

## **Fare thee well Father WaEsther**

Funeral on a cloudy chilly morning makes the mourning mood so solemn. That was the feeling in Mathare, Nyeri on 02<sup>nd</sup> July 2021 as we lay to rest the remains of the Late Rev. Fr. John Peter Njoroge, imc (1954-2021) known by many as WaEsther.

The Requiem Mass celebrated by his Grace Peter Kairo, the Archbishop Emeritus of Nyeri Archdiocese began at 10:30AM. It was very well attended with all the Covid-19 protocols respected.

The nine-minute homily, the shortest I have ever followed in a Funeral Mass was given by Rev. Fr. James Githnji, imc, one among the three classmates of Fr WaEsther present at the latter's burial. It was punctuated with a series self evaluation queries. Two very striking ones; "Why are you here?" And, "In what situation will you meet your death?" Thanking the Lord who gave us the late Fr Njoroge, he concluded by assuring us that the twenty-three catechists massacred by the rebels in Mozambique in the 1992 civil war, and given a dignified Christian burial by the late WaEsther are now welcoming him in heaven.

Before heading for the cemetery, we heard some few speeches including tributes and gratitude. Rev. Fr. Peter Makau, imc, Superior Kenya-Uganda Region, addressed a series of homage and condolences from various bishops and the Consolata Missionaries General Direction. He outlined the enthusiastic availability and missionary witness in the life of the deceased. He said that the departed worked very hard to improve the school at Thegu. "Despite various challenges faced by the head teacher resulting to poor performance, Father WaEsther encouraged them so much and even would occasionally send them some foodstuff. Today, as we speak, it is one of the best performing schools in that zone".

The final very poignant testimony given by the Superior is that even when sick, WaEsther wanted still to serve the people of God. From sick bed in the hospital, he moved visiting other patients, prayed for them and wished them well. He then gave a word of gratitude to Fr Martinelli, imc and the Regional House nurse for sacrificing themselves to care for the sick confreres especially the late Fr. John Peter Njoroge.

Archbishop Peter Kairo, on his part, outlined having worked well with Father John Peter Njoroge during his time in Thegu Parish. "One thing is that, he was a great farmer! And he could bring me cabbages, carrots, goats, and many other farm produce every time he visited me at the Diocesan Secretariat."

By 2 PM, Father WaEsther was laid to rest. He has fought a good fight; hence merits eternal life.