



## A House of Hope

In the closing months of 2015, The Year of Consecrated Life, a promising development dawned in our diocese. On October 11<sup>th</sup> the Sisters of Mary of Kakamega launched the Cardinal Otunga House—an adult foster care home that will accommodate up to five elderly residents at a time. Sisters will be present round the clock to give them “special care with love and dignity” and “bring them closer to God gracefully.” As a site for their “ministry of hope” the Sisters have purchased a comfortable home on a quiet street in Bend. In this effort they have been blessed with a dedicated group of imaginative, hard-working volunteers who have helped navigate the complicated regulatory waters of finances, administration, and licensing. Steady progress has been made toward official approval, and the Sisters look forward to welcoming the first residents within a few months.

Founded in 1932 in the Diocese of Kakamega in Kenya, the Order now includes Sisters from Uganda and Tanzania who serve in apostolates of teaching, nursing, and social work. From their first American outpost in Virginia the Sisters came to Baker Diocese five years ago. Since then Sisters Sabina, Kevin, Fortunata, and Anna have made themselves invaluable parish workers at St. Francis in Bend and St. Thomas in Redmond. At Blessed Sacrament Parish in Ontario Sisters Irene and Regina have done the same.

But this new venture is groundbreaking. The Cardinal Otunga House affords the Sisters the opportunity to establish an Oregon apostolate of their own whereby their numbers can expand organically here among us as the Lord of the Harvest sees fit to bless their labors.

So it has happened in Klamath Falls with the Benedictine monks from Hanga Abbey in Tanzania. First came Father Pirmin Ngolle, who began to help out at St. Pius X Parish over ten years ago. Upon Father Pirmin’s untimely death, Father Ildefonce Mapara took his place, both in St. Pius and as a weekend substitute priest in many of our parishes. Next to come from Hanga Abbey were the Benedictine Brothers Nolasco and Nicodemus, who have themselves run an adult foster home in Klamath Falls since 2011. This summer they were joined by Brother Peter. This steady growth of consecrated religious men in the south of the Diocese should give the Sisters of Mary of Kakamega hope that the Lord will bless them with increase as well.

He blesses us all in blessing them, for consecrated men and women add an invaluable presence to the Catholic world we build up here. A century ago Africa was mission territory, as was Eastern Oregon. Now Africa sends missionaries to us. Perhaps that is the significance of the name the Sisters have given to their home for the elderly. So tirelessly did Cardinal Otunga spend his life in leadership to the East African church from 1973 to 2003 that he has been proposed for canonization. Formed by the Cardinal’s example, the Sisters of Mary of Kakamega now hand on his sanctity to those who will

come to them for care that flows from Christian compassion.

If you are interested in learning more about this promising new venture, feel free to contact Sister Sabina by e-mail at [sabinambenge16@gmail.com](mailto:sabinambenge16@gmail.com) or by phone at 541-588-2416.