The burial took place at Megarih Cemetery, 2km away from St. Joseph school. It took another procession to reach there. The body was lowered to the grave at 11:00 AM.

Brother Yemanu's Sister from Nigeria was able to make it to the burial, and many other relatives, high ranking government officials, members of religious congregations, the representatives of the Eparchy of Asmara, friends, former students and the faithful of Keren attended the burial.

Rev. Fr. Okbagabir, the Head of the Keren Eparchy secretariat and a former student of the De La Salle Brothers, gave the final reflection. He described Brother Yemanu as a committed, organized and intelligent person who tirelessly served the people especially the young through the mission of education. He advised the young students to learn the value of education, sacrifice and loyalty from the late Brother Yemanu Jehar.

His eulogy was read by Brother Tinsiew Tesfasilasie, FSC. He described Brother Yemanu as a responsible, exceptionally intelligent, sociable, generous and joyful person. He also said that Yemanu had always been successful in any kind of task.

The end of the burial ceremony was marked by a song, that sang by the De La sale Brothers gathering around the tomb. The song had a message that says *'I will sing together with the angels, so that you will inherit me what you have prepared for me'*

I want to conclude by quoting from our late Brother Br. Yemanu Jehar's Message to the RELAF Brother while he was a General Councilor in Rome. The letter was written for Easter 2002.

Yemanu Speaks:

" ... 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' Jn 15:13.

The history of salvation has been characterized by one thing: the confrontation between the unconditional love that God has for every one of us and our persistent refusal to accept his love and to conduct our lives in his spirit.

The love of God for us became concrete when his 'beloved Son' became a human being like us. Jesus lived our life and showed us how to behave as creatures made in God's image and likeness. With his suffering, death and resurrection, Christ gave us the certainty of our own membership into the kingdom of heaven.

The Lenten period gave us the opportunity to participate in the mystery of the cross, particularly through the passion experience of Christ. Now we are happy to celebrate and to be fully incorporated into the joy of the Resurrection of our Lord.

On the Cross, Jesus carried all our pains and sufferings and, finally, he transformed them into sources of life.

... The celebration of Easter invites all of us to 'be born again' into a life of love and understanding; and to renew our religious consecration with 'faith and zeal' for the success of our mission.

'The resurrection of Christ should also procure for you the benefit of making you rise spiritually by causing you to live according to grace. This means it will cause you to enter an entirely new and heavenly life.' DLS Med 29:3

May the joy of Easter continue to grow in our hearts so that renewed in spirit and strengthen in faith we could always be faithful to the call we have received from God, our heavenly Father.

Happy Easter to all of you

*Yours in De La Salle
Brother Yemanu Jehar, FSC
General Councillor (2002)"*

We thank all who have been contacting us and sending us condolences messages. We appreciate your support and solidarity in time of our loss. If you need a copy of a video /CD that contains the burial ceremony of Br. Yemanu, please email me your postal address.

May the soul of our beloved Brother, Br. Yemanu rest in peace!

Live Jesus in our hearts – Forever!

Brother Negasi Gebreab
Asmara - Eritrea