

## **ASSESSMENT AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2015-2016 ACADEMIC YEAR**

### **GRADUATE EDUCATION IN AFRICAN STUDIES**

The Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS), a postgraduate Institute located in Nairobi Kenya, was founded and sponsored in 1989 by the US based Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Africa Region.

### **AFFILIATION WITH SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, USA**

In 1994 the Institute affiliated academically with Saint Mary's University of MN/USA, an accredited University\* and a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities. This affiliation has been mutually beneficial as Saint Mary's University registers and awards four graduate credits per course, generates transcripts. In turn, the Institute expresses Saint Mary's outreach beyond the U.S. borders, and conveys Saint Mary's name and excellence into the higher education circles of Nairobi, Kenya. Moreover, Saint Mary's has been sponsoring and sending selected members of its faculty to Nairobi since 2002 to take courses during the Immersion sessions for the sake of faculty updating.

### **AFFILIATION WITH TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, NAIROBI-KENYA**

In 1999 the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies affiliated academically with Tangaza College, Nairobi Kenya, a constituent college of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. This affiliation has also been mutually beneficial as Tangaza College grants a joint Tangaza University College/Saint Mary's University Certificate for any three courses while maintaining a minimum 2.5 (C+) grade point average. Tangaza College also grants a Tangaza College Diploma for five courses which must include the courses on "African Culture: An Overview" and "African Religion," while maintaining a minimum 3.0 (B) grade point average. In turn, the Institute has brought onto the Tangaza Campus a unique program of African studies that has influenced the wider community to the point that 30% of Tangaza's faculty and five of the seven directors of the other Tangaza Institutes have taken MIAS courses. Furthermore, the Institute has a 12,000 volume library specializing in Africana that is available to all Tangaza faculty and students.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

The highlight of the 2015-2016 academic year has been the awarding of two MA in African Studies degrees, seven Tangaza diplomas, and nine Tangaza College/Saint Mary's University certificates. Furthermore, ten students are at an advanced stage of writing their MA theses, while twenty-seven students have finished their MA course work and are now working on their theses/proposals -- thirteen of them are at their third and final drafts.

### **ENROLLMENT**

The student enrollment for the 2015-2016 Academic year totaled one hundred and ten part-time graduate and/or special students. Fifteen courses were taught with a total of ninety-six course registrations

### **NEW MODEL OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE**

Through the writings and reflections of the students, staff, field assistants and lecturers over the past twenty-seven years, MIAS has been able to further analyze and delineate the inner structure of African cultural knowledge and break it down into fifteen foundational themes, that is ideas, values and symbols. This new paradigm has major implications for cultural study programs. The discussion and analysis of the fifteen themes is the subject matter of a book published by MIAS titled *African Cultural Knowledge: Themes and Embedded Beliefs*. This book is now being used by the lecturers as a

textbook for all MIAS courses, and makes the MIAS paradigm describing African Cultural Knowledge available to a wider audience. There is no other Institute or University in Africa that has a similar program in which African cultural knowledge is taught systematically the way grammar of languages are taught in certified language schools.

## **FACULTY**

All the faculty teaching in Institute's programs are part-time adjunct lecturers, teaching one course a session; all have appointment at various local Universities, Colleges and academic programs. For the 2015-2016 academic year they totaled eight, five of whom are professors, two senior lecturers and one lecturer. There were all veteran, return lecturers.

## **FACULTY ACCOMMODATIONS**

The faculty lounge provides lunch for the lecturers from 11:45 a.m. This was needed as many of the faculty come from afar to teach and often do not have time to get lunch while on the way. This same courtesy has been extended to the students and field assistants, as food is now available at 11:30 every class day during the semester programs.

## **LATEST PUBLICATIONS**

Rev. Prof. Laurenti Magesa a core faculty member who is widely known in theological circles in East Africa, Europe and USA has authored and co-authored several books, the latest being *What is not Sacred? African Spirituality* published by Orbis books, New York in 2014. MIAS has also published its latest book *African Cultures: Cycle of Community and Communal Activities* as the third book of the African Cultural Domains series. The book was published by MIAS Books in August 2015. Work is currently ongoing on the fourth book in the series scheduled to be completed in 2016.

Prof. Michael C. Kirwen

Director: MIAS

Associate Dean: Saint Mary's Un. Of MN/USA