



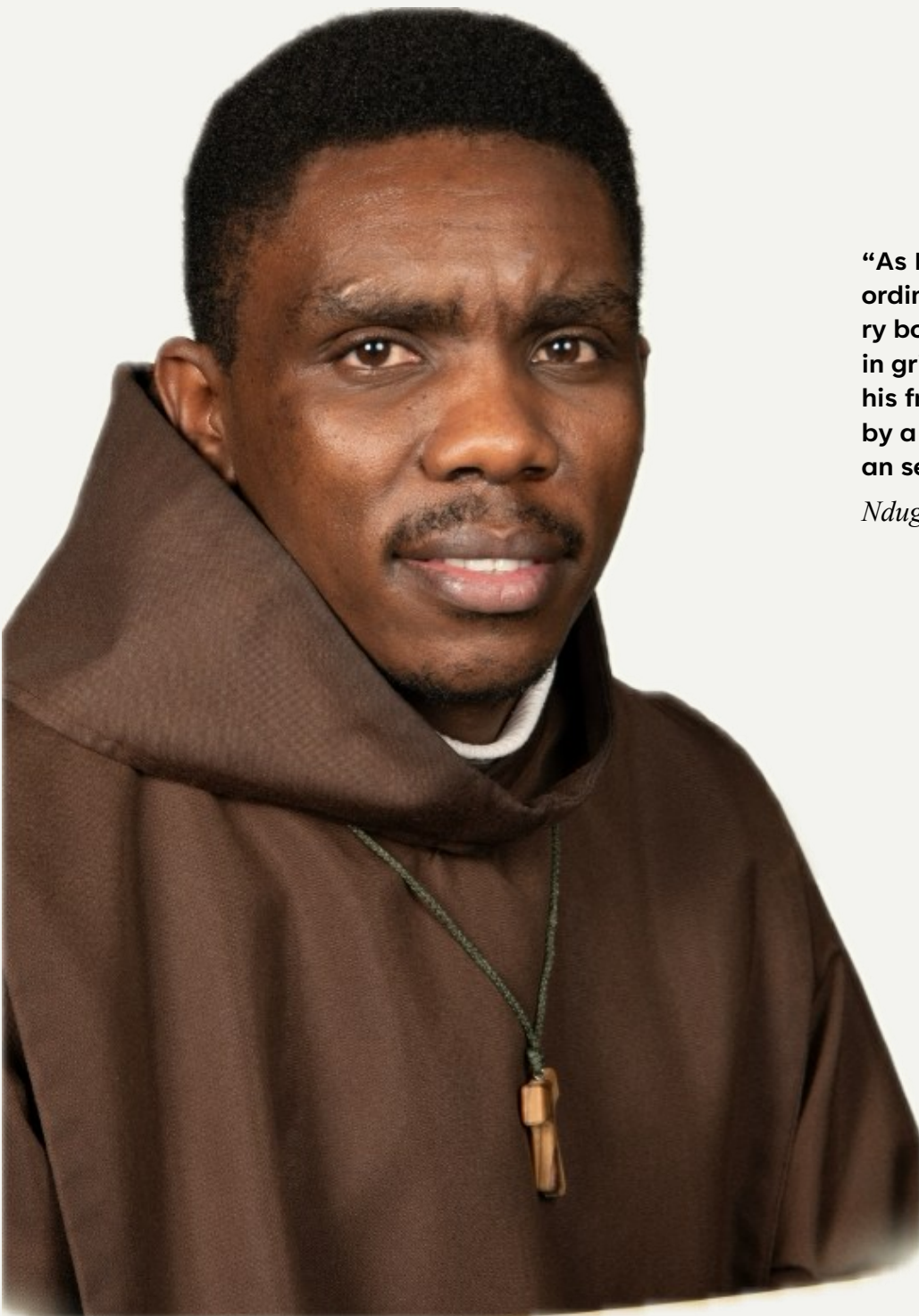
The Flock

Franciscan Missionaries of Hope (Lyke Community)

Spring 2026

Lykecommunity.org

From Grief to the Altar: *Ndugu* Michael Mongare's Vocational Journey



“As I prepare for my diaconate ordination on **May 30, 2026**, I carry both gratitude and ache. A boy in grief at the sudden passing of his friend. A fatherless child raised by a praying mother. A seminarian sent home.”

Ndugu Michael Mongare, FMH

From the Superior General



Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends of our Mission,

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Gospel of Matthew 9:37).

With hearts full of gratitude, I write to you in this season of grace as we continue our journey in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, whose life remains for us a living Gospel. In this Franciscan Year, we are reminded of his ardent desire: *“Let us begin again, brothers, for up to now we have done little.”* This call to renewal echoes deeply in our missionary vocation today.

The Church continually invites us to missionary dynamism. As we read in *Lumen Gentium*, “The Church is, in Christ, like a sacrament — a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all men” (LG 1). Our Institute exists precisely to be that visible sign of hope, reconciliation, and charity in the world.

Expansion of Our Mission

With joy, I share that the Lord is opening new doors for us:

Africa – Strengthening our pastoral and formation ministries while responding to urgent needs in underserved regions.

Europe – A renewed evangelizing presence, especially among migrants and communities experiencing spiritual fatigue.

United States of America – A new missionary collaboration in parish and chaplaincy apostolates, marking a significant step in our Institute’s growth.

These new missions are not merely geographical expansions; they are responses to the cry of the poor, the thirst for the Gospel, and the invitation of the universal Church.

As *Evangelii Gaudium* reminds us, “Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people.” We go forth not because we are many or strong, but because Christ sends us.

The Vital Role of Our Friends

To our dear Friends of the Institute: you are not external supporters — you are part of our family. Your prayers, encouragement, material assistance, and moral support sustain our brothers in formation and our missionaries in the field.

The new missions in Africa, Europe, and the USA bring both grace and responsibility. Formation of young missionaries, establishment of new communities, and support of pastoral works require your continued partnership. Your generosity becomes evangelization. Your sacrifice becomes mission.

In the words of St. Francis, *“It is in giving that we receive.”* Through your support, you participate directly in bringing the Gospel to places of spiritual and material need.

A Call to Renewed Hope

As we continue this Franciscan Year, may we rediscover simplicity, fraternity, and joyful witness. Let us be instruments of peace in a divided world, bearers of hope in wounded societies, and humble servants of Christ and His Church.

Entrusting our mission to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our Seraphic Father St. Francis, I thank you for walking with us.

May the Lord give you peace.

Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Mungai

Superior General



From Grief to the Altar

**Ndugu, Michael
Mong'are Ooga,
FMH.**

I was nine years old when my friend died. Him and I were altar boys, two skinny boys in oversized albs, trying to look serious while secretly competing over who would ring the bells at consecration. The altar felt

like home, a place where God seemed close and where the world felt smaller and safe. We whispered about who would hold the cross first, laughed quietly during rehearsals, and felt proud to serve. Then, suddenly, he was gone. I remember the dusty road to his home, the low cries of women, the murmurs of men, the heavy silence hanging in the air. What hurt most was hearing that the priest would not celebrate the funeral Mass for him. I was young. I did not know the Church laws. I did not understand the reasons. I only knew my friend was gone, and something felt unfinished. That night, lying awake in the dark, I whispered, almost stubbornly, *"I will become a priest. I will stand at the altar. I will not turn people away when they are hurting."* I did not fully understand what priesthood meant, but I knew something inside me had changed. Later, I would come to understand that "in everything God works for good, with those who love him, including moments of deep pain" (Rom. 8:28).

I was born into a family of nine. My father died before I was born: my mother was three months pregnant with me when she buried her husband, my father. I never heard his voice, only stories. My mother carried everything alone. I remember her counting coins for school fees, her face tight with anxiety when the money wasn't enough. Sometimes I stayed home because we simply could not pay. I walked long distances in worn-out shoes, studied while hungry, and learned early what sacrifice meant. Yet every evening, my mother knelt to pray. She believed God would provide even when we saw no evidence. Reflecting on the words of the Psalm-

ist, "God is the father of the fatherless and protector of widows," (Ps 68:5), I saw that promise lived out in our home. Twelve years after that childhood promise, in 2014, I found myself at the Apostles of Jesus Major Seminary in Nairobi, Kenya, to begin my formation. Before joining, I visited my parish priest for advice. Full of joy and excitement, I shared my desire to begin my journey to the altar. He looked at me and asked, *"Can anything good come from your village?"* His words stung, but I held onto the truth that God looks at the heart (Sam 16:7) and that God has plans to give us a future and a hope (Jer 29:11).

Formation began with seriousness and hope. At the Apostles of Jesus Major Seminary, I studied philosophy, took on leadership roles, and spent long nights reading and praying. In 2018, I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy (Urbaniana University, Rome), and a diploma in philosophy and religious studies. I was ready for the next phase of my formation journey, the novitiate. Then, without a warning, everything was brought to a standstill. Formation program in the Apostles of Jesus was suspended indefinitely. No timeline. No clear explanation. Just silence. I went home carrying confusion and quiet shame. People talked. Some assumed I had failed. There was no money for further studies, so I went to construction sites. I carried stones. I mixed cement. My hands grew rough and blistered under the sun. At night, exhausted, I would lie on my bed and ask God, *"What are You doing with my life?"* But the word of God became real to me: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart...and He will make straight your paths." (Prov 3:5-6). Later, I began teaching, first locally and then in Mombasa. I earned a salary and looked stable, but my heart was restless. As St. Augustine will remind us, *"Our Heart is restless until it rests in God"* (Confessions, book 1). Strangers would ask me, *"Are you a priest?"* or *"Were you in the seminary before?"* Each question felt like a fire shut up in my bones (Jer 20:9).

In September 2020, I joined the Franciscan Missionaries of Hope in Nairobi, Kenya. Starting over humbled me, but it also healed me, watering the seed that was thirsty.

Postulancy, novitiate, scholasticate, and then theological studies in the United States, each step required surrender. Then in 2024, my mother died. When I received the call, my legs became weak. I



Ndugu Michael making his First Profession of Vows as an FMH

had to sit down. The woman who had carried me before I was born, who struggled to educate me, who prayed daily for my vocation, was gone. Standing beside her body made everything real. The house felt empty. Her chair was there. Her Bible was there. But she was not.

It felt as if everything had collapsed. Losing her reopened the wound of losing my father. For the first time, I felt truly or-

phaned. I cried in a way I had never cried before. What broke me even more was knowing she would not be there on the day my name would be called for ordination. For years, I had imagined her sitting in the front pew, dressed simply but proudly, her hands folded in prayer, tears quietly running down her face as she heard my name pronounced before the altar. I wanted to glance at her just once and see her smile. That dream died with her. "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted" (Ps 34:18) was no longer just a verse; it was survival. And "I am the resurrection and the life," (Jn 11:25), became hope I clung to with trembling hands.

Now, as I prepare for my diaconate ordination on **May 30, 2026**, I carry both gratitude and ache. A boy grieving his friend. A fatherless child raised by a praying mother. A seminarian sent home. A laborer carrying stones. A teacher searching for peace. A son burying his mother. None of it was wasted. Like Joseph, what was meant for harm, God has turned for good (Gen 50:20). My mother may not sit in the front pew physically, but I believe she will be present in a deeper way, her prayers woven into every step I take toward the altar. When my name is called, I will hear it not only as a candidate responding to the Church, but as a son carrying his mother's faith to fulfillment. As St. Paul assures in his letter to the Philippians, "He who began a good work... will bring it to completion" (Phil 1:6). The seed planted when I was nine did not die. It struggled, it bent, it wept, but it lived. And it continues to grow in the vineyard of the Lord.



Ndugus paying a sick call to Mama Martha Nyaboke, Ndugu Michael's mom

Please consider being our partner in mission.

Your donation allows stories like that of Ndugu Michael Mongare to be scribed and shared. Your support allows the Franciscan missionaries of Hope to bring their own experiences of having been given hope to their ministries. It allows us to minister with a purpose.

How to give:

For our friends in Kenya, the Paybill Number is **8998990** Account Number: **823823** Account Name: **Franciscan Missionaries of Hope.**

For our friends in the United States, please visit our secure donation page at <http://www.lykecommunity.org>.

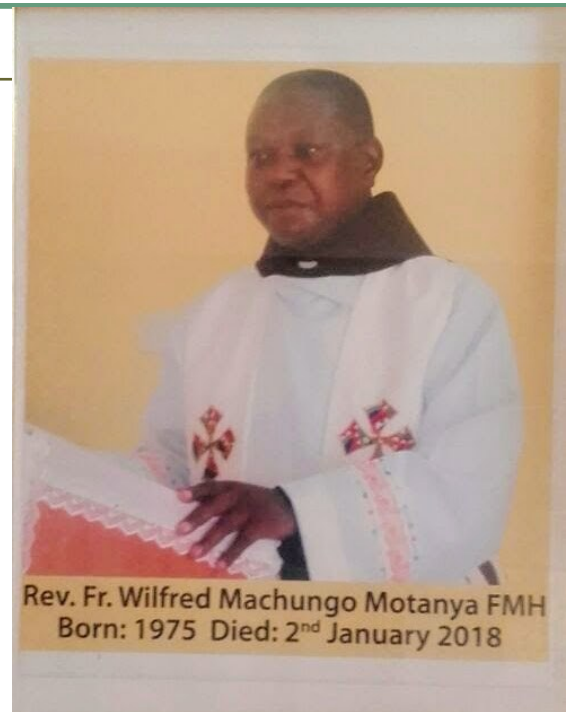
Make checks payable to:
Franciscan Missionaries of Hope
1905 Wellerman Road – West Monroe, LA 71291

IN MEMORIAM: *NDUGU* WILFRED

MOTANYA, FMH

Jan 2nd, 2026 marked 8 since Fr. Wilfred Motanya went to be with the Lord. As the first member of the FMH to rest with the angels, Fr. Motanya's passing is always a sad memory. For those who knew and interacted with Fr. Motanya, he was a flower plucked too soon.

That Fr. Motanya has been gone for almost ten years hasn't dimmed his light amongst those who knew him. Every now and then his name is brought up as a *ndugu* will try to imitate his mannerisms or quote a phrase he was fond of. Fr. Motanya was known for his hearty laughter which would lighten up a room, his preaching and oratory prowess, and his knowledge of the history (Patristics) and Law of the Church. He was a walking dictionary on these areas. The *ndugus* always referred to him as the Congregation's Canonist. It was always fun being with Fr. Motanya. May our *ndugu* continue to rest in God's blessed peace. Amen.



Right: the newly elected FMH General Council. From Lto R: Ndugus Deoson Tayebwa (Councilor), Daniel Aloo (Councilor), Joseph Mungai (Superior General), Henry Kiggundu (Vicar General), Patrick Muga (Councilor)



Thank You!

FLOCK, the name of our newsletter, is a subtle shout out to YOU, the Friends of Lyke Community. We dedicate this Newsletter to YOU as an appreciation because much of what our community has become today is a result of your selflessness, generosity, and kindness. YOU have sacrificed your time and resources to see that the vision of the co-founders of the Lyke Community continues to be realized. ASANTE SANA!

Friends of the Lyke Community come from all walks of life. If you are not yet a friend and would wish to become one, please contact: Fr. Deoson Tayebwa @ lykefmh@gmail.com

P.O. Box 15319 — 00509, Nairobi, Kenya.

In the United States, please contact:

Fr. Francis Kamau, FMH @ lykefmh@gmail.com

Visit our website at <http://www.lykecommunity.org>

Asante Sana

From our Archives

