TRIBUTE TO
Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka
1959 - 2016

Edited by Jimmy Spire Ssentongo
Center for African Studies
Uganda Martyrs University
Tribute to Associate Professor Fr Joseph Kisekka

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Centre for African Studies
School of Postgraduate Studies and Research
Uganda Martyrs University

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Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

Foreword

Mathew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God”

The first time I met the late Kisekka was in Rome, Italy in 1983. We were both students at the Pontifical Urban University, where we spent a period of three years together. During this time, he was a seminarian studying philosophy while on the other hand I was a priest studying for a master’s degree.

He gave me an impression of being a very serious and focused student. The reason I say so is because, during that time, foreign students did not have visa restrictions for moving from one European country to another. So, most students used this as an opportunity to spend more time travelling and partying than reading their books. However, this was not the case with Kisekka. There were many things that tempted students to waste time, but Kisekka was not swayed. He concentrated on his studies because he valued time and had a critical mind. He was a man of few words and asked only the necessary questions, but he was very generous with information.

When he completed his course, he left me in Rome and we did not have much contact since then. I only got back in close touch with him in 2014 when he was introducing me to Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), and that was in preparation for the commencement of my term of office which began in January 2015. Since then, we have been working closely together, especially considering that when I came on board, my predecessor, Prof. Charles Olweny, was away for medical treatment. Therefore, given the prevailing circumstances, the only person that was available to induct me was Kisekka, who was the substantive Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Finance and Administration (DVC-FA) but was also the Acting Vice Chancellor. He handed over to me the office of Vice Chancellor and he did a wonderful job in introducing me to the University Management, Senate, Staff and to Students. I realised that he had comprehensive knowledge about UMU, to the extent that he made clarifications for me about the institution off head.

In the time we have worked together, my impression of him is that he was very zealous in doing his work and he had UMU at heart. Even
when his health condition deteriorated and his energies were down, he did not pity himself—he continued ceaselessly working.
I shall not hesitate to add that when we faced challenging financial times, Kisekka did tremendously well in managing the University’s resources. He did not tolerate wastage and unnecessary expenditure. In effect, I conceived him as a person who stood by his conviction. Whatever he said, he said it from his heart and I could sense that he stood by what he said. That is why to him I associate the biblical quote in Mathew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”—he called a spade a spade.

I think UMU encountered a great loss but he also left a significant contribution to the development of this University, mainly in the way he carried out the functions of DVC-FA. He was someone who can be looked up to as an example of virtues such as hard work, persistence, commitment, truth, and hope. For instance, when his health was failing him, I noted that he was a fighter for life. In other words, instead of the sickness overcoming him, in a way, he overcame the sickness. He did not succumb to the pain of his sickness. He was a person who had hope in life. As we remember him, let us also avail ourselves to learn from his life.

Fr Prof. John Chrysostom Maviiri
Vice Chancellor, Uganda Martyrs University
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Introduction

Death is a bully! Every time it strikes, shock grips us, as if we somehow expected that it had ended its feast. It surrounded itself with so much mystery that, despite the consolation of our religious beliefs, it still hits us hard at every visit. Nothing ever makes us as helpless as facing death.

Here at ours, on 14th April 2016, the baby that was born on 26th March 1959 breathed his last at Mulago Cancer Institute. At this point, we knew him as Associate Professor Fr Joseph Kisekka, the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Finance and Administration at Uganda Martyrs University, and a strong man in many ways. He was different things to many who knew him, a man of several shades.

In this tribute, we put together a few of our thoughts about the departed comrade. It is perhaps at this time that we have had to look back into our memory files and ask ourselves: Who exactly was Kisekka? Why did he do this and that? Why did he love what he was fond of? Why did he hate what he didn’t like? Did we really understand him? We may as well ask if he really understood us, but of that, if we do not know by now, we may never really tell. In the midst of all these questions, agony and celebration of his life, whether we liked the man or not, there is certainly something to learn from his life. Some may even add, ‘to unlearn’.

Kisekka is that proverbial elephant that we find people explaining in this tribute depending on the part of its massive body that they interacted with while blindfolded. The one who touched the tail says an elephant is like a rope, the one who touched the ears says it is like a satellite dish, while the one who got hold of its leg says it is shaped like a tree trunk. Thus we here find Kisekka as a brilliant man, a man of poor judgement, a brave man, a hard worker, a just man, an unfair man, a kind man, a bully, a humorous man, a mean blunt fellow, a generous man … Like anyone of us, he had his low side, but, of a man that was able to achieve all he did in his rather short life, there are many lessons for us still on this earthly journey. These lessons are tailored into every tribute.
message we shall read here. At moments like this, as we remember our departed, we should always ask ourselves: ‘how will I be remembered?’ Of course it is one thing how we want to be remembered and quite another how we are actually remembered. Nevertheless, we have a big hand in determining the latter.

This tribute brings together memories and lessons from Dr Kisekka themed around i) his own words – as he told his life journey and the eventual battle with sickness; ii) Kisekka the Priest; iii) Kisekka the Philosopher; iv) Kisekka the Administrator; and v) Kisekka the Teacher. There is much overlap between these various aspects of his life, which also partly helps us appreciate how the whole came to be.

We shall also find things to laugh about, and this is very vital for healing from the loss. Dr Kisekka was in many ways a man so dramatic in his strictness. The man who one time came back to office from his home village complaining of muscle pains – he had just beaten a thief terribly! The man who beat up his thieving uncle, insisting that he was beating a thief – not his uncle! The man who advised a new faculty dean that ‘if your predecessor does not want to write a hand-over report then you write a take-over report’! For this we laugh off some of the things that could have angered us about him.

We pray that God rewards him for all his good deeds and that we may become better people in whatever we do through the memory of and reflection on who Dr Kisekka was and what he stood for.

Dr Jimmy Spire Ssentongo
The Chair, Center for African Studies
Joseph Kisekka – A Man of God, of Wisdom, of Action
Sr Dr Speranza Namusisi

I will remember Joseph
The man of God, of wisdom, of action
Keen and sure
A man who will never fail to offer
Open in mind, open in action

We will remember Joseph
For the contribution to UMU
The battles strongly fought
Never to weaver, never to surrender

We will remember Joseph
Even near death’s bed
Joseph still had courage, full of hope, full of life – the will to live

When we remember Joseph,
So firm in character, so strong in decision
A man of wisdom, a lover of nature

And I remember Joseph
As a colleague – a word he used often
Everyone matters, everyone is known
So keen, so firm
Courage he had, encouragement he gave
Nothing could pass the philosopher of UMU
In reason, in deed, Joseph was

Now to you my friend,
Living is once and passing is once
But the mark you leave
Will be the memory to all that live
And so did Joseph
The life at UMU
The life within
The role he played, no one can deny
You will be remembered Joseph
For you still live

The writer is the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Uganda Martyrs University.
1. Kisekka in his own words

A conversation with self: Lessons from an ethic(s) of sympathy

Dr Kisekka wrote the following article (A conversation with self) during the time he was seriously battling with sickness. It was posthumously retrieved from his documents by his Personal Assistant, Stella Apiyo. It vividly brings out the inner reflections, questions, hope, anxieties and tensions he battled with in the last moments of his life. The article is also a reflective narrative of his "journey with cancer". Fr Edward Ssemwogerere, with whom they shared residence at the University, says that most of the literature he read towards his last days was about death – perhaps in preparation for his own, though, as this article shows, he never really seemed to have completely surrendered at any one moment. For reasons we are only left to speculate about, he never completed the article. It ends with something that could have been (or not) the last subsection, with the heading: "The Critical Moment"! Indeed, it must have been critical for him!

"Death missed me
Dear Friend, I write to thank you for your support during my recent struggle with sickness. Again this time death missed me, I am alive and kicking. Be blessed ever".

This was a message that I sent to staff of the institution where I have been working since 2001. It was not actually meant for my friends/colleagues or those I consider to be, but it was first and foremost intended to all those individuals (in their capacity as individuals) who for one reason or the other jubilated with delight in my having fallen sick and having been admitted.

Several of my genuine colleagues shared with me some of the reactions to my message. It was reported that the bad wishes used to spit fire by uttering such words as: "the man is finished, he is almost dying"; "do you think there is a person remaining? He has to go"; "my neighbour is not yet in office"; "the man is always sick, he should leave office"; "do they not have another person to sign the cheques?"; "if he comes back, he will do so as an ordinary guy"; "we thought death would liberate us ..." I am told that the utterances were indeed many.
The most cherished thing about this feedback is that all these utterances had/have a human face behind them, they were never anonymous.

However, what cannot be subjected to discussion is the fact that I was admitted for the second time in two years and in critical condition. Two, that individuals are entitled to personal wishes, though it is well known that if all wishes were horses then even beggars would ride. So let those who genuinely wished me to die continue to swim in the dreamland of death. What I know is that even this time it dodged me and, therefore, I too missed it. In any case, I wait for another round when I will have no more excuses but to go. And, who knows, this time I will ask some of my cherished “friends” to accompany me.

But all the same I am not surprised by the seemingly negative utterances –considering that even the professionals themselves had given up on me when I was earlier on admitted. When I was admitted the second time, at a different facility, the same reactions were registered. In fact, when I was told to carry out an x-ray at Mulago, the girls (care takers) told me that one of the nurses seeing the condition I was in wondered why they were troubling God (naye banange lwaki abantu batawaanya Katonda?). So she was already recommending me to the Almighty. Whenever the girls take me back for reviews, they simply laugh at her for she is the one to receive us and I simply smile and wave at her.

Still I am surprised, because two years ago a group of doctors (and these were/are my colleagues) were overwhelmed by my condition that they had to come to my hospital bed and declared that they wanted to discharge me because my condition did not have any medicine, and that the best I could do since I was a believer was to wait for a miracle. That was February 2014 and I must confirm that the miracle at all odds happened during the month of April 2015.

The analysis of the three types of reactions to my condition reveal that in all of them there was the element of empathy and sympathy, accompanied by the intensity of the frequency of repetition of the utterances.
The first group, however, seem to have enjoyed my condition in such a way that they made it a table talk and a matter to joke about. Their mental scape was geared towards jubilating in the suffering of another. It was sarcastic talk, and probably done in bad faith.

The nurse, I think drawing from her experience, had no bad intentions but was comparing parallel situations which indeed ended in parallelism. It was genuine talk and wished less suffering. It was uttered in good faith.

The earlier doctors were genuine in their observations and had been informed by the bizarre picture of my lungs as had been portrayed by the MRI, CT, and X—RAY. They drew on their past professional experience, they were disturbed, challenged, sincere and left hope to a colleague - hope in form of a miracle. What they did was done in good faith.

Certainly this time I left the hospital in disappointment, though strengthened by the word of medical doctors that a miracle could happen.

For me the miracle happened in a series of events;

i) Meeting Sr. Namugga who had been diagnosed with cancer and had been sent away by the professionals. This nun resorted to using herbs, especially the herb called Dandelion - which she later introduced to me and a lot of literature about cancer and herbs. Up to today, Namugga is living a normal life.

ii) Prayer and the healing hand of a priest friend, and talking to other people who had been declared free of cancer.

iii) Herbs of various types from friends and colleagues like: Namulindwa of Kitengeesa – Masaka; Sefa Organic; Anamed-Uganda –Kirimya; Bro. Fr Anatoli – Bikira; Mr Kayemba – Kabuwoko; Mukadde – Nakitaraka; Mukyala Elifazi – Kalilio; Mr. Kasirye; Dr Katongole; and Prof. Kanyandago- Uganda Martyrs University; and Bishop Santos Wanok-Nebbi.

What I found very attractive in all these, was the hope herbal natural medicine offered - especially in the face of witnesses who claimed to
have been healed. One had to have a lot of trust, or was it not the attitude of a drowning person who would cling to a worm hoping that it would save him?!

For sure the role that is played by herbs in the healing process of individuals cannot be underestimated. When ‘blood cancer marker’ is found to be at 800 and one goes on to take herbs then after a month comes back for review and the same conventional practitioners carry out the diagnosis only to find it dropped to 350, would this not be a beginning of an inquiry? Unfortunately, some conventional practitioners do not want to hear anything about it. The observations though show that the future of medicine is integrative medicine and it is the way to go - notwithstanding the accusations that herbs’ healing process is tedious, slow and difficult to quantify.

The Beginnings
The malaise that has accompanied me to date seems to be traced back to the early nineties. I had a blackout during the burial of a dear friend, Fr Joseph Rukongeza, at Bujumbura Parish in Hoima Diocese. We had driven from Masaka to the burial place, departing very early in the morning and arriving just in time for the burial. After the episode, checkups were not done and the whole thing was played off as fatigue, hunger, and overcrowding.

Between 1990-2013, obsessed with the future, working long hours, oftentimes foregoing leisure and sleep, and of course no serious health checkups, there was lack of self-sympathy on my side which I acknowledge as a grave mistake.

In August 2013, I almost experienced another blackout during a centenary celebration. This is when I woke up to the grave importance of a checkup. Why did it take me so long to make sense of periodic check-ups? Up to now I have not come out with a convincing reason.

Diagnosis
All diagnoses from X-ray to MRI pointed to one thing; cancer of the lung with plural effusion of a malignant source. Those were the tests that had been ordered by the mission hospital. Even after the results were released, the only help I got was the blind and mechanical removal of the water (for which I am grateful for the caring Consultant
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

who handled this). The hospital insisted that my condition did not have any remedy. The personnel who were handling my case felt powerless, and I take it that they condemned me to death earlier than my death and thus entrusted me to a miracle.

When I arrived at Mulago, I was surprised to later on learn that the tests and subsequent results of my illness that had taken four months for the mission hospital to conduct, took only half a day to finish, although unfortunately, the results from the two hospitals were in agreement.

Asked why I had been condemned, the Mulago Specialists observed that it was not condemnation per se, but it was the overall overwhelming picture that could have shocked their colleagues who felt powerless before the condition. Was it a form of defending the profession? Or were they only acting as professionals? In any case, the Mulago consultants dared to face the challenge and they have been part of the miracle.

They dared because they gave themselves to the cause - they risked to confront the overwhelming bizarre condition of mine. They went beyond empathy to the level of sympathy. And I think it is here that the mission hospital failed.

The critical moment

...
Interview with Dr Joseph Kisekka

The interview reproduced below was conducted in 2011 by Alex Agaba, Dr Jude Ssempebwa, and Amelia Zalwango. It was published in the Uganda Martyrs University Newsletter in the same year. In here, Dr Kisekka tells us about himself.

Who is Professor Joseph Kisekka [PJK]?

PJK: I was born in March 1959 in Katigondo, Villa Maria Parish, Masaka District. At birth I was named Sikayanirabyabanange (loosely translating as “I don’t claim other people’s property”) but I don’t use the name because it is too long.

Do you stick to the meaning of that name though?

PJK: Sure. In fact, I prefer fairness to charity. You do not exploit me first and then pretend to be doing me a favour. I was later also named
Kisekka and christened Joseph at baptism. I started schooling in 1965. At the time, I knew how to read and write because I got lessons from my aunt before going to school. For a reason I have never understood, my father made me repeat Primary seven. I did my secondary education and high school certificate at Bukalasa Minor Seminary. During my high school certificate course, I vowed not to continue to the major seminary if I didn’t pass my examinations to qualify to join Makerere University. During that time, it seemed as if seminarians who continued to the major seminary were those who had more or less failed their high school certificate examinations. However, I passed the examinations and I was admitted to Makerere University. At the same time, I got a scholarship tenable at Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome, Italy. The scholarship was open in a way that funds would be provided for me to study up to PhD as long as I did well in my studies. So I went to Italy, where I did a BA in Philosophy and BA in Theology. Philosophy interested me most. I excelled in all my courses and got first class degrees. In 1984, I came back to Uganda for ordination after which I worked as a parish priest in charge of schools in Makukuulu Parish, Masaka Diocese, for one and a half years.


In 1990, when I returned from Rome, I was posted to manage money in Masaka Diocese. At first I could not figure out the link between philosophy and money. So I decided to do philosophy of money, focusing on how to make and invest money for the diocese. I also taught at Katigondo Major Seminary from 1990-2001 and I was visiting Lecturer at Alokolum Major Seminary in 2003. In 1996 I was posted to manage a one square mile farm and I transformed it into a high income generating project. This experience helped me to connect with the environment in a special way and, up to today, I am still a farmer. I am also a self-made environmentalist.
So how did you come to Uganda Martyrs University?

PJK: In 2001 Uganda Martyrs University advertised, calling for someone to teach Ethics. That attracted me to Uganda Martyrs University. The University is mainstreaming ethics in everything: not teaching it just as a course in one department as it happens at other universities. At the same time, I had been appointed as a lecturer at Makerere University. I decided to leave the appointment at Makerere and come to Nkozi where it is conducive to do things that I enjoy like reading, research and teaching. Most of all, I was attracted to UMU because of its rurality.

But you are Deputy Vice-chancellor (Academics)!

PJK: Two years after my appointment, my colleagues chose me to be the director of the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies. I have never known why, because I did not ask anybody for the position. I accepted on condition that I was to serve for one term of three years. I was hesitant to join Administration because it has a way of tying you down (dealing with problems) yet I had come to Uganda Martyrs University to read and do research. The other side of the job of Director though is that it taught me to be patient. Before, I always wanted to do things my way. But leading people who include equals and seniors and juniors taught me how to be patient. I considered myself as being a servant and we valued fairness, openness, teamwork and commitment. Looking back, it was a good experience. However, I ended up staying in the job for six years. Then the University called for applicants for promotion and the position of Deputy Vice-chancellor in charge of Academics. I thought I could go in for the promotion. I submitted my papers because I thought they were acceptable. That’s when I was promoted to Associate Professor. I did not apply to become DVC. I was on my farm planting trees when I received a phone call... the caller informed me that I had been appointed to the position and asked me if I accepted the appointment. I said that I would try.

Looking back, have you made some achievements at Uganda Martyrs University?

At one time I was a Director for the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies. I made a mark through adhering to the general University rules and approaching my colleagues as friends. I don’t dilly dally! I mean what I say and stand by it until you convince me otherwise. But I always
provide you with an opportunity to present your side of the argument. I think I was leading a sophisticated group. They are free people. Many of them are accomplished professors and free thinkers. For me, getting such people to work together as a team is an important achievement. I maintained our strategic international relations. Notre Dame University started with collaborating with the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies. So did Halifax St. Mary’s University in Canada. I also maintained the collaboration with Radboud University and Groningen University in Holland. I have also accompanied many students and fellow staff. As DVC AA, I think am doing whatever I am doing in line with what is described in the University’s statutes and charter. The achievements in this regard are “ours” not mine. I am a facilitator because I cannot achieve much by myself. But as a group, I think we are achieving a lot. Our Quality Assurance Committee is functional. The Curriculum Review Committee, of which I am chair, is also functional. I am also working with the Research Directorate to strengthen research at the University. We are also putting emphasis on community engagement through the Directorate of Outreach. These are our achievements as a University. Much as we may be teaching similar programs as other universities, Uganda Martyrs University is teaching these programs differently.

As the Deputy Vice-chancellor in charge of Academics, what is your vision for Uganda Martyrs University?

PJK: My vision coincides with that of the university. I would like to see a university of national and international repute, and this reputation should come through research. We have to abandon what I call the “mbalabyeko” or “katukomewo” type of research (loosely translated “let me come back”) as if the phenomenon being researched on ceases to occur when you are gone. We should adopt an action based and grounded research. I am also trying to encourage lecturers not to spend all the hours in class—teaching from Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 5 pm. Allow people to go out and interface with the living library—the community.

PJK: Each one of us is unique. Here I quote Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala who says that “God does not create photocopies.” We are all unique yet we are supposed to work together in that uniqueness. Everyone has a role to play and beauty lies in finding out that role and harnessing it.


2. Kisekka the Priest

Fr Kisekka, the sign of contradiction
Fr Edward Anselm Ssemwogerere

My first encounter with the late Joseph Kisekka was in 1978 when I entered the gates of Bukalasa Minor Seminary. He was in Senior Four. I was as short as a full stop by then. I looked at the gallant, muscular, tough, bright, stammering big man with fear and respect. He was that tight defender in football who never let the opponent bypass him.

This was a student who was always debating with fellow students and even had the audacity to openly argue with staff members on some controversial issues. He would always ask “why”. He would not simply follow orders. He also subjected his own beliefs to doubt. I later came to realise that this is philosophically known as Descartes’ Methodical Doubt.

His character caused some staff members to look at him with unease. Till the last moment of his life, Kisekka maintained the same character. He argued with sickness and even resisted death. Actually, at one time, he laughed at death when he humorously wrote that “death has missed me.” Indeed death had to tussle with him before it finally overpowered him.

His demand for a clear explanation on issues did not end in the seminary, but followed him throughout his life. Fr Kisekka was ordained priest in 1984 by Bishop Adrian Kivumbi Ddungu. He deeply respected Bishop Ddungu because of his wisdom, and the latter dearly loved the former. When he was appointed Treasurer of the Diocese, he humbly but firmly served in that office. He would never close an eye to the naked truth nor favour anybody just because of their position. Indeed some people referred to him as ‘the policy man’.

Like all other stakeholders, the Bishop would make requisitions when he needed some funds. To the amazement and discomfort of many, this policy man would turn down some requisitions which were wanting in clear explanations. If the expenditure was never provided for in the
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

budget, and if he judged it not to be of significant importance, he would task the applicant to indicate which account to debit and which one to credit. Fortunately, Bishop Ddungu clearly knew the kind of man he was dealing with and never pressed any further. The Bishop would often meticulously follow the policy. So, whenever the Bishop wanted to keep some money in safe custody, he would entrust it to the Policy Man.

At Katigondo, Makerere and Nkozi, Kisekka will be remembered for his philosophical mind. In his work, the Chronology of failed projects, this philosopher noted that he was indeed influenced by the works of various philosophers - among whom are; Pico dellaMirandola with his La missione del dotto (The mission of the educated), Jacques Maritain`s Le philosophe dans la cite´ (The philosopher in the town), Nyerere`s writings on Education and the role of University, Hegel`s Phenomenology of mind, especially his idea of the dialectic, AdornoTheodoro`s The Negative Dialectic, Nietzsche`s Thus spoke Zarathustra especially his concept of God is dead, Edmund Husserl`s concept of intentionality and Jean Paul Sartre`s Being and Nothingness. But his favourite seemed to be Hegel.

As an educator who was concerned with moulding university students in view of being self-reliant, he used to counsel them in these words: 
... much as there is a sense of satisfaction and pride in getting employed, you must understand that it is a big enslavement. To be employed by an organisation, more or less on a permanent basis, gives one a sense of security, but it may affect one`s ability to develop one`s self especially where one may be showered with many incentives which in our situation may create a false impression of ‘forever will be’, forgetting the time when one would retire and no longer enjoy those benefits.

In Narozari, his parish of appointment from 1996 to the point of his death, Kisekka loved to work with all types of people, with the ultimate objective of fighting poverty. An element of development was always integrated into his sermons, and open debate after mass was the norm. Fortunately, he always lived to what he preached. He had green hands. He cherished the philosophy of dirty hands, and he loved the
concept of small is beautiful in reference to projects. He strongly discouraged lazy hands and vehemently hated those who wanted to steal from the sweat of others. He would never close an eye on all forms of injustice.

Kisekka was very difficult to convince, but once convinced he would not bend an inch. This was paradoxically his strength and weakness. It was a strength because he was always ready to die for his conviction. Indeed, this is what Christianity demands. It was a weakness because at times he would remain on the wrong side, even if the whole world would be against him, until he was convinced.

Simeon rightly prophesied about Jesus, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (Luke 2:34).

I think it is not fallacious to attribute this to Kisekka. When Kisekka passed on, indeed the hearts of many were revealed. To some it was a sigh of relief: “the thief catcher, the policy man, the outspoken has at last fallen”. This attested to the fact that the man did not belong to the world (John 15:18-21). To others it was a great loss: of a man who was so objective, the postmodern philosopher, the advocate to the oppressed, the open-minded priest, the human rights activist, the faithful servant who always served above self, and the financial controller who never attended financial management classes but used his art to manage so well. At Nkozi, in the opinion of many, he managed the finances quite well.

Similar to the confession of the Jews after the death of Jesus, some people have really reflected and confessed that indeed we lost an objective person who hated wrong and worked for the truth - a man who was open, whose philosophy was to please the institution and God, and not individual people, a no nonsense leader.

Kisekka was a sign of contradiction wherever he was. Some would love him and many would hate him. No one could remain neutral. He would make us choose, tertium non datur (no third way is given). As a friend
to him, I kept changing positions. At times he would annoy me but, on further reflection, I could accept my misinterpretation of his intentions.

I wish to join Maggie Ddembe, a daughter of Kisekka’s village, in the eulogy she gave:

Joe silent now, you were a heart so strong and firm
At Narozari, Kitovu and even when at the farm
You put people right and you brought justice straight in formation
Some however won't assent, Joe you never meant harm.

Kisekka fare thee well.

The writer is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Business Administration and Management at Uganda Martyrs University
Fare well son of Katigondo, farewell Fr Dr Joseph Kisekka
Ddembe Margaret N.

The village moans a first borne Priest and Son.
Well borne the torch, yet no easy heir for you to get soon.
Though you once left for far, Katigondo remained at your heart;
No bounty you’d proffer but with us you pitched tent.

The grace of priesthood you received; in no disgrace you now return
Priest, teacher, man-minder, mentor, and many good turns
We thank God, for many returns of work;
people of academic muscle; Priests through Katigondo,
the work at Nkozi, and all you touched, not one but tones.

Joe silent now, you were a heart so strong and firm
At Narozari, Kitovu and even when at the farm;
You put people right and you brought justice straight in formation
Some however won't assent, Joe you never meant harm.

The test of a man now gone is his legacy, not time spent;
Kisekka was real and rare a man, not only at home, wherever he went;
A model of a worker to help and with a personal self giving to spend,
Always on time as a Doctor, for a purpose to attend.

We may dwell on the many falls Joseph took
Forgetting the sweat in torrents, as if he were a village brook;
He did really shed, for the love of his own
In death he goes parting, poor and with no earthly crown.

Dear to our hearts, Katigondo will never have you here again; now gone
We are at crossroads; Katigondo community is at loss now;
OUR driver, manager; now gone we moan;
God is kind I believe, he isn't mean,
We keep fond memories of you though we feel alone.

Vale Josephus, valecalissimus amicus
Vale frater, vale pater et filius
Vale Sacerdos, requiescat in pace

The writer is a resident of Katigondo village, where Fr Kisekka was born.
Fr Kisekka was an enigma - a strong castle with roughcast outer walls

Dr J. C. Katongole

First encounter
I met Fr Joseph Kisekka, for the first time, at Katigondo National Major Seminary in 1980. I did not associate so much with him since he was not closely related to music. Those days J.C. (as I was commonly known) was a synonym for music: I was the Choirmaster for Ganda Group, The Head Choirmaster of the seminary, trained fellow seminarians in church music, and member of the specially gifted music group called The Chromatics). We used to meet “under the mango tree” or Mwasa football ground for Ganda Group music assemble entertainment, Joe would not be there. We had, every Monday, Ganda Group Choir practice, I could not see Kisekka there; neither did I see him joining the Seminary Choir Practice that used to take place every Tuesday. I do not think he liked music very much. The only occasion he could not escape music was during the general liturgical preparations choir practices.

After sometime, the man disappeared completely from the seminary - only to hear later that he had been sent to Rome for studies.

Second encounter
After my studies in Germany 1998, I spent two years at home trying to organise myself. Eventually, in 2001, I applied for a lecturer job at Uganda Martyrs University at Nkozi. I was invited for an interview on a day I do not remember. The appointment was for 2pm. I arrived 30 minutes to time and entered the Reception room. I saw a gentleman in a suit with a grey collarless shirt (not clerical). We greeted each other very warmly but, though he called me by my name, I could not remember his. He had also come for the interview. He told me his story and I told him mine and we had a quick flashback on our life together at Katigondo.

Since we were only the two of us and the receptionist, we ran short of stories. I was very careful and critical on what to tell him (as a priest) about myself (as a lay person). This silence was broken by a lady who entered the reception from inside and walked straight to where we were. She introduced herself as Eliza Kikule and, with an “economical”
professional smile, she greeted us and enquired who Dr Joseph Kisekka was. My newly discovered classmate identified himself and went inside with her for the interview. We both passed the interview and were appointed as lecturers of UMU, an appointment which took effect on 1st September 2001.

A colleague and a friend
Knowing nobody at UMU, except the Chaplain by then – Msgr Dr Lawrence Ssemusu, we very happily began our journey at the service of UMU as colleagues and indeed as friends. We were eating together at my house, where we used to recall our seminary life and shared our experiences at UMU, which had become our new place of work. He was a very generous person: he used to bring with him every Monday fruits from his garden and fish from Lwera. Later on our table was joined by Fr Ssebanenya who had also joined UMU staff. Fr Anselm Ssemwogere also joined us later. During our meals, we would argue a lot about many issues and Fr Kisekka was known for his sometimes different outlook on the world, which I believe was due to internalisation of some philosophical schools of thought.

We used to share about what went on in the lecture rooms and the approach we should adopt in our relationships with both the students and fellow staff members. He used to enjoy the way I was bringing the African heritage experiences into all my lectures because I believed that there had to be a noticeable difference in the way lectures are conducted in Africa and in Europe. One day he suggested to me to come up with a course that would enable me to share more in details about the African worldview and practices with my students. I welcomed the idea and that is how I introduced the course unit called Indigenous Knowledge.

Assoc. Prof. Joseph Kisekka, the Spar dash castle
I would allegorically compare Dr Kisekka to a castle, built on a strong foundation, with strong walls, beautifully painted inside and fortified with roughcast on the outer side of the walls. Roughcast or pebbledash, according to Weyer, et al. eds. (2015) is a coarse plaster surface used on outside walls that consists of lime and sometimes cement mixed with sand, small gravel, and often pebbles or shells. Most modern pebbledash is actually not pebbles at all, but small and sharp flint chips, and should correctly be called Spar dash.
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

Seen from the outside, the castle is not very appealing to the eyes, especially if one appreciates beauty only from what aesthetically appeases the eyes. Once in a while, I would feel embarrassed when one found us on the compound and greeted us. Joe would respond in such a cold manner as if the one who greeted had made an offence. But, if the person stayed longer with us in our conversation, you could surely know that it was not true. He would then talk to him/her in a very friendly, open way. That person would actually go away with a very positive impression of Fr Joe. The same would be the case if one had a request to make from him. He could start by responding in an unfriendly way (as if he wanted to test something) and end up friendly and in jovial mood.

However, sometimes he would only let you see the roughcast outside of the beautiful castle. This was normally the case when Fr Kisekka would catch you outside the norm, or “offside”. I would compare such an encounter with one leaning against the roughcast wall of the castle. One will not fail to feel the pain from the pricking of the mixture of sand with strong cement. There were cases when one or two people would get really bruised, even bleeding, depending on the way they got into contact with the roughcast wall. That was the case whenever he had to deal with situations of injustices, unfaithfulness, lies, and corruption.

Kisekka the strong castle with roughcast outer walls was an enigma. One would describe the castle as an ugly one, indomitable, which should be broken down/removed. That is for the occasions when one bumped onto the wall and got hurt. He/she would wonder how on earth one could be inhuman to put roughcast on the outer wall which has bruised him/her. On several occasions people, including those who had ‘bulldozers’ or power tried to remove the castle because it was making them uncomfortable, but failed. Another would again depict the castle as a master piece of divine work. This could only be said about the castle by those who understand the purpose of roughcast on an outer wall: not to hurt those who exert friction to it or to make them bleed those who bump onto it, but to protect the walls and eventually the whole building against the bad weather dangers. The inner beauty of the castle are the moral values, the common good, justice, fairness which were being protected by the principles, the spar
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

dash or roughcast. The latter is what one could easily see and feel, while one had to get closer (inside the castle) to see the other picture.

Yes, we saw a castle on top of the mountain and we had an interesting experience of it. We are still feeling your aura, son of man, REVEREND FR ASSOC. PROFESSOR DR JOSEPH KISEKKA.

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Fr Joseph Kisekka: An icon of a conviction-led life
Kabiito Benedicto

On the sixteenth day of April, 2016, parishioners of Narozali Parish (Masaka Diocese) had no choice but to get to terms with the demise of their hero! A day before, Masaka Diocese, and of course the country at large, had ably accorded his body a painful send-off at Bukalasa Seminary. For people who lived and worked with Fr Kisekka, the two days were the best moments to both mourn his loss and celebrate his inspirational life - a life marked by monumental achievements and life's lessons.

At the parish, ten speakers, one by one, took to the stage to recount the exceptionalities his exemplary life exhibited. To some, his death was a reminder that life is an inescapable vanity, to others a reminder that life is a temporally great gift that one needs to use well. Given his convictions about life, commitment and rightful course-of-action, his resilience and positivity in face of challenges, it was hard to imagine him no more! But yes, even the strongest of humans obeys the law of nature.
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

With passion in person, Fr Kisekka promoted environmental integrity and works that advanced its cause. He managed farms and forests, for the parish and diocese alike, his own as well. In Masaka Diocese and beyond, he was a manager of all; nature, money, people, and institutions - and ably so. In Mpigi and Kampala (UMU and Makerere University, respectively), he enlightened minds and challenged the status quo, all for the good cause.

‘Pessimisticising’ the Good Cause: Misconceptions and Stereotyping around the Man

It took me a great deal of time, I guess many others too, to understand Fr Kisekka. He was an open-ended character of righteous living; a foundation of commitment and conviction, a true icon of an examined-life, but with a high tune of strictness. To the average person, Dr Kisekka seemed very hard to deal with, courtesy of his high expectations and unordinary convictions about life which he hardly compromised. This habitually allowed labels to get generated and pinned all around him. This, however, could never detract him. One of his common phrases to his flock in Narozali parish was: “Kola kyotekeddwa okukola, n’ebwebasiima n’ebwebatasiima” (Do what you’re supposed to do, whether they appreciate or not), and he was up for the task, and all the time.

Until today, there are people who are jammed into thinking that Prof. Kisekka was terribly a difficult character, of course judged on the account of his openness (unfailing propensity to transparency) and high moral/professional expectations. One of his close friends talks of him as being ‘annoyingly open’. An elder at home talked of him as “a man who hated unscrupulous and fraudulent dealings of any kind... who was so impatient to such behaviour, so much so that he would openly confront them promptly, no matter the circumstances and the weight of persons involved”. This made victims and suspects of such dealings uncomfortable with him. In fact, his outright character repelled many from him, yet, for those who kept far from him, they took all the beliefs heard about him as facts curved from steel.

There are interesting beliefs about Fr Kisekka that obtained in his early years of service at Narozali, the dominant one being that he was a
serious soldier trained in Italy. As such, many people believed that he had a gun, and that, that is why he successfully hunted down loggers who were depleting the parish’s natural forests. After intensifying his campaign against deforestation, tree harvesters resorted to doing their thing at night. But he never gave-up, he pressed harder. He is believed to have surveilled the forests even at night - a move that saw him score high for the environmental cause. Although no one stands out to confirm these beliefs, many believed that no one could do the latter without an external reinforcement (a gun).

One thing that was clear with Kisekka from the very beginning is that he hated laziness. He openly preached against it, on and off the pulpit. He challenged the youth and children of his parish to break away from laziness and embrace work. He was not up to saving ‘the soul’ alone, but the ‘whole human being’. Many a time, he took trouble to talk to the youth and children after mass; about life, education and work. He is a priest whose call was never limited to spiritual services, he worked for social and economic improvement of people under his pastoral care. He drew children close, encouraging them to study and work hard; supporting many who could not farther their education. He often gave out coffee stocks and tree seedlings to interested families, appointing children to take charge of them, and rewarding those who showed commitment to work and study hard.

Lessons on balancing faith, cultural practice, and reason/reasonableness

I have a feeling that the clergymen of my childhood would in silence pray (or at least wish) that Christians turn up in big numbers to attend their rural visitation services. And, hopefully, that they come along with the usual gifts of chicken, eggs, matooke, and fruits, among others. These were almost automatically expected offers to the visiting men of God. Of course, the practice was being rubber-stamped by the cultural requirement of courtesy that gifts are never refused. But also, this ALWAYS met receptive modes of expectant clergy until Fr Kisekka lately dawned. Kisekka is the man who made a difference. He invited the faithful to think through their situations and see whether they are the best positioned to just give even amidst moments of need and lack; to assess who, what and when to give. He cautioned people to be just to others, but to begin with themselves. At first, it appeared like
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

an attack or insult on people’s good will – but it evoked some sense of responsibility to the self. On the other hand, it appeared like a condemnation to the clergy who entertained the practice. But, finally, it trimmed possible excesses that would lead to exploitation.

He openly told the faithful that God is not happy with poor people, so, they had to work hard and overcome the state of poverty. For people who came for Mass daily, but remained needy, he reminded them that, yes prayer is good, but God would be happier with them if they could make their families more satisfied and happier. He encouraged them to work more to improve their socio-economic situations than praying more.

It was Fr Kisekka’s practice to allow time at the end of Mass to interact with the faithful and share socio-economic insights for their betterment, and most importantly, to learn from them. Often, he gave a platform to whoever wanted to do so or talk about any important aspects of life. Using the same avenue, he encouraged the youth and children to talk to their peers and parents over thorny or constructive issues. This is very rare in the Catholic Church, yet he changed lives with it. I remember exploiting the chance twice, one of which generated a debate between parents and school-going children.

One time, after a Sunday Mass, Dr Kisseka challenged Christians to be just to themselves and their families. He wondered and asked, “why do you give your eggs and hens to people (priests) who look healthy when your children look malnourished?” He also cautioned people to stop selling ndiizi (plantain-lady fingers) only to use the money to buy pan cakes (made out of them) for their children - emphasising bananas as natural, and healthier than pan cakes. He is reported to have told a woman who had brought him eggs at an out-station to take them back to her children who needed them most. He once confronted a Christian who contributed 200,000/= towards the construction of the priests’ house in 2004, when (during the same time) two of his children were sent back home several times for failure to pay school fees (85,000/=) by a school belonging to the parish.

One other important value the priest exhibited was that of simplicity. Fr Kisekka was not poor; he was a rich man who chose to keep a low profile. And, with his high profile positions of responsibility, he remained
in touch with the lowly, and maintained the local lifestyle. He encouraged people to prioritise local foods, prepared in local healthy ways. For those who care to learn, he offered good lessons for a humane life.

May his works earn him Eternal Life – May lessons learnt live on- AMEN.

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3. Kisekka the Philosopher

The Philosopher I know
Dr Albert Luswata

Introduction

Fr Dr Joseph Kisekka, also dearly known by many as Joe, carried many umbrellas, which makes it hard to adequately describe him. For many, he was a priest who said mass and administered sacraments with such dedication and determination. To others he was a farmer, who reared animals and planted plenty of crops, both for food and cash. Yet to others, he was a manager and mentor who led with justice and firmness. In this memoir I would like to share the inspirational life of Dr Joseph Kisekka, the Philosopher that I know.

Here I will try to show how Kisekka the Philosopher greatly influenced Kisekka the priest, farmer, entrepreneur, manager and mentor. And as such, I will show that, in order to understand Kisekka the priest, farmer, entrepreneur, manager, mentor, and to appreciate this great personality, you must understand Kisekka the philosopher first. Philosophy had permeated his entire life as his modus Vivendi and modus Operandi. Of course, this endeavour is not an easy one, and there are even risks of making fallacies while trying to understand him. But at the same time, I am convinced that, as a philosophy student, mentee and junior colleague of this Philosopher from Masaka, I am in a privileged position to explain the linkages. At the same time, as a former student and worker in some of the institutions where Kisekka both studied and worked (namely: Katigondo Philosophicum, Urban
College, Pontifical Urban University, and Uganda Martyrs University), I hope to be eligible to talk about the person of Dr Kisekka.

**Philosophical Formation**

Kisekka the philosopher did not become such by accident. His personal life experience both as a child and later as a student prepared him for it. His childhood experience favoured him. Joe was born at Katigondo village, which hosted the first institution of higher learning in Uganda (started in 1911) and it happened to be a *philosophicum*, considered at his time to be the best in the region. It attracted students from the East and Central African region, and here they obtained a diploma and degree in Philosophy. No wonder, the first modern African Cardinal, Laurean Rugambwa from Tanzania, just like the first African Bishop South of the Sahara, Joseph Kiwanuka, are both *alumni* of Katigondo.

Joe’s talents too favoured him. He had his elementary school in the neighbouring Villa Maria village and his secondary school in the adjacent minor seminary of Bukalasa, but he did not complete his Philosophical studies in Katigondo his home village. His Bishop, Adrian Kivumbi Ddungu of Masaka, had recognised his potential early on and sent him to Rome to study Philosophy (although there is a legend that says his Bishop wanted him to change from his village where he did all his prior education). In Rome, he went to an elite Urban College, which gathered very brilliant seminarians and priests from all over the world (most notable among the *alumni* before was Cardinal John Henry Newman. Others are Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala of Uganda, Cardinal Maurice Michael Otunga of Kenya, etc). While there, he frequented the Pontifical Urban University which had prominent Professors of Philosophy who influenced his own philosophical thought. At the Urban College, he learnt to relate well with people from diverse cultures and nations. The Pontifical Urbanian University was also famous for its mission studies which were particularly sensitive to cultural diversity and used multicultural approaches to studies. This may explain the non-discriminatory approach of Kisekka the manager and professor. He knew how to work with people of all cultures without discrimination. This did not make him abandon his Ganda culture, though his love for it did not lead him to discriminate those from other cultures.
As a student of Philosophy, Kisekka was super gifted. He surprised many at the Pontifical Urban University, where he studied only in Italian and was able to get a first class degree, labeled *Summa cum Laude*. He later did the same at the Masters Degree (Licentiate) and Doctorate (all in the same University). His doctoral thesis was entitled: *The World and History in the Romantic Thought of Thomas Carlyle: A Search for Transcendence*.

I retrieve my memory of Kisekka the Philosopher from his captivating classes of Contemporary Philosophy at Katigondo *Philosophicum* between the years 1997 and 2000. Legend at Katigondo had it that Dr Kisekka used to wait for his colleagues to choose first the courses they preferred to teach and he could take the ones they left and considered to be harder - and Contemporary Philosophy was among them. The other was Logic.

As a Philosopher, Dr Kisekka is distinguished by the following traits which he portrayed in most of his classes and writings:

1. Emphasis on a holistic approach to Reality. This is depicted by his adoption of the caution that 'Everything is as important as the other'. Those familiar with his lectures will testify that Kisekka found sense in everything. This may explain his interest in almost all issues. There is no issue that Kisekka could overlook or ignore. He never took anything for granted. He, therefore, taught and wrote on anything including the natural environment; the impact of technology, human rights, bioethics, etc. They all seemed to captivate him. This may also explain why the same person was a priest, academic, farmer, entrepreneur, treasurer and manager.

2. The other distinguishing trait is his emphasis on the interconnectedness of nature. Dr Kisekka considered all nature to be One and dismissed any approach that separated some elements as more important than others. In his environmental ethics classes and writings, he was always passionate about protection of the non-human environment as having an intrinsic value irrespective of what it does for humans. He, therefore, loved animals and trees. He reared and planted many. He also encouraged other people he met, in whichever forum, to do the same. This may explain his contribution to the diocesan farm which he developed in Narozari Parish, Masaka.
Diocese, and his contribution to coffee growing in his country as the Director of Uganda Coffee Development Authority.

3. Most Philosophy alumni of Kisekka remember him for his use of the German word *Vernunft*, which means reason. For Kisekka the Philosopher, all reality is based on reason. He never accepted anything unreasonable and mediocre and without filtering its accuracy using rational arguments. In other words he asked the why of things, unlike the majority of the people in society who merely conform. It’s especially due to this trait that sometimes his colleagues in the workplace never understood him as a Philosopher-cum-Manager. Many felt uncomfortable that he wanted to know why they chose to do what they did in the way they did it. This philosophical mind created him not only friends but also enemies. Kisekka did not shy away from asking his bosses why they chose to do things the way they chose, a trait not very accepted in the hierarchically structured African society. He did not spare his juniors either who usually feared his curious questions.

4. Finally, Kisekka understood Philosophy as problem solving and not only as criticism. This was manifested by two things: his reference to Hegel who criticised the previous Philosophers for only describing the world without changing it, and his reference to those Philosophers who stop at *critica* without providing solutions. Joe presented Philosophy as problem solving. He, therefore, emphasised that a philosopher lives in town because that is where there are problems. He took this from the antique Greek philosophers who lived in city States called *polis*, and most of the issues studied in philosophy were based on practices in such city States. These ranged from economics to politics, astrology, medicine, geography, etc.

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4. Kisekka the Administrator

Dr Kisekka, a man of procedure
Mary Stella Apiyo

Associate Professor Rev. Fr Dr Joseph Kisekka was little known to me at the time he chose me to work with him upon his appointment as the Deputy Vice Chancellor - Academic Affairs (DVC AA) in 2009. He was popularly known as Dr Kisekka and that is how everyone called him.

I worked with him for half the time he served at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU). These were seven good years; three as his Personal Assistant in the portfolio of DVC AA and the remaining four when he was added the portfolio of Finance and Administration. I remained unrecognised in the second portfolio. The non-recognition was no surprise though, when I recall the difficulty ‘we’ went through before I could finally receive a formal appointment in the first position. The hurdles in my appointment strengthened the work relationship and brought out his attributes, as someone who did not reverse his decision and someone who believed in fairness, equity and justice.

As time went by, I got to know Dr Kisekka’s values, principles and overall attributes even better. He had respect for all but had high regard for Professor Peter Kanyandago as an elder/senior person in the University. He had mood swings; he would quarrel in a moment and forget it in the next moment. This gave me hope. He was strict, ethical, transparent, and never favoured anyone. He hated wastage or extravagancy, from paper to money and misuse of University property. I am happy to have been given the opportunity to learn and unlearn this by myself. I realised that he believed in fairness to not only a person but to the institution. He refunded allowances paid to him by inviting institutions when his journey was fully paid by Uganda Martyrs University. When he demanded for accountability, he pursued it to the end. I witnessed tough moments when he put certain individuals to task to ‘vomit’ what they stole or attempted to steal from the university. He never spared those who tried to undermine his position/office.

As part of the work in office, I made suggestions and also passed on information to staff on his behalf. Some of the communications were
not pleasing and indeed attracted accusations from some staff members. He would take a stand and support me. This I felt was the best thing he did for me. I realised that he was a team player, and the feeling that he was part of the team gave me confidence and helped me to build a working relationship with him.

As my immediate supervisor, Dr Kisekka challenged me quite a lot. I experienced his different sides through some of the challenges and mistakes which I made in the office. Many times, he would ask me to do things which I thought I was not able to do, but doing these tasks trained and made me grow as a person. I felt I could actually do more and the credit he gave at the end of these tasks helped me to gain confidence in what I did.

He always followed procedure. He was strict on time management and quality services, and he expected the person he worked with to do the same. One clear example of this was in 2010 when I applied to attend an exchange programme at Saint Mary’s University, Halifax - one of UMU’s partner institutions. He accused me of abuse of office by not following procedure to let him okay my application before submission. I also accompanied him to meetings outside the University a couple of times. I recall two incidents: One, when he instructed the driver to leave me because I was delaying him. This is because I was slow in packing the items we had travelled with. The second time he gave me a verbal warning for delaying others. There was also an occasion when he made me apologise to staff following poor services provided by a service provider I contacted to serve during one of the academic staff meetings. From these encounters I learnt that one should know the immediate supervisor’s principles, and here they were: you have to keep time and take responsibility for your actions.

Among his other achievements while we worked together, I can point out the following:

i) Initiating the end of semester academic staff meeting, which had two parts - the workshop session with tailor-made training and the general staff meeting to share information with staff. This helped reduce tension among staff and indeed many appreciated his transparency.
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

ii) Strengthening the Curriculum Review Committee; he ensured that all old programmes under blanket accreditation by National Council for Higher Education were reviewed and re-accredited by the same body.

iii) The implementation of the workload policy and the continuous demand to both academic and administrative staff to account for the forty (40) working hours in a week – I liked his consistency in handling everyone without favouring any individual. But this policy certainly made the office even more unpopular.

iv) He put the Staff Development Fund to use by putting pavers on walkways at the Main Campus. This changed the face of the University. The process continued at Rubaga Campus and at Mother Kevin Postgraduate Medical School. He played a significant role in this exercise.

v) He streamlined the operations in the Finance and Accounts Department, which helped UMU to recover from the financial crisis we were engulfed in. He was a pillar in the Finance team and often boasted of the course he did in philosophy of money.

He could not be compromised on the protection of University properties; from household items to vehicles and land, among others. Those who faced his wrath can testify to this.

One side of him I found unpleasant was his opinion about death and mourning the dead. I found this rather inhuman. On several occasions, I lost my loved ones and there were some whose burial I couldn’t really miss. But whenever I would ask for permission to attend the burial, his response would leave me more traumatised. He once told me “let the dead bury the dead”! On another occasion he told me that I couldn’t bury everyone who dies from my village! Sometimes I obeyed, but sometimes I couldn’t. In all cases, I never agreed with him on opinion relating to death.

Early in 2013, Dr Kisekka began complaining of tiredness, especially after class sessions. But he continued to teach and supervise for that academic year. He later started visiting the hospital frequently for a series of tests, which he narrated to staff in 2013 during the end of semester meeting as he urged them to embrace the health insurance scheme. I didn’t nurse him but I emotionally walked with him in the
journey of suffering. He always remembered to call to tell me his whereabouts and how he felt. And indeed he called me before beginning his final therapy in Nairobi Hospital. And that was the last time I spoke to him. I also received his instruction that the case of students from a certain affiliated institute had been logically concluded, and that I should ensure that the students receive their documents from the institute or have it passed over to DVC AA [Sr Dr Speranza] before his condition worsens. This to me was a strong testimony that he had the University at heart. He was dedicated and sacrificed his life for UMU.

The last time I saw him in hospital, he was visibly in pain - but the news of his death still hit me hard. I met him as a boss but, the more I got to know him, the more we became closer. The girls who nursed him, particularly Helen Namala and Teddy Nalumu would just call me by name every time I visited him in hospital. This, I came to learn, was because of what he shared about me and our work in office.

He had met my family members - mum and the pleasantries he shared with her; Dad who later became more or less a friend as he came to attend graduation ceremonies of his children at UMU; and my brothers and sisters. They all constantly inquired about his condition when they got to know of his sickness. They were saddened at his passing. Dr had become a family friend.

As testified by many, I observed the following virtues: hard work, transparency, incorruptibility, not unfairly pleasing anyone, working without fear or favour, brutal honesty, commitment to work, being just and fair, love for academic work, and never compromising in defence of the truth - which I think came from his priesthood.

Rest in peace, Associate Professor Rev. Fr Dr Joseph Kisekka.

The writer works as a Personal Assistant to the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic Affairs.
I write this tribute at a time when Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) is still mourning the passing of Rev. Fr Prof. Dr Joseph Kisekka. To many in UMU, it is still difficult to accept the fact that Prof. Kisekka is gone forever. This is because the late Prof. Kisekka spent about 16 years working in this University where he rose in ranks from a Lecturer to Associate Professor and then to Deputy Vice Chancellor - firstly in charge of Academic Affairs and later in charge of Finance and Administration.

He was too involved to be missed or ignored and was arguably the single most imposing figure within the university by the time of his death. Whereas I am aware of a tribute as a compliment or something in praise of a person, I will broaden mine to include general reflections about the man that was loved and hated, supported and opposed, praised and cursed because of his firm principles and practices that he applied consistently and uniformly. Arguably, there is no better tribute than an honest one because he himself valued sincerity and frank discussion. Within the dimension that I will profile him, I will argue that there are several things we can learn from him but also a few to unlearn from him. Either way, his versatile life provides useful lessons.

An economist

The late Professor Joseph Kisekka was different things to different people. To some, he was a priest; to others – a prudent manager; to others – a farmer; to others – an environmentalist; to others – a wonderful teacher or professor; yet to others – a philosopher. I decided to pay tribute to him as an economist! I am cognizant of the fact that making reflections about his life is as problematic as it is contentious because people who knew him in respect of only one of the aforesaid dimensions will not understand that he was anything else. This is because he was too committed and immersed in whatever he did for anyone to imagine that he could be involved with something else. That was Professor Kisekka. I make no exceptions and call him an economist because of his mastery of the science of scarcity and his affinity for cost control.
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

A master of scarcity

Economics is the study of scarcity (https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/students/what-is-economics accessed on 2nd May 2016). Scarcity is a situation where resources are insufficient to cover human needs. This is a reality that is often recognised by many. Yet, few people gather the needed courage to take tough decisions and live within the available means. Prof. Kisekka was always mindful of scarcity and cautious of the choices he made either for himself or the University. He made sure that no resources were spent where there was no direct benefit to the institution. His high level of vigilance on resource use got him into conflict with colleagues and bosses, often querying their expenditure and financial decisions they made for the institution. He will be remembered for popularising the “Spirit of St. Charles Lwanga” which was interpreted by many to mean making sacrifices for the university by going an extra mile while expecting same or less pay. It was soon dubbed the “Ghost of St. Charles Lwanga”. We started travelling without per diem (or taking half of it) because of the forced need to sacrifice.

Surprisingly, he was a man of policies. He would first ask if there was any enabling policy before he allowed anything to happen. Yet, some policies on per diem for academic and other travelling staff were not followed - which amounted to some kind of double standards on his part. It could be seen, though, that his adoption of this modus operandi was in response to the stark reality of managing an institution with limited resources.

On a personal level, many do remember his modest lifestyle in terms of dress code, the car he drove and so forth. One time he asked why people drove very expensive cars when cheaper vehicles would take them to their destinations. He argued that a saving on expensive cars alone was sufficient to feed the poor and do several public works in every district!

Expenditure containment

Prof. Kisekka had a high affinity for cost containment. Cost containment is the business practice of controlling expenditure levels to prevent unnecessary spending and improve the financial position of an
organisation (http://smallbusiness.chron.com/definition-cost-containment-66172.htm, accessed on 4th May 2016). After assuming the office of Deputy Vice Chancellor, he embarked on a general inspection of the university, entering all nooks and crannies asking questions such as: how much fuel is spent on the generator, how many items are issued from the store weekly, how many electric bulbs blow each week and why; how much mileage is covered by each vehicle and where; and the like.

Before long, it was discovered that fuel spent on the standby generator was five times more than was actually needed; that vehicles were consuming a lot of fuel even when they had not physically left the parking yard; that some lecturers were paid for taking students out for study trips that actually never happened, etc. There seemed to have been such a haemorrhage of finances that the university was threatened with freezing of accounts by the Uganda Revenue Authority for non-remittance of tax. Dr Kisekka, as he was popularly called, will forever be remembered as a man who saved the university from closure - which he did through a merciless onslaught on expenditure.

While travelling for his final send-off at the cemetery of Bukalasa Minor Seminary, a colleague observed that even if this was for his own burial, Prof. Kisekka would have rejected the idea of bringing a whole University Bus and other vehicles, had he the capacity to make such a decision. He would have argued that he is gone but the university has to continue. For me, this was the first assault on his principles and a piercing reality of the fact that he was indeed departed. Yet, I could also understand the decision by the university management to facilitate many people to attend the burial of a true institutional hero.

However, Dr Kisekka's expenditure control went somehow too far, forcing some people to raise eyebrows. There were concerns about cutting expenses in ways that either affected quality or reduced efforts to market the university. Indeed, even if for different reasons, the student enrolment began to diminish. This was coupled with cases of instant dismissal of employees that were suspected of being corrupt, some of whom sued the university. One time, he made a support staff to stand outside his office for hours while he watched from his window to see if his order was violated! His methods of work adversely affected the morale of several staff, with implications on performance. He
trusted few people, if any, in matters of money and openly said so. This mistrust made him attempt to police all activities both major and minor to the extent of one time issuing fuel chits himself. In one discussion, I joked that he was trying to “boil the ocean” as the scope of supervisory work he had allotted himself was tall order for any single person to handle, however strong. Arguments began to build that his actions, which had saved the university at one point, could lead to its demise at another.

General reflections

Prof. Kisekka will be remembered as a man of firm principles, especially when it came to planning and spending of resources both personal and institutional. He will be remembered as someone who saved Uganda Martyrs University which was facing extinction due to uncontrolled expenditure and misappropriation of funds. He will be remembered for his overzealousness in monitoring resource use to the point of facing off with his supervisors and colleagues without any fear or favour. He will be remembered as a man who pursued social justice in allocation of resources. What he denied others, he would deny himself. All these are virtues that we can learn from the life of a man who so firmly believed in equality of opportunity for all.

Be that as it may, Dr Kisekka will also be remembered as a rigid manager who was inflexible in most of his decisions, to the point of refusing to listen to some alternative views. Where he believed himself to have acted for the common good, he occasionally could not fathom why there was need to respond to certain queries from those who missed his logic. He also thought that many people would understand his covert communication, thus sometimes remaining silent when loud messages were needed. One time in a staff meeting, he refused to explain the tough security checks at the main gate, insisting that “if you cannot hear my silence, you will not understand my words”. Yet, many could understand that the checks were meant to minimise theft of university property that had reached unprecedented proportions. His strong views on justice were at times on collision with the employment laws, where he wanted those perceived to be corrupt dismissed immediately without following due process of disciplining or termination. Notices of delayed salaries began at the most critical phase of his sickness and intensified after his demise leading some to doubt if, without him, they would ever get their salaries on time. Yet, this
should have been a mere coincidence. Fare Thee Well, Prof. Kisekka. UMU will miss you greatly. May your soul truly rest in eternal peace.

Dr Joseph Kisekka: The benevolent Father behind the bully
Assoc. Prof. Jude Ssempebwa

It was 2:00pm and I was at Kampala Parents’ School to pick my daughter after her sunny school day when my Nokia Lumia rang. And there was a bad omen, a premonition. The caller’s name blinking up and down, “Leonard”. That beloved friend who only calls when something is terribly wrong. “Hello?” I received. “Your mentor is dead!”

‘True to form and substance. Those are Leonard Kawuki’s calls’, I thought to myself as I quickly ran through my time with Dr Kisekka; Ms Teddy Naluwu, Dr Kisekka’s girl who doubles as a great friend of mine and who sat diligently by his hospital bed and took care of him as he put up a most impressive fight against cancer; and our utmost faith that, as he said many times, Dr would beat the cancer and return to contribute to the building of the UMU we all look forward to.

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Dr Jimmy Spire Ssentongo and I were eulogizing Dr Kisekka via a Facebook chat-room when he dropped what struck me as a strange line: “Could you write a short tribute to Dr Kisekka, about two to three pages - explaining the person you saw in him? I want to compile a tribute book in about two weeks’ time”.

“I cannot!” I said, adding that “I do not know anything good to say about him yet, in my culture, we say only good things about the dead. Moreover, I suspect that he was behind the infamous discrimination against commuting staff at the main gate in Nkozi; the new policy of refuelling the bus every other evening in Buwama — with the result that commuting staff cannot have dinner with their children after they reach home beyond nine o’clock in the night — he announced the eventual scrapping of the transport refund of UGX 2,000/= of which I was a gratified beneficiary… as Vice President of the UMU staff association, I fought hard against these and other things and I heard that some people reasoned that I was fighting Dr Kisekka (not asking
the Deputy Vice-Chancellor [DVC] to speak to us about these things)... such people may not be happy to hear that I wrote about their friend, more so in death, when he can no longer raise his voice against my pen". "Okay", said Dr Ssentongo.

Then one morning, I found a message from him in my message feed saying, “Ssebo, I still feel you should write for us a tribute to Dr Kisekka. Whereas you had your differences, you were also close to him at some point. I think your tribute would show us a more diverse/inTEGRal picture of his many faces. Thanks in advance”.

I had heard that Dr Ssentongo is in charge of parts of what used to be the Research Directorate where I served for years under Dr Kisekka. And, accustomed to obeying Directors of Research at UMU, I obliged, also realising that although the tongue tends towards the hurting tooth, in fact, every cloud has a silver lining.

After all, even though Dr Ssentongo was referring to differences between Dr Kisekka and I that I am not sure about, I am sure that before coming to UMU, Dr Kisekka and I came from Narozari Parish, where he served as a Priest and where I was baptised 35 years ago. So, unlike many in the UMU fraternity who knew him only as an indomitable DVC, I was specially privileged to know him as a member of my home village, with whom I share a wide network of relatives and friends. Yet I also knew him as a researcher whose manuscripts I edited and as a Director under whom I served at the Research Directorate.

Maybe Dr Ssentongo was right after all: I knew the man as the tough disciplinarian who will rant at you while you are fidgeting to find your way around a daunting task; the bully who will jeer at you, hurling sick jokes; but also the very soft-hearted man who will leave his seat of power in his all-powerful office of the DVC to come sit near you on the sofa and peculiarly present to you bottles of drinking water in a sisal basket called ekibbo. He is the supervisor who followed my work at UMU keenly enough to recommend me for appointment to the position of Acting Director of Research and who told me to stop talking to him in English as though I did not know Luganda—the lingua franca of the village where we come from. The pan Africanist philosopher who was so passionate about our indigenous wisdom that, under my editorship of Mtafiti Mwafrika (a pan Africanist series at UMU), he published a
persuasive case for returning to our indigenous way of doing things in which he competently discusses the persevering relevance to our development needs of Bulungi bwa nsi (literally said, for the good of the world), Mwoyo gwa gwanga (spirit of the nation/ republicanism) and Bulungi bwa kitundu (for the good of the area). A development thought leader who frowned at poverty alleviation projects too narrowly, if not erroneously, conceived that he did not only author the critical-satirical essay, “A Chronology of Failed Projects” but also had the audacity to criticise a research project on poverty that I led, until I told him I was a knowledge, not a development, worker! A mixed farmer so passionate about his crops and livestock that he did not only videotape them but, amidst a punishing schedule, found the time to sit me down to watch the videos and request my ideas for their improvement. Apparently, he wanted to use the videos to share his ‘best practices' with other farmers.

He was fluent in both theoretical and practical environmental ethics — perhaps the only DVC I know of who goes around campus picking trashed mineral water bottles. Knowledgeable, hands-on, generous and straightforward. If he turned down your requisition, like he sometimes did, at least he did not waste your time, so my memories of working with him remind me of the dictum I found somewhere on Facebook saying, “a clear rejection is better than a fake promise”. A hardworking man who cared about keeping things on the rail, so much that he turned up for work even when all of us felt he deserved to be on sick leave. Indeed, I asked him inconveniencing questions because, unlike those who did not know him, I knew that the bad guy persona was a façade masking a soft heart that cares. A heart that acknowledged that our pay at UMU was inadequate but committed to what was humanly possible: pay the little that you can in good time and in good faith.

Fare thee well my mentor. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to work with you and to know you.

The writer worked at Uganda Martyrs University as Editor and currently works at Makerere University.
Dr Kisekka, a highly principled man

Leonard Ssozi

I first met Dr Kisekka in 2008 when I joined Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) as Faculty Administrator. He was my first supervisor in the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies, for a year. Even when I was transferred to the Office of the Dean of Students, he was our line supervisor. In all my interactions with Dr Kisekka, I found him to be a highly principled person who spoke his mind as long as whatever he wanted to put across was guided by institutional policy. I recall, during Board meetings, whenever a disagreement arose, he always referred members to the Faculty Handbook. This is a virtue that any administrator ought to emulate to resolve workplace conflicts.

Dr Kisekka was a gentleman of outstanding self-respect. He was also considerate in his interaction with co-workers and always meditated upon decisions he made - leaving room for adjustments. I remember a time when I had a work-related difference in opinion, prompting him to recommend disciplinary action. At that time I was new on the job - still mastering my roles. After sometime, he acknowledged that his recommendation might have been made in haste. It takes a strong character to accommodate and tolerate differences in opinion.

Doctor had a rare ability of putting a compassionate, and yet sober human face and heart to even the most difficult interactions with both fellow employees and students. But most outstanding of all, was his passionate service to Uganda Martyrs University, working selflessly with staff and students to develop the institution. He was concerned about working conditions in all departments and took it upon himself to investigate root causes of problems particular departments were facing. At the time when the institution’s financial standing was weakening, he spearheaded a cost-cutting crusade which enabled UMU to fulfill her financial obligations with Uganda Revenue Authority, the National Social Security Fund and to pay staff salaries. He literally set up the UMU Finance department in its current form and substance! He was knowledgeable in financial matters like a trained accountant although his training was philosophy and theology. His professionalism and drive will be greatly missed.
I have not come across a person, so passionate about responsible environmental stewardship like Dr Kisekka. I had an opportunity of working closely with him as his teaching assistant tutoring environmental ethics and sustainable development on a Faculty of Agriculture distance learning programme. I admired the practical examples he gave students to illustrate environmental issues. There was this particular instance when he imagined that the sap that is released when a tree/plant is cut symbolises the pain that the tree endures. He likened this to tears! I meditated upon this illustration and was concerned about the immense pain I had inflicted on the environment. I suppose our students were equally inspired.

Doctor valued education and was ready to support colleagues who wanted to upgrade academically. He encouraged administrative staff to upgrade. For some of us who were privileged to enroll into foreign Universities and to attend international conferences, he always wrote reference letters without reservation and recommended a modest stipend, as long as the institution’s financial situation was okay.

Uganda Martyrs University, Uganda, and the world at large will continue to draw inspiration from your achievements. May you Rest in Peace.

The writer currently works with the Law Development Centre, Kampala.

‘Colleague’: A true priest, strict administrator and accomplished academician

Augustine Muwonge

It was encouraging to hear that a mammoth crowd turned up at Bukalasa to give a deserved send-off to a ‘fallen’ administrator, priest and ‘colleague’ - as he was referred to in some UMU circles. I am inclined to believe all these mourners had a thing or two to admire about this departed Deputy Vice Chancellor of the great Uganda Martyrs University. I think it was curiosity based on the many stories about him that propelled some to go to Bukalasa.
I knew Fr Prof. Kisekka for close to twelve years. The first time I heard him speak was at a lunch break as we walked to the dining hall. He was on phone talking to someone who, I later learnt, had messed up ‘his’ fish farm and eucalyptus trees. “Do not think you will mess my farm”, he roared. “I toiled to set up these projects. “Mwe mwagala by’abwereere” (you want free things), he continued as we proceeded to our destination.

This talk sent shivers down my spine. The picture painted by that telephone talk was that of a tough, hard and unapproachable man. Thank God, this was to change the following day when the Head of our Department then sent me to liaise with Dr Kisekka in regard to fees clearance for students in the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies, of which he was the Head. When I knocked at his door, he warmly welcomed and offered me a sit. The rest was a friendly exchange of ideas. Since then, I have known him as a friendly and frank person. He did not mince words when something went wrong. His life was devoid of hypocrisy, deceit and favouritism. No relationship, however close it was, would force him to favour anybody. To him everything had to be won on merit and hard work. For one to be a true friend, one had to execute one’s duty. Failure to do so meant that Dr Kisekka would definitely hunt you down. I vividly recall a gentleman who had been hired to run an office at UMU but kept on absenting himself because he had some other job in another institution. He pursued the issue until the administration had no choice but to let the employee in question go. He expected total commitment from everybody.

Those who never had chance to interact freely with him never got to know that he was social, kind, and that he believed in fairness. These are attributes of a good and committed priest. May be not many knew he was jocular. While still at UMU, we could occasionally meet near the volleyball court after lunch or during the few evenings I would spend at the university after work to chat. Often, he would rather take an unpopular position in the interest of justice and fairness.

Dr Kisekka was very orderly, and this was evident in the way he kept records. Ask him for a memo or any official communication and you will have it in a flash of a second. Try to challenge him on any university policy, he will have a substantiated answer in a minute. I fondly
remember his box file and folder which used to support him in his endeavour to uphold this virtue.

He was very economical with both his personal and public resources. He was never extravagant. He would always take time off to remind people that the resources you squander are very scarce in some areas and people in those areas are in dire need of them. I will never ever forget the incredibly low electricity meter readings at his room. At first I thought the meter was faulty but my colleague in the office assured me there was no problem but the professor just uses electricity sparingly. “Nze amasanyalale ngateekako wengetaagira wokka”, he replied in Luganda - literally meaning he only switches on power when it is necessary.

Those he taught both at Katigondo National Major Seminary and at Uganda Martyrs University have only one expression to make in relation to him, ‘omusajja amanyi ebintu’ - literally meaning he is well equipped with the knowledge he has to pass onto his students.

There are innumerable adjectives that could be used in an effort to describe the gallant son of Buddu County in central Buganda. However, there were two which were more evident, especially in the last months of his earthly life. He proved to the world that he was selfless and brave. We talked on phone mid last September. I asked him whether he was still at Bakateyamba [where he stayed to recuperate after being hospitalised at Mulago Hospital]. He told me he was back in office. “Nze emirimu egyandeeta grii Nkozi”, he assured me in Luganda - meaning that the work ‘that brought him’ was at Nkozi, not at Bakateyamba - Nalukolongo! He didn’t let his failing health get in the way of his commitment to Uganda Martyrs University.

A few months later, the Almighty God called him to His heavenly kingdom. We will always remember your legacy at UMU and wherever you served. May God’s comfort abound, replacing the sadness we are soaked in with endless gratitude. Adieu ‘colleague’ till we meet to part no more!

The writer used to work in the Finance Department at Uganda Martyrs University.
Dr Kisekka, a dedicated servant of UMU

Richard Ouma

Allow me to jot a few lines on what I can remember about the life of Dr Kisekka and his service at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) since 2006 when I joined university service. By 2006, Dr Kisekka was the Director of the then Institute of Ethics and Development Studies, a job he did well and that earned him elevation to the status of DVC AA.

During Dr Kisekka’s tenure as DVC AA, several academic programmes were started at the main campus and indeed at other UMU branches such as Rubaga, Masaka, Mbale and Kabale. It was during the same time that the Quality Assurance Unit was established and nurtured into a Directorate (QAD) under his guidance and supervision.

My key memories relate to the time when I was in charge of the Quality Assurance Directorate and directly answerable to Dr Kisekka. By that time, he was DVC AA but also Acting DVC FA. He indeed supported me and my office in re-organising the Directorate as the immediate supervisor. As QAD, we acquired a fairly bigger office space and improved on the office set-up because of his support.

When he became in-charge of the office of DVC FA, UMU had abysmal external debts. But, through thick and thin, he managed to reduce the burden. I liked the manner in which he handled the situation in the sense that, during every staff meeting held once per semester, he could come with figures and always remind staff of the previous and current outstanding balances - which kept decreasing over time. I remember the calm nature of how he handled staff meetings at the time when everything rotated around financial difficulties in the institution.

When I was in charge of the development of the UMU Quality Assurance Policy 2015, whose process took over a period of 3 years, we really got the support and encouragement of Dr Kisekka. He, however, at times reminded me not to expect everyone to be positively responsive to this exercise but instead assured me that the work had to continue. When the final product was ready and after Senate's approval, he gladly accepted to present it to the Governing Council for approval and it became a functional institutional policy.
In relation to manning the Curriculum Review Committee Meetings that were marred with many challenges when we had to review almost all our programmes from 2013-15, Dr Kisekka applied an extra sense of direction to enable what looked an impossibility to become possible. It is true several colleagues at times had to leave our meetings unhappy, but, for the good of the institution, the chairman had to protect the face and interests of the institution. There are times when he could request some of us to chair in his presence and would without a shadow of doubt support the Chair’s ruling as long as it was to aid us come out of the backlog that we were facing. I salute him for his continuous enquiries on technical issues relating to my work that gave me a sense of belonging and confidence. Indeed, by September 2015, because of his efforts as the Chair of Curriculum Review Committee, some of our programmes were highly ranked and re-accredited by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) without any changes because of the improved quality output.

Dr Kisekka outside UMU/Uganda
I had a chance to travel outside Uganda three times with Dr Kisekka when he was DVC AA and experienced his other life outside UMU. Two times we travelled to Nairobi and one time we moved to Kigali, Rwanda. The first travel to Nairobi and the one to Kigali were to attend the East African Universities Quality Assurance High Level Meetings and the other in Nairobi was to attend African Catholic Universities Quality Agency (ACUQQA) Workshop. As is the practice at UMU, I remember the collegial attribute he displayed in support of my views during the ACUQQA workshop, and the friendly manner in which we conducted our evening nearby walks after the day’s work.

The last close encounter I had with him was around mid-2015 when I was organising On-spot Services Assessment visits at our main campus and branches. It looked like a state of hopelessness in acquiring financial support to perform our work. I remember the Budget personnel declaring their inability to help because they had no means and they all advised me to see Dr Kisekka. I moved to his house, which doubled as his office at the time, but before we looked at my concern, he did narrate the challenges we are facing as an institution and especially those relating to his office, and how he at times makes painful decisions for the good of the institution even when they may not please some colleagues. We had a cordial exchange and he
finally sanctioned our project that culminated into field work and report development for action.

Conclusively, I would like to note that Dr Kisekka was a dedicated servant of UMU. He sacrificed his efforts, time and valuable weight to the service of UMU as a lecturer, mentor, counsellor, and manager whose works remain central in the history of UMU. It is my wish that UMU as an institution could think of an event or action that will keep the memory of Dr Kisekka alive for generations. Thinking aloud, given his philosophical mindedness, if God gave him chance to write only one more email to us, I presume it would read: “Death has not missed me this time”.

Rest in eternal peace Dr Kisekka.
The writer works with the Directorate of Quality Assurance at Uganda Martyrs University.

Tribute to my former boss
Paul Odhiambo

I met Dr Joseph Kisekka for the first time on 12th December 2006 at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), Nkozi. I was impressed by his humility and gentleness. It was around this time that I was in the process of taking a position as a part-time lecturer at the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies (IEDS). When I commenced working at Uganda Martyrs University in January 2007, Dr Joseph Kisekka was my immediate supervisor as he was then the Director of the IEDS. Through his effective leadership, I managed to settle down at the university within the shortest time possible. He took his time to personally introduce me to the UMU Management staff, IEDS staff and the third year class (Bachelors of Ethics and Development Studies). To make my work easier, I was provided with office space and necessary materials for teaching. I wholeheartedly appreciated the support I got from him and the rest of the administrative and teaching staff at the IEDS. I can reiterate that my induction to the UMU family was smooth due to the Director’s cooperation and the generosity of staff at the IEDS.

In August 2007, I was employed by UMU as a full-time lecturer. Additionally, I was assigned as the Coordinator for the MA distance-learning programme. It was another moment to acclimatise myself with
new and challenging responsibilities. The support I received from the Director made me discharge my duties with relative ease. There was an occasion when I felt that additional responsibility like coordinating the distance-learning programme was taking a lot of my time for teaching and supervising students. However, Doctor always encouraged me to soldier on since it was the responsibility of the IEDS and the entire university to ensure that the programme was a success for the good of the students and other stakeholders of the university. Through his encouraging words, I was energised to discharge my duties as a coordinator that involved working closely with the staff to prepare teaching modules, teaching duties, marking of exams and supervision of students. Through Dr Kisekka’s exemplary leadership and guidance, I was able to coordinate the MA distance learning programme for almost two years.

Personally, I enjoyed working under Dr Kisekka for two and a half years (January 2007 to June 2009). I knew him as a person who valued integrity, hard work, punctuality and honesty at work place. He was a down-to-earth administrator and a humble priest. He was open-minded, flexible and accommodative to other staff’s views. As long as the staff met their targets, Doctor never had any problem. In other words, he was mainly keen on performance. Dr Kisekka also treated staff at the IEDS as colleagues. During staff meetings and retreats, he always reminded us about our goals and the guiding principles and values to achieve the Institute’s and UMU’s objectives. He also encouraged staff to pursue further studies.

Dr Kisekka as well had a jolly personality, often cracking jokes with his colleagues. I am proud of having worked at IEDS when Dr Kisekka was the Director. When I got an opportunity to undertake a six-month internship programme at the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) in Nairobi in June 2009, he did not have any problem with it. His main concern was finding a staff member to carry on with the coordination of the MA distance-learning programme. I believe that he offered great services to UMU in other offices he held even after I had left the university. May the Almighty God grant Fr Associate Professor Joseph Kisekka eternal peace.

The writer is a policy analyst at The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), Nairobi.
5. Kisekka the Teacher

Joe, a masterful teacher
David-Ngendo Tshimba

Up until 2013, for those enrolled in UMU’s famous undergraduate programme - Ethics and Development Studies (EDS), encountering Dr Kisekka for the Wednesday morning lecture in the second semester of the third year was unavoidable! For a decade or so, the name “Joe Kisekka” had been made synonymous with the lecture on “Bio and Environmental Ethics.” He was the guru and ensured that whoever partakes of his lecture becomes a faithful disciple.

As the 2008 EDS class, we had been told and re-told by our senior course-mates (including alumni) that we would better charge our batteries so well in preparation for the inescapable encounter with Joe. By the time we crossed to our third and final year of the course in 2011, Joe had become that messianic figure we all awaited with a concoction of anxious feelings: a tough yet insightful lecturer; mean-sounding yet approachable mentor; a stringent yet brilliant advisor; a demanding yet rewarding supervisor!

Then came that fateful first Wednesday morning of the second semester. We had been told by the Institute Administrator to decently show up for Joe’s class at 8.30 am without fail! “Eish, another Esuruku in third year!” a classmate of mine exclaimed. Dr Robert Senath Esuruku had taught us “Decentralisation and Development” in the second semester of our second year, and as with Joe’s class, his too was scheduled on Wednesdays starting at 8.30 am without fail. But if Robb did mean business, Joe was indeed his referential point! I had made my own investigation and sooner did I realise that Robb was Joe’s student at Katigondo Major Seminary. Not only did Joe tutor Robb at Katigondo, but Robb eventually worked with Joe as the Institute’s Associate Director throughout the tenure of Joe’s directorship.

Little wonder, I concluded: “it seems Robb was our precursor to Joe’s culture of ‘meaning business’ in the EDS course!” For some, it was just quite too late to ‘call it quits’ (Joe’s class had been strategically put in
the last leg of our final year as the proverbial baptism by fire before getting that rewarding UMU manila paper (academic transcript!). For others, it indeed was a time of reckoning: Having gone through four previous classes on ‘ethics’, Joe’s class became some kind of ‘the last dose to get ethically cured of all sorts of residual blemish’.

No doubt, as it turned out, the Wednesday morning lecture was indeed insightful: no hand-out notes were ever provided to us, nor did Joe possess any of the proverbial ‘yellow notes’ (recycled notes). Only one thing was handed over to us on that first encounter; it was a detailed course-outline, framing the course description, methodologies, weekly expectations, monthly tutorials, mid-term researched presentations, and a rich bibliographical list of reading materials (available in print and e-resources).

From that first Wednesday encounter, Joe had captured four names and put face onto them (as in never to confuse or easily forget them!). Susan Kijjagulwe, Dominic Seryazi Segujja, Rosabella Ntanzi and myself. For Dominic and I, that wasn’t great news; since the days of Robb Esuruku’s classes, we were known for always struggling to make it to the lecture on time. Now, there came Joe who marked us by repeatedly making reference to our names in examples. Susie was our class representative and a close friend to Rose with whom she shared ‘book-worming passion!’ It was no big deal to expect Susie and Rose in class 30 minutes prior to the lecture. Though Dominic and I resided in Hafflet Hall, the one male residence hall on campus and a three-minute walk from our lecture-room, we just couldn’t be expected in class on time, not least for our characteristically nocturnal lifestyle (with good WiFi internet connection spanning between midnight and 5am, we oftentimes bedded too late for an 8.30am lecture).

“Dom, where are you? And Dave, say something in relation to the class discussion?” were Joe’s occasional utterances in the lectures after the first encounter. So, with Joe’s serious business-meaning posture, Dom and I had no choice but to show up as expected, lest we face the full measure of disciplinary action! But from the third Wednesday onward, we all started looking forward to Joe’s classes: they were pregnant with insight, non-conventional in many respects, and loaded with a good dose of theoretical reasoning and pragmatic applications.
But Joe was not so great a communicator; his cryptic sentences were filled up with “whatever” (as a substitute for any word eluding his memory). I fondly remember one case-scenario during the lecture on bio-ethical theories: Explaining Joseph des Jardins’ rendition of ‘inherent worth’ in contrast to Paul Taylor’s ‘intrinsic value’ Joe had this to say: “Picture that first coin of the ship-owner got on the very first business transaction and now well kept in a sealed box fifteen years after the business has grown. That whatever, for Des Jardins, it has whatever yet Taylor’s whatever does not capture that whatever!" The whole class burst into laughter and this went unstoppable for close to five minutes. And there goes Joe: “So why are you whatever, I hope you have whatever what I mean". Louder laughter followed!

Yet, we had surely well understood Des Jardins’ “inherent worth” as different from Taylor’s “intrinsic value” in this whatever-filled explanation of Joe. Though not an eloquent communicator, Joe remained a masterful teacher. For one to have attended his lecture, one was surely assured of at least 60 per cent comprehension of the lecture content; further reading and engagement after class would be pursued by the student eyeing a distinction grade! No wonder, though frightening in preparation, his end-of-semester oral exam turned out to be easily passable for all who had fully attended the lectures and made their contribution to the discussions known.

A masterful teacher he was; Joe’s classes were never an avenue for ready-made answers or solutions to ethical puzzles. He always reminded us of his task as a ‘problematiser’: “I have no answer for you my friend, nor should you expect from me a solution to your considered dilemma”, he often mused. His lectures were best known for the exposition of ethical dilemmas in human encounter with the rest of life forms. From my own recollection of Joe’s emphases during his lectures, I fondly remember having noted the following:

We as humans are but a part of this biotic community; as members of this family of life forms, we should restrain ourselves as much as possible from conferring upon ourselves those egoistic rights over all other life forms. Instead, for our recognised faculties, we are expected to exercise even greater responsibility vis-à-vis all those other life forms. This is why I only slaughter that hen as my very last resort and endeavour to make an apologetic conversation with her before the slaughter: Dear
hen, here I am on a verge of starvation to death, and have run out of options for food; the rains did not allow the production of my maize, matooke and doodo as my second last resort to food. Please receive my considered apology to have you for my supper!" If such becomes our attitude vis-à-vis these birds, then our chips-and-chicken lifestyles will give way to respect for these other members of the biotic community.

An insightful lecturer of bio-environmental ethics, he indeed was. While Joe never pretended to have some ethical answers in response to our ethical dilemmas, he nevertheless constantly reminded us that to choose is our fate: “we are condemned to choosing” was his most famous utterance! Even when pushed between a rock and a hard surface, there too lies our choice. Even deciding not to choose becomes an expression of our choice. For Joe, we just can’t eternally shy away from making a choice however puzzling the dilemma we are facing is. As for my role, Joe always echoed, ‘I am expected to expose you to as much wide a range of streams as possible, such that at the end of the day, we may be fortunate to make a choice from the point of view of ethical reasonableness! That alone is the yardstick against which we are all urged to exercise our ethical judgment’. But remember, Joe always concluded his lecture, ‘the ultimate choice is yours to make when all has been said to you, and for this you should assume your responsibility’.

Joe is physically no more; but though we no longer can put physical face to his name as he so did on that first Wednesday morning encounter for Susie, Rose, Dom and I, he nevertheless remains available to us via his insightful thoughts. For now having joined the larger constituency of departed insightful moral philosophers, to which he had remotely belonged while at Makerere, Katigondo and Uganda Martyrs University, my colleagues and I of the 2008 EDS class cannot in anyway feel orphaned from the viewpoint of ethical reasoning. I for one, my encounter with Joe in that final year of my undergraduate studies at UMU was perhaps the most delicious dish, which was served to me both in buffet and take-away provisions! For this, I cannot be more grateful to Joe, the then IEDS and UMU.

Until our paths cross again in the hereafter, I pray, may Joe’s insights continue to make a difference in our lives where it really counts!
The writer is an alumnus of Uganda Martyrs University and a lecturer in the School of Arts and Social Sciences.

The uncompromising yet lively teacher
Deo Sselwanga

When I attended Uganda Martyrs University (2003-2007) in the then Institute of Ethics and Development Studies, the late Dr Kisekka was the Institute’s Director. In-between his busy schedule, those were years when he enjoyed spending some time in class. He was the type of lecturer for whom punctuality, class attendance and regularity were very important. He also led by example in that he always ensured that he teaches all the hours allocated for each course unit.

His policy was that if it was time and he was already in class, he would not let you into that class. And to come back to the next class, you needed an apology letter and a note from the registrar which would then be kept in your student’s file. The first ten minutes of his classes were always tense because he always spent them ‘fighting’ with late comers; reminding us on the importance of punctuality, roll calling and generally assuring us that in order to get the degree, there was some serious work to do. Actually, he took his roll calls so seriously that if he called your name and you responded ‘present’, he spent a few seconds looking at you and you could tell that he is double checking to ensure that your name corresponds with your face.

You could also tell that he was making an effort to make sure that he recognises every student (54 in this case) by face and full name. Many of the students who were relatively ‘quiet’ in class always got surprised that he identified them by name whenever they met on the campus. He always said; ‘to get a degree means acquiring power. So, before we give it to you, we need to professionalise you, otherwise you are going to misuse the power gained. You will become the officers who turn up late at work and keep people waiting at your office doors or turn up at work, hang your coat on the office chair and then disappear’.
In addition to turning up on time, he always preferred that we stayed in class until at least the next break. I remember one day when one of my classmates walked out of the class to attend to a phone call. Kisekka followed him and the next words we heard were: “I am the Director of the Institute and I have disqualified you from my class”. From what I remember, it took a lot of convincing, pleading, and intervention from other people in order to allow the student to proceed with studies.

Dr Kisekka, therefore, was the most feared facilitator we had. One day I was in a pub at about midnight and I noticed one of my classmates - who was well known for staying in pubs until dawn - leaving the pub and heading back to the hostel. When I asked him for the reason as to why he was leaving early, he said; ‘man, we have Kisekka’s lecture at 9 am and I want to be in class early, and sober’. Such a statement speaks volumes about how seriously students took Kisekka’s classes.

Yet, away from his strictness, his classes were very lively, fun and intellectually stimulating. If you are the student whose approach was to wait for notes to be dictated in class, Kisekka’s classes were the wrong ones for you. He could only show up with a few words scribbled on a small piece of paper and you could tell that it contained a very brief list of the major themes he intended the class to cover each day. We found him to be a very controversial and ‘fanatical’ moralist/ ethicist. His arguments and positions on debates such as abortion, mercy killing, suicide, organ donation and prostitution made some students wonder if he was really a Catholic priest. This is because many probably expected him to be more inclined towards the Church’s view on such highly contested moral questions. He so passionately argued in favour of environmental protection and we could see that he was not simply persuasive but he believed and practiced what he argued in favour of.

In whatever he did, we could see that he sought to uphold academic rigour, ensuring quality learning (a core value at UMU) and ensuring that in addition to getting through the university education system, the students get something out of it.

The writer is an alumnus of Uganda Martyrs University, currently a social worker at McMan Youths, Family and Community Services Association in Alberta, Canada.
This year, we laid to rest an extraordinary man, teacher and administrator, what he achieved was remarkable. Those of us who grew into academic life under his watch sometimes fail to appreciate the thickness of the glass ceiling he broke through: from lecturer, to a Director of an Institute, to the second highest office at Uganda Martyrs University. At a time when it was difficult for a man to work as Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs, Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Finance and Administration, and almost inconceivable that the university could recover from its financial meltdown, he did all three. However, my tribute shall focus on the teacher in him that I knew most.

As his student between 2004 – 2007, together with a few colleagues, we named him Mr Headmaster. It was the nature of his leadership that earned him a name that comes along with respect and humour in equal measure. In one of his outstanding speeches to students, he reminded us all of why it is important to follow the Institute Handbook. For the three years, this became the basis of every argument for your coursework to be accepted, miss lectures, or submit late a dissertation. In typical head teacher style, he was never interested in making you fail but never wanted to give a free ride. As I grew into my later years of study, I found him incredibly formidable in argument – yet wonderfully kind in private. I never understood why he laboured to explain every decision he took quoting reason (sometimes, “reasonableness”).

On one occasion as part of a students’ group, we put a request for extension of a coursework submission date. He received the note a few days later, even after our proposed submission dates, and the work was already submitted. After reading it, he wrote back on the same paper with five words, “what does the handbook say?”

He was always faultlessly kind to his students – and utterly devoted to us. In my second year, I was invited to participate in a conservation study by the University of Reading. Dr Kisekka and Evelyn G. Ayot (my research supervisor) wrote to the university giving them assurance that I would finish the bachelors course well and on time. The University of
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

Reading wrote me a provisional admission and a bursary to study environmental science; such was the trust, confidence, commitment and judgment about his students.

Later I was to work under him on several assignments; a research assistant, teaching assistant, and a line manager, though distant. The post-student relations revealed a duly compassionate man. On several occasions he said the decisions he took were necessitated by his office. He exhibited a symbol of selfless humanity and a standard bearer for the rights of the truly downtrodden, giving real answers to questions avoided. He was classless yet rich, mean on the outside yet kind on the inside, literally disagreed with whoever he worked with (myself inclusive) but could always be convinced with time and reason, buried the hatchet and moved on. A few years after one of our disagreements, he was later to work with me to revolutionise football at UMU. He supported every decision we took and followed our success; he brightened our lives on the only game he watched against Nkumba University by jumping along our funs. I feel so sad that he missed all the success we achieved of recent and that to come.

I thank God for a man everyone called Doctor openly but described differently by everyone privately; my own being “headmaster”. Above all, we give thanks for the life of a man so unique in speech, walk, work and food. The extraordinary and irreplaceable character of dedication to work and a strong drive to succeed will never be extinguished from our minds.

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Dr Kisekka, the Gaia Hypothesis protagonist
George Kyaboona

On 14th April 2016, I learnt about the unimaginable loss of Dr Joseph Kisekka to lung cancer. Joseph was later laid to rest the following day on the 15th of April at Bukalasa Seminary in Masaka.

I first met Joseph on 4th August 2008 as I took up a Teaching Assistant role at the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies, Uganda Martyrs
University (UMU). By then, he was the Director of the Institute and I worked with him as his teaching assistant for over 3 years. We taught together undergraduate course units on both full time and long distance study programmes.

Joseph was committed to research and teaching focused on bioethics, environmental ethics and sustainable development. He is listed as an eminent professional in the UNESCO Global Ethics Observatory Database 1: Who’s Who in Ethics. In him was a highly principled and committed person with a strict work ethic, a philosopher, an academic and avid reader. He had special passion for the environment. He often made specific reference to the scholarly writings of James Lovelock, Peter Singer, Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, Baruch Spinoza, to mention but a few - and this defined his world view on life and the environment. He mentored many including myself and was often described by his students as a ‘principled and committed lecturer’ solely because he was always punctual and would never miss any of his lectures.

Over the years of working with Joseph, I found him a very understanding and down-to-earth person. Just like many of my other colleagues at the time, I often consulted him on matters regarding career development and growth. He was flexible enough to approve my study leave with pay when I left for the UK to pursue my postgraduate studies after securing a commonwealth scholarship in August 2009. What a fantastic man he was! I remember he was quite dismayed by my decision to resign my role as an Assistant Lecturer in November 2011 but, after carefully listening to me, he gracefully accepted my decision and wished me well in all my future plans. On a more personal note, on the same day before I left his office he requested me never to forget to invite him on my wedding day – it is a shame he has left before I could fulfil his wish!

All in all, it was a privilege for me to have been a part of Joseph’s life. Through his scholarship and practice, he made a significant contribution to Uganda Martyrs University and the world at large. It is my wish that a scholarship foundation is established at Uganda Martyrs University in honour of his distinguished service.
Joseph – a cherished boss, colleague, scholar and friend, will be missed by many, but never will be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to have known him! You fell asleep without a goodbye, but memories of you will always stay.

Rest in peace Dr Joseph Kisekka.

The writer works as a Safety, Health, Environment and Quality Manager at EnviroServ Uganda Limited.

You may be gone, but you will always be alive in my actions

Furaha Mambo Natalie

I first met you in 2011 in the first semester of my last year as an undergraduate student. My predecessors in the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies had warned me about a certain Dr Joseph Kisekka - the mighty Dr Kisekka. They described you as extremely tough, highly principled, and the most feared authority at Uganda Martyrs University, whose words were laws.

With all the “background information” about the man who would be my lecturer of Bio Ethics, I went to class on the first day of lectures with a biased mind. In fact, the previous night I went to sleep trying to picture how this powerful man would look like. For some reason, in my imagination I pictured a gigantic human being with a deep voice. So, as you walked towards our class that morning, those who already knew you started murmuring “There he comes! There he comes”. Suddenly, the atmosphere in class changed. Those who were talking stopped, those who were standing ran back to their seats and there was total silence. One would think the class was empty!

You were there, standing at the door. If I am to base on my “background information” about you, at that specific moment I would say a miracle happened. You Smiled! As if that was not enough, you went ahead and cracked a joke which sent the whole class into uncontrollable laughter. Right there and then, my polluted and suffocated mind started breathing some fresh air again. And I must say that my imagination of a gigantic human being with a deep voice was
also wrong, because what I saw was a relatively small bodied man with a...not-really-deep voice.

For some minutes, I felt guilty for even having paid attention to what I was told about you. I felt sorry for judging you. That day, the lesson I learnt did not come from what you talked about in class, neither did it come from the first topic to be covered on the course outline. It came from that little “miracle” that happened in the morning, and that lesson was: Never judge anyone you have never met basing on hearsay, because despite the fact that we may all have similar eyes, the way we look at things sometimes maybe different. Those who described you as being very principled were actually right, because that first lesson turned into a principle that I try as much as possible to apply in my daily life.

Your knowledge of Bioethics and Environmental sustainability issues made your lectures not only interesting but also so captivating that I always looked forward to attending them. Even those who would occasionally miss lectures for one reason or the other hardly missed yours. I was always astonished by your ability to correctly spell complicated Greek and German names of scholars and philosophers and to explain so many philosophical concepts and terms without referring or looking into any books or notes whatsoever. And yet, you would find ways of simplifying them in order to help everybody understand and benefit from the lecture. Yes, that is how knowledgeable you were! And your unfailing sense of humour, Hmm... that was the icing on the cake.

One thing I will never forget about the time I spent with you as a lecturer is the coursework we had to do. This happens to be the longest assignment I have ever done in my whole academic life. It started on the first day of the semester, and ended just a few days before the end of the semester. In this coursework, we were required to observe environmental and sustainable development issues in and around our community and record at least one issue in a journal. This was to be done on a daily basis. To me, this was not only a practical coursework but it also made me very critical of things that happen around us which we tend to ignore or take for granted; for instance how we humans treat animals and the environment in general. Thanks to you, I learnt to appreciate and value nature with all its contents. This is because your
teachings did not stop in class with theories but continued in our daily practices as you encouraged change of behaviour at individual level. To you, education was not all about going to class, listening to the lecturer, taking notes, and going to the library to read in order to pass exams, but also about transforming and changing people’s attitude and behaviours - most especially towards the environment, which is not given due attention most times.

Your favourite word was “CARE”. The care you talked about was not restricted to human beings but included everything around us; both living and non living. In fact, you loved and cared for the environment so much that seeing a student trespass in the lawn was equal to a criminal offence to you. You believed that everything was created for a purpose and, therefore, ought to be protected and respected. Even grass!

You may be gone but you will always be alive in my actions. You will always be alive every time I keep a used airtime card or an empty plastic water bottle in my hand bag or pocket until I find a dust bin. You will always be alive every time I avoid trespassing onto a lawn. You will always be alive every time I encourage a friend, neighbour, relative or a child to do the same for the sake of our environment. May GAIA rest your soul in peace!

The writer is an alumnus of Uganda Martyrs University.

‘He challenged me that while I wanted money in my twenties, I would want more money at forty’

Aliinde Tom

Receiving the news of the loss of Rev. Fr Dr Joseph Kisekka was very discomforting. I felt very weak, but then remembered that the power of God touches everywhere and that in the eyes of God we are all equal with different life schedules. A strong and important man of Dr Kisekka’s kind would not have died so soon. Like a big breaking news story, I needed to listen or read several times and from different sources to come to terms with the painful fact of his demise.
Many thanks to social media that enabled me get the news immediately though I never managed to make it for the burial. I am always sceptical of social media news, but this time my critical thinking was overran by emotions to easily believe the story. But perhaps it was also because the story was broken by Ms Suzan Kijjagulwe, a staff at UMU, my former classmate and class coordinator via our small Whatsapp group of members of the 2008 EDS class. She is a source I could for sure believe without reservation.

After learning of his death, memories of him ran back to the time I first knew him as Director of the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies. I never had a chance to meet him personally in the above capacity since he for some long time stayed on his sabbatical leave in 2008 after which he handed over to assume the position of Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs. I was lucky then to have him as my lecturer of Bio and Environmental Ethics. But before that, I often observed panic among second year students of Ethics and Development Studies (EDS) whenever Dr Kisekka was to teach their class. The worries and fears were mainly because he was strict on time management and performance. Everyone was supposed to be in class in or on time if the relationship was to be a smooth one.

As a principled man, I understood him as never wanting to live an “obvious life.” He often used the dictum ‘do not be predictable’. This reminds me of one morning we were set to have him for a class. Most of us who appreciated his way of doing things were in Room 11 before time. One of our colleagues, David came in after Dr Kisekka had entered. David knew he was late and that it was likely he would not be let in but expressed a strong desire and determination to be part of the day’s lecture. Very quietly and suspiciously he entered with expectation that Dr Kisekka would not allow him to take a seat. Dr Kisekka had seen him enter but chosen to take more time writing on the whiteboard. On turning, David had taken his seat already. It was a moment of laughter as many thought Dr Kisekka had not noticed. It had been expected that David would not be allowed to attend the morning session as was often seen with late comers previously. Dr Kisekka, to everyone’s surprise, did not ‘push’ David outside but said, ‘do not be predictable’. It was a surprisingly unique moment, we saw another side of him.
I remember Dr Kisekka for inducing in my class sensitive living with regard to our environment. My final semester in the year 2011 was an unusual one. Dr Kisekka’s lectures expressed the fact that the world was not only for humans. He urged us never to attack with intention to kill, even the smallest insect, as it has value that might be intrinsic or otherwise. It came to a time when I and my classmates became even cautious of killing insects while walking. Believe me, it was responsible walking despite the fact that this was not sustained beyond that semester. We almost became social misfits as our reasoning was apparently abnormal, especially to our colleagues of the Business Administration and Management class.

Knowing that many other people must have been touched by Dr Kisekka’s death, I got in touch with my former classmates. Only a few phone calls reminded me of the two-week environmental journal we did under his instruction. In the said journal, we virtually noted any environmental issues we came across. My colleagues recall that the journal gave new insights and chance to give Mother Nature a second thought. Another classmate had fresh memories of the environmental book review. This was part of Dr Kisekka’s class exam, where one was interviewed about what they read and was awarded marks. Gauda (one of my classmates), was scared when called in but got surprised on realising that Dr Kisekka was not as hard as people had depicted him. She narrated to me that she scored good marks and she loved the interview at which panel Mr. George Herbert Kyabonna, a lecturer, also sat. Gauda blesses Dr Kisekka, who she describes as a good lecturer.

My personal story of Dr Kisekka is such a rich one. The above, I feel says just very little of this great man of God. I would further describe him as a good and developmental citizen. I had chance to meet him in May 2011 after my final exams. I went to seek for a word of advice to go with to the wider society after my university life. Dr Kisekka told me to work hard and invest in long term ventures. He challenged me that while I wanted money in my twenties, I would want more money at forty.

Apparently he was prophesying to me that I would have a family and, therefore, more responsibility. A further internalisation of his statement to me suggested that in my twenties I only “wanted money” but in my
forties I would “need the money.” Dr Kisekka encouraged me never to fear. He told me that even if I ever heard that a helicopter is on sale, I should never fail to go and ask the price. He added that the reason for the sale could be because of a missing spare part that I might be in possession of and that day could be my turning point.

As an environmentalist, he advised me to plant trees, for example pine, which I would harvest in my forties. In fulfilment of his advice, am happy I have been planting trees every year and am sure to enjoy the fruits at forty. My lecturer also shared with me about his agricultural investment comprising of coffee and cassava among other crops. He often emphasised in his chat that, he did everything in phases, and that I should be patient and always use the little resources available to achieve a bigger objective while remaining focused.

I cannot forget Dr Kisekka’s advice to apply for teaching assistantship in the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies (IEDS) then. This was by way of showing me work opportunities while recognising my potential. This made me happy because I understood that in his view I was a good ‘brand’. He, however, noted that if I wanted to be rich I needed not to go into teaching. This to me now means that he was committed to living a simple life as he never expected riches working in the field of education or teaching. I think this explains why he for so long drove his Toyota Corona car. I thus can say, he was at the service of humanity and not worldly treasures.

Dr Kisekka, my lecturer and mentor, has had reasonable influence in my life. I have often remembered his strong statements. I never forget the night we held the first public debate in the UMU Auditorium in the year 2010 under the umbrella of the Uganda Students Ethics Alliance (USEA) and he and other staff were in attendance. Moved by the organisation and arguments, as part of his remarks he said “even if I died today, Tom has showed me what a university should be”. By Tom, he was referring to the author of this tribute, who was the founder and first president of the then new association at UMU. Up to this day, Dr Kisekka’s statement lifts me up, rejuvenates me and keeps my hopes alive.

From other people’s experiences, Dr Kisekka has been described as a man of undisputed integrity. A colleague of mine and former
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

classmate, Benedict, talks about Dr Kisekka as a man who stood for justice at all times. He, therefore, was a parent who could never take sides in times of conflict.

For the purpose of those who never sat in his class, Dr Kisekka was well aware of the challenges of the twenty-first century. He taught us about homosexuality and how out of divine order the vice was. I had hated homosexuality from the time I got to know about it but had never imagined having a friend/relative being homosexual. He for the first time challenged me and my class on what we would do in a scenario of the sort! He advised us never to hate or abandon, but perhaps understand and help such a brother or sister.

Dear Rev. Fr Dr Kisekka, be informed in your beautiful heaven now that within the short time I shared with you I learnt a lot. I believe those who had more time with you learnt a lot more. You left a mark, and that is why I have made this record of you. You taught us about the theory of Gaia adjusting itself in the form of calamities befalling humankind and causing death hence checking on population explosion. In view of your death, I think Gaia is not only about hurricane Catrina or the worst earthquake that has hit the world. Gaia adjusts itself all the time. Your turn came and you are gone. We will surely miss you and one day we will surely follow you. May God have mercy on your soul, until we meet again. Rest in Peace.

The writer is an alumnus of Uganda Martyrs University and currently works as the Chief Executive Officer at Rightgate Consults Uganda.
Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

Bibliography of some of Dr Joseph Kisekka's publications


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Tribute to Assoc. Prof. Fr Joseph Kisekka

Quotes on death

“I am always saddened by the death of a good person. It is from this sadness that a feeling of gratitude emerges. I feel honoured to have known them and blessed that their passing serves as a reminder to me that my time on this beautiful earth is limited and that I should seize the opportunity I have to forgive, share, explore, and love. I can think of no greater way to honour the deceased than to live this way” (Steve Maraboli).

“It is a curious thing, the death of a loved one. We all know that our time in this world is limited, and that eventually all of us will end up underneath some sheet, never to wake up. And yet it is always a surprise when it happens to someone we know. It is like walking up the stairs to your bedroom in the dark, and thinking there is one more stair than there is. Your foot falls down, through the air, and there is a sickly moment of dark surprise as you try and readjust the way you thought of things" (Lemon Snicket – Horseradish).

“Death ends a life, not a relationship” (Mitch Albom – Tuesdays with Morrie).

“I am not afraid of death; I just don’t want to be there when it happens” (Woody Allen).

“To the well-organised mind, death is but the next great adventure” (J. K. Rowling – Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone).

“The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time” (Mark Twain).

“At least if those who leave us could come back, and tell us how that far looks like… Anyway, even if I cry until trees fall, nothing will change” (Paul Job Kafeero – Walumbe zaaya).