

**A STUDY OF PARTICIPATION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN IN LIBERATION
ACTIVITIES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO NAIROBI DEANERY
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI**

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BY

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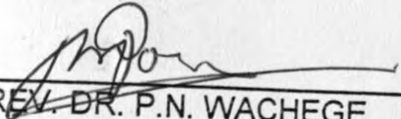


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DEDICATION

To my brother the Late Mr William Mathenge Kabugi (1965 - 1996) who at the time of his death, at 7.30 p.m. on 10th September through a tragic road accident, had tirelessly dedicated himself to WORK. He greatly inspired me towards the progress of this study. May God rest his soul in eternal peace. AMEN.

I also wish to dedicate this work to my parents Mr Joseph Kabugi and Mrs Lucy Wambui Kabugi for their great love, support and inspiration that has made my work a success; and for their sacrifice to educate me.

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ABSTRACT

The core of Liberation Theology is restoration of authenticity and, especially, the liberation of the poor in whom we vividly find the dehumanised and depersonalised humanity. This humanity has been undermined by poverty, starvation, subordination, corruption, hunger, diseases and violation of human rights. The phenomena of street children, HIV/AIDS patients and orphans, street mothers, street beggars, prostitutes, school drop-outs, illiteracy, abandoned aged and incomplete families in Nairobi Deanery call for emancipation, salvation and social praxis. These states suggest a depolarised humanity of rich and poor, powerful and powerless, and proud and the humble. The fact that all people are equal, created in the likeness of God, shows that both the oppressors and the oppressed are dehumanised.

For a long time, women have been taken as passive objects of oppression and liberation. But their position in the society has changed following much conscientisation on liberation movements. The thesis, therefore, has four objectives namely a) To examine the fundamental magisterial directives and social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on and about women in relation to liberation; b) To examine the impact of the Church's social teachings and instructions on the liberational activities of the Catholic women; c) To investigate and assess the liberational roles of Catholic women in the socio-cultural, political, economic, religious, educational and other realms; and d) To assess the role of the model of the Blessed Virgin Mary in inspiring Catholic women in their liberational activities. To help pursue these objectives three hypotheses namely: a) The Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are already involved in liberative efforts and ministries to transform and humanise the society; b) The Church's magisterium provides teachings, directives, support and challenges to Catholic women's liberational participation; and c) The model of the Blessed Virgin Mary inspires the Catholic women to help the oppressed find freedom from their oppressive states and to live authentically; are tested thanks to the library and field work research.

The study comprises six chapters. Chapter One is the introduction. It elaborates the research problem, the rationale for the study, the objectives, the scope of the study, the literature review, research methodology, hypotheses and the theoretical framework within which this study is carried out. Chapter Two examines the Roman Catholic Church's social teachings which guide, support, direct, challenge and instruct the women's liberational struggle. The social teachings include the Bible, the Documents of Vatican Council II, Papal Encyclicals, Apostolic Exhortations and Papal Letters/ Addresses to women. The reflections and teachings of the Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC) and

the African Synod are also provided.

Chapter Three forms the background information of the area of study, Nairobi Deanery of the Archdiocese of Nairobi. It includes a historical overview, the geographical spread, the population, the economy and the hierarchical structure of the Church. It further presents the data collection, interpretation and analysis of the Catholic women's insertion among the marginalised and their sources of pedagogy in effort to liberate the dehumanised.

Chapter Four is an elaborate study of the Catholic women's existential approach towards liberation. Different case studies which indicate that Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are already participating in liberation of the oppressed and the oppressors are cited. The following dimensions of liberation have been discussed : the Church, the Family, Education, Health, Social, Recreational, Communication Services, Public Life and Economy within the framework of Catholic women's liberational roles.

Chapter Five is a critical appraisal of the role of Catholic women's liberational efforts and ministries. Different approaches towards liberation have been discussed namely: Educational, Self-Reliant, Community Based, Evangelisation and Aid/Relief provision are discussed. The chapter also examines the role and impact of the model of the Blessed Virgin Mary (B.V.M.) who is concretely acknowledged and appreciated as an unparalleled model to Catholic women in their liberational roles as highlighted in Her Magnificat. A brief dialogue between Mariological approach and Christological perspective is also examined.

Finally, Chapter Six forms the recapitulations and conclusions of the study. Various recommendations on Catholic women participation in humanising the society are provided. Among the findings of the study is that Catholic women's liberational efforts are entirely guided by the model of the B.V.M. as a Woman, thus, ignoring the exemplification of Jesus Christ into the periphery.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	-	<u>Apostolicam Actuositatem</u> (Decree On The Apostolate of Lay People)
ACS	-	African Christian Studies
AFC	-	Agricultural Finance Corporation
AFER	-	African Ecclesial Review
AG	-	<u>Ad Gentes</u> (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity)
AIDS	-	Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
AMECEA	-	Association of Member Episcopal Conference of Eastern Africa
AOSK	-	Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya
B.V.M	-	Blessed Virgin Mary
CA	-	Catholic Action
CBHP	-	Community Based Health Projects
CCEA	-	Christian Churches Education Association
CLM	-	Catholic Lay Missionaries
CRE	-	Christian Religious Education
CRS	-	Catholic Relief Service
CUEA	-	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
CWA	-	Catholic Women Action
EATWOT	-	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
FEMNET	-	African Women Development and Communication Network
FIDA	-	International Federation of Women Lawyers
FC	-	<u>Familiaris Consortio</u> (On The Modern Family)
FLE	-	Family Life Education
FLP	-	Family Life Programme
FN	-	Family Network
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Programme
GS	-	<u>Gaudium et Spes</u> (Pastrol Constitution On The Church in The Modern World)
HIV	-	Human Immuno - deficeincy Virus
HLI	-	Human Life International
JP	-	Justice and Peace
JPC	-	Justice and Peace Commission
KCS	-	Kenya Catholic Secretariat

KEC	-	Kenya Episcopal Conference
KIE	-	Kenya Institute of Education
KNCCW	-	Kenya National Council of Catholic Women
LE	-	<u>Laborem Exercens</u> (On Human Work)
LG	-	<u>Lumen Gentium</u> (Dogmatic Constitution On The Church)
LR	-	L'osservatore Romano
MD	-	<u>Mulieris Dignitatem</u> (On The Dignity and Vocation of Women)
NFP	-	Natural Family Planning
NGO	-	Non-Government Organisations
NT	-	New Testament
OT	-	Old Testament
PDSHG	-	Pastrol Development Self Help Groups
PP	-	Planned Parenthood
PPA	-	Participatory Poverty Assessment
RE	-	Religious Education
RM	-	<u>Redemptoris Mater</u> (The Mother of The Redeemer)
RMs	-	<u>Redemptoris Missio</u> (On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate)
SAP	-	Structural Adjustment Programme
SCC	-	Small Christian Community
SCCs	-	Small Christian Communities
SEASC	-	Sisters of East Africa Study Conference
SECAM	-	Symposium of Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagascar
SEE	-	Social Education and Ethics
St	-	Saint
SVP	-	Society of Vincent the Poor
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development

Operational Definitions

AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa. It was founded by fifty Bishops and Prefects of Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia; and later the Bishop's Conferences of Ethiopia (February 1977) and the Sudan (1979) joined; hence, currently it is at the service of seven Catholic Bishop's Conferences with the Seychelles as an associate member.
APOSTOLATE	This refers to the work done by the non-ordained members of a religious order of congregation on the Lord's behalf.
ASSUMPTION	The taking up of the body of the B.V.M directly to heaven after Her earthly life had come to an end. This dogma was defined in 1950 by Pope Pius XII.
COUNCIL	This is an official ecumenical, regional or local Church assembly.
COREDEMPTRIX	This is a title that is given to the B.V.M to illustrate Her cooperative role in the economy of salvation through faith and obedience.
DEAN	A priest charged by a bishop to preside over one district of a diocese.
DEANERY	A subdivision of a diocese composed of several parishes presided over by a dean.
ENCYCLICAL	A document written by the Pope to the Catholic Church throughout the world. The documents normally consist of new official teachings or directives.
FAMILY APOSTOLATE	The ministry of Church by the non-ordained and the religious to the matters concerning the families.
FIAT	The B.V.M unconditional YES and a joyous total desire to collaborate with God's good will of salvation of humankind.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION	The dogma of the Church which proclaims that Mary was free from sin by the grace and privilege of almighty God and by the virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, from the moment of Her existence. This was defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854.
LAY APOSTOLATE	The ministry of the Church by the non-ordained people. They are called by the virtue of Baptism to evangelise to the non-Christians.
MAGISTERIAL DOCUMENTS	These are official documents containing authoritative teachings of the Church made by the pope and the bishops. Other theologians contribute by virtue of their scholarly competence.
POINT OMEGA	The Transcendental God.
PREFECT	A priest or a bishop who is given charge over a territorial division of the faithful which has not been directed as a diocese.
SYNOD	An official assembly of the Church which is held at international, national, regional, provincial or diocesan level.
VATICAN II	This was a Catholic Council (1962 - 65) which, among other things, opened the Church to more of its own members, to non-Catholic Christians and to the non - Christians.
VIRGIN BIRTH	The belief that Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of Mary or became human without the cooperation of a human father.
VIRGINITY OF MARY	The belief that the act of the birth of Jesus Christ did not diminish Mary's Virginity but rather sanctified it. The liturgy of the Church celebrates and acknowledges Mary as the "Ever - Virgin", <u>Aeiparthenus</u> .

NOTE: All Biblical references were made from the Revised Standard Version (RSV) Bible.

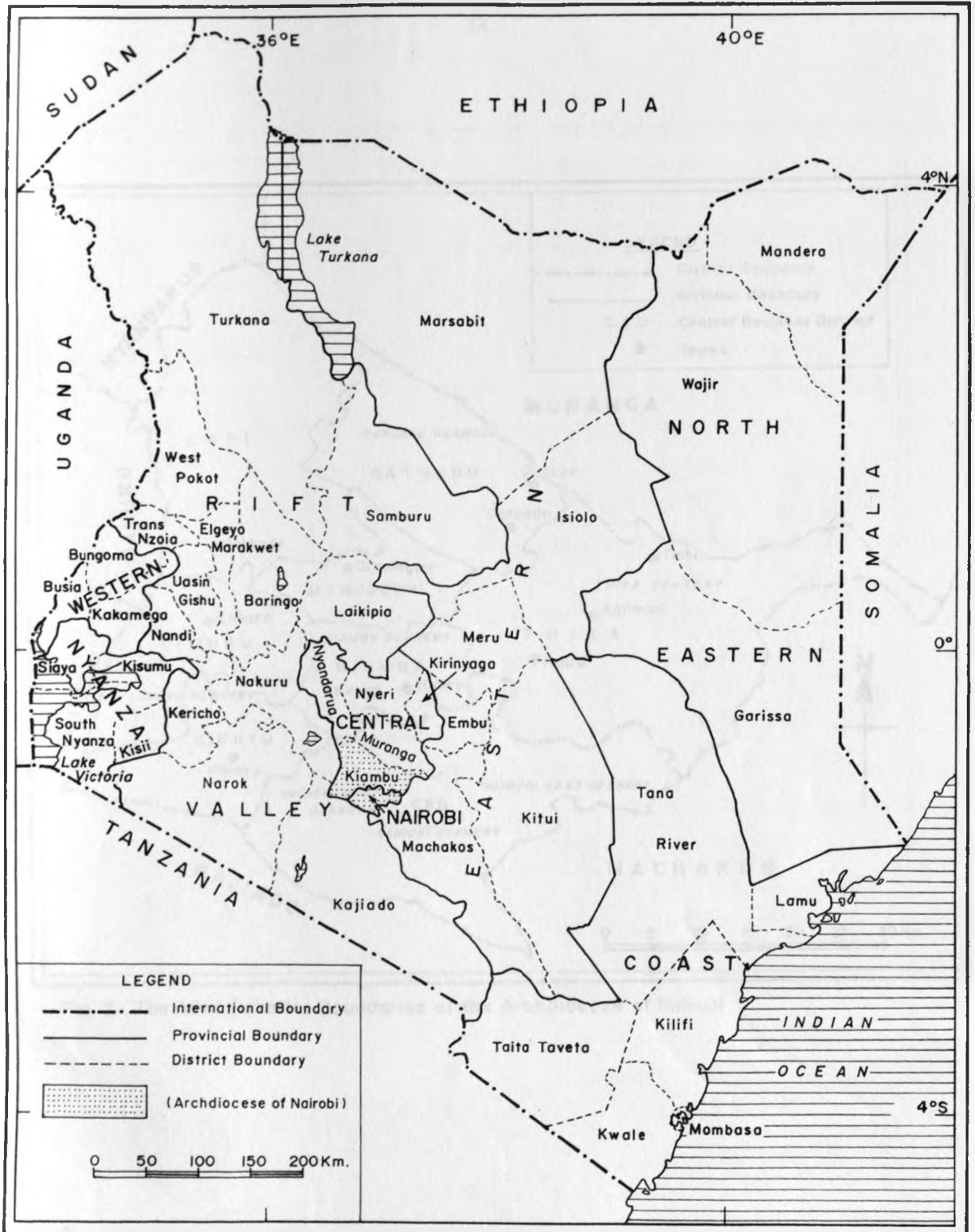


Fig. 1 The Administrative Boundaries of Kenya.

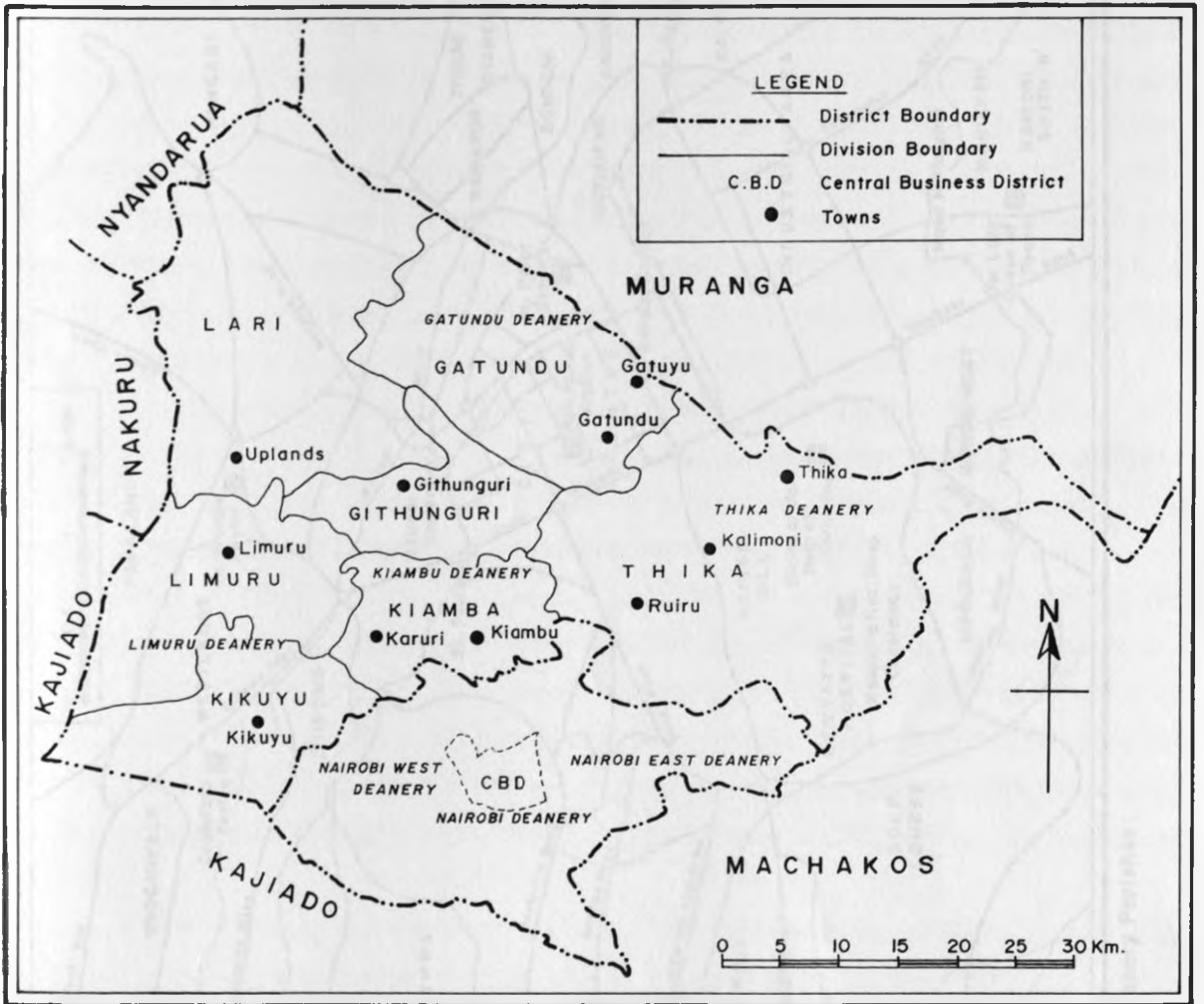


Fig. 2 The Administrative Boundaries of the Archdiocese of Nairobi.

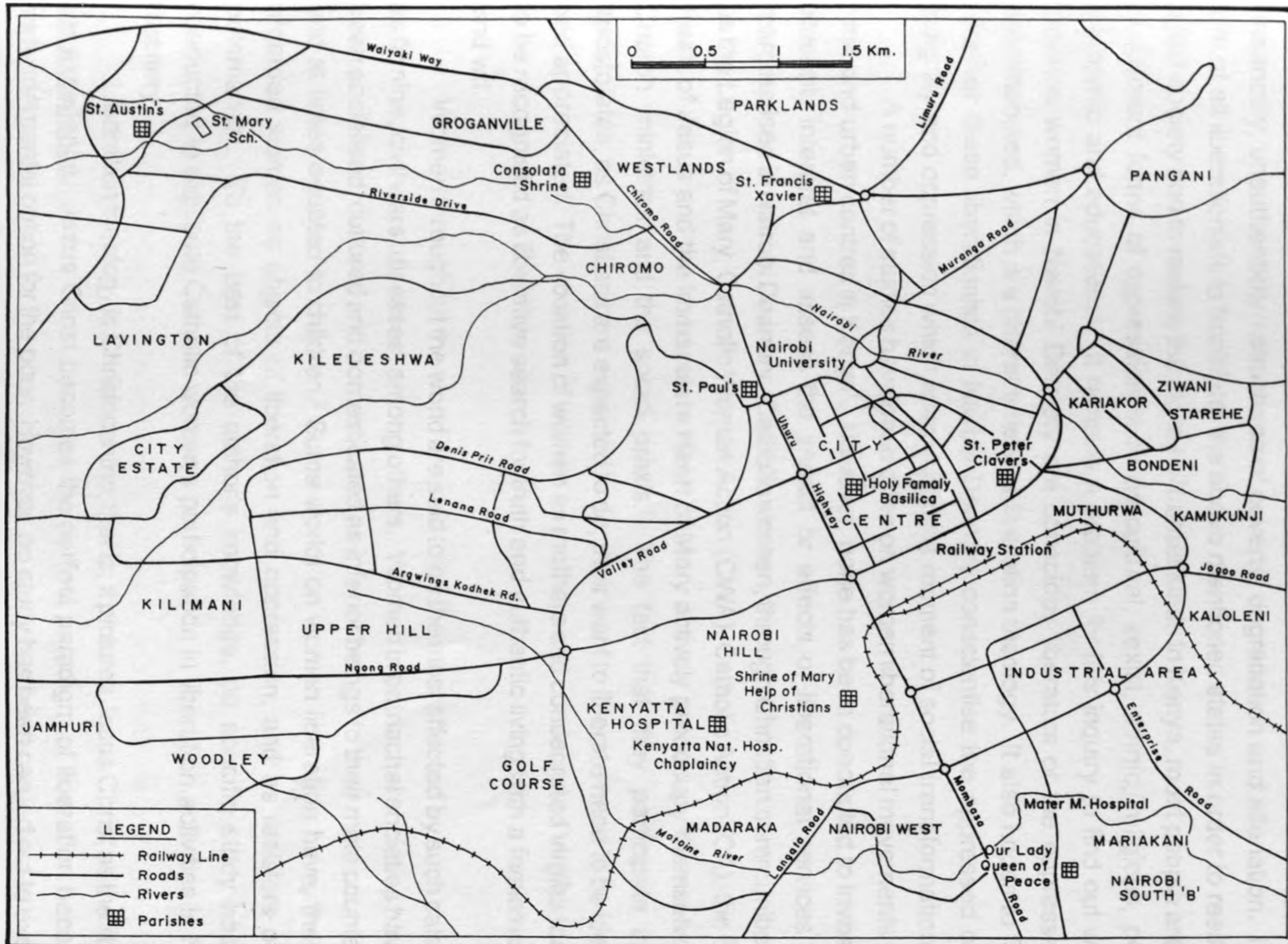


Figure 3 Locations of Nairobi Deanery Parishes.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The starting point of liberation theology is the state of unfreedom, oppression, unsanctity, unauthenticity - structures of poverty, degradation and alienation. It is the aim of all liberationists to transform the above mentioned states in order to reestablish a just society and to restore the dignity of humankind. In Kenya, most people are found in different forms of oppression such as cultural, sexist, ethnic, religious, political, economic and educational. It remains a problem for this inquiry to find out whether Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are conscious liberators of the oppressed and dehumanised, which is a characteristic of liberation theology. It also hopes to find out whether these liberationists in Nairobi Deanery conscientise the oppressed on their indignity and oppression which is an important moment of social transformation.

A number of studies have been done on women liberational movements in both rural and urban centres in Kenya¹. However, none has been conducted to investigate, present, interpret and assess the impact or effects of liberational services to the marginalised in Nairobi Deanery. Catholic women, through Christian communities such as the Legion of Mary, Catholic Women Action (CWA), Catholic Action (CA), the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary actively preoccupy themselves with Church ministries and the social praxis. The fact that they participate in such apostolates, as Christians are expected to do, their want to liberate need to be identified and appreciated. The vocation of women as mothers and consecrated virgins too need to be recognised as liberative search for truth and authentic living with a feminine touch and wit.

Women throughout the world are said to be the most affected by such calamities as famine, civil wars, diseases, among others. Women in patriarchal societies have also been socialised, cultured and domesticated as inferior beings to their male counterparts and at times equated to children.² Some works on women liberation have, therefore, regarded women as objects of liberation and oppression, and as resisters of male paternalism. To the best of the author's knowledge, no specific study has been conducted to explicate Catholic women's participation in liberation activities in Nairobi Deanery.

Liberation theology is Christocentric, that is, it pictures Jesus Christ as the liberator par excellence. Jesus Christ becomes the perfect paradigm of liberation because of his fundamental option for the poor. However, no study has been carried out to exemplify the Blessed Virgin Mary (B.V.M) as a "Mother of Liberation" for the Catholic women. It

becomes, therefore, a task for this inquiry to find out how the model of B.V.M inspires the Catholic women to participate in liberational roles and ministries.

Finally, the Catholic women's liberational roles are directed and challenged by the magisterium. This inquiry hopes to provide the relationship between the directives, instructions and challenges of the Catholic social teachings and the Catholic women's commitment to their participation in creating a more humane society.

1.2 Objectives of The Study

1. To examine the fundamental magisterial directives and social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on and about women in relation to liberation.
2. To examine the impact of the Church's social teachings and instructions on the liberational activities of the Catholic women.
3. To investigate and assess the liberational roles of Catholic women in the socio-cultural, political, economic, religious, educational and other realms.
4. To assess the role of the model of the B.V.M in inspiring Catholic women in their social praxis.

1.3 Hypotheses

1. The Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are already involved in liberative efforts and ministries to transform and humanise the society.
2. The Church's magisterium provides teachings, directives, support and challenges to Catholic women's liberational participation.
3. The model of the B.V.M inspires the Catholic women to help the oppressed find freedom from their oppressive states and to live authentically.

1.4 Rationale For The Study

Scholars such as Wanjiku Kabira, Mercy A. Oduyoye, P.N. Wachege, Laurenti Magesa, Bonita Bennett, Virginia Fabella and Nasimiyu Wasike have written a number of works on liberation theology. As gender activists they feature women as victims of male paternalistic oppression and resisters of this domination. This is well explicated in Kabira's Celebrating Women's Resistance. Nancy Friday in My Mother, Myself offers a different perspective to gender issues and features women as oppressors of their own

femininity.³ She further observes that men complement women in all realms of life despite the patronising biasness.⁴ However, there is no specific study that has been conducted to explicate the liberative roles of women. There is, therefore, need to investigate, present and assess the social transformation of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery.

The patriarchal mentality has for a long time socialised and domesticated women as inferior beings regarding their place of independence only as in the kitchen. This socio-cultural phenomenon is undergoing transition as people become integrated in the global village of modernisation, industrialisation and westernisation. The International Conference called by the United Nations Organisation in Beijing (Sept. 1995) sought to raise the dignity of women and emphasised their need to participate in leadership roles to liberate the women-folk. It is the hope of this inquiry to inspire more women (men included) not only to participate in leadership roles and to work independently but also to consciously preoccupy themselves with the social transformation and pedagogy of the oppressed with an accentuation of re-establishing human dignity.

As implicated earlier, liberational theology is basically Christocentric. In an attempt to find out the Catholic women's sources of liberational pedagogy, the study hopes to briefly present a Mariological - Christological dialogue as a contribution to the field of liberation theology.

1.5 Scope of The Study

The research for this study was carried out in Nairobi Deanery which comprises nine parishes namely: Our Lady Queen of Peace - South B, Holy Family Basilica, Consolata Shrine, St Peter Clavers, St Paul's University Chaplaincy, Kenyatta Hospital Chaplaincy, St Francis Xavier, Shrine of Mary Help of Christians and St Austin's.

The area of study was chosen because it is the key urban deanery in the Archdiocese of Nairobi. It has important Catholic centres such as the Kenya Catholic Secretariat (K.C.S) - which was one of the key sources of the study.

Nairobi Deanery is in the city centre where most important social, political, economic, religious and educational activities involving the Catholic women are held and discussed. The African Synod (1995) was also celebrated here by his holiness John Paul II; its teachings were important in opening new horizons and challenges to women who have apparently been side-lined or have side-lined themselves. These African documents provide a clear account of the call of Catholic women to play their liberational and inculturational roles utilising their God-given gifts and charisms.

In addition occasional public lectures on women liberation, as well as relevant

seminars are held in Nairobi. The publications coming out of such seminars were cardinal in providing recent development on women's liberational consciousness and activists. The author had also to travel outside Nairobi Deanery where the Catholic women out of their volition, involve other women in the transformation of the society and in liberational self help projects, seminars and workshops. Such places as Mombasa, Ngong, Makueni and Kiambu were visited. It is the hope of this study, therefore, that the inquiry conducted at such a limited area will be an ample representation of Catholic women's consciousness of human suffering and liberative roles.

1.6 Literature Review

There is no available literature that focuses on the liberational activities of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery. However, a number of scholarly works that give insights into this study have been written. The following is a review of some of these literature.

With Passion and Compassion is a collection of essays by women from Africa, Asia and Latin America. These essays are important in providing some insights into feminist theology by women themselves with an ecumenical bend. In an article entitled "The Christ for African Women," Elizabeth Amroah and Mercy A. Oduyoye provide insights into liberational christologies by African feminist christologists. These works provide praiseworthy reflection on Jesus Christ in view of women's participation in liberation from women's point of view ⁵. This study hopes to complement these works by exemplifying the B.V.M as the model of Catholic women liberationists.

Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed is an in-depth and interpretative study focusing on education as an important moment of praxis. He stresses on the conscientisation of the oppressed in their domesticated oppression in order to assist them commit themselves to the transformation of the society. He views the participation of the oppressed in liberation - as critical reflectors and activists - as a means of validating the social praxis. He explains that:

Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated. At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must see themselves as men engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Reflection and action become imperative when one does not erroneously attempt to create a dichotomy between the content of humanity and its historical forms ⁶.

But Friere is opposed to the banking system of education which he says:

attempts, by mythicising reality, to conceal certain facts which explains the way man exist in the world,... resists dialogue;....treats students as objects of assistance;.... inhibits creativity and domesticates the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world, thereby denying men fully human⁷.

He, therefore, explicates the need of problem - solving education which he appraises as de-mythologising, dialogical, treats the oppressed as critical reflectors and "affirms men as beings in the process of becoming - as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" ⁸. Friere's work forms a succinct forum for this inquiry in appraising the Catholic women's approaches toward liberational activities.

Margaret Atuma has written a thesis on "The Calling and Role of Nuns" in which she defines and explicates the three evangelical counsels namely: poverty, chastity and obedience. She provides us with a relationship between the evangelical counsels and the sisters / nuns total self giving in the service of God and the people⁹. Atuma further describes the sisters apostolic ministries in education, health and social work for the common good ¹⁰. This study hopes to complement her work by giving an integral approach to both lay and consecrated virgins liberational roles in diverse realms of life such as religious, economic, political, social, educational, family, recreational and communication.

Genevieve Wanjala's thesis on " Liberation Theology" cites the peculiarity of women's oppression which he says posits itself within the forms of social status, sexism and racism ¹¹. He articulates the moments of liberation theology of Latin America as an effective exemplification of women liberation citing such works as J.L Segundo, The Theology of Liberation (1976). He observes that majority of women are not aware of their roles in the Church, that they mainly participate in economic, psycho-social and pastoral activities such as guidance, counselling, and cleaning the Church ¹². Wanjala's thesis discusses women as patronised and condescended people by their cultural and social setups. The thesis does not, however, visualise women as conscious reformers and conscious liberators of their own servitude and of the oppressed which this study seeks to present.

The documents of Vatican II (1962 - 65)¹³ incorporate the service of women as "ordinary apostles" within the context of common priesthood. The laity are enabled and challenged to witness as Christ's followers, in all spheres of life sanctifying the world as they face and focus on today's challenges of transforming the society from unauthenticity to authenticity in all dimensions. These documents provide the council's general principles on the laity apostolate but do not focus on women in particular. However, the council's rulings are important in gaging how the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery

react to the challenges in their concrete situation.

Papal Encyclicals and other Post Vatican II Magisterial Documents such as Mulieris Dignitatem (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women) ¹⁴ provide further support and challenges to women in their liberational roles. They create an awareness that women's role is not in the periphery but it is central. According to these sources the role of women is not optional but an obligation of duty. They highlight women as vital partners in mission and leadership in the spirituality of service according to their giftedness and charisms. These documents are important in enriching our study with challenges, encouragement and affirmations to women to help make them involved and effective in their liberational roles.

The Synod for Africa 1995 ¹⁵ focuses on the contemporary conception of the Church not just as the "People of God" but as the "Family of God". This assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops whose all embracing theme reads: "The Church in Africa and her evangelising mission Toward the year 2000: 'You shall be my witnesses' Acts 1:8)" examines invaluable aspects of the role of Church ministry, namely: evangelisation, inculturation, dialogue, justice, peace and communication. These African documents are important to this study as they provide a clear account of all Catholic women's liberational roles. However, this Synod did not specifically examine what Catholic women are already doing in relation to liberation activities.

P. N. Wachege in African Women Liberation, A Man's Perspective ¹⁶ gives a critical study of seven basic forms of oppression and exploitation which dehumanise and depersonalise African women. These are traditional, social, political, economic, sexual, intellectual and the religious / ecclesiastical. He further provides provisional solutions to these problems. Moreover, he pictures Jesus Christ as a model of liberation and challenges women to take after Him in their liberational efforts. While taking this into account in our study we will opt for the B.V.M for our model since as a Woman, the Mother of our Saviour will touch women most.

In another book African Single Mothers, Socio - Ethical and Religious Investigations¹⁷ Wachege discusses the phenomenon of single motherhood as a common feature in the global village. He has featured and identified twenty-five categories of single mother families. This book provides important liberational roles played by both prominent and ordinary single mothers inspite of their depiction by the society as "the disadvantaged and the maladjusted" human species. It challenges women to commit themselves in getting involved in social praxis for their own welfare and the welfare of all. The author's option for African women sidelines those who are not African. Being aware of this limitation, this study intends to include some from other races.

A. Nasimiyu - Wasike in an article " Christology and an African Women's

Experience” observes that women in the Third World Countries work hard to gain control of resources which determine their means of living. They are, however, faced with cultural barriers which restrict them to remain inferior to their male counterparts. She notes that the inferior position of women was altered by Jesus Christ when He identified Himself with the poor and the marginalised, for instance, the women. This article provides us with an insight into Catholic women’s divine call to participate in liberational work to restore justice, happiness and love among all people as Jesus did.¹⁸

Anna P. Obura in Changing Images gives a critical analysis of the images of girls and women as portrayed in Kenya Primary Textbooks. According to her findings, the images of women are less pictured than those of men and boys. In addition, female images are depicted as negative, weak, unremunerated and mostly concerned with domestic chores while the male images are portrayed as superior, positive, striking, powerful, decisive among others. This has led to poor girls’ performance in schools due to lack of role models to emulate from their textbooks ¹⁹.

Obura further observes that there are many women intellectuals and professionals in different fields of study such as medicine, astronomy, philosophy, hypertology and biochemistry. She notes that such women would be appropriate examples to challenge the girl-child in future careers ²⁰. She does not, however, show how such women engage in liberative services through their professions.

T. M. Hinga in an article “The Biblical Mandate for Social Transformation: A Feminist Perspective” notes that women are hardly depicted as social transformers but rather as objects of liberation. She highlights “the need for subjectification of women”²¹ as moral agents and liberators. She observes that through conscientisation, women have become subjects of the egalitarian society. In view of this, she notes that:

Christians are not just recipients of liberation but are also expected to be vehicles of salvation and liberation of others. The indication that one is liberated carries with it the imperative to liberate and save others. Liberation is therefore not only a privilege to be enjoyed by the oppressed, but it is also a task to be done. Women therefore are... challenged to become subjects by actively undertaking the task of liberating, transforming not only themselves but also society to ensure a more humane and egalitarian future ²².

This is an important call to women liberators in the social praxis and a pointer towards this study’s research problem.

Wanjiku Kabira and Elizabeth Akinyi in Celebrating Women's Resistance give an overview of women's position in traditional African society. They show that women were regarded as inferior and bound by the paternalistic laws, taboos and social norms.

However, from a historical perspective, they observed that women were gender sensitive and fought against patriarchal oppression through artistic expressions like songs ²³.

The authors further observe the importance of women's groups as working forces for liberation. This work is important in featuring different forms of oppression that women face and possible means of attaining freedom.

In the light of the works cited above, it is apparent that no literature focuses on the liberational activities of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery. The available literature on women liberational efforts only appears to hint at transformational activities of lay women in general and consecrated virgins in limited realms. This leaves a gap for further research on liberative efforts and ministries of Catholic women to the marginalised - a gap which this study intends to fill.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study has adopted a theological framework within the context of Christian patriarchy societies. According to the creation account, women are introduced as equal human beings to their male counterparts: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). The bible presents a dual fact of sexuality, that is, male and female but as sharers in the common humanity. In this, both male and female claim equal relationship with God their creator. But the understanding of God's liberative works through history in the O.T. was adopted in a patriarchal society such that women were regarded as inferior and with no legal rights in the socio - juridical set up.

The account of the fall of man, Genesis 3, gave impetus to the patronising attitude against women. The woman, Eve, was seen as a source of all evil and the cause of human suffering, sin and death. Moreover, the oppression of women as inferior human beings was seen as a normal social phenomenon. This chauvinistic attitude was culturally accepted in the Christian community finding favour in the Pauline teachings on the place of women in public worship (1 Cor 11:2 - 16). Most socio-cultural set-ups throughout the world are patriarchy and women have been cultured, socialised and domesticated in oppressive societies.

However, the sensitisation of women on their equality, rights and duties in the global village through international conferences has brought a new feminine perspective in liberation theology and biblical hermeneutics. The inauguration of the N.T at the annunciation and the fiat of Mary are seen as new impetus to women's dignity and vocation in the society. Thus, the woman (Eve) who was visualised as a source of all evil now becomes the source of life (Mary). Through the Eve - Mary analogy, the

women become sensitised of their role as liberators rather than objects of liberation and oppression. Consequently, patriarchal subjugation of women in the society now loses meaning among women liberationists with a new understanding of an egalitarian society. The women, using Allan Boesak's words, are no longer pseudoinnocent to their rights and duties. Boesak further explains this view in the following words:

The oppressed who believe in God, the father of Jesus Christ, no longer want to believe in the myths created to subjugate them. It is no longer possible to innocently accept history "as it happens", silently hoping that God would take the responsibility for human failure. The theology of liberation spell out this realisation. For the Christian Church it constitutes; in no uncertain terms, a farewell to innocence ²⁴.

Similarly, the works and ministries of Jesus Christ among the oppressed earned women a close association with the Son of God (cf Lk 8:1-3; 7:36ff and 10:38 - 42). This promoted their position in the socio-cultural set-up which was further facilitated by Jesus' choice to reveal the easter message to women first and not to any of His twelve disciples. The proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus was an important liberative role that women were imbued with. This, among other roles of serving Christ calls every other woman to the priestly, prophetic and royal roles as baptised and confirmed Christians.

In the light of the above, Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery have taken upon themselves, the responsibility of humanising the society and to sensitise their fellow women on the dignity and vocation of women. The biblical notion of equality for all human beings and the liberative work of Christ are great sources of strength for Catholic women's response to the cry of the poor. The B.V.M performed liberative roles of bearing and nurturing Jesus Christ our redeemer. Through Her Virginity and Motherhood, the Catholic women identify themselves with Her as one who suffered oppression (paternalism) but was willing to re-establish human dignity.

The study is also based on the phenomenological and evolution theories of Teilhard de Chardin. In an attempt to respond to the human's need for the future, Teilhard came up with the law of complexity-consciousness in which he explains that any changes in the cosmogenesis are oriented towards the human person as the goal. This evolutionary development according to Teilhard would only have a successful completion with the activation of a transcendent absolute which is a personal source of love outside the cosmogenesis.

This source of love which he named Point Omega becomes the source of love energy within which the human action is activated towards an infinite goal. Teilhard

identified Jesus Christ with the "Omega of evolution and by so doing gives to the human progress not some vague completion but the well-defined reality of the historical Jesus; whose second coming in the Parousia has always been for Christians the goal of God's creation".²⁵

Thus, Teilhard's theories are geared towards the infinite concentration of the human goals towards Christ, the physical centre of evolution and its Omega. Within this conception, our study contends with Teilhard that the Catholic women's liberational activities "are summoned to collaborate with God's creative action in and through dedication to the human task; for efforts to build the earth also build up the body of Christ, who by his redemptive death and resurrection has triumphed over the passivity of life and the mystery of evil"²⁶

Finally, this study has adopted a historical-critical method of biblical analysis particularly the redaction criticism approach. It is an approach which pays more attention to the redactional activities of the evangelist and the situation in life of their audience. This criticism "sets itself the task of studying the particular organisation and character of each of the Gospels, including the authors theological approach, his structuring of the material he has chosen, and his stylistic impress on the material"²⁷ As such the evangelists are seen not as passive compilers but as people who can choose, synthesis and adapt their gospels according to the needs, thought forms and mentality of their audience.

Redaction criticism focuses on the authors as having own initiatives, stylistic adjustments, clarifications, theology, adaptation, summaries, geographical information and peculiarities. As such, this criticism looks at each evangelist as inculturators of their gospels in the situation of life of their readers. It is within this hypothesis that the study utilises the historical-critical method of biblical analysis in handling the synoptic gospels in relation to women liberational activities.

1.8 Research Methodology

This consisted both secondary and primary data collection. The secondary data collection involved library research in which the author consulted various books, journals and Church documents related to the study. Libraries such as Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library, Hekima College Library and Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) Library were consulted. The relevant documents form the bibliography of this study. In the biblical analysis of the role of women in the Bible, the author used an exegetical method, that is, the historical- critical method.

In the primary data collection the author employed three major methods namely:

oral interviews, administration of questionnaires and participant - observation methods. The sample of informants used for this study was divided into four categories. These were: the Catholic lay women, the nuns, the clergy and the beneficiaries of the Catholic women's liberational roles. While using the above mentioned methods, the author managed to contact 201 informants as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Sample Size of Respondents

CATEGORY	SAMPLE TARGET	RESPONDENT	ACHIEVEMENT PERCENTAGE
1. Catholic Lay Women	180	170	94.44
2. Nuns	12	12	100.00
3. Clergy	9	9	100.00
4. Beneficiaries of Catholic Women's liberational roles	30	10	33.33

From the above table, the achievement percentage of the nuns and the clergy were 100 percent. This shows that the author realised her sample target of the two mentioned categories of respondents. 94.44 percent of the Catholic lay women were contacted through the oral interview, questionnaire and participant - observation methods. The achievement percentage was less by 5.56 percent of the sample target. This analysis gives us a total of 182 Catholic women liberationists including the nuns. Similarly, the achievement percentage (33.33) of the beneficiaries of the Catholic women's liberatioal roles was less by 66.67 percent. This was because the population consisted of very young children aging from three days old who could not be interviewed. However, the impact of the Catholic women's liberational roles on such children were witnessed through the participant - observation method. Systematic sampling was used in the category of the clergy; random sampling was used in both the categories of the nuns and the beneficiaries of the Catholic lay women. Quota sampling was used in the category of the Catholic lay women.

The selection of Catholic lay women informants was based on two criteria. Firstly,

the author interviewed different women associations, S.C.Cs and devotional groups leaders from different parishes identified by their local priests. Secondly, it was necessary to interview Catholic lay women doing prominent liberational roles in the society. The CWA members and the clergy were helpful in identifying such women who formed part of the case studies for this inquiry.

The selection of the nuns / sisters depended on their religious congregations. This was important to the study because each congregation of the women religious has unique apostolate. The nine clergy interviewed were the fathers- in- charge of the nine parishes of Nairobi Deanery. Concerning the criterion used to identify the beneficiaries of the Catholic women's liberational roles, the liberationists were used to assist the author contact them. This fourth category of informants interviewed helped the author assess the impact of the Catholic women's liberational activities. Both formal and informal structured interviews were conducted.

Two methods were used in recording the oral interviews. Firstly, a tape recorder which proved to be a convenient method was used in most interviews. The tape recorder necessitated a continuous flow of discussion. Secondly, a note book was used where the informants were unwilling to have their discussion taped. Note taking was cumbersome and time consuming since the author had to keep requesting the interviewees to repeat information that was not clear. The interviews were conducted in English, Kiswahili and Kikuyu; among other semi-literate and illiterate respondents, the author employed qualified interpreters which was rather expensive. The oral interviews had the advantage of affording the author personal contact with the respondents some of whom expressed their opinions freely.

Through the questionnaire method the author employed both postage and hand delivery means. This method was important because it consumed less time than the oral interviews. The author had to translate some of the questionnaires into Kiswahili and Kikuyu for the semi-literate and illiterate. The questionnaires were administered to the four categories of respondents mentioned above. They formed both open ended and closed questions (see appendices I - IV).

However, one problem was encountered while using the method. Some of the respondents failed to send back their questionnaires. The author had to use a follow - up system, that is, successive reminders were sent at regular intervals requesting the respondents to send the questionnaires in time. The author was also forced to visit some of the respondents regularly especially those at close proximity.

Through the participant - observation method the author took part in women's liberative workshops, projects, relevant lectures, religious activities in the SCCs, youth seminars and youth recreational trips, CWA meetings, and in the self help groups. Some of these activities animated by Catholic women were held outside Nairobi. This

necessitated the author to accompany the Catholic women to such places as Makueni, Mombasa, Ngong and Kiambu in order to witness their liberative efforts. Out of their volition they involve other women in different parishes and in the rural areas in the transformation of the society. This method earned the author an advantage of participating in liberational activities of the Catholic women.

1.8.1 Data Analysis

The author applied four major steps namely: editing, coding, tabulation and interpretation.

(a) Editing: This involved the editing of the responses to determine the accuracy and uniformity of the answered questionnaires. This was done to determine and to discard major response errors.

(b) Coding: Three major steps were used here. Firstly, the author categorised the responses under which the data fell. This involved reading and copying the responses of the open - ended questions and responses on separate sheets to help the author determine the categories of responses to work with. Such categories included women's involvement in economic, political, religious, educational, recreational, communication services, health and social realms. The question - response sheets were then classified under the broad categories mentioned above. The categories of dehumanised persons targeted by Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery were also categorised under the same procedure.

Secondly, the author used a frequency table to determine the number of women liberationists who target each category of the marginalised people. Such categories included i) youth / jobless / school dropouts, (ii) illiterate and semi-literate, (iii) oppressors, iv) rural and urban families, (v) sick / HIV / AIDS patients, vi) poor / poor aged / refugees / displaced / street beggars / street children and vii) single mothers / girl child / prostitutes / women in poor cultures such as wife inheritance.

Thirdly, the categorised and quantified data were transferred on separate sheets to facilitate manual computation. This helped the author to determine the number and percentages of Catholic women targeting each category of the dehumanised persons.

(c) Tabulating: Under this step, the computed data was then represented in form of tables as indicated in chapter three. In order to represent the data in form of bar graphs, the author hired computer services.

(d) Interpretation: The edited, coded and tabulated data was then interpreted within the framework of the research problem and the hypotheses. Descriptive analysis was also used to interpret and present the Catholic women's insertion among the

oppressed. This was done using case studies which had been categorised in the second stage of data analysis, that is, coding. The categorisation of case studies and interpretation formed the core of chapter four of this study.

1.9 Research Problems

Various limitations were encountered while conducting this study. Firstly, the author encountered some uncooperative and cagey cadre of clerics. For instance, one dean adamantly refused to impart any information concerning his deanery. However, relevant information was gathered elsewhere, for instance, in the development office of the Archdiocese of Nairobi where one of our main respondents, Mrs Mburu was of great help.

Secondly, language was a barrier particularly among the semi-literate and the illiterate. To solve this problem the author hired qualified interpreters to avoid inaccurate interpretation. The author also had to translate the questionnaires into Kiswahili and Kikuyu in order to reach more respondents.

Thirdly, the author travelled outside Nairobi Deanery in order to participate and observe the liberational roles of Catholic women. Such places as Makueni, Mombasa and Kiambu were visited. These areas were not within the area of study but the researcher needed to witness the effects of liberational activities of the Catholic women of Nairobi Deanery, who out of their volition travel to different areas to establish authenticity. This was a very expensive exercise but worthwhile.

Fourthly, while employing the oral interview method of data collection, some of the respondents felt that the questions were gaging their commitment to their Christian living and witnessing. They were, therefore, unwilling to impart any information regarding their liberational roles. The author solved this problem by giving the respondents an opportunity to express their attitudes on certain selected situations.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER TWO

2. THE TEACHINGS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ON AND ABOUT WOMEN IN RELATION TO LIBERATION

2.1 Introduction

The very title of this thesis compels us to critically and profoundly elaborate the ecclesial perspectives of our subject matter. The reflections will assert that the Catholic women participation in liberation activities is a vital response to an involving call to bear witness to the teachings of Jesus Christ the Liberator par excellence: "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Consequently, the Church helps them to discern their roles by providing support, directives, challenges and teachings on and about women in relation to liberational activities. The Church, as we shall see, does this through the teachings of the Bible which is the primary source of Christian living. The Church also utilises other directives and instructions derived from Documents of the Vatican Council II, the Papal Encyclicals and Exhortations, reflections from some prominent theologians, and the Pastrol Letters of Kenya Episcopal Conference (K.E.C.).

This chapter examines the relevant documents of the above mentioned sources of the Catholic Church teachings from ecclesial, social, political, economic, cultural, catechetical, educational, medical and family life aspects. The documents provide the roles, duties and rights of women as liberators and animators of liberation through their self-giftedness, self assertion and individual charism. Emphasis laid on the dignity and femininity of women as sharers in the common humanity and as the image of God (Gen 1:27) calling them to serve humankind as common priests is also tackled.

The chapter starts by examining the role of women in the Bible as a primary source of all Christian teachings from which every other document is based and expounded. The documents of Vatican Council II are second in the order of analysis and importance to this study because they form the Church magisterial basic decrees and dogmas from which the Church documents emerge. The third document, Mulieris Dignitatem (M.D.) (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women) is a most important and explicit Post Conciliar document specifically expounding on the dignity, femininity and vocation of women in the society and before God. The Addresses and Letters of John Paul II affirms the teachings of M.D and are pedagogy to women liberational roles. Redemptoris Mater (R.M.) (The Mother of the Redeemer) is a Mariological study which the author uses to explicate the B.V.M. as the invaluable model of women liberationists.

Women also serve as agents of sanctification of human kind through missionary

work and as workers in order to reach the indignified, the poor and the oppressed of the society, hence the necessity of Redemptoris Missio (R.Ms) (On the Permanent Validity of The Church's Missionary Mandate) and Laborem Exercens (L.E) (On Human Work) respectively. The basic but most important vocation of women is motherhood. Familiaris Consortio (F. C) (The Family in the Modern World) exhorts the teachings of the Church on virtues and values of motherhood in a family set up as originally intended by God. The teachings of K.E.C. are examined next as important documents produced by indigenous Catholic episcopate on issues affecting the participation of women in liberational activities. Lastly, The Church in Africa is one of the most recent exhortation of John Paul II on African Synod which was issued during his pastoral apostolic visit to Kenya, 1995. They are teachings and instructions to help women discern and be actively involved in their liberational roles.

2.2 Women In the Bible

The author uses a historical critical method - which includes textual criticism,¹ source criticism,² form criticism³ and redaction criticism⁴ - to study the Christian teachings of the Bible on the participation of women in liberational roles. The Biblical teachings are most important because they form the essential basis for Christian belief and doctrines. As such, the teachings of the Church are inspired by the Bible - both the O.T. and the N.T.

2.3 Women In the O.T

We are aware of women in the O.T who played prominent liberational roles for their own good and for the well being of their communities. Imbued with the spirit of God, they actively and remarkably participated in salvation history prompted by their dedication to bring about authenticity. For the purpose of our thesis, we are going to briefly present six such women among others namely: Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Judith, Esther and Ab'igail.

Miriam, as we learn from the book of Exodus was the sister of Aaron (Ex 15:20). She played the role of a prophetess. As such, she enthusiastically led people in a festive celebration for giving thanks and praise to God in assisting them to cross the Red Sea. From the book of Exodus we read:

Then Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; and the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea" (Ex 15 : 20 - 21).

Another woman who was outstanding in her liberational role is Deborah. She was a prophetess and lived in the era of Judges (Judg 4 : 4). Deborah used her feminine power and wit to ensure the victory of Israel's army against the oppressors. She crowned all these by inspiring people with the canticle in praise of Jael (Judg 5: 24ff). As such, she managed to give hope and encouragement to her people.

Then we have Huldah, a brave woman who lived during the reign of King Josiah. She was not only consulted by men like Hilkiah the priest, but she also vigorously delivered the message of forgiveness and peace thus acting as God's instrument in the service of the people. The following quotation explicates her liberational role distinctly and clearly:

So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asa'iah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they talked with her. And she said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent you to me, Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. Because they have forsaken me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. But as to the kind of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words which you have heard, because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard how I spoke

against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have rent your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the LORD. Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place'." And they brought back word to the King(2 Kings 22 :14 - 20).

Another O.T. woman who played a prominent liberational role is Judith. She proved her worth and fearless service when the Israelites were confronted with the mighty army of Nebuchadnezzar (Jud 1 : 1ff). When even the elders lacked faith in God, Judith had the gumption to challenge people to trust in God and fight on. For love of her motherland and her people, Judith organised them and, in her fidelity and truthfulness to God, she allowed God to use her as the instrument to effect victory among her people. She thus became a model of deep faith in the midst of difficult circumstances. She also had courage to behead Holoferness the commander of the enemy army (Jud 13 :7) refusing to be coerced by her Israel men warriors' cowardice. Her difficult and courageous role for the common good provoked praise and glory from great men too (Jud 15: 8-10). Moreover, in gratitude to God Judith led all the people in service singing a long moving song of praise (Jud 16).

We then have Esther who also contributed a lot for the welfare of her people and in a foreign land (Esther 1 - 11). Through her the deliverance of the people of Israel was accomplished. Furthermore, unlike Judith, Esther refrained from killing the enemy. Instead, she interceded thereby playing the role of a courageous mediator although she was a woman. The deliverance is commemorated during the feast of Purim.

Another woman famous in the O.T. for her prominent liberational role is Ab'igail who was married to Nabal (1 Sam 25). Using her great faith and boldness, she was instrumental in saving her husband's family from bondage and possible death. Realising the eminent destruction of her husband's family by the mighty David, and when all seemed hopeless, she acted decisively. With courage and determination, she went out to meet David and with a lot of humility, knowledge and wisdom she begged him mercy. She earnestly requested David to have pity on Nabal's family. David himself acknowledged the self-transformation effected by Ab'igail as follows:

And David said to Ab'igail, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from avenging myself with my own hand! For as surely as the LORD the God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had made haste and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male." Then David received from her hand what she had brought him; and he said to her "Go up

in peace to your house; see, I have harkened to your voice and I have granted your petition" (1 Sam 25 : 32 - 35).

Thus Ab'igail played a fundamental role of interceding for her household. By so doing, she not only liberated Nabal's house from destruction, but also restrained David from committing evil deeds.

The above women, namely : Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Judith, Esther and Ab'igail adequately show that some distinctive O.T. women played liberational roles. They did so not only for their own welfare. As indicated above, they rendered their services for the good of men too and, indeed, for the common good. Among the basic characteristics they manifested as we have disclosed are: being prophetess; intermediaries; reconcilers; strategists; liturgical masters and salvation agents of God. Most remarkable is how they are actively involved in liberational roles, thanks to the docility in freedom in allowing God to use them as living instruments of salvation and deliverance. They participated with deep courage, self esteem, faith and determination. As such, they are a great inspiration to our contemporary women with liberational inclination.

2.4. Women In the N.T.

In looking at the participation of women in liberational roles, the author limits herself to the synoptic Gospels for purposive exemplification. The synoptic Gospels are notable for their peculiarities and concurrences in the universalistic liberation of the oppressed as well as the oppressors. They deal with the history of the life and person of Jesus Christ which is a vital and constant operative, challenging and controlling power in the lives of women. They form the content of their missionary apologetic and didache (catechitcal instructions) as well as their diverse approach to liberating the oppressed as first handled by women in the Gospels.

2.4.1 The Gospel According to St. Mark

St. Mark⁵ begins his gospel narrative with an eye-opener which reads: "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God " (Mk 1:1). According to the Biblical scholars, the evangelist had in mind his Gentile readers especially the Romans who were not conversant with the O.T. It is the shortest with its own peculiarities and omissions, among the synoptic Gospels, to suit the needs, aspirations, mentality and thought forms of its readers.

The discipleship and persistent faith of women as portrayed by St. Mark are

relevant models for Catholic women in their participation in liberational roles. The pericope (Mk 1 : 29-31) accounts for Jesus' healing of Simon's mother-in-law of her fever that had bed-ridden her. Soon after the healing, she served Jesus and His disciples with a new impetus as follows: "the rapidity and completeness of Jesus power is indicated by the fact that without any exhortation and debility she served them".⁶ Her service to Jesus Christ, her master, is a model of fervent service to Catholic women in readiness to serve and a call to witness and proclaim the Gospel.

The woman who had suffered for twelve years with a haemorrhage was cured after touching the cloak of Jesus (Mk 5 :25-34). This woman is a figure of deep faith and courage; she was aware of her uncleanness and it was a taboo to go near the people because any contact with them made them unclean. It was even worse to touch a rabbi; but because of her faith and courage she was healed instantly. This faith was commended by Jesus when He said : "... your faith has restored you to health, go in peace and be free from your complaint" (Mk 5:34).

Similarly, Jesus healed the daughter of the Syrophenician woman due to her faith (Mk 7 :24-30). The Gentile woman was aware that Gentiles were regarded as 'dogs' by the Jews, but she persistently insisted on Jesus, the Jew, healing even when it seemed impossible as expressed in this quotation: "but the house-dogs under the table can eat the children's scraps" (Mk 7 : 28). She is the only person who calls Jesus Lord in the Gospel according to Mark which signifies her devotion and insight into Jesus Christ. Her conversation with Jesus calls for co-operation of different faiths - an indiscriminate approach - towards liberation since she - a Gentile - sought mercy from a Jew.⁷

The account of a poor widow who gave all she had for the support of the Temple is an example of great sacrifice (Mk 12 : 41 - 44). The two coins, which were equivalent to a penny (Mk 12:43) were the smallest amount in circulation. Mark wanted to show his Gentile readers - especially the Romans - the importance of dedication and generosity even in humbling circumstances. This is a call for generous temporal support of the Church and the poor. The woman's action also introduces the passion narrative in which Jesus displayed most perfectly similar qualities by giving up His life for the redemption of many. The poor widow is a model of generous and trusting faith which was a sign of total dependence on God.⁸ An awareness is created that "Jesus in his words : 'This widow has put more than all of them she out of her poverty put in all the living that she had' (Lk21 : 1-4) ... presents her as a model for everyone and defends her, for in the socio-juridical system of the time, widows were totally defenceless people (cf also Lk 18:1-7)".⁹

The pericope (Mk 14: 3-9) is an account of the woman who anointed Jesus at Bethany with very expensive perfume. The very act of anointing Jesus at the house of

Simon the leper (Mk 14 :3) was a sign of liberated boldness which Jesus said was to be revered and commemorated when he stated that: "what she had done will be told also in memory of her" (Mk 14:9). The anointing was a prophetic preparation of the body of Jesus before His burial.¹⁰ The woman had a spiritual insight into the messianic dignity of Jesus Christ by anointing Him as the "anointed one". This symbolises the prophetic roles that women are called to participate in. The woman at Bethany confessed "her faith by symbolic action and embodies those qualities of devotion, courage and generosity that the liberating message of the gospel is to proclaim to the whole world".¹¹

2.4.2. The Gospel according to St. Matthew

The Matthean gospel¹² has many Jewish characteristics since the evangelist wrote mainly for the Jewish readers as we learn through historical - critical method of biblical study. As such he draws insights from the Jewish cultures and philosophy of life in trying to convince them that Jesus Christ was the Messiah they had long awaited.

The Matthean pericope (15 : 21-28, cf Mk 7 :24-30) demonstrates the discipleship of the Canaanite woman by identifying Jesus Christ as Lord and Son of David. She manifests a lot of wisdom in her reply to Jesus' answer in the following words:

"And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, " Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her "O woman, great is your faith!" Be it done for you as you desire" (Mt 15 : 26-28).

Concerning this pericope, John Paul II states:

Christ speaks to women the things of God and they understand them; there is a true resonance of mind and heart, a response of faith. Jesus expresses appreciation and admiration for this distinctly "feminine" response, as in the case of the Canaanite woman (cf Mt 15:28). Sometimes he represents this lively faith, filled with love as an example. He teaches, therefore taking as his starting point this feminine response of mind and heart. This is the case with the "sinful" woman in the Pharisee's house, whose way of acting is taken by Jesus as the starting-point for explaining the truth about forgiveness of sins.¹³

Such is the wisdom that liberationists should seek to have in the spirit of Christian living.

The evangelist Matthew also portrays women as the first disciples commissioned by Jesus Christ to witness to His resurrection (Mt 28 : 9-10). In spite of the fact they were women, Jesus as documented by Matthew commissioned them to play the role of directing His disciples to Galilee in order to meet Him. In emphasising the importance of this pericope John Paul II states that:

From the beginning of Christ's mission, women show to him and to his mystery a special sensitivity which is characteristic of their femininity. It must also be said that this is especially confirmed in the Paschal Mystery, not only at the cross, but also at the dawn of the Resurrection. The women are the first at the tomb. They are the first to hear: "He is not here. He has risen, as he said" (Mt 28:6). They are the first to be called to announce this truth to the Apostles (cf Mt 28: 1 - 10; Lk 24 : 8 -11).¹⁴

True Christian liberation calls the Catholic women to witness and proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ for the sanctification of those people that have not had the opportunity of knowing Jesus Christ, to those who have become de-evangelised and have become slaves of modern urbanisation, science and technology which seems to offer solutions to human problems but without ultimate truth.

2.4.3. The Gospel According to St. Luke

St. Luke the evangelist¹⁵ characteristically uses the cultures and philosophy of life of the Gentiles, particularly the Greeks, to win his readers. His gospel according to the historical - critical method is the most cultured since his readers are historically known to be highly cultured people. This made his gospel narrative relevant and acceptable to the Greeks.

Luke starts his gospel events by the prophesy of the birth of John the Baptist (Lk 1 : 5 - 25). John was to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ and the last eschatological fulfilment of Jesus as indicated by Luke as follows: "he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just to make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (Lk 1:17). This was fulfilled through Elizabeth, his mother, whose name means "either 'my God is the one by whom to swear' or 'my God is fullness'".¹⁶ The maternal role played by Elizabeth who was well advanced in years is of symbolic importance to the vocation of women as mothers which should be highly esteemed by all women.

Luke also accounts for the annunciation and birth of Jesus Christ (Lk 1: 26-38) and (Lk 2 :1-20, cf Mt 1 : 8-25) respectively . The B.V.M., who was betrothed to Joseph, becomes a partner in the economy of redemption.¹⁷ She portrays the role of a strong believer by accepting the angel's message of bearing and nurturing the child Jesus who later became the redeemer and saviour of humankind. It is through Her that the prophesy of Isaiah quoted below, was fulfilled:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace". Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his Kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for ever more (Is 9 : 6 - 7).

The B.V.M. becomes the figure of genuine hope, charity and faith to women liberationists in their pilgrimage of faith, peace and justice towards liberation.

Prophetess Anna, a widow, advanced in age served God in the Temple with prayers and fasting (Lk 2:36-38). She prophesied on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem (Lk 2 : 38). This is a sign of great hope, sacrifice and faith necessary for any redemptive ministries which the Catholic women undertake.

Luke gives us another interesting episode of a peculiar woman who manifested a lot of courage. When Jesus entered the house of a pharisee, the woman who was a sinner broke the Jewish prefabricated rules by entering the house of a hasidean. She went further to wipe Jesus' feet with her tears and anointed Him with ointment (Lk 7 :36-50). The woman was forgiven because of her determination, courage and love for Christ. This is a symbol of great courage, faith and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus gave her a new identity of a dignified and forgiven woman in her society. She gives us a model of women prostitutes who are sanctified from their sins - which are the root core of slavery and alienation.

Other women who followed and assisted Jesus in His ministry include Mary of Magdala, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza and Susanna (Lk 8 :1-3). By following and assisting Jesus, it shows that they participated in the ministry and had also learnt the good news of the kingdom of God. They, as true disciples of Jesus also assisted by ministering to the needs of their master - Jesus Christ and His disciples. Their participation in the mentioned ministry broke the tradition of women inferiority towards men which is a challenge to active women participation in liberational activities.

The pericope (Lk 10 :38 - 42) gives an account of Jesus' company of two women, Martha and Mary. By the very act of welcoming Jesus in their house, the two women showed hospitality to their Lord which can be equated to hosting the Church in their home. Mary and Martha respectively gave service to Jesus by listening to Him and trying to provide for His needs. But Jesus praised Mary more for choosing to listen to Him. Martha serves as a warning model to the Christians who concentrate too much on temporal satisfaction rather than seeking for the ultimate truth (Lk 10 : 40 - 42).

The large number of women who followed Jesus mourning and lamenting for Him to calvary is another indication of women's forefront and selfless service to the

Lord (Lk 23 : 26-32). This act could have been a result of Jesus teaching His followers that He was the way, the truth and the life. Women also took part in the burial of their master Jesus Christ (Lk 23 : 50 -12:11). They took note of the tomb and the position of the body so that they could return to anoint His body; this indicates the value of burial rituals to the Jews. This participation in salvation history became important to the Christian life because they - Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James among others - became important witnesses to Christ's resurrection. Luke presents them as chosen bearers of the Good News. He (Luke) shows the "importance of women in the Church's life in their commission to be the first proclaimers of Easter faith".¹⁸ Concerning women's forefront participation in redemptive ministries, the Pope has this to say:

The Gospels ... highlight the fact that women were in the forefront at the foot of the cross, at the decisive moment in Jesus of Nazareth's whole messianic mission. John was the only Apostle who remained faithful, but there were many faithful women. Not only the Mother of Christ and "his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene" (Jn 19 :25) were present, but "there were also many women there, looking on from afar who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him" (Mt 27:55) ...in this most arduous test of faith and fidelity the women proved stronger than the Apostles. In this moment of danger, those who love much succeed in overcoming their fear. Before this, there were the women on the via Dolorosa, "who bewailed and lamented him" (Lk 23:27). Earlier still there was Pilate's wife, who had warned her husband : "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream" (Mt 27:19).¹⁹

The Pope presents and acknowledges women's sensitivity and capability to service and fearless love in their participation in liberational roles.

2.4.4. The panoramic view of Lk 4 : 16-30

The importance of the model of Jesus Christ as a Liberator to the Catholic women liberationists can be derived from Lk 4 : 16-30. The panoramic view of this Lucan text clearly indicates its value for our subject. To verify this, the following literally analysis is vital.

Jesus went back to Nazareth, his home town where He joined the Jews in the synagogue as a committed Jew on the Sabbath day as it was their custom (V.16). He volunteered to read the scripture although it was the duty of the director to authorise a competent adult Jew to read and expound the scripture in the synagogue. He was handed the scroll of prophet Isaiah (V. 17). Jesus read the prophecy of Isaiah which,

when he finished reading, said He was its fulfilment (Vs. 18 - 20). The prophecy shows the universal mission He was to accomplish and His awareness to fulfil the prophecy namely:

- a) to spread the good news to the afflicted;
- b) to give sight to the blind and to liberate the captives;
- c) to free the oppressed; and
- d) to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

The proclamation of the fulfilment of the prophesy by Jesus Himself at first won Him admiration from the crowd (V. 22a). This admiration then turned to sheer animosity when they recalled the background of Jesus as the son of Joseph - the carpenter (V.22b). Jesus reacted to the rage of the people (Vs.23 - 27). He anticipated their intentions by telling the people of their demands to prove Himself to be the messiah. He declared that a prophet is never accepted in His own home country. To emphasis this, Jesus reminded them of the time Elijah was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a town in Sidonia and not to any of the widows of Israel (V.25). Similarly, during the time of prophet Elisha only Naaman the Syrian was cured among the many sufferers from the virulent skin diseases. Elisha was not sent to the Jews (V.27). Furthermore, (Vs. 28-30) shows people's reaction towards Jesus' response. All the people became enraged and hustled Him out of the city. With the intention of killing Him, they took Him to the brow of the hill of their city in order to throw Him off the cliff. But Jesus escaped through the crowd and walked away from the enraged people.

The above Lucan text (4: 16-30) enriches us, and actually teaches us the following which is of great importance for our thesis.

a) Luke presents the boldness of Jesus Christ in liberating humankind. Jesus was not formally schooled as the scribes were. He was a son of a mere carpenter and spent most of His time helping His father Joseph. By their standards, he was not competent enough to be chosen to read the text. But due to His boldness and conviction, He was ready to face any criticism and rejection while rendering this vital service. This shows the Catholic women that a liberationist needs to be courageous and confident in undertaking any genuine liberational role. They should be ready to face any challenges, risks, rejections and frustrations in their roles or activities as Jesus did. They should also be courageous enough to insert themselves into the lives of the people particularly the sufferers and the oppressed. The Catholic women should note that their roles in political, social, economic, religious, educational, cultural and medical realms can endanger their professions or lives. Hence a call for boldness and persistence as Jesus manifested.

b) As a liberator, Jesus brings the good news to the afflicted, which was to set the

captives free. He brings to the people the means to liberation and emancipation. This is a challenge to the Catholic women liberationists and feminists to re-establish authentic lives of both the oppressed and the oppressors.

c) Jesus liberating mission is universal. He came to liberate the Jews as well as the Gentiles, the women as well as the men. Similarly, the Catholic women liberationists should emulate Jesus' mission of working indiscriminately for the common good. They should be ready to help all the people regardless of their gender, religious beliefs, political affiliations, races, status and locality. Thus, from this we learn that women's liberational ministry should not only be for the welfare of women. It should also be for the welfare of the human race which includes men whether they are the oppressors or the oppressed.

d) Jesus' proclamation of the fulfilment of the prophesy of Isaiah as the messiah shows His awareness and willingness to liberate the oppressed. Catholic women should also take it upon themselves as an obligation of duty to liberate particularly the afflicted, the oppressed and the poor. It is the duty of these women to identify for themselves the aspects or perspectives they need to liberate others from. This amounts to embracing the dangerous and oftentimes thankless PROPHETIC roles in our contemporary society which is severely subjected to modernisation and existential anxieties of rapid changes.

e) Jesus also proclaimed the year of favour from the Lord, which the Jewish leaders in the Temple ignored (Is. 61 : 1-2). The Jewish leaders were reluctant to proclaim this because of the weight of the Jubilee's requirements. Among the accompanying demands of the Jubilee were:

- i) to free all the slaves;
- ii) to relax the debts (Lev 25 : 2ff);
- iii) to return all alienated property to its original owner;
- iv) to share bread with the hungry and give hospitality to the poor as well as clothing the naked; and
- v) to give justice to the weak, the destitutes and orphans.

These and other factors within the framework of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) had painstaking social bearings which they did not like. They were uncomfortable with such requisites. That is why they conveniently evaded the verse (Vs 18 -19). As a result, the oppressed remained oppressed while the rich continued to prosper. It was a surprise to the archsynagogus and the scribes to be reminded of their ignorance towards the poor and the oppressed. In other words, they were ignorant or reluctant to implement the demands of scriptures. The significance of this to the Catholic women liberationists is to conscientise them to be bold enough to remind the Church or the

leaders in ecclesial, political and economic realms of their limitations and assert the sidelined values and related issues of social justice and genuine peace. This calls for a revolutionised attitude among the liberationists rather than a conservative approach towards unauthenticity; that is an attitude that changes genuinely with the needs, mentality and aspirations of the people with personal and communal conversion as the springboard.

f) Luke leaves it open for us to find out from what aspects we should liberate. In other words Luke does not give a summary of the liberational roles we have to play but leaves it at our own discretion. As such, women liberationists get an option as to the kind of liberational roles they would like to play utilising Jesus the universal Liberator *par excellence* as their model.

The above analysis highlights women's participation in trying to establish and enhance authenticity, through their devotion to service, motherhood, discipleship, charisms, deep and persistent faith, and amicable love. They participated in diverse ways and means in the salvation history of all people. Their forefront participation in the messianic mission of Jesus is thus an encouragement and inspiration for the contemporary women to total courageous and self-giving service for the sake of liberating the less fortunate, the afflicted, the oppressed and the oppressors. Moreover, the paranomic view of Lk 4 : 16-30 not only equips women with Jesus as their liberational exemplar, but also creates awareness of the struggle and the universality involved in the task. It further becomes a pointer to the contribution that when women are participating in diverse liberational roles they are actualising the will of God who made a fundamental option for oppressed, the marginalised and the dejected in the person of Jesus Christ the Redeemer and Saviour.

2.5 Documents of Vatican Council II

The Vatican Council II was convoked between 1962 and 1965. Unlike the Vatican Council I which deliberated and ruled on matters concerning faith and reason, and the papal ecclesiastical primacy and infallibility, the Vatican Council II ruled on the incorporation of all its members, of other Christians and of the entire world. This section examines the Conciliar documents of Vatican Council II on the teachings, instructions and challenges on women liberational roles.

The decree Lumen Gentium (L.G) (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), 21 November, 1964²⁰ emphasises the call of the people of God to participate in the threefold roles of Christ through their baptism and confirmation; that is, priestly, kingly and prophetic missions as explained below:

Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful are appointed by their baptismal character to Christian religious worship, reborn as sons of God, they must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church. By the sacrament of Confirmation, they are more perfectly bound to the Church and are endowed with the special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread the faith by word and deed. ...aroused and sustained by the spirit of truth, the People of God, guided by the sacred teaching authority (magisterium), and obeying it, receives not the mere word of men, but truly the word of God (cf 1 Th 2:13), the faith once for all delivered to the saints (cf Jude 3). The people unfailingly adheres to this faith, penetrates it more deeply with right judgement, and applies it more fully in daily life.²¹

The Catholic women have an obligation of duty to proclaim the mystery of Christ to those who for various reasons have not known Christ.²² Through the sacrament of matrimony the Christians (women) have a prophetic role of evangelisation in their families to fulfil.²³

By the virtue of their charisms, as taught by L.G., the faithful should participate in the building of the Church through temporal occupations. The people are one body of Christ (cf Rom 12: 4-5) but in diversity of their essence of living, they should work for the sanctification of the world. All temporal duties should be geared towards the glorification of God. While each individual has own charisms, what matters is the person at work and not the work done in degree of social status, race or gender²⁴ (cf Col 3:11). According to L.G., those Christians that are called to assist and work in ecclesiastical offices should do it diligently towards the establishment of divine salvation, putting into consideration the needs, thought forms and aspirations of the people.²⁵

Chapter four of L.G, on The Laity ²⁶ challenges and directs all Christians to cooperate in the apostolates and temporal duties in establishing equality and liberty in these words:

The faithful must, then, recognize the inner nature, the value and the ordering of the whole of creation to the praise of God. Even by their secular activity they must aid one another to great holiness of life, so that the world may be filled with the spirit of Christ and may the more effectively attain its destiny in justice, in love and in peace. The laity enjoy a principle role in the universal fulfilment of this task. Therefore, by their competence in secular disciplines and by their activity, interiorly raised up by grace, let them work earnestly in order that created goods through human labor, technical skill and civil culture may serve the utility of all men according to the plan of the creator and the light of his word. May these goods be more suitably distributed among all men and in their own way may they be conducive to

universal progress in human and Christian liberty.²⁷

On matters concerning the Church the laity have an obligation to guide the Church through the established institutions. As Christians, they should serve as Her conscience. L.G. states:

By reason of the knowledge, competence or pre-eminence which they have the laity are empowered - indeed sometimes obliged - to manifest their opinion on those things which pertain to the good of the Church. If the occasion should arise this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose and always with truth, courage and prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who, by reason of their office, represent the person of Christ.²⁸

This kind of boldness is well exemplified in Christ's mission to fulfil the prophesy of (Is 61 : 1-2). It is a call for all Christians to live a holy life (cf Mt 5 : 48) and to support one another towards this holiness.

Chapter eight of L.G. is a Mariological explication of the Church's dogma on B.V.M.²⁹ It explains the role of the B.V.M as the Mother of God, the Mother of the Church and of all Christians as follows:

The Virgin Mary, who at the message of the angel received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and gave life to the world, is acknowledged and honoured as being truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer. Redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son and united to him by close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the high office and dignity of the Mother of the Son of God and therefore she is also the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit.³⁰

Moreover,

Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. But, being of the race of Adam, she is at the same time also united to all those who are to be saved; indeed, "She is clearly the mother of the members of Christ ... since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head." Wherefore, She is hailed as pre-eminent and as a wholly unique member of the Church, and its type and outstanding model in faith and charity.³¹

The B.V.M. as a figure of hope, faith and charity becomes an inspiration³² to the contemporary women liberationists. Her position as the Mother of God (Theotokos) earns her the titles Advocate, Helper, Meidatrix and Benefactress.³³ Catholic women should emulate such characteristics in their own capacity and through their charisms.

Apostolicam Actuositatem (A.A.) (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People), 18th November, 1965³⁴ further explains the role of the laity in apostolic duties through their self giftedness as attained through baptism and confirmation. Lay apostolate should be a diligent blending of one's spirituality and temporal activities.³⁵ True witnessing of faith in Christ makes use of the two above mentioned characteristics. As A. A. states:

Laymen should make such a use of these helps that, while meeting their human obligations in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate their union with Christ from their ordinary life; but through the very performance of their tasks, which are God's will for them, actually promotes the growth of their union with him. This is the path along which laymen must advance, fervently, joyfully, overcoming difficulties with prudent patient efforts. Family cares should not be foreign to their spirituality, nor any other temporal interest; in the words of the apostle. "Whatever you are doing, whether speaking or acting, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the father through him" (Col 3:17).³⁶

Such apostolate is well explicated by the B.V.M. as a Woman, a Mother and a Worker in Her lowly social status.³⁷

The objectives of lay apostolate³⁸ as stated in A.A include redemption of humankind, the perfection of temporal order - which comprise "personal and family values, culture, economic interests, the trades and professions, institutions of the political community, international relations and so on as well as their gradual development"³⁹- and works of charity to the oppressed for the benefit of all people. The lay apostolate is a diverse field upon which A. A. obligates the Catholic faithful to participate in some of the mentioned fields⁴⁰ which include Church communities, the family which comprise "adopting abandoned children, showing a loving welcome to strangers, helping with the running of schools, supporting adolescents with advice and help, assisting engaged couples to make a better preparation for marriage, taking a share in catechism - teaching, supporting married people and families in a material or moral crisis, and in the case of the aged not only providing them with what is indispensable but also procuring for them a fair share of fruits of economic progress".⁴¹ The apostolate of young people, the apostolate of like towards like and the global apostolate are other areas of lay apostolate.

The lay apostolate does, however, take shape in different forms. Of most important is the individual apostolate. In this, the women liberationists should be guided by their Christian conscience (cf Jn 4:11). This is vital especially where the Christian faith is hampered by forces of enduring cultural ties, religious traditions and lack of knowledge of God, among others. Such individual apostolate in co-operation facilitates group apostolates.⁴² This unison facilitates a combined force towards establishing

authenticity. This should serve as an insight towards fervent women participation in co-operation in liberational roles.

In the light of the above, missionary work becomes a vitality towards sanctification. Ad Gentes Divinitus (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity), 7th December, 1965⁴³ explains the need of those involved in missionary work to adequately incarnate the gospel into the lives, thought forms and aspirations of the people. The Catholic missionaries should also insert themselves into the lives of those that they intend to evangelise in order to make the Gospel message more meaningful to them as instructed in the following quotation:

In order to bear witness to Christ, fruitfully, they should establish relationships of respect and love with those men, they should acknowledge themselves as members of the group in which they live, and through the various undertakings and affairs of human life they should share in their social and cultural life. They should be familiar with their national and religious traditions and uncover with gladness and respect those seeds of the Word which lie hidden among them. ... Just as Christ penetrated to the hearts of men and by a truly human dialogue led them to the divine light, so too his disciples, profoundly pervaded by the Spirit of Christ, should know and converse with those among whom they live, that through sincere and patient dialogue these men might learn of the riches which a generous God has distributed among nations...⁴⁴

Such is the inculturational background information that any Catholic catechising and missionary woman should bear in mind.

On the dignity of humanity, the Church recognises the image of God in people and emphasises the need to establish an authentic life without tampering with the dignity and vocation of the oppressed. Gaudium et spes (G.S.) (Pastrol Constitution On the Church in The Modern World), 7th December 1965,⁴⁵ highlights some of the causes that render people captives, namely ; sin: atheism, systematic atheism, the mystery of death, sudden social, political and economic changes.⁴⁶ This awareness calls for active participation of the liberationists in all spheres of life for the common good. Concerning the participation in public life, G.S. states that:

It is fully consonant with human nature that there should be politico-juridical structures providing all citizens without any distinction with ever improving and effective opportunities to play an active part in the establishment of the juridical foundations of the political community, in the administration of public affairs, in determining the aims and the terms of reference of public bodies, and in the election of political leaders. Every citizen ought to be mindful of his right and his duty to promote the common good by using his vote. The church praises and esteems those who devote themselves to the public good for the

service of men and take upon themselves the burdens of public office.⁴⁷

The decree does, however, caution that "Christians must be conscious of their specific and proper role in the political community: they should be a shining example by their sense of responsibility and their dedication to the common good; they should show in practice how authority can be reconciled with freedom, personal initiative and with the solidarity and the needs of the whole social framework and the advantages of unity with profitable diversity".⁴⁸

In conclusion, the Conciliar documents of Vatican Council II as examined above exhibits diverse instructions and teachings for the Catholic women liberationists. They serve as an eye opener to fields of oppression and means for liberation. As such, they revitalise the roles, dignity and the femininity of women's participation in redemption of humankind. The decreed instructions and teachings can however be summarised as follows:

- a) As members of the people of God, women should participate in the threefold missions of Christ namely : priestly, kingly and prophetic missions.
- b) Women have an obligation of duty to evangelisation of their families.
- c) They should blend their spiritual and temporal duties for effective evangelisation.
- d) Women liberationists should be indiscriminate in their efforts to redeem people (cf Col 3:11).
- e) They should avail themselves to assist and work in ecclesiastical offices.
- f) They should be active in lay apostolate either in individual or group apostolate.
- g) They should cooperate in their apostolic ministries.
- h) They should act as the conscience of the Church as well as the society.
- i) Boldness is called for in effective liberational roles.
- j) Women should emulate the B.V.M. in their liberational and apostolic ministries.
- k) They should aim at redeeming all the people and at perfecting the temporal order.
- l) They have a right to choose among the diverse fields of apostolate and ministries.
- m) They should participate in lay missionary work.
- n) They should also participate in all sphere/realms of life with an aim of liberating all people subjected to oppression.

2.6 The Papal Encyclicals, Apostolic Exhortations, Papal Letters/ Addresses and the Kenya Episcopal Conference

This sub-section examines the Post Conciliar documents which are an explication and affirmation of the Christian teachings of the Bible and the decrees of the Conciliar documents spelt out in Vatican Council II. It examines the most relevant Papal Encyclicals, Apostolic Exhortations, Papal Letters/Addresses, and the teachings of K.E.C. that challenge, instruct and teach the Catholic women on active participation on liberational roles. John Paul II has a remarkable contribution towards this subject.

2.6.1. Mulieris Dignitatem (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women)

This Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II is among the most renowned document dealing with the Church's teachings, directives and challenges on and about women in view of liberation. The Letter was issued on 15th August, 1988 to coincide with one of the Church's dogma - the Assumption of the B.V.M. - and the tenth pontificate of John Paul II. It marked the Marian Year, that is from August 1987 to October 1988, a year the Church explicitly dedicated specifically to the B.V.M as the best example of who a genuine woman is and the roles a liberated woman can and should play for the good of fellow women and of all.

As the Woman who bore the Son of God sent to redeem (Gal 4:4), Mary played a most central place in salvation history. Her place was so vital that she is traditionally and technically referred to as Theotokos. The Apostolic Letter tells us that:

Mary attains a union with God that exceeds all the expectations of all Israel, in particular the daughters of this chosen people, who, on the basis of the promise, could hope that one of their number would one day become the mother of the Messiah ... Only by the power of the Holy Spirit, ... was Mary able to accept what was "impossible with men but not with God" (cf. 10:27).⁴⁹

Thanks to the above divine gift for the service of humanity, Mary becomes the complete human being and the culmination of the dignity and vocation of women. Her awareness of Her femininity and the God given mission to accomplish is a pointer and encouragement to women in their liberational roles. An awareness is created that:

The dignity of every human being and the vocation corresponding to that dignity find their definitive measure in union with God. Mary, the woman of the Bible, is the most complete expression of this dignity and vocation. For no human being, male or female, created in the image of God, can in any way attain fulfilment apart from this image and likeness.⁵⁰

In the explanation of Genesis (2 :18-25) we are reminded of the equality and fundamental partnership between man and woman.⁵¹ In the interpersonal communion the equality of all, men and women, for a fulfilled existence is well disclosed and articulated. By their humanity, women and men are essentially equal. Nevertheless, we are reminded that "to be human means to be called to interpersonal communion".⁵² That is why the bible attributes both "feminine" and "masculine" elements to the Creator. With this awareness, women are inferior to nobody. Their inferiority complex is a contradiction of their being created co-equal. They are indeed, complementary beings. As such, whatever role they play, their beneficiaries should not only be fellow women but men too, and creation as well.

The Letter explains in details the Eve-Mary analogy in salvation history.⁵³ What comes out clearly is that the woman Eve failed the human race by sinning while the Woman Mary participated in liberating human race by cooperating in God's grace. The latter superceeded the former in doing good for all. She overcame the shame of Eve in such a way that she restored the dignity of women by being the transformed "Eve".⁵⁴

The Apostolic Letter, furthermore, creates the awareness that, existentially, motherhood surpasses fatherhood and that the latter has a lot to learn from the former. Within the context of special communion with the mystery of life, the Letter stresses the following with regard to the role of motherhood:

It is commonly thought that women are more capable than men of paying attention to another person, and that motherhood develops this predisposition even more. The man - even with all his sharing in parenthood - always remain "outside" the process of pregnancy and the baby's birth; in many ways he has to learn his own "fatherhood" from the mother In any event, the mother's contribution is decisive in laying the foundation for a new human person.⁵⁵

The value of consecrated virginity is also elaborated. The Letter is clear in the invaluable impact of celibacy for service to all. Through their evangelical counsels - Chastity, Poverty and Obedience - the consecrated virgins radically follow the tough discipleship demands of Jesus to leave everything and follow Him (cf Mt 19:27). The Letter expresses this within the context of the complete service for the Kingdom of God.⁵⁶ Indeed "Celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom or rather virginity, is undeniably an innovation connected with the incarnation of God".⁵⁷

The Apostolic Letter, furthermore enriches us with the explication of the symbolism of the Church as the bride of Christ.⁵⁸ The analogy makes clear the equality and necessary complementarity of women and men in what they are and what they do. It is important to bear in mind that:

In the sphere of what is “human” - of what is humanly personal “masculinity” and “femininity” are distinct, yet at the same time they complete and explain each other. This is also present in the great analogy of the “Bride” in the Letter to the Ephesians. In the Church every human being - male and female - is the “Bride”, in that he or she accepts the gift of the love of Christ the Redeemer, and seeks to respond to it with the gift of his or her own person.⁵⁹

It is encouraging to learn from the Apostolic Letter how the Church acknowledges, exhorts and is grateful for the liberational roles and other active participations of women of all kinds of categories. The Church asserts this as follows:

Therefore the church gives thanks for each and every woman: for mothers, for sisters, for wives, for women consecrated to God in virginity, for women dedicated to the many human beings who await the gratuitous love of another person; for women who watch over the human persons in the family, which is the fundamental sign of the human community; for women who work professionally, and who at times are burdened by a great social responsibility for “perfect” women and for “weak” women - for all women as they have come forth from the heart of God in all the beauty and richness of their femininity; as they have been embraced by his eternal love; as, together with men, they are pilgrims on this earth, which is the temporal “homeland” of all people and is transformed sometimes into a “valley of tears”; as they assume together with men a common responsibility for the destiny of humanity according to daily necessities and according to that definitive destiny which the human family has in God himself, in the bosom of the ineffable Trinity.⁶⁰

Also:

The church gives thanks for all the manifestations of the feminine “genius” which have appeared in the course of history, in the midst of all peoples and nations; she gives thanks for all the charisms which the Holy Spirit distributes to women in the history of the People of God, for all the victories which she owes to their faith, hope and charity: she gives for all the fruits of feminine holiness.⁶¹

In conclusion, this analysis of M.D. discloses the Roman Catholic renewed and revitalised image, understanding, attitude and role of women. The foregoing section has critically and profoundly brought out a re-evaluation, assertion, pedagogy and challenge of women in their redemptive roles thanks to their status of common priesthood by virtue of their baptism, confirmation and participation in the Eucharist. These may be summarised as follows:

- a) It is an obligation for all Catholic women to participate in liberational roles

according to their God-given charisms;

- b) Liberationists should not be discriminative in helping the oppressed and the oppressors;
- c) Motherhood and consecrated virginity are important vocations for women participation in divinsing ministries;
- d) Catholic women should emulate Jesus Christ and the B.V.M. in their liberational roles;
- e) The feminine touch in all circles of oppression is important. As such, women need not masculinise themselves to succeed in their efforts;
- f) Mothers have a great responsibility in creating good characters out of their children especially at their formative stage;
- g) The interpersonal communion between men and women should enhance liberational activities of women and of all;
- h) The Church hails all women - mothers, wives, sisters/nuns, professionals - who pursue liberational activities for the sake of humanising the society . She does, therefore, call upon women to intensify their roles by encouraging them.

2.6.2 Letters and Addresses of John Paul II

Pope John Paul II addresses his Letter to Mrs. Getrude Mongella who was the Secretary General of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing (Sept 1995), on the eve of the conference and to all women throughout the world. He commends the efforts of women in their fight for equality and freedom.

The Pope stresses the importance of the dignity of women which he says is fundamental in any liberational roles. He states that:

The conference's success will depend on whether or not it will offer a true vision of women's dignity and aspirations, a vision capable of inspiring and sustaining objective and realistic responses to the suffering, struggle and frustration that continue to be a part of all too many women's lives.⁶²

His acknowledgement of the dignity and unfreedom of women challenges women to "call on governments and organisations to work effectively to ensure the legal guarantee of women's dignity and rights".⁶³ He affirms his teachings as explicated in M.D. on the need for women to sustain their femininity in liberational movements.

According to him, motherhood an important vocation for women, should not be seen as an impediment to personal assertion and actualisation. Motherhood is inherent to any proper child's growth to maturity, henceforth, a neglect and abandonment of

one's child is oppressive and a contradiction to the intentions of the above mentioned vocation. The Pope teaches that:

It is a disservice not only to children, but also to women and society itself, when a woman is made to feel guilty for wanting to remain in the home and nurture and care for her children. A mother's presence in the family, so critical to the stability and growth of that basic unit of society, should instead be recognized, applauded and supported in every possible way.⁶⁴

Women have a task of humanising the society through their self giftedness. They should enhance development and progress - which John Paul II defines as "access to resources and opportunities, equitable access not only between social and economic classes, but also between women and men"⁶⁵ for the temporal liberty of the marginalised. This progress and development is however, deterred by disservice done to the essence of human life through abortion and contraception: "there will never be justice, including equality, development and peace, for women or for men, unless there is unfailing determination to respect, protect, love and serve life - every human life, at every stage and in every situation".⁶⁶ Women should note that liberation of the society springs from their subjective consent to sustain life.

The Pope, however, does recognise, acknowledge and commend those women participating in liberational activities in these words:

Thanks to women who devote themselves to children, to the suffering, to the elderly ; in the family , in hospital wards, in mission dispensaries, in a whole range of public and private institutions, in volunteer work. In all these spheres the presence of women are able to combine singular gifts of generosity, practicality, intuition and tenderness with necessary professionalism is irreplaceable. It is comforting to note how many women today are dedicated to the medical profession, one of those which together with competence demands a large dose of humanity.⁶⁷

The Pope teaches that women should also serve as symbols of peace between warring parties through love and forgiveness : "may the women on opposing sides, especially the mothers give one another their hand symbolically in a chain of peace, as if to compel the governments, those fighting and the whole people to regain their trust in the validity of negotiations and the prospects of peaceful coexistence".⁶⁸

Media, as a forum for promoting the participation of women in development and progress, according to the Papal Letters and Addresses, is an important aspect of women liberation. It is a means with which women can use to promote their prerogatives. The pope expresses his sentiments towards women's oppression in the media with the

following questions:

How often is the role of women as wife and mother undervalued or even ridiculed? How often is the role of women in business or profession life depicted as a masculine caricature, a denial of the specific gifts of feminine insight, compassion and understanding, which so greatly contribute to the "civilization of love?"⁶⁹

Women can however revolutionise the above situation by implementing "sound media education programmes" by being decriminate media consumers as guided by the Pope.⁷⁰ It is also the responsibility of the women to educate the girl child and to set role models in religious, socio-economic, educational and in political levels. As earlier mentioned the dignity of women thus becomes inherent to any form of liberation and women should propagate this by upholding their femininity.⁷¹

In conclusion, the Apostolic Letters and Addresses of Pope John Paul II to women provide a pedagogical succinct of women's role and dignity to liberation. Its explication of these roles can be summarised as follows:-

- a) The dignity of women is fundamental to any liberational activities;
- b) Women should cooperate in fighting against any form of oppression meted out against them;
- c) Motherhood should not be seen as an impediment to personal actualisation;
- d) Women have a role of initiating human development and progress;
- e) The humanisation of the society begins at a woman's subjective consent of her conception;
- f) Women should become animators of pro-life campaigns;
- g) More women should be trained as medical professionals to get in touch with the most needy people;
- h) Women should serve as symbols of peace between warring parties;
- i) They should also revolutionise the contempted feminine image in mass media to revitalise their dignity.

2.6.3 Redemptoris Mater (The Mother of the Redeemer)

The Encyclical R.M of John Paul II was issued on 25th March, 1987 to mark the annunciation of the divine mystery of incarnation and the Pope's ninth pontificate. It is an explication of the role of the B.V.M as a model of faith, charity and fidelity to women liberationists.

Through the Immaculate Conception, the B.V.M gains the title Coredemptrix.

Her consent (fiat) to become the Mother of the Son of God is a model of unquestionable faith that the Church is called to emulate in Her task of redemption.⁷² As such, the life of the B.V.M. becomes concrete to the Gospel readers from the moment of annunciation (Lk 1: 26-31). Her low status in the society is a challenge to liberationists to eradicate the forms of oppression in our contemporary society for the glorification of God. The cry for freedom can be heard through the Church, mass media and in existential life. Even Mary in her magnificat⁷³ glorified God for raising her status (Lk 1 : 48). This becomes a life giving hope for the Catholic women as well as the oppressed.⁷⁴

The femininity and dignity of women - as emphasised by Pope John Paul II in his Letters and Address to women on the eve of the World Conference on women in Beijing (Sept 1995)⁷⁵ - is fundamental to any liberational work. Mary's fiat is Her subjective consent of Her femininity for an eschatological fulfilment of the Church as explained in the following words:

She responded, therefore, with all her human and feminine "I", ... By accepting this announcement, Mary was to become the "Mother of the Lord", and the divine mystery of the Incarnation was to be accomplished in her: "The Father of mercies willed that the consent of the predestined Mother should precede the Incarnation" ... The mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished when Mary uttered her fiat...⁷⁶

This is a symbol of prophetic roles of contemporary women as mothers and propagators of life.

The joy and travail of motherhood, as taught in R.M., is shrouded with sufferings and contemplation. This is well implicated by the B.V.M. in her fiat to bear the Son of God, nurturing Him and later being His disciple. Motherhood should be received as a liberational vocation which entails readiness to suffering and sacrifice as in the case of B.V.M. In readiness to preserve life She became a refugee in Egypt yet She was the Mother of the Son of God.⁷⁷ Thanks to Mary's "obedience of faith" (Rom 16:26)⁷⁸ and the complementarity and mutuality of Mary and Joseph that our redeemer Jesus Christ was saved from the oppressive hand of Herod. Moreover, the life of the B.V.M brings to our awareness that liberational work calls for partaking in other people's sufferings.⁷⁹

According to R.M., the liberation of people should have a whollistic approach. Other than temporal liberty, we are instructed that the liberationists should offer Christian liberty. Full conversion and belief in one's faith becomes a channel of divinising ministries. The B.V.M. becomes a model of great hope, deep faith and genuine charity to the Church. Her Coredemptrix marked the culmination of the O.T. and inauguration of the N.T. at the annunciation, a faith - according to John Paul II - that is analogous to that of

Abraham.⁸⁰ She was also the first forthright disciple of Christ.⁸¹ As the encyclical stresses:

It is precisely Mary's faith which marks the beginning of the new and external covenant of God with man in Jesus Christ; this heroic faith of her "precedes" the apostolic witness of the church, and ever remains in the church's heart, hidden like a special heritage of God's revelation. All those who from generation, accept the apostolic witness of the church share in that mysterious inheritance, and in a sense share in Mary's faith.⁸²

The Church has the task of helping Christians in their "pilgrimage of faith"⁸³; the women apostolates, in the spirit of evangelisation should work "energetically and constantly to bring all humanity ... back to Christ its Head in the unity of his Spirit"⁸⁴ with an ecumenical orientation.

The magnificat is an expression of God's fundamental option for the poor through B.V.M. Mary was among the marginalised and the oppressed of Israel who faithfully awaited the salvation of God. The theme of divine election is actuated at the annunciation where Mary gives Her glorification to God for uplifting Her lowly status to that of Coredemptrix. The Church - liberationists - should bear in mind that:

there is a duty to safeguard carefully the importance of "the poor" and of "the option in favour of the poor" in the word of the living God. These are matters and questions intimately connected with the Christian meaning of freedom and liberation. "Mary is totally dependent upon God and completely directed towards him, and, at the side of her Son, she is the most perfect image of freedom and of the liberation of humanity and of the universe." It is to her as Mother and Model that the Church must look in order to understand in its completeness the meaning of her own mission.⁸⁵

Similarly, the role of the B.V.M. in the mystery of Christ is also realised in the mystery of the Church as the bride of Christ. As a Mother and a Virgin, she explicates similar roles to the Church in the light of redemption and in the pilgrimage of the Christian faithful as taught by the Pope in the following words:

The Church "becomes herself a mother by accepting God's word with fidelity." Like Mary who first believed by accepting the word of God revealed to her at the annunciation and by remaining faithful to that word in all her trials even unto the Cross, so too the Church becomes a mother when, accepting with fidelity the word of God, "by her preaching and by baptism she brings forth to a new and immortal life children who are conceived of the Holy spirit and born of God." This "maternal" characteristic of the Church was expressed in a particularly vivid way by the Apostle to the Gentiles when he wrote: "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!" (Gal 4 : 19).⁸⁶

Thanks to Her Motherhood, the faithful Christians have become daughters and sons of God : "And because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:6). From Her the Church "recognises the maternal dimension of her vocation".⁸⁷

In conclusion, R. M. is an explication of the roles a liberated woman ought to undertake in liberating the oppressed as well as the oppressors. As such, it is a pointer towards the roles, dignity and femininity of Catholic women liberationists which can be summarised as follows:-

- a) Liberationists should always be attentive to the cry of the marginalised and be ready to help;
- b) They should also insert themselves into people's lives in order to identify their plight;
- c) Motherhood is a liberational vocation that entails suffering, contemplation and sacrifice;
- d) Detachment from the plight of the oppressed is an ineffective approach towards liberation;
- e) Liberation should have a whollistic approach;
- f) Catholic women should learn their discipleship from the B.V.M, who was the first disciple of Christ;
- g) They have a responsibility of evangelising other people;
- h) The Church should learn Her parentage from the B.V.M.

2.6.4 Redemptoris Missio (On the Permanent Validity of The Church's Missionary Mandate)

R. Ms is the eighth encyclical of Pope John Paul II issued at his thirteenth pontifical year, 1990. It concided with the silver jubilee of the Conciliar Decree Ad gentes.

R.Ms is an urgent call to missionary work which the Pope says is a "matter of all Christians."⁸⁸ It is a response to a request of such a document to clarify the implications of Ad gentes and for the resurgences of Christian faith. The Pope aimed at encouraging and facilitating the missionary work of the Church, those called to missionary vocations, those who assist Catholic Lay Missionaries (C.L.M.) and theologians engaged in exploring and expounding systematically the aspects of missionary work. He also aimed at clarifying the intentions of the missionaries to the non-Christians especially the political

leaders. He stated the purpose as a service to the people by witnessing and proclaiming the Christian liberty.⁸⁹

The encyclical affirms the teachings of R.M. that man's liberty cannot only be sought by his horizontal inclinations, but also his spiritual attainments; a vitality to man's fundamental questions on God, life and death. Jesus Christ becomes a model to women liberationists by integrating the two forms of liberation (cf Lk 4: 16 - 30) which is a characteristic of the Kingdom of God.⁹⁰ As such, "the poor are hungry for God, not just for bread and freedom".⁹¹ The Holy Father further explicates this by saying:

The liberation and salvation brought by the Kingdom of God come to the human person both in his physical and spiritual dimensions. Two gestures are characteristic of Jesus' mission: healing and forgiving. Jesus' many healings clearly show his great compassion in the face of human distress, but they also signify that in the Kingdom there will no longer be sickness or suffering and that his mission, from the very beginning, is meant to free people from these evils. In Jesus' eyes, healings are also a sign of spiritual salvation, namely liberation from sin.⁹²

On the other hand, liberationists should bear in mind that those who require redemption have a right of conscience on the means of liberation with the least coercion and most important a right to this redemption. As the encyclical puts it, forced liberation is no liberation.⁹³ But through the grace of God, a liberationist is called to participate in the salvation mystery through her subjective consent. It is only by this means that women apostolates would be placed to liberate others; "salvation, which always remains a gift of the spirit, requires man's cooperation, both to save himself and to save others".⁹⁴

R.Ms further affirms the teachings of R.M. on the indiscriminate principle of changing the lives of all the oppressed especially the dejected in the society. In view of this, the Pope teaches that:

The Kingdom of God is meant for all mankind and all people are called to become members of it. To emphasize this fact, Jesus drew especially near to those on the margins of the society and showed them special favour in announcing the Good News ... To all the victims of rejection and contempt Jesus Christ declares: "Blessed are you poor" (Lk 6:20). What is more, he enables such individuals to experience liberation even now, by being close to them, going to eat in their homes (cf Lk 5:30; 15:2), treating them as equals and friends (cf Lk 7:34) and making them feel loved by God, thus revealing his tender care for the needy and for sinners (cf Lk 15: 1 -32).⁹⁵

These teachings call for an existential, anthropological and sociological approach towards

social praxis. Indeed, the liberationists should also cooperate with the Church. That is why the encyclical teaches that the Church serves as a parameter to liberational roles and decries those who undervalue Her role and the role of Jesus Christ as a Liberator par excellence.⁹⁶

Evangelisation, according to R. Ms, also entails bearing witness to the Gospel. A Christian apostolate should be careful to discern and discard their liberational ministries (cf 1 Cor 8: 7 -13). However, this kind of witnessing and mission is not to be met without challenges.⁹⁷ Different people hold different beliefs and cultural norms. The Catholic women should liberate them - through the power of the Holy Spirit - by making the Gospel more meaningful to their socio - cultural norms, needs and mentality. In this approach, St. Paul becomes an exemplar of inculturation - "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures"⁹⁸ (cf Acts (17 ; 18, 26 - 28).

This awareness is a call to religious inculturation in our African context. It requires the lay missionaries to "immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those whom they are sent, moving beyond their cultural limitations".⁹⁹ As a result "they must learn the language of the place in which they work, become familiar with the most important expression of the local culture, and discover its values through direct experience."¹⁰⁰

Of the various categories of lay apostolate, the catechists, both women and men should be held in high esteem as explained in R. Ms. The Pope commends them as agents of the basic education to Christian foundation. They "are specialists, direct witnesses and irreplaceable evangelisers who, --- represent the basic strength of Christian communities especially in the young churches."¹⁰¹ They should therefore be conversant with Church doctrines.

Lay missionaries are thus called upon by the Holy Father to cooperate through prayers and sacrifice. All Christians, by virtue of conversion, baptism and confirmation need to witness and proclaim the Word of God. Other Christians are instructed to cooperate in giving financial support to apostolic work while parents have the responsibility of encouraging their children to total self giving in the service of God. For such a sacrifice among the parents , the Pope teaches that, "when parents are ready to allow one of their children to leave for the missions, when they have sought this grace from the Lord, he will repay them, in joy, on the day that their son or daughter hears his call".¹⁰²

In conclusion, this encyclical is a pedagogy to Catholic women's spiritual and temporal liberational roles. It is a continuous revitalisation of women's participation in changing the lives of the oppressed in particular and the oppressors in general. The above teachings and instructions can be summarised as follows:

- a) Liberationists should use an integral approach in fostering liberty;

- b) The marginalised have a right of conscience to the means of liberation and a right to be evangelised;
- c) The freedom of the oppressed should not be violated in the name of redeeming them;
- d) Salvation can only be attained through people's co-operation with the grace of God;
- e) Christians should apply the Church teachings and the model of Christ as a parameter to their liberational roles;
- f) Catholic women should aim at uplifting the lives of the dejected in the society;
- g) Missionary work entails witnessing and proclaiming the word of God;
- h) They should expect to face challenges in their efforts;
- i) They are called to a mission of inculturation to make the gospel more meaningful to their recipients;
- j) Catechists should have adequate training to provide the formative Christian education;
- k) All Christians, by virtue of their conversion, baptism and confirmation should cooperate in missionary work through witnessing, gospel proclamation, prayers, sacrifice and financial support.

2.6.5 Laborem Exercens (On Human Work)

L.E is the third Encyclical of Pope John Paul II issued on 14th September, 1981 on the nineteenth anniversary of Rerum Novarum (On Social Order) to mark his third pontificate. It coincided with the solemnity of the Feast of Christ the universal king.

L.E. teaches profoundly that "the Church considers it Her task always to call attention to the dignity and rights of those who work, to condemn situations in which that dignity and those rights are violated and to help to guide the above - mentioned changes so as to ensure authentic progress by man and society."¹⁰³ That is why when women are participating in the above they are fulfilling the will of the Church.

This encyclical also gives guidance and education not only on human work but also on the person of the worker. It is of great interest for us to learn that a person is to be esteemed basically for what one is and not for what one has or does. The section on Work and Man¹⁰⁴ refers to the person of the worker and to the realisation of her or his humanity : "the basis for determining the value of human work is not, above all, the type of work that is done, but the fact that one does it is a person".¹⁰⁵ Cooperation in whatever

role one plays is recommended, thus:

Movements of solidarity in the sphere of work - a solidarity that must never mean closed to dialogue and collaboration with others - can be necessary also with reference to the condition of social groups that were not previously included in such movements but which, in changing social systems and conditions of living, are undergoing what is in effect "proletarianization" or which actually already find themselves in a "proletariat" situation, on which, even if not yet given that name, in fact deserves it.¹⁰⁶

The encyclical gives the following as constituting "the fundamental and perennial heart of Christian teaching on human work"¹⁰⁷ which is of great value to women in their liberational role:

Man has to subdue the earth and dominate it, because as the "image of God" he is a person, that is to say, a subjective being capable of acting in a planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself and with a tendency of self-realization. As a person, man is therefore the subject of work. As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process, independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity.¹⁰⁸

As such, within the context of the rights of workers, the encyclical makes it clear that women are to be adequately remunerated and their working terms reviewed to suit them in their state as mothers also.¹⁰⁹ This calls for a radical transformation of mentality. It demands a true metanoia (conversion). Such a renewed attitude towards work and commitment to change is expressed thus:

Work is seen as a great reality with a fundamental influence on the shaping in a human way of the world that the Creator has entrusted to man; it is a reality closely linked with man as the subject of work and with man's rational activity. In the normal course of events this reality fills human life and strongly affects its value and meaning, even when it is still something good, and so man develops through love for work.¹¹⁰

The encyclical, therefore, creates the awareness that one not only works for oneself but also fulfils oneself as one works.¹¹¹

Another related vital point highlighted in this encyclical is that of the indispensability of liberational trade unions. These are essential in amicably handling issues like adequate remuneration, viable socio-economic systems, fair social benefits, the welfare of workers (especially women) and constant revision of terms of service to reflect the

rapid changes we are encountering. The encyclical has it in these terms:

Catholic social teaching does not hold that unions are not more than a reflection of the "class" structures of society and that they are a mouthpiece for a class struggle which inevitably governs social life. They are indeed a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice, for the just rights for working people in accordance with their individual professions. However, this struggle should be seen as a normal endeavour "for" the just good: in the present case, for the good which corresponds to the needs and merits of working people associated by profession: but it is not a struggle "against" others. Even if in controversial questions the struggle takes on a character of opposition towards others, this is because it aims at the good of social justice not for the sake of "struggle" or in order to eliminated the opponent.¹¹²

In conclusion, the encyclical L. E. conscientises Christian women to appreciate their work as human beings with an incentive to serve people. It is a pedagogical analysis on human work with which women are provided with a vision of service as summarised below:

- a) Women have a right to duty and service without any form of indignation for the progress and development of the society;
- b) They are all called to service regardless of the type of work they participate in;
- c) As a result workers are advised to cooperate within their set-ups for social development;
- d) Any work entrusted to a person should help her to realise her dignity and self-worth as the image of God;
- e) Women have a right to a just wage and good working conditions that would enable them to perform effectively their roles as mothers;
- f) Women (workers) have a right to trade unions for the sake of social justice;
- g) The worker should have a radical approach towards the work done, that is, work should not be seen as a source of oppression but as means of liberation to the worker and to the beneficiaries of the work done.

2.6.6 Familiaris Consortio (The Family in the Modern World)

This Apostolic Exhortation was issued by John Paul II on 22nd November, 1981 on the Solemnity of the Feast of Christ the universal King on his fourth pontificate. F.C. addresses the social, religious, political, cultural, economic and educational needs of a

Family . It also addresses the role of the Christian family in the modern world.

This exhortation teaches that the family is one of the institutions that has been diversely affected by the social and cultural dynamics. The Pope identifies three categories of families that need Church counselling and support. First, those that are living justly despite the above mentioned changes; second, those surrounded by uncertainty in a just marriage but seeking to live it authentically; and lastly, those that face impediments towards living an authentic marriage life.¹¹³

The Pope teaches that the family in the modern world is received with a lot of distortion of what should comprise it. He challenges the Church to conscientise the youth - which is the most vulnerable group - on the values of a Christian family. This calls for agent family apostolate to curb the distortion of the original meaning of marriage and family. The lay women, through their charisms and sacrament of matrimony are called to this task.¹¹⁴

F.C. explains that the family today is faced with such states of unfreedom as "the spread of divorce and recourse to a new union, even on the part of the faithful; the acceptance of purely civil marriage in contradiction to the vocation of the baptised to be married in the Lord; the celebration of the marriage sacrament without living faith, but for other motives ; the rejection of the moral norms that guide and promote the human and Christian exercise of sexuality in marriage".¹¹⁵ The Christians are thus called to family apostolate to maintain marriage indissolubility.

The humanising of our society, according to F.C., depends on the conscience of moral values and a wisdom that actualises a just society. In reference to the Vatican Council II documents, the Pope affirms his message by stressing that: "our era needs such wisdom more than bygone ages if the discoveries made by man are to be further humanized."¹¹⁶ The faithful are called to a complete metanoia if a just society is to be realised. This is a conversion that seeks for the love of God and a detachment from impediments of marriage and family since they are divine and indissoluble institutions. According to F.C., spouses should be a symbol of constant reminder to other Christians of Christ's salvation mystery as the Bridegroom of the Church. They have a great responsibility of fostering Christian marriage values to the young adults.¹¹⁷

This exhortation further enlightens us that the essence and role of the family is contained in its ability to guard, reveal and communicate love within and without the family.¹¹⁸ This encourages and fosters the human dignity in each family member and the recognition of motherhood "in its irreplaceable value"¹¹⁹ unlike the modern culture which gives high esteem to professional women. Such a culture seems to esteem the human person in terms of her productivity in the world economy. The Pope decries this by saying:

The dignity of women is contradicted by that persistent mentality which considers the human being not as a person but as a thing, as an object of trade, at the service of selfish interest and mere pleasure : the first victims of this mentality are women. This mentality produces very bitter fruits such as contempt for men and for women, slavery, oppression of the weak, pornography, prostitution ... and all those various forms of discrimination ... in fields of education, employment and wages.¹²⁰

The Church is, therefore, called upon to counter such mentality with an aim of re-establishing human dignity.

According to the Pope, fecundity is a sign of mutual cooperation between man and woman in the creation mystery of God in love. It is a special gift of love from God which rejects any form of scientific progress which calls for anti-life mentality through contraception in the name of future quality life.¹²¹ Women are mostly the victims of contraception, sterilisation and procured abortion which render them as sexual objects. This attitude or practise, according to John Paul II, emanates from lack of God in people's hearts.¹²² But the Church, however, is not ignorant of the problems emanating from demographic increase on socio-economic realms. For this, F.C. advocates for Natural Family Planning (N.F.P.) method¹²³ which the Pope teaches that, the Church has a responsibility of educating married couples and young adults (before marriage) on matters concerning sexuality and periodic continence. True love guided by the grace and commandment of God, and sacrifice are basic to chastity and a good Christian family.¹²⁴

The exhortation is explicit in the responsibility of parents - both husband and wife, single mothers, divorced, separated women and widows - in giving their children a liberating education; education that instils human Christian values, selfless interests, wisdom and fortitude. Such pedagogy is made possible by mutual collaboration of parents and agents of education like schools. But most important, the parental education becomes the animating principle to other forms of education. In cases of Christian values, parents, have a right to oust out any form of education that is not in conformity with Christian teachings.¹²⁵

A true Christian family, according to the Pope, has an open heart to the needy and readily expands their parental love and care to children from other families and those abandoned by their parents or the orphans. Thus, all captives of social, cultural, economic, religious, political and physical circumstances deserve an authentic life which can alternatively be found in such Christian families.¹²⁶ John Paul II clarifies that a Christian family is not bound by flesh and blood relations; instead, it incorporates others that need their liberative activities.

According to F.C. the family is an ecclesia domestica ("Church in miniature")¹²⁸

with a missionary role within the family and to the entire community. Parents are called to exercise their common priesthood among themselves and the children by educating them on how to pray and by praying together. Other roles of family include social and political development.¹²⁹

Due to the challenges that delimit the value of Christian family life F.C. challenges the ecclesial community (lay and religious women included) to take counselling roles and helping in tangible family problems that risk marriage indissolubility. As such, family apostolate should be accentuated towards social and spiritual liberty of families afflicted by states of unfreedom.¹³⁰ The Holy Father concludes the exhortation by exemplifying the Family of Nazareth - Family of Mary, Joseph and the God incarnate, Jesus Christ - as a prototype to all Christian families.¹³¹

In conclusion F.C. is a pedagogy to women's role in the family as members of the ecclesial community through baptism, confirmation and the sacrament of matrimony. In the light of this Apostolic Exhortation their roles may be spelled out as follows:-

- a) To educate the young adults on the values and virtues of marriage and family life as indissoluble and divine institutions;
- b) To serve as marriage counsellors on the problems facing modern families;
- c) Married couples should be outstanding in serving as models to the young couples and to the youth;
- d) Women should reject any form of artificial contraception;
- e) They should also engage in pro-life campaigns to counter the anti-life mentality which contradicts the original intention of family life;
- f) They should also be facilitators of N.F.P. programmes;
- g) Mothers should collaborate with other agents of education in instilling good values in children;
- h) A Christian family should be accommodative to the needy;
- i) They should be practising priests in their ecclesia domestica;
- j) The family of Nazareth should serve as a prototype to modern Christian families.

2.6.7 Kenya Episcopal Conference (K.E.C)

The Conscience of Society : The Social Teachings of the Catholic Bishops of Kenya 1960 - 1965¹³² gives ample morale, challenge, encouragement and affirmation to women to help make them more involved in their liberational roles. The Catholic Bishops teach that women have equal rights, duties, common humanity and equal, but different capabilities as men. Women should, therefore, not be discriminated, but should

strive for equal rights and roles in liberational struggles. In view of this, KEC teaches that:

Women, no less than men, are endowed with intellect and free-will by God Himself. They too, therefore, have the same basic rights and duties as men. Just as a boy has a right to education and training which will help him to be a good father and husband, so the girl, too, has a right to such training as will help to be a good mother and wife. Any custom or laws which are degrading to women or which deny the girls these rights are contrary to the Will of God, a real threat to a happy life, and a serious hindrance to the cultural progress of the community.¹³³

Although cost-sharing in a family has become an acceptable norm in the global village, KEC challenges working mothers to reconsider their professions if they have to end up being separated from their families. This is because basic education, children's morale, religious education and psychological health of a family are more important and entirely depends on the great contribution of a mother towards a healthy nation.¹³⁴ The mothers, therefore, have a great responsibility towards their families.

The social teachings of K.E.C. indicate that single motherhood is a contradiction of a complete growth of physical, social, moral, religious and psychological health of a child which is only fulfilled within a married life.¹³⁵ Henceforth, it is undeniably true that children need both parental love and care. Women are, therefore, called to faithfulness and full conversion since "the act of intercourse outside marriage is gravely sinful"¹³⁶ - one of the causes of single motherhood. On the other hand KEC dejects artificial contraception as an alternative to the above problem; Catholic medical personnels are charged with a responsibility of decrying any form of contraception or cooperation in obscuring abortion even when it calls for persecution.¹³⁷ According to the indigenous episcopate, the Church only allows an indirect use of contraceptives; that is, when the medicine used in case of illness has an indirect effect of sterilization.¹³⁸

According to K.E.C., abortion is an oppressive solution to unwanted pregnancies which trample the human dignity and is a recourse to the original plan of God. It is a radical form of birth control which denies "the right of all humans to life".¹³⁹ The Church instead offers N.F.P as an alternative to abortion and artificial contraception. Married couples who have the know how and experience of N.F.P are challenged with a responsibility of performing this apostolate, thereby assisting others.¹⁴⁰

Through the organ of Justice and Peace Commission (J.P.C.), the Church hopes to re-establish freedom and authenticity where the human's dignity has been tampered with. KEC instructs and calls upon the faithful to help JPC achieve the underlying objectives:

- a) To develop programmes for education of people towards a stronger sense of justice.¹⁴¹
- b) To guide and co-ordinate pastoral action on fostering justice and peace within the church and in the social, economic and political life of the country.¹⁴²
- c) To work for the eradication of injustice whenever it is seen to exist, for instance: the question of land distribution, violation of human rights, unfair practices in agriculture, education, health, media, tourism, housing and habitat.¹⁴³
- d) To give advice, encouragement and support to all those involved in the promotion of justice and in opposition to injustice.¹⁴⁴

The accomplishment of these objectives as taught by the Bishops of Kenya entails the participation of all citizens whose culmination level is one's basic life and commitment. Peace and justice, therefore, becomes everyone's responsibility and is vital for Kenyans to be aware of their civic rights. As K.E.C. puts it:

The battle for peace ... is fought and won on the threshold of our individual lives - in the homestead of parents who live together in mutual fidelity and love, in the factory where an honest day's work is done and is justly remunerated, in the business premises where the owner puts service to his fellows ... Peace is not a far away dream to be made on uncertain reality by globetrotting diplomats. Peace is a much nearer home affair. Each ... is called to build ... fabric of peace.¹⁴⁵

As such, all Christians should also participate in public life to enhance peace.

In conclusion, K.E.C. is an eye opener to the plight of the oppressed and a facilitator of liberational efforts. The following have been highlighted for effective participation of women in liberational roles:-

- a) Women have equal rights to duty and service as men;
- b) The development and progress of a society also depends on the quality of a family life;
- c) Proper child care and growth to maturity is fulfilled in a "normal" family set-up;
- d) Artificial contraception should not be taken as an alternative to curb unwanted pregnancies;
- e) Catholic medical personnel are warned to abstain from participating in obscuring artificial contraception;
- f) Catholic women should encourage and propagate the N.F.P.;

- g) Women should participate actively in the J.P.C. in order to:
 - i) educate people on the need and principles of justice;
 - ii) assist the ecclesial body in establishing peace within Herself and in the entire society;
 - iii) assist animators of peace and justice to eradicate any forms of oppression in the entire society; and
 - iv) educate citizens on their civic rights.

2.6.8 The Church in Africa

This Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II was issued in Cameroon on 14th September, 1995 on the seventeenth of his pontificate. It coincided with the Solemnity of the Risen Christ.

The exhortation is important because it examines the situation/ challenges affecting the African Church and the possible solutions that need the attention of those engaged in humanising the society for the common good. Being an upshoot of the Vatican Council II, it affirms the Conciliar decrees, Papal encyclicals and exhortations examined above. It emphasises the need to implement these directives with urgency and with a new vigour. According to the Pope, thanks to Christ's death and resurrection, the destiny of Africa is that of life and not of death.¹⁴⁶ He recommends that "efforts must be made to try to put the Sacred Scriptures into the hands of all the faithful right from their earliest years"¹⁴⁷ through catechism, bible translation and lay apostolate for effective evangelisation. He teaches that through evangelisation the oppressed shall find freedom.

This Apostolic Exhortation does also express the need for an urgent move towards inculturation being guided by two principles: "compatibility with the Christian message and communion with the universal Church ... care must be taken to avoid syncretism."¹⁴⁸ All these should, however, be done focusing on the Church as a Family of God. The Pope further encourages an ecumenical dialogue among Christians of different faiths to help actualise evangelisation. Through Church ministry and lay apostolate, the evangelisers are called to initiate such a dialogue to build up the Family of God and for integral human development.¹⁴⁹ In mission, the Christians are challenged to initiate liberation by becoming the voice of the voiceless and by decrying any forms of oppression. All these, according to the Pope, they can do through the means of mass communication; thanks to modern science and technology. Evangelisation can also be effectively done under the following structures: Parishes, Movements and Associations, Schools, Higher Institutions of Learning and Material Means.¹⁵⁰ In addition

to this, the Holy Father also emphasises the need of an esslesia domestica (church in miniature); portraying the family of Nazareth as a proto-type of an African Christian family.¹⁵¹ The Synod Fathers appealed to Christians to safeguard the ideal form of family unlike the Cairo Conference (1994) which “seemed to wish to adopt resolutions contradicting many of the values of the African family”.¹⁵²

One of the major problems facing families today, according to the Synod, is the scourge of AIDS which is making the burden of women almost unbearable. While there is no cure for the disease, AIDS awareness should be embarked on especially among the youth. AIDS victims, especially women, should not on the other hand be neglected.¹⁵³ The same concern and apostolate should be exercised among the refugees and displaced persons who out of social, political and economic instabilities have been alienated from their homes (cf Mt 25 : 34-46). Jesus in the Beatitudes hails the peace-makers: “Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9). The Pope also affirms the dignity of women as of equal humanity with men. Women are called to participate fully in the socio-political, economic and religious realms of life.

In conclusion, the Church in Africa presented at the threshold of the Third Millenium is an important document challenging Christians, women included, to transform Africa by bearing witness to the Mystery of Christ and the Mystery of the Church. These challenges can be highlighted as follows:-

- a) To proclaim the message of Hope to the oppressed;
- b) To make available Sacred Scriptures to all people through translations, catechism and lay apostolate;
- c) To safeguard the values of a Christian family;
- d) To create AIDS awareness especially among the youth;
- e) To provide moral, spiritual and material support to the refugees and displaced persons;
- f) To serve as facilitators of religious ecumenism;
- g) To serve as agents of peace;
- h) To work for their rights and dignity.

Summary

The documents examined in this chapter, namely : The teachings of the Bible, the Documents of Vatican Council II, the Papal encyclicals, exhortations, magisterial, Letters/Addresses, the Kenya Episcopal Conference and reflections by some prominent theologians, provide a new vision, attitude and basis of the official Church stand mainly towards the participation of women in liberational roles. They provide challenges, teachings and instructions to Catholic women to get actively involved in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal functions; thanks to their baptism and confirmation, which are essentially liberational. Women are thus made aware that they have to strive to be agents of the realisation of the threefold ideals of the Church namely : being self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting for the well being of all. An awareness was clearly spelled out that all women are called and obliged to appreciate and participate more actively in their duties and rights to serve the society for the realisation and actualisation of the dignity of women and men as originally intended by God.

As we have explained, the documents are explicit in providing instructions, challenges and guidelines on the dignity and vocation of contemporary women. They emphasise the equality of women in the sharing of common humanity and are thus endowed with specific capabilities and potential just as their male counterparts. They are thus called to use their self-giftedness, individual charisms and femininity to authentically enhance freedom for all women and the entire society taking the B.V.M. as their model. Two most important vocations that are naturally endowed on women, as the documents have disclosed, are motherhood and consecrated virginity. Through these states of life, women can help raise the quality of life within their own families and of the society as common priests and through total self-giving to the service of God (virginity).

The documents are also important in hailing, encouraging and guiding those that are already helping the marginalised. The Church recognises that women as mothers, wives, sisters/nuns and professionals are already participating in liberational struggles. It emphasises women's right to duty in all realms of life : socio - political, economic, educational, ecclesial, family and cultural.

Most important to this study are the teachings the chapter has examined on the B.V.M. as the Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and a Mother of the Church. The B.V.M. becomes a vivid figure for the Catholic women in liberational roles. The chapter also exemplifies Jesus Christ as a Liberator par excellence. It is therefore an incentive towards the actualisation of women participation in liberational roles.

Consequently, it is within the framework of the documents explicated in this chapter that we are enabled to comprehend and assess the participation of Catholic

women in diverse liberational roles. In other words, the documents perused and analysed in the chapter form the fundamental basis, commitment and challenge of the Catholic Church's vital reference for women liberational activities and the mission to transform all towards genuine freedom and authenticity. It is in the light of the above reflections that the study delves into further explication of the data obtained in our research in the following two chapters imbued with the Catholic women's involvement in liberational undertaking.

Endnotes

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6. H. Wansbrough, "St Mark" in R. C. Fuller, et al, (eds.), A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scriptures (London: Catholic Biblical Association, 1969) , P 959.
7. L.P. Pherigo, "The Gospel According to Mark" in C. M. Laymon, (ed), The Interpreters One Volume Commentary on the Bible (Nashville & New York : Abingdom Press , 1971), P 657.
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9. John Paul II, "Mulieris Dignitatem" (On the Dignity and vocation of Women) L.R. , English Edition, N. 40 (1058) - 3 October, 1988, P6.
10. P.V. Linden, "Mark" in D. Bergant, R.J. Karris, (eds), The collegeville Bible Commentary (C. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989) P 931.
11. J.R. Donahue, "Mark" in J. L Mays, (ed.), Harper's Bible Commentary (San Francisco : Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), P 1004.
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16. R.J. Karris, "The Gospel According to Luke" in Brown "et al"; (eds.), The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, p 680.
 17. J. Kodell, "Luke" in Bergant and Karris (eds.), The Collegeville Bible Commentary p 940.
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 20. A. Flannery , Vatican Council II : The Conciliar and Post Concilia Documents (New York : Costello Publishing Co. 1975) , P 350 ff.
 21. Ibid. , pp 361 - 363.
 22. Ibid. , p 367.
 23. Ibid. , p 392.
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 32. Ibid. , pp 422 - 423.
 33. Ibid. , p 419.
 34. Ibid. , pp 766 - 798
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47. Ibid. , p 982.
48. Ibid. , p 983.
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63. Ibid. , p 5 - 6.
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67. Ibid. , p 41.
68. Ibid. , pp 47 - 48.
69. Ibid. , p 51.
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76. Op cit. , pp 28 - 29.
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78. Ibid. , p 27.
79. Ibid. , pp 37 - 39.
80. Ibid. , p 30.
81. Ibid. , p 75.

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83. Ibid. , pp 53 - 55.
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103. John Paul II , "Laborem Exercens" (On Human Work) L.R. N.38 (702) - 21 September 1981, p 1.
104. Ibid. , pp 2 - 5.
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146. John Paul II, The Church in Africa (Nairobi : Pauline Publications Africa, 1995) , p 43.
147. Ibid. , p 44.
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The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible. It appears to be a series of paragraphs or sections from a document, possibly a book or a report. The text is too light to transcribe accurately, but it seems to contain several distinct sections separated by what might be sub-headers or paragraph breaks. The content is mostly lost to the quality of the scan.

CHAPTER THREE

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION; CATHOLIC WOMEN AND THE MARGINALISED

This chapter has two sections. The first section gives the background information of the Archdiocese of Nairobi within which Nairobi Deanery can be understood. This will enable the reader to concretise the findings of our field work research. The second section introduces us to the Catholic women's participation in the social praxis. The analysis provides us with the phenomenon of marginalisation in Nairobi Deanery. This is discussed within the context of the previous chapter.

3.1 Background Information

3.1.1. A Historical Overview

The history of the Archdiocese of Nairobi can be traced as early as mid-1800s, thanks to the innovative and laborious input of the French Holy Ghost Missionaries. The Archdiocese of Nairobi was by then part of the vicariate of Zanzibar which extended along the coast of the Indian Ocean from Cape Guardafui as far as Delgade¹. During this time the vicariate had no western boundary; rather, it had a permanent Catholic mission station which was established in 1863 on the island of Zanzibar. The mission was later expanded on the mainland in Bagamoyo, Mhonda, Mombasa (1891) and Bura (1892). The construction of the Kenya - Uganda Railway saw a missionary outreach to what can now be termed as the establishment of the Archdiocese of Nairobi.² In 1899, St Austin's mission, "the mother Church of Nairobi" - the oldest parish in Nairobi Deanery - was founded targeting the Kikuyu country. The interior missionary work in Kenya which is credited to Bishop Allgeyer saw an extension of other missions namely : Riara Mission (1904), Mangu Mission (1906) and Riruta Mission (1909).³

The vicariate of Zanzibar had such a vast area extending from the island of Zanzibar to the present day Rift Valley. Its first apostolic vicars were Emile Allgeyer, John Neville and John Heffernan. In 1953 the ecclesiastical province of Kenya was founded. Since this time (1953) other missions namely Mombasa in 1955, Kitui in 1956 and Machakos in 1968 were excluded from the vicariate to form the present day Archdiocese of Nairobi.⁴ Other parishes in the Archdiocese have gradually come up with the increase of population as presented in section 3.1.2 of this chapter.

His Grace Raphael Ndingi Mwana a' Nzeki is the current bishop ordinary of the Archdiocese. His predecessors since 1862 were : Maupoint, Bishop of Reunion (1862-

1872); Rev. Fr. Horner (1872-1882); Jean Marie Raoul de Courmont (1883-1896); Emile Augustine Allgeyer (1897 - 1913); John Gerald Neville (1913-1930); John Heffernan (1932-1945); Rev. John J. MacCarthy (1946-1971); and His Eminence Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga (24th October 1971 -1997).⁵

The first ordained indigenous priest in the Archdiocese of Nairobi was late Fr. Paul Njoroge (senior) in 1942 who hailed from Limuru parish. The Archdiocese has currently produced five bishops namely: His Eminence Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga ordained on 3rd October 1950 from Chebukwa parish; His Grace John Njenga ordained on 17th February 1957 from Lioki parish; His Grace Raphael Ndingi Mwana a' Nzeki ordained in 1961 from Mwala parish; His Grace Nicodemus Kirima, ordained in 1962 from Karatina parish; and His Lordship Alfred Rotich ordained on 12th November 1983 from Kipchimchim parish. As such, the Archdiocese has currently produced 107 indigenous priests including Late Fr. Paul Njoroge (senior), Late Fr. Joseph Kamanu ordained in 1962 from Kagwe parish, Late Fr. Alfred M. Gakobo ordained in 1981 from Kereita parish and Late Fr. William Muthama ordained on 8th February 1981 from Githunguri parish.

The first religious women congregation was the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi founded in 1955 by His Grace the Late Archbishop J. J. MacCarthy. Their apostolate included teaching catechism, human development and medicine. The Late Archbishop MacCarthy founded it in honour of the doctrine of the Assumption of the B.V.M which was declared by the Church in 1950. Hence, the congregation was named "Sisters of Our Lady of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Nairobi".⁶ The first indigenous Assumption Sister was Sr. Martin Wanjiru of St. Austin's parish - one of our main respondent in this study. Currently the Archdiocese has 54 religious congregations of women.

3.1.2 The Geographical Spread

The Archdiocese of Nairobi covers an area of 3,271km². The area coincides with the civil divisions of Kiambu District, parts of Thika district and Nairobi city area.⁷ It comprises seven deaneries with their respective parishes as outlined below. The establishment years of these parishes are also provided.

(a) Nairobi Deanery

- (i) Catholic Chaplaincy, Kenyatta National Hospital (1982).
- (ii) Catholic Chaplaincy, St Paul's University of Nairobi (1969).

- (iii) Consolata Shrine, Westlands (1971).
- (iv) Holy Family Basilica, City Centre (1904).
- (v) Our Lady Queen of Peace, Nairobi South B (1968).
- (vi) Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, Upper Hill (1985).
- (vii) St Austin's, Muthangari (1899).
- (viii) St Francis Xavier, Parklands (1941).
- (ix) St Peter Claver's, Race Course (1922).

(b) Nairobi West Deanery

- (i) Our Lady of Guadalupe, Adam's Arcade (1970).
- (ii) Our Lady Queen, Karen (1958).
- (iii) Sacred Heart, Dagoretti (1989).
- (iv) St. Joseph the Worker, Kangemi (1985).
- (v) St. Michael's, Langata (1976).
- (vi) St. Raphael's Spring Valley (1975).

(c) Nairobi East Deanery

- (i) Assumption, Umoja/Embakasi (1978).
- (ii) Blessed Sacrament, Buru Buru (1983).
- (iii) Catholic Chaplaincy, Kenyatta University (1972).
- (iv) Divine Word Parish, Kayole (1986).
- (v) Holy Cross, Dandora (1978).
- (vi) Holy Trinity, Kariobangi (1973).
- (vii) Our Lady of Visitation, Makadara (1956).
- (viii) Queen of Apostles, Ruaraka (1968).
- (ix) St. Benedict's, Thika Road (1982).
- (x) St. Joseph, Jericho (1979).
- (xi) St. Joseph & Mary, Shauri Moyo (1979).
- (xii) St Teresa's, Eastleigh (1974).

(d) Kiambu Deanery

- (i) All Saints, Komothai (1985).
- (ii) All Saints, Riara (1904).
- (iii) Holy Family, Githunguri (1974).
- (iv) Holy Rosary, Ikinu (1985).

- (v) Holy Spirit, Miguta (1956).
- (vi) Martin de Porres, Karuri (1977).
- (vii) Nativity of Our Lady, Kagwe (1960).
- (viii) Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Ting'ang'a (1963).
- (ix) Our Lady of Victories, Lioki (1913).

(e) Limuru Deanery

- (i) Holy Cross, Thigio (1968).
- (ii) Immaculate Conception, Gicharani (1977).
- (iii) Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Ngarariga (1954).
- (iv) Our Lady of the Rosary, Ruku (1965).
- (v) St. Charles Lwanga, Githirioni (1987).
- (vi) St. Francis of Assisi, Limuru Town (1991).
- (vii) St. John the Baptist, Riruta (1909).
- (viii) St. Joseph, Limuru (1931).
- (ix) St. Joseph the Worker, Kereita (1965).

(f) Gatundu Deanery

- (i) Annunciation, Gatitu (1953).
- (ii) Archangel Gabriel, Mutomo (1982).
- (iii) Christ the King, Karinga (1960).
- (iv) Martyrs of Uganda, Gatundu (1966).
- (v) Mary Help of Christians, Ndundu (1974).
- (vi) Our Lady of Fatima, Kiriko (1943).
- (vii) St. John the Baptist, Mangu (1906).
- (viii) St. Teresa, Kianguno (1990).

(g) Thika Deanery

- (i) Immaculate Conception, Kilima Mbogo (1927)
- (ii) St. Francis of Assisi, Ruiru (1975).
- (iii) St. Maria Magdalene, Munyu (1989).

- (iv) St. Matia Mulumba, Thika, Makongeni (1978).
- (v) St. Patrick's Thika Town (1961).
- (vi) St. Theresa, Kalimoni (1919).

The ecclesiastical spread of the Archdiocese of Nairobi necessitates us to discuss its religious (Catholic) population. This will assist the reader to visualise the spread of the Church especially in Nairobi Deanery.

3.1.3 Population

The population of the Archdiocese of Nairobi estimates over 3.5 million with a Catholic composition of approximately 855,344.⁸ In the city of Nairobi the population as such ranges from 1.8 million (100%) out of which 1.5 million profess Christianity. 17 per cent of Nairobi population are non-Christians (300,000); these include the Muslims, 9 per cent which amounts to 150,000; Hindus, the Bahai faith and others who amount to 2 per cent; 6 per cent of this population adhere to the African Traditional Religion, that is 100,000 people.⁹

The Catholic population of Nairobi area estimates 600,000; other Christians namely : Anglicans (80,000), protestants (425,000), indigenous (380,000) and orthodox (15,000) amount to 900,000. The Catholic population of the four large ethnic groups in Nairobi area is estimated as follows:

Table II : Catholic Population by Ethnic Composition¹⁰

Ethnic Group	General Population	Catholic Population
Gikuyu	600,000	225,000
Luo	300,000	70,000
Luhya	290,000	75,000
Kamba	215,000	90,000
Others	400,000	85,000
TOTAL	1,805,000	545,000

The above table presents the four major ethnic groups with Gikuyu having the highest general and Catholic population. From the above data we can infer that the capacity of an ethnic population does not, however, determine its Catholic composition. For instance, the Kamba Catholic composition is higher than the Luhya by 15,000 although the Luhya general population is greater by 75,000. The situation in Nairobi

reflects a cosmopolitan society or diverse ethnic composition.

In the light of the above, the highest percentage of the Nairobi area population profess the Catholic faith. This presents us with the probability of a high percentage of Catholic women liberationists in Nairobi Deanery. The study was not, however, able to determine the number of women Catholic faithful in Nairobi area who are our major concern in this study.

3.1.4 The Hierarchical Structures of the Archdiocese of Nairobi

The hierarchy of the Church comprises the bishops, priests and the deacons. The Archdiocese of Nairobi is administered through various structures which include Diocesan Chancellor, Consultors, Diocesan Canonists, Diocesan Tribunals, Pastrol Administrative Council (PAC), Deans, Parish Priests and Chaplains. These bodies have distinct pastrol and social roles for the common good. The following is an explication of who or what the above mentioned structures are and their roles.

(a) Diocesan Chancellor

A Diocesan Chancellor is a key representative of the bishop ordinary in the diocese and administrates directly under him. He is a priest whose main duty is to keep the diocesan archives. A priest must be of good reputation, liable and proficient in the canon law to qualify as a chancellor. His election entirely depends on the bishop's (ordinary) will. His office is called chancery; if need be, he is assisted by a vice-chancellor.¹¹

(b) Diocesan Consultors

Diocesan Consultors normally constitute a board of four to six members. This board serves as an advisory council of diocesan bishops especially where the "cathedral chapters had not been erected".¹² It is also responsible in governing a diocese when the see becomes vacant following the death or resignation of a bishop. The board elects through secret balloting a diocesan administrator within eight days after the see falls vacant. This diocesan administrator presides over the diocese until a bishop is elected. This is so unless "the Holy See has made other arrangements for the interior government" or when "the diocese already has an apostolic administrator".¹³

(c) Diocesan Canonist

A canonist is a person holding a doctorate in canon law. He is an authority in the interpretation and application of ecclesiastical law to individuals or institutions within the Church. A diocesan canonist is charged with responsibilities in marriage tribunals within the diocese.¹⁴

(d) Diocesan Tribunal

This is an ecclesiastical court of justice in a diocese. The personnel of the diocesan tribunal are required to hold a degree in canon law or have an expertise in the canon law. Diocesan tribunals are mostly concerned with marriage cases.¹⁵

(e) Pastrol Administrative Council (PAC)

PAC comprises the bishop ordinary, the deans, consultants of bishop who include the diocesan chancellor, vocations director and the diocesan canonist. The role of PAC is to deal with the pastrol affairs of the diocese.

(f) Deans

A dean is appointed by a bishop to preside over a deanery. He is entitled to a number of responsibilities.¹⁶ These include:

(i) Ensuring that the clergy within his deanery adhere to the liturgical and canonical laws.

(ii) Responsibility over the welfare, progress and development of parishes in his deanery.

(iii) Administering over the parishes' properties.

(iv) Ensuring that parish records are well kept and up dated.

(v) Responsibility over the health care of sick priests.

(vi) Ensuring that sacred feasts and functions are administered as per the rubrics.

(vii) Ensuring the proper custody of the blessed sacrament.

(viii) He is expected to make an annual report of the conditions of the parishes under his jurisdiction to the bishop.

The current dean of Nairobi Deanery is Fr. Myles Healey, father-in-charge of St. Paul's University Chaplaincy.

(g) Parish Priests

A priest is an ordained religious person entitled to pastrol care of a parish community, hence a parish priest. He is expected to exercise his duties under the local

ordinary. Parish priests are entitled to some of the following responsibilities:

- (I) To proclaim the gospel to the parish community.
- (ii) To administer solemn baptism.
- (iii) To carry the Eucharist publicly to the sick within the parish.
- (iv) To perform funeral services.
- (v) To help the Christians understand the primacy of the Eucharist.
- (vi) To administer to the Christians sacramental needs.
- (vii) To administer public processions outside the Church.
- (viii) To care for non-Catholics particularly in regard to evangelisation.
- (ix) To exercise authority over the parish finances and represent the parish in legal matters.¹⁷

(h) Chaplains

These are priests appointed by the bishop to preside over certain institutions such as schools, colleges and hospitals. Their responsibilities include:

- (i) To hear confessions.
- (ii) To administer Holy Communions.
- (iii) To administer private baptism and confirmation to persons in dangers of death in the absence of a parish priest.
- (iv) To administer Masses.
- (v) To care for the oratory.

The above structural administration helps the Church in the Archdiocese to efficiently and effectively serve the Christians. Besides, it has Diocesan boards, councils and commissions which cater for both the spiritual and temporal needs of the people. These constitute the Pastoral Development and Lay Apostolate; Education and Religious Office; Vocations; Communications; Refugee Assistance Programme; Medical Board; and Family Life and Natural Family Planning. Currently, the Archdiocese has 240 Catholic sponsored schools, both private and public, some of which are found in Nairobi Deanery (see chapter four section 4.4).

3.1.5. Economy

This section will feature the economic set up of Nairobi area to help us concentrate on Nairobi Deanery. This provides the background information of the causes of marginalisation in Nairobi Deanery to help the reader contextualise some of the forms of oppression in the next section.

Nairobi is an industrialised city which has gradually promoted and facilitated a dual economy. On the one hand we have subsistence economy and on the other, a newly industrialising one. In the former the wages are very low or negligible while the latter utilises capital. Subsistence economy provides market labour for the second form of economy. Industrialisation attracts rural-urban migration which results to an influx of rural population in Nairobi. This creates cheap unskilled labour which renders many people as captives of poverty. Other people end up jobless and frustrated which raise the phenomena of street children, street beggars and a high crime rate which is seen as cheap means of leaping over poverty.

The increase of rural migrants into the urbanised city creates a shortage of social amenities, sanitation and housing. These problems have led to the categorisation of low wage earners as ghetto dwellers which is a clear dimension of poverty (cf Appendix VI). The density of the people huddled in shabby accommodation creates an environmental problem which leads to a health hazard. The close knit housing has even increased poverty in the slums especially because of various infernals that render many homeless. A considerable consequence of such people is to offer cheap labour to acquire employment ; but unemployment for women is usually higher than that of men.¹⁸ As such, some women have opted to prostitution and illegal local brewing as income generating businesses. Some are attracted to marginal form of employment such as 'yaya' to assist them raise their families. Alan Gilbert and Josef Gugler further explain that:

There is clearly also a strong element of discrimination against women in urban labour markets of the Third World, as indeed in industrialized countries. Domestic service is the prime example. In many countries it is largely women who accept the long hours and low pay. They are usually not allowed to keep their children with them, but have to entrust them to the care of others or leave them to their own devices.¹⁹

This form of economic set up has distinctively bipolarised people into the extremes of poverty and richness. Following the increase of the international debts, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced to maximise Kenya's Gross Domestic Produce (GDP). This has capsised families into a pool of poverty and captivity. The consequent cry for freedom among the oppressed have raised an eye brow among the politicians who coerce the marginalised to make unprecedented choices of their political representatives. The result of an uninformed voting has even led to more oppression; corruption, injustices and nepotism have thus become unnecessary evils in the labour market even among the oppressed.

At a glance the population in Nairobi earn their living from industries and industry-related companies. Some of the skilled labourers earn a reasonable wage which categorise them as the middle class people. The private companies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) provide labour markets which accommodate a considerable numbers of wage earners especially the skilled labourers.

This section as discussed above provides a brief background of the Archdiocese of Nairobi within which the study is based. It will enable the reader to contextualise the second section of this chapter and especially chapter four of this study which applies various case studies to explicate the Catholic women's participation in liberational struggles. The economic overview presented here is of cardinal importance in the understanding of unauthenticity in Nairobi Deanery.

3.2 Catholic Women and the Marginalised

Basing our findings on what has already been articulated in chapter two, the study will endeavour to explicate the humanisation of the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery. Moreover, an interrelation of the involvement of the Catholic women's roles to liberate the dehumanised and the magisterium will be provided.

From our field work research we encountered various groups of marginalised people that the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery aim at liberating. They delve into the problems of the poor, the afflicted, the oppressed and the dehumanised. It should be understood from the context of this study that even the oppressors are a group of dehumanised personalities following their ignorance and failure to comply with the image of God among those that they subjugate. The reality of oppressors is thus a result of scarred human relationship by the corruption of domination and subjugation. The Catholic women, therefore, aim at resurging full humanity of both the oppressors and the oppressed for the common good.

Both lay and religious women target different groups of the marginalised as par their charisms and self-giftedness, thanks to their baptism and confirmation. Following the dual economy in Nairobi as described earlier many people within and without Nairobi Deanery are adversely afflicted. In order to redeem the oppressed, the Catholic women use an existential, pedagogical and ecumenical approach among those people they feel are most vulnerable and cry for urgent liberation. That is why different liberationists identify and insert themselves among different categories of marginalised people. The table below helps us to emphasise this point. It presents the categories of marginalised people on the first column, the number and percentage of Catholic women respondents who identify themselves with the oppressed in the second and third column respectively.

Table III : Catholic Women and the Depersonalised

Categories of Dehumanised Persons	No. of Catholic Women Respondents targetting the oppressed	Percentage of Catholic Women Respondents
1. Youth/Jobless/School dropouts/students	37	13.21
2. Poor/Poor aged/ Refugees displaced/ Street Beggars/ Street children	105	37.5
3. Sick/HIV/AIDS patients	24	8.57
4. Single Mothers/girl child/prostitutes/women in poor cultures such as wife inheritance	49	17.5
5. Illiterate and semi-literate	8	2.86
6. De-evangelised/ non- Christians	32	11.43
7. Opressors	5	1.79
8. Rural and Urban families	20	7.14
TOTAL	280	100

NOTE: The total number of Catholic women respondents were 182 as already shown in chapter one. But the number of respondents indicated in the above table exceeds 182 by 98. This is a clear indication that the Catholic women respondents target more than one category of the dehumanised people. Similarly, the oppressed belong to more than one category of subjugation; for instance, a school dropout could be a single mother, youth as well as jobless. See the table below.

Table IV : An Overlap of targeted categories of Dehumanised Persons

The Dehumanised	No. of Catholic Women Respondents	Percentage of Catholic Women Respondents
1. Poor/street beggars/ disabled /youth/family	24	24.49
2. Family/HIV/AIDS patients/ sick	7	7.14
3. Oppressors/Family	11	11.22
4. Youth/jobless/single-mothers /school dropouts	21	21.43
5. De-evangelised/non-Christians/illiterate/semi-literate	23	23.47
6. Family/youth/students	12	12.25
TOTAL	98	100

From Table III 8.57 percent of Catholic women respondents opt to liberate the category of sick/HIV/AIDS patients while some of them target the family as well, that is 7.14 percent (see Table IV). Some Catholic women liberationists, therefore, play a double role in the establishment of social praxis. Consequently, the number of respondents as shown in Table III logically goes up by 98.

The volition of the liberationists to save the oppressed is enhanced by their understanding of oppression and means of social praxis. In solidarity with the poor, the Catholic women have shown an open heart and love for them rather than what many would confuse with a charitable sympathy. The Catholic women, therefore, hold different reasons for targeting different categories of the oppressed. The following are some of their objectives and means of establishing full humanity as given by the respondents, among various categories of the marginalised.

(a) The Youth/Students/School dropouts/Jobless

The youthful stage is an important category of human impermanence through which all adults pass through. They also form the largest percentage of the whole population in Kenya - in the AMECEA countries they comprise 60 percent of the total

population.²⁰ According to the Catholic women respondents youth apostolate is of cardinal importance due to the underlying reasons:

(i) The youth are the present and future society which needs a solid ground for self-worth, a better Church, good citizenship and a better government. In them there is hope for a better humanity. They are, therefore, catechised and counselled to make them responsible and accountable rational and independent people.

(ii) The youthful stage is a period of self discovery of the human "I". It is during this time that human personalities and self fulfilments are intensively delved into. They also try to discover their capabilities, potentials and to make a choice of their rightful careers and vocations. The Catholic women, therefore, engage themselves in youth apostolate to help domesticate them in the social structures and norms to enable them cope with the social set up.

(iii) The youthful stage is also a discernment period within which the future of a person at times entirely depends. John Paul II calls it "a special treasure."²¹ A treasure of discovering and choosing a future. Through a series of sensitisation seminars, workshops and counselling, the Catholic women educate the youth on personal profile.

(iv) During their self discovery as explained above, the young people become most vulnerable to the scourge of HIV/AIDS and planned parenthood (pp); that is, they become victims of artificial contraception. Youth apostolate helps to educate them on the Church's moral theology and to create the HIV/AIDS awareness.

(v) Some Catholic women argued that most youth experience hopeless or bleak futures while others are more often neglected. These problems lead to their lack of identity in the society which turn some into circumstantial captives of juvenile delinquency. Most parents depend on the teachers for their (youth) pedagogy and moral development which leaves some unguided and irresponsible.

(vi) Some Catholic women find it easier to evangelise the youth at their formative stage of adult life thanks to their (youth) docility in freedom in allowing the Catholic women to evangelise them.

(vii) The school dropouts are often vulnerable to prostitution, drug abuse and rape especially the girls. The Catholic women dialogically incorporate them into self help groups and training centres such as "Jitegemee" in Eastleigh. Such skills as tailoring, carpentry, dressmaking and leadership skills are provided.

(viii) Some of the youth hail from poor rural families who can hardly meet their educational and social needs. The liberationists contribute or unanimously pay their tuition fees through the headteachers or parish priests.

(ix) In order to form liberated independent individuals, the youth are educated to become critical reflectors and activists. They are sensitised on human suffering, oppression and depersonalisation to incorporate them in the transformation of the society;

they are promoted to become liberators as in the case of 'Youth For Life' discussed in the next chapter.

Youth apostolate is a challenging task which the Catholic women participate in. Like the B.V.M who participated in the education of the disciples of Jesus: "do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5), the Catholic women pedagogically liberate the youth as parents, teachers and mothers.

(b) HIV/AIDS Patients

The scourge of AIDS is a threatening epidemic; "it has the peculiarity of being a deeply human problem, a medical condition with very many non-medical repercussions and connotations, and what is more important, where human behaviour which can be defined as a specific wilful act of a human being, plays an extensive role in transmission"²² The Catholic women's concern for the sick can be summarised as follows:

(i) The risk of healthy carriers spreading the virus consciously is very high. The Catholic women counsel them to face the reality of abstaining from sexual activities for the common good. In this, the liberationists assist the healthy carriers to sublimate their sexual energy to other activities such as sporting.

(ii) AIDS patients are terminally ill. This makes them desperate to a point of some individuals committing suicide. The respondents, inspired by the suffering of Jesus on the Cross, evangelise them with a message of hope. They offer them spiritual liberty in which they (the patients) experience the grace of God and forgiveness.

(iii) The HIV/AIDS orphans are innocent infected victims who are normally neglected as dying human beings. The Catholic women try to propagate a culture of life by reaffirming the value of the image of God in these children.²³

(iv) According to Dr. Margaret Ogola,²⁴ the patients suffer shock, fear and anger after receiving the results of diagnosis. Some isolate themselves and suffer guilt of their prior sexual activities that led them into the predicament. Such patients are periodically counselled to help them cope with the stigma.

(v) In order to cope with the AIDS patients, the families are directed on how to cater for their patients' needs. Issues on the patients' diet, rest, medication and fraternal companionship among others are discussed. The sentiments of AIDS patients caretakers' can be understood as follows:

people closely related to infected persons may be shocked ... to learn about their condition and with it, ideas of danger and death may appear. These people, too, require support to help them regain the correct focus about the infected person and about his new situation. ... what is of central importance is their consideration and what is

expected of them is that they continue relating with that person as they did before they received the news.²⁵

Concerning the problems facing the HIV/AIDS patients, the Catholic women respondents are both trained counsellors and trained health care takers. The HIV positive are assisted to mortify themselves to shun the spread of HIV/AIDS.

(c) Families, Women and the Girl Child

Some Catholic women, in fidelity and truthfulness to God aim at liberating the poor families and families as such. They also liberate their fellow women and the girl child for the following reasons:

(i) The family is the basic unit of a society and the stability of a nation depends on the growth of families and on how well they are cultured. Their concern for the families was also expressed in its characteristic as the domestic Church or the ecclesia domestica (Church-in-miniature). It also serves as the first school of conduct, prayer, faith and the basic human values and norms.

(ii) The enlightened respondents expressed their awareness on the eminent destruction of human dignity by the modern science and technology through artificial recourse of fertility. Through sensitisation, both men and women are educated on the Church's moral theology on contraception, family life among others.

(iii) The Catholic women's concern to educate people on environmental programmes was expressed as a response to plight of rural women and the girl child who walk for long distances in search of water and firewood. Some of the respondents expressed it as a response to John Paul II call to preserve the natural resources during his pastoral visit to Kenya in 1985. The following was part of his International Eucharist Congress message to the Christians concerning the conservation of the environment:

It is a requirement of our human dignity, and therefore a serious responsibility, to exercise dominion over creation in such a way that it truly serves the human family. Exploitation of the riches of nature must take place according to criteria that take into account not only the immediate needs of people but also the needs of future generations. In this way the stewardship over nature, entrusted by God to man, will not be guided by short-sightedness or selfish pursuit; rather it will take into account the fact that all created goods are directed to the good of all humanity.²⁶

(iv) Women would have a powerful influence in the society if given equal opportunities with their male counterparts. Education on human rights, duties leadership and management skills promote and facilitate women's participation in public life.

(v) As baptised and confirmed Christians, women promote sacramental marriages based on the Truine oneness. Counselling, seminars and workshops by Family Life animators promote Christian families which are the true signs of God's love for His people (cf Ep 5:25; 6:1,4).

(vi) Single mothers who have been manipulated to feel rejected and social misfits live in servitude which the Catholic women seek to unyoke.

(vii) Workshops and retreats are given to consecrated virgins, novices and the lay women for spiritual liberty. This facilitates the search for a meaningful life and enhances Christian living worthy feminine dignity as daughters/children of God.

(viii) Motherhood is an important vocation that young couples are sensitised and enlightened on.

(ix) Following the patronising cultural backgrounds of women, their femininity and dignity has been trifled. Women, both lay and religious also suffer violence meted out against them such as rape and wife beating. The liberationists insert themselves into their fellow women's plightful situations in order to unyoke this inferiority complex and to liberate them from the mentioned afflictions. They also emphasis the need of feminine touch in all circles of life.

(x) Poor families hardly educate their children. In most cases the girl child is sacrificed for the sake of the boy child who is normally regarded as a family asset. Following much conscietisation, Catholic women fight for the equality of the girl child in the family and the society. In view of this, the thirty-ninth preparatory session, 15th March to 7th April 1995 at United Nations Headquarters, for the fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace expressed the following:

(Girls of today are the women of tomorrow. The skills, ideas and energy of girls are vital for full attainment of the goals of equality, development and peace.) [For a girl to develop her full potential she needs to be nurtured in an enabling environment, where her needs for survival, protection and development are met and her equal rights safeguarded.] [If women are to be equal partners with men, now is the time to recognize the [human] dignity and worth of the girl child and to ensure the full enjoyment of her human rights and fundamental freedoms.] ...They often have less access to nutrition, physical and mental health care and education and enjoy fewer rights, fewer opportunities and fewer benefits of childhood and adolescence than do boys.²⁷

In the light of the above a considerable percentage of women, 24.64 percent, opt to re-establish authenticity among their fellow women, the girl child, the rural and urban families.

(d) Poor/Poor Aged/Refugees/Displaced/Street Beggars

These categories of the poor and oppressed people have the highest percentage of Catholic women liberationists, that is, 37.5 percent. The religious women, through their consecrated poverty, immerse themselves among the poor by doing works of mercy, charity and social justice. Their reasons for liberating the poor, the aged, refugees, the displaced and street beggars can be summarised as follows:

(i) The poor are easily evangelised. While they are provided with temporal liberty, the word of God appeals mostly to their conditions (cf Mt 5).

(ii) The abandoned aged people have such frail bodies to participate in any social activities. At their stage, they experience loneliness following abandonment and death of their friends. They also suffer from fear of death. The Catholic women liberationists provide them with company, family love and a hope to live on through home visits, evangelisation and providing their temporal needs.

(iii) The liberationists expressed an option to liberate the poor, rejected, oppressed and dehumanised as exemplified by Jesus Christ. Coupled with human fraternity the Catholic women make the problems of the dehumanised their own and seek to liberate them.

(iv) The understanding that these categories of the dehumanised are part of the Family of God encourage the liberationists to respond to the cry of the poor. According to Jose Comblin the cry for freedom is a significant affirmation of a forthcoming liberation²⁸ which the liberationists in Nairobi Deanery animate. According to some of the respondents, F.C is an important Church's social document which guide, challenge and instruct them to incorporate the dehumanised as part of their families.

e) De-evangelised and Non-Christians

The Catholic women in their response to Christian witness and Gospel proclamation use an ecumenical approach. They recognise the Church's role in mission as a Family of God in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy (cf Jn 17: 21 - 22). According to the women respondents spiritual liberty is basic to any form of liberation (cf 2 Cor. 5:17). But evangelisation according to the respondents, does not only consist in ecclesial words and witnessing; rather it also involves social praxis of the Christian liberationists. The Catholic women, therefore, integrate spiritual and temporal liberty for the promotion of the Kingdom of God. In this, they are profoundly concerned to defend and to promote authentic human freedom. As guided by R.Ms the Catholic women showed an understanding of people's right to know and experience the richness and vitality of the Christian Gospel.

From the data presented in table III and the bar graph (see fig 4) there is unequal

distribution of Catholic women's volition to liberate the marginalised. The category of Poor/Poor Aged/Displaced/Refugees/Street beggars has a high percentage of 37.5 women respondents while the category of oppressors has only 1.79 percent and illiterate/semi literate 2.86 percent. The categories of the family and the sick have almost an equal distribution of women liberationists. From the data presentation, as in figure 4, the Catholic women concentrate more on the category of the poor.

According to the author, an equal distribution of Catholic women liberationists among the marginalised would have an effective impact in the transformation of the society. This is essentially because the oppressed, the afflicted and the depersonalised are in servitude due to the contradiction of full humanity as practised by the oppressors. A concentration on the poor seems to deal with the symptoms of marginalisation rather than the causes. For instance, if the Catholic women struggled against corruption, nepotism, unfair institution of working conditions, poor remuneration and maladministration of SAP, families would not suffer joblessness and afflictions. Similarly, if SAP was properly administered, health services, education and infrastructure would be affordable. In that case the number of poor people, the jobless, street children would be reduced.

The Catholic women concern for the illiterate and semi-literate calls for our attention. The percentage of respondents who existentially liberate this category of the marginalised is only 2.86. Owing to the fact that ignorance and lack of knowledge of an individual's human rights and duties subordinates a person, the Catholic women should facilitate and promote adult education. This helps people to make informed decisions in the public life. It also enhances women's participation in leadership roles in the society. There is also an urgent need for parents to conscientise their children on the virtues and values of family kinship. 7.14 percent of the Catholic women attach themselves to liberating the families and 13.21 per cent to the youth. But from the fieldwork research, only 2 percent of the respondents in youth apostolate sought to educate the youth on their responsibilities towards the aged; much energy has been swallowed up by the fear of the HIV/AIDS scourge which they seek to eradicate. Family kinship, duties and responsibilities of the young towards the old would shun the problem of the abandonment of the aged in the streets. This would otherwise channel the liberational efforts of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery to other crucial problems of rehabilitating the prostitutes, assisting the street children and the HIV / AIDS orphans. These groups of people are circumstantially bonded and seem to have less attention of the Catholic women liberators.

Women in poor cultures such as the practise of genital mutilation, domestic violence, wife inheritance, ghost marriages and disinheritance of property after a husband's death have also a considerably low attention of the liberators as shown in fig. 4. These poor

CATHOLIC WOMEN AND THE DEPERSONALISED

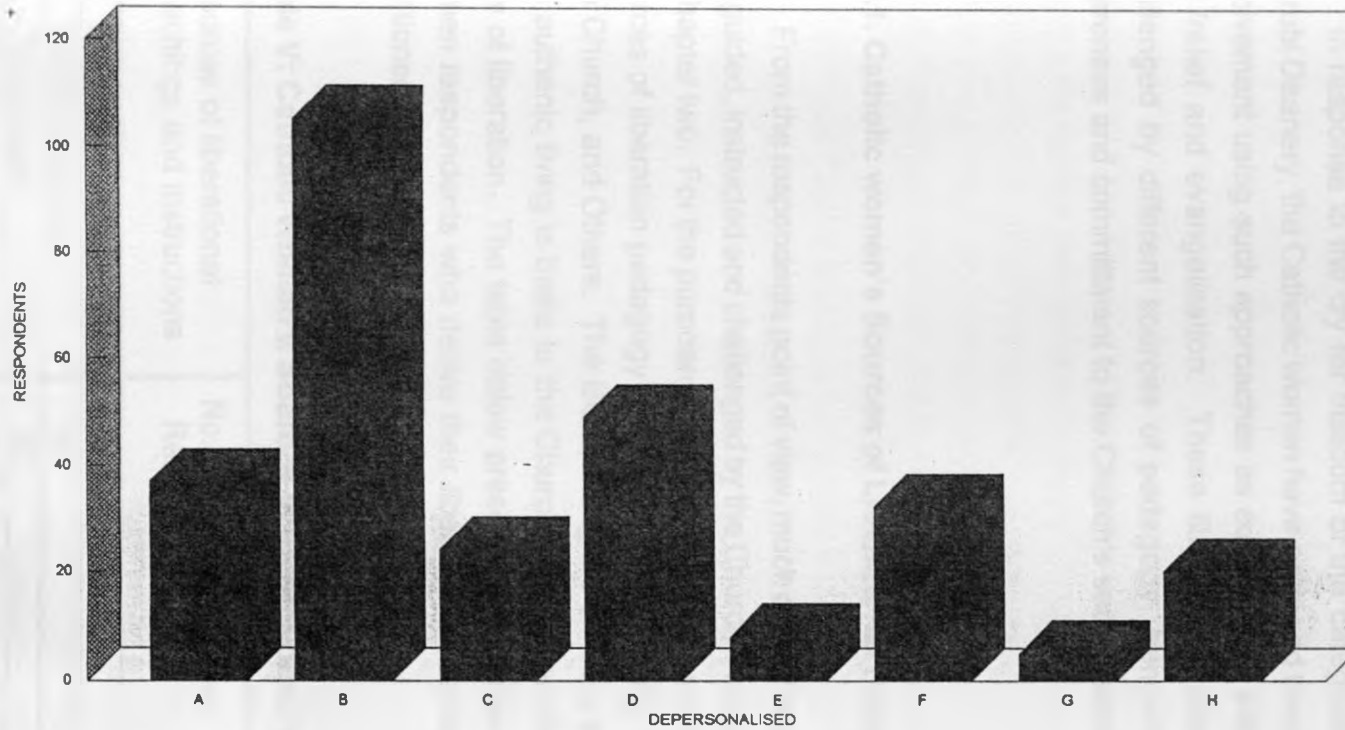


Fig4

A	YOUTH / JOBLESS / SCHOOL DROPOUTS	37
B	POOR / POOR AGED / REFUGEES / DISPLACED / STREET BEGGARS / STREET CHILDREN	105
C	SICK / HIV/AIDS PATIENTS	24
D	SINGLE MOTHERS / GIRL CHILD / PROSTITUTES / WOMEN IN POOR CULTURES(SUCH AS WIFE INHERITANCE)	49
E	ILLITERATE AND SEMILITERATE	8
F	DE-EVANGELISED / NON-CHRISTIANS	32
G	OPPRESSORS	5
H	RURAL AND URBAN FAMILIES	20
TOTAL		280

cultures have subordinated both women and the girl - child. The disinheritance of property leaves the widow with little to feed, educate and bring up the children, who at times end up in the streets. Lack of enough funds victimises the girl - child at the expense of the boy child who is seen as a family asset. Consequently, more women and girls in these cultures will continue experiencing subordination as long as the above mentioned cultures, which are their root causes of captivity, are not eradicated.

In response to the cry for freedom of the categories of dehumanised people in Nairobi Deanery, the Catholic women have engaged themselves in diverse liberational involvement using such approaches as educational, self - reliant, community based, aid /relief and evangelisation. These liberational roles are guided, directed and challenged by different sources of pedagogy, hence the logic of examining their awareness and commitment to the Church's social teachings.

3.2.1. Catholic women's Sources of Liberational Pedagogy

From the respondents point of view, much of their liberational efforts and ministries are guided, instructed and challenged by the Church's social teachings already examined in chapter two. For the purpose of our analysis we have grouped the Catholic women's sources of liberation pedagogy into four groups namely: The Bible, The Magisterium, The Church, and Others. The Bible, being the primary source of Christian existential and authentic living is basic to the Church's social teachings on and about women in view of liberation. The table below presents the number and percentage of Catholic women respondents who derive their liberational teachings and instructions from the mentioned sources.

Table V: Catholic Women's Sources of Liberational Pedagogy

Sources of liberational Teachings and Instructions	No. of Catholic Women Respondents	Percentage of Catholic Women Respondents
1. The Bible	70	31.67
2. The Magisterium	50	22.63
3. The Church	62	28.05
4. Others	39	17.65
TOTAL	221	100.00

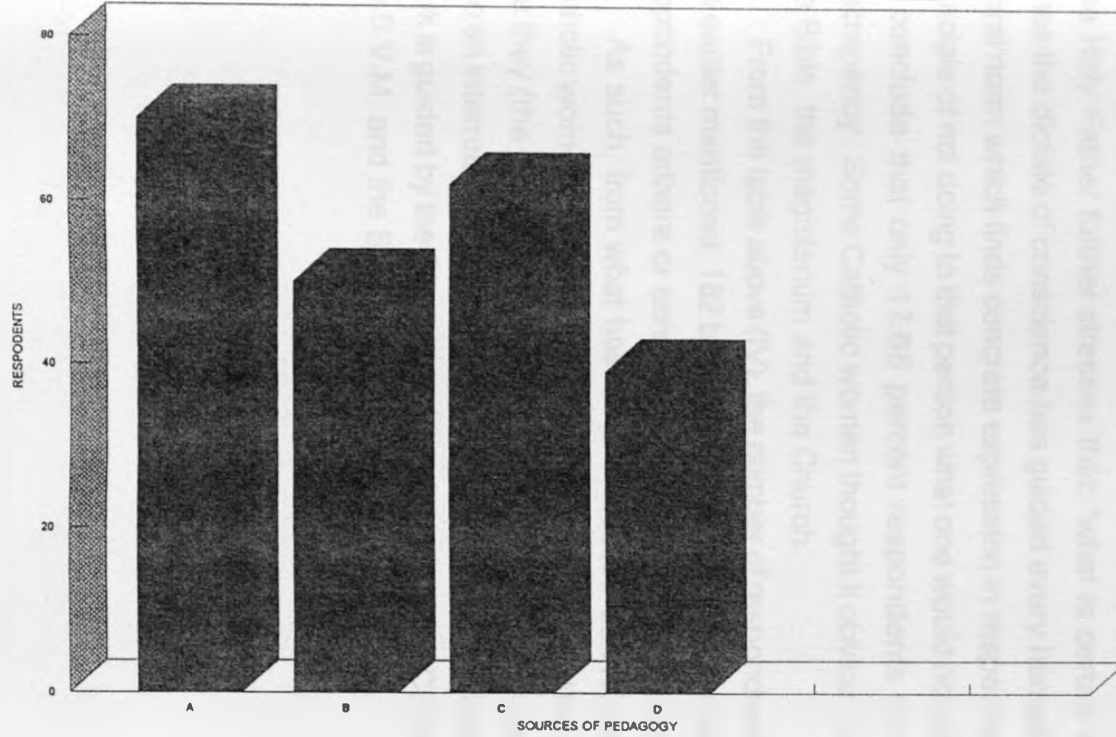
NOTE: All Catholic women respondents emulate the model of the B.V.M. in their liberational roles.

The percentage of the respondents who rely on the Bible for any meaningful social and spiritual transformation is 31.67. Some Catholic women, 28.05 percent concentrate on the pastoral guidance for their participation in the social praxis. The magisterium as already highlighted, are Church's decrees, dogmas, instructions, social teachings and challenges towards the spiritual and temporal perfection. They specifically expound and explicate the biblical teachings concerning contemporary issues with an aim of assisting the Christians to concretise the word of God. Out of 221 respondents 22.63 percent recognise and adhere to them. Some of the encyclicals and apostolic exhortations have already been examined in the previous chapter; others recognised by Catholic women, according to the respondents, include: Mater et Magistra (On Social Progress) by Pope John XXIII, issued in 1961; Centesimus Annus (On the Human Person), 1991, by John Paul II; Octogesima Adveniens (On the New Social Problems), 1971 by Pope Paul VI; Quadragesimo Anno (On Social Reconstruction), 1931, by Pope Pius XI; Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concern), 1987, by Pope John Paul II; and Evangelii Nuntiandi (On Evangelisation in the Modern World), 1975, by Pope Paul VI. These social teachings of the Church form a constant reminder and challenge to women's participation in liberation and helps them to resurge full humanity for the common good.

The above mentioned magisterium deal with contemporary issues facing the global village. The bar graph below illustrates the women's sources of pedagogy (see fig. 5). The magisterium is only third in favour of women's pedagogical consultations after the Bible and the Church. From our fieldwork research an awareness was created that these documents are underutilised with only 22.62 percent respondents who assume and make use of them. While the Bible and the Church's pastoral guidance provide basic standards of social and spiritual liberty, the fieldwork research experience brought to our awareness that the Catholic women who critically reflect and utilise the magisterium are more inserted into people's lives and are intensely transforming the society. It logically follows that if more Catholic women are introduced to the magisterium their liberational efforts would be more profound. It is worth noting that those already enlightened on these documents are making a remarkable effort of conscientising their fellow women.

17.65 percent of the Catholic women are guided by other sources of inspiration. Such sources include the Christian conscience, the model of saints and contemporary social models. The given percentage as per the respondents does not, however, rule

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SOURCES LIBERATIONAL PEDAGOGY



A	THE BIBLE	70
B	MAGISTERIUM	50
C	THE CHURCH	62
D	OTHERS	39
TOTAL		221

Fig 5

out that other Christians use these sources. As Christians, the Catholic women witness and proclaim the Gospel; we therefore expect them to be guided by the Christian conscience. Concerning the conscience John Paul II teaches that:

The code of morality as inscribed in the Ten Commandments are inscribed in the moral conscience of humanity, in such a way that those who do not know the commandments, in other words the law revealed by God, "are a law to themselves". Thus writes Saint Paul in his Letter to the Romans, and he immediately adds: They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness. Rom 2 :14.²⁹

The Holy Father further stresses that: "what is certain is that from the most ancient times the dictate of conscience has guided every human subject towards an objective moral norm which finds concrete expression in respect for the other person and in the principle of not doing to that person what one would not wish done to oneself."³⁰ Hence, to conclude that only 17.65 percent respondents use other sources would be a discrepancy. Some Catholic women thought it obvious to record other sources except the Bible, the magisterium and the Church.

From the table above (IV), the number of respondents sum up to 221 which exceed the earlier mentioned, 182 by 39. The reason being that more than one Catholic women respondents adhere or consult two or three or even all sources of their pedagogy.

As such, from what has been discussed above, concerning the participation of Catholic women in liberating both the oppressors and the oppressed, we can conclude that they (the women) identify themselves with various dehumanised groups. There is also an interrelation between liberational activities and their sources of pedagogy. Their work is guided by the Church's social teachings, the Christian conscience, the model of the B.V.M. and the Saints, and the social models.

SUMMARY

This chapter has firstly looked at the background information within which the study is based. It gives us the historical overview, the geographical spread, the population, the hierarchical structures and the economy of the Archdiocese of Nairobi. It is only within this context that Nairobi deanery, our area of study, can be properly understood. As such, the information form a firm foundation for the understanding of Catholic women's liberational roles in Nairobi Deanery.

Secondly, the chapter has introduced us to the participation of Catholic women in liberational roles. Various categories of the marginalised targeted by Catholic women are also provided. Moreover, the Catholic women's volition to liberate the dehumanised have been listed according to the respondents' views. These were linked with their sources of liberational pedagogy within which their efforts and ministries are based.

Finally, the chapter paves way to discussing the involvement of Catholic women in diverse liberational efforts and ministries. This will form the content of our next chapter, that is chapter four.

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CHAPTER IV

4. CATHOLIC WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN DIVERSE LIBERATIONAL ROLES

Introduction

This chapter endeavours to present the participation of Catholic women in various categories of specific liberational activities namely : the Church, the Family, Education, Health, Social Realm, Recreation, Communication Services, Public Life/Politics and Economy. It also seeks to verify the working hypothesis that Catholic women are already doing liberational roles. As explained in chapter two, these dimensions of roles are supported, guided and directed by the magisterium. These liberational activities are an obligation of duty as baptised and confirmed Christians, with an accentuation of social praxis and spiritual liberty. The chapter, therefore, seeks to present, interpret and elaborate women's activities through their diverse charisms and self-giftedness (cf 2 Pet 1:1). From a Christian perspective, "these gifts are not meant for individual and personal aggrandisement, but rather for the service of the community".¹

The states of unfreedom or captivity that call for women liberational roles in Kenya include dire poverty, corruption, injustices, problems necessitated by international debts and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the scourge of HIV/AIDS, landless vagrants among others. These problems indignate the human person which call for Catholic women humanism, a humanism that has respect for the poor, the lowly, the elderly, and the infirm² as people of one common origin (Gen 2). The women - folk: single mothers, wives, consecrated virgins and professionals, hence, become necessary agents of humanism - like "one synod (African) Father said: 'The Church is worth what woman is' (Bishop Agboka)".³

4.1 Women and the Church

The definition of the Church as the "People of God" by the decree L.G. of the Vatican Council II saw an ushering of active women ecclesiastical participation in divinising ministries as lay apostolates and missionaries. This has been further facilitated by the African Synodal realisation of the Church as the "Family of God" which includes women, lay and consecrated virgins.

We gathered from our field work research that Catholic women, as guided by their Christian conscience, witness and proclaim the good news both as individuals and group apostolates. In individual apostolate, Catholic women professionals evangelise their co-workers through prayer meetings and interdenominational bible study with an

enthusiasm as that of the Samaritan woman - she is a model of feminine spiritual, religious and intelligible potentials of contemporary women in liberational pursuits.⁴ The recitation of the Rosary⁵ is encouraged in such prayer meetings. Through the gospel message and the sharing thereby the Catholic women realise and enhance the rediscovery of liberational roles within themselves and among others respectively. Such qualities "as receptivity, fidelity, patience, humility, care for others, concern for continuity and unity"⁶ are inculcated in human virtues through the gospel sharing which liberates and instigate liberation for the common good. Such an ecumenical approach is a response to the Holy Father's call⁷ and an emulation of Jesus' universalistic approach towards salvation.

Some careers necessitate a communal interpersonal relationship with people who, due to their persistent cultural ties and different religious faiths, have never known Christ while others have become de-evangelised following personal reasons.⁸ This, according to the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (A.O.S.K.) is a "spirituality of relationality" which incorporates people of different cultures and faiths.⁹ This inspiration is well guided by the relationship between Ruth and Naomi, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law respectively, two women of different cultures and faiths (Ruth 1-3). Their interpersonal relationship is "based on a relational value system."¹⁰ As a result, it becomes necessary for the Catholic women to have principled faith guided by reason in order to evangelise wholesomely (cf Is 7 :9). This reason of faith, according to St. Augustine (354-430)¹¹, should not be mistaken with blind faith (credulity). He asserts that one must have a reason to believe in order to deepen that believe.¹² This is why, according to one of our respondents, Catholic women reserve time to learn their catechism.¹³ Henceforth, an awareness is created that for any effective evangelisation, Christians must be committed witnesses and proclaimers of the Gospel message.¹⁴

The agglomeration of diverse individual apostolates form such groups as the Legion of Mary, the Sacred Heart, the C.W.A. and C.A. The Sacred Heart is a devotional group which practice house to house visits in communion for reparation rites which entail "the consecration of the family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary".¹⁵ The Legion of Mary, which is also a devotional group, live a sacramental life which stress on Christian liberty than on temporal one. They visit homes to prepare children for baptism and Holy Communion, to encourage Christians to attend Mass and to partake in the Eucharist, to prepare couples for matrimonial sacraments and visiting the poor. They cooperate with the Society of Vincent the Poor (S.V.P) in identifying those in abject poverty.¹⁶

The Legion of Mary was founded by Frank Duff¹⁷ in Dublin, Ireland. Legion was a section of the Roman army under one captain, hence, the Legion of Mary is analogically an army of Christians under one general, the B.V.M, which accentuates the ministry of

crashing the evil.¹⁸ The proto-evangelium : “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed, he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen 3: 15-19) is a prophetic cooperation between the Woman, Mary, in the salvific history of mankind. We see the woman antagonistically involved in this war both in Gen 3 and in Rev 12 where the Dragon awaits to devour the child (Jesus). Mary, the handmaid of the Lord (Lk 1 : 48) becomes the hope of the Legionaries in their struggle for Christian liberty. No wonder we encountered a good number of Catholic women inspired in their liberational works by this devotional group. The following liberational exaltation of Mary thus becomes their source of inspiration:

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those in low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever.¹⁹

In the light of the above, Mary’s exaltation is implicit in the bipolarisation of humanity between the extremes of the proud and the lowly/humble; the powerful and the oppressed; and the rich and the poor. Mary is also explicit on God’s, Her Son’s and Her stance among the oppressed. The canticle shows no neutrality in liberational struggles; it is either for or against oppression.²⁰

The women interviewed learn their dignity and role in the Church through the example of B.V.M. She becomes a perfect model for motherhood and plays the role of a mediator for the faithful (cf Jn 2 : 5), hence, she gains the title Mediatrix. Following Her example, the Legionaries serve as a link between the Christians and the ordained priests, for instance among the patients in hospitals who need pastoral guidance.²¹ The exemplarity of B.V.M. is further highlighted by Teresa Okure in these words:

Thus, as Eve, after the fall, became physically “the mother of all the living” (Gen 3 : 20), thereby playing a role akin to that of God, the source and giver of life (Ps 36 : 9 ; Job 33 : 4), so, at the annunciation and at the foot of the cross, Mary became spiritually the mother of God’s children in Christ (cf Jn 19 : 25 - 27). Revelation 12, which is applied to Mary at the Feast of the Assumption, portrays the Church, mother of God’s children, as woman, just as in the Old Testament Zion was called “mother” (cf Ps 87 : 5). Hence motherhood, the bearing and bringing forth of life, remains a prerogative that God share exclusively with the woman.²²

The faithful also undertake evangelisation ministries which are met not without challenges (cf Lk 4 : 16-30) within the umbrella of C.W.A. Unnecessary conflicts of ideas between the Catholic theology and other religious faiths are discouraged. In this case ecumenism becomes appropriate in showing love and respect for other religious faiths by listening and discerning their (other) beliefs.²³ This attitude helps members of C.W.A. to mingle and cooperate with people of different faiths.

The C.W.A. is a National Organisation of all Catholic women who have registered themselves as members of the Association. It was officially launched in 1967 under the auspices of Kenya National Council of Catholic Women (KNCCW). The KNCCW is affiliated to the World Union of Catholic Women Association. Currently the CWA membership rates from 70,000 nationally. It has an Executive Council of twelve members who are elected on quarterly basis. The Organisation has a national board made up of three representatives from every diocese namely: the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer. KNCCW aims at promoting the participation of Catholic women in the ecclesial and in human development; training them in leadership roles through the seminars ; giving Catholic women a voice at the national and international level ; studying problems of general interest in national affairs; and facilitating initiatives of the Christian and social welfare of families.²⁴ The motto of C.W.A. is "strong in faith", in readiness to serve.²⁵ That is why, in the research, we noticed that C.W.A members are among the most dynamic in participating in liberational ministry within Nairobi Deanery. At a local level the C.W.A works in liaison with the parish council in their liberative missions. A case in study is the St. Peter Claver's Church's C.W.A.

It was founded in 1986 with only six members with an initiative that "a house without a woman is not a house," that is, women participation in the ecclesial is vital. Currently it has one hundred registered members. The African traditional sense of communality or Mbiti's African philosophy of "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am" is enhanced in group apostolates. It contradicts the Western definition of religion as a dichotomy of the ultimate and everything else.²⁶ The C.W.A. has made Christianity an integral part of their total way of life. The organisation practice spiritual exercises such as communal prayers, bible study, spiritual retreats at least on 23rd March of every year. This is a significant date for the dulia of St. Monica²⁷ as their model of a Christian woman.

They also perform acts of charity such as visiting the sick, contributing towards the support of the poor, donate towards the "Cardinal's Contribution" which is used for the maintenance and training of the seminarians like in St. Thomas Aquinas, Tindinyo and Mabanga Senior Seminaries. In such agendas they cooperate with other parishes within the Archdiocese of Nairobi. Other important activities undertaken by the members

include social activities such as participation in funerals and weddings. Social-economic activities are also practised to alleviate poverty and to educate their next of kin. In their liberational activities, the Family of Nazareth becomes a prototype to their families; they emulate the respect and humility of the B. V. M. towards her husband Joseph even during Her betrothal to him.²⁸

Most of these women belong to Small Christian Communities (S.C.C's) popularly known as "jumuia ndogo ndogo" in their local areas. Bible reading and reflections (prayers and meditation) become more concretised within their *sitz im leben*. S.C.C's are "the most basic 'phenomenal or sacramental' expression of 'the salvific will in Christ through the Spirit,' the universal Church."²⁹

Catholic women also participate actively in youth apostolate. They activate them in spiritual exercises such as Christian rallies, choir, Eucharist ministries and liturgical participation to help transform them and be self-supporting. The youth are an important component of the Family of God which the Catholic women strive to imbibe with good morals and Christian virtues and values with an aim of inculturating them. It is to the awareness that much hope and future of the Church and the society entirely depends on how well the youth are cultured that Catholic women help to rehabilitate some of them; youth members come from different socio-cultural set ups which turn youth apostolate into a hard task. Some are rehabilitated drug addicts, alcoholics and partial mentally retarded, while others hail from the incomplete families, the single mothers' families.³⁰ Much counselling is done to incorporate all the members as one family.³¹

Through such groups the members gain healthy interpersonal relationships and better social communication.³² Organised inter and intra rallies help them to exchange ideas, perform concerts with moral teachings and commemorate their deceased members. Youth seminars are also organised to enlighten the youth on issues concerning the scourge of HIV/AIDS, boy-girl relationship, how to cope with stress, on careers and on the question of poverty in the society. These assist them in their moral judgements and accountability to their character; St. Paul's youth seminars are mostly held at Sarare Boarding School in Ngong, Nairobi. As an incentive towards their liturgical participation, the St. Peter Claver's Church Youth group is taken for a leisure trip to Mombasa or Kisumu among other areas at least once a year during the advent season. Some of the problems encountered by the patronesses in such trips involve the girls' health where they have to offer ante-natal care to those with advanced pregnancies but with caution not to cause any embarrassment³⁴. Much counselling is given to avoid abortions and acute depression which can easily lead to suicide.

Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery also serve as lay missionaries (cf Acts 1: 8). In the past, global missions were marked by the number of convertees, works of charity

as baits for "catching of souls", the replica of Mother Church, "sheep stealing" and "sheep protecting" which resulted to African Christians total dependence on the mother Churches.³⁴ This was more oppressive than liberative. Currently the Catholic Lay Missionaries (C.L.M.) evangelise mission areas such as the semi arid areas - Kakuma and Lodwar - and slum areas in Nairobi - Mathare, Mukuru and Kangemi³⁵ with an aim of eradicating the root causes of poverty, suffering and underdevelopment. They assist the indigent to become self-sufficient. They also evangelise them to minister unto themselves. C.L.M. respond to the cry for freedom for the non-evangelised and those whose dignity has been tampered with. The slum dwellers live in such dire poverty to the extent of losing their self-worth and hardly recognise the image of God in themselves. Such are the kind of roles Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery play.

The C.L.M. programme was started in 1989 and 90 per cent do stay in the project. Their performance is judged by the Christian witnesses, commitment and the duration they spend in the field. C.L.M. are required to be committed Catholics with professional training to help accommodate them in the wider economy of the society as they carry out their ministries. The emphasis on missionary work is a CALL (cf Acts 1:8) to do the will of God and not the commercial aspect. Those accorded positions as lay missionaries are given two days seminar on its requirements and a three week's orientation covering a cross-section of courses - the history of the Church, liberation theology, on profile and personality, development issues among others - are given. They are also accorded a discernment period for three days (spiritual retreat).³⁶ The preparation assist them to insert themselves into people's lives and to incarnate the Gospel as per the needs, aspirations and mentality of the people.

In connection with the above, C.L.M. play a wholistic approach towards liberation, that is physical, social, economic, political, intellectual and spiritual - blending the temporal perfection with spiritual liberty. This is a response towards the call of Vatican Council II ;³⁷ a realisation of the Council Fathers of a half-baked liberation which calls only for Christian liberty. Jesus serves as a good model of an integral liberational approach (cf Lk 4 : 16-30). Temporal activities done by the C.L.M. encompass primary health care, adult literacy, income generating projects, small businesses, agricultural/ food production projects, community based water projects, women's projects and activities that involve the most afflicted in the society such as 'ayahs', prostitutes, parking boys, ex-prisoners, single mothers, HIV/AIDS sufferers and the handicapped people.³⁸ In regard to evangelisation, an awareness is created that "man is sick, and his sickness is a sickness of the spirit ...".³⁹ As such, to 'heal' the sickness of the marginalised the C.L.M. insert themselves in other people's lives which dispose them to night attacks, bearing with the alcoholics, drug addicts and the poor environment where the garbage heaps and road sides serve as latrines for the children at day light and for adults at

night.⁴⁰

The climatic conditions of the semi-arid areas where some Catholic women from Nairobi Deanery volunteer to render their services especially during lent season are harsh. The bandit attacks in such areas as Lodwar and the loss of their property is another nasty stumbling block. The Catholic women (men included) sacrifice their existential remunerating jobs, attachment to their families and homes to help liberate such climatically and banditry challenged people. The endeavour to imbibe hope and faith among the oppressed and to revolutionise the kind of "Aristotelian unmoved mover" conception of God to a compassionate God⁴¹ in them. They seem to be aware that "liberation theology is no mere intellectual exercise, no cerebral enterprise, for it deals with matters of life and death for those on whose behalf it is being done."⁴² In this case the C.L.M. tend to make Allan Boesak's words on liberation theology their own. That is ; "what we need is a spiritual and political Exodus out of the situation of oppression toward a situation of liberation, out of the situation of inhumanity, darkness, and hatred toward a situation in which we ... can regain our common humanity and enjoy a meaningful life, a wholeness of life that has been destroyed."⁴³

Our research made us encounter a very dynamic and dedicated group of women whose participation in liberational works is unparalleled. These are the nuns who are also called sisters.

As consecrated women they give themselves totally sacrificing worldly pleasures and their inalienable right to marry for a total service of the people. They live in communities (convents) of people with different cultural backgrounds interacting and interrelating as family members. The A.O.S.K. was started in August, 1962 and aims at fostering spiritual liberty and integral growth of women religious in Kenya by organising workshops on formative courses, educational seminars, catechetical work and mobile team work which visits other religious in various dioceses. The Association targets mainly women religious who in turn reach the grassroots within their own parishes. At its formative stage, A.O.S.K. targeted to educate the women religious in Sudan on spiritual formation courses after which they could form others. In Kenya, the A.O.S.K. assisted missionary sisters culturally to engage in forming 'young' congregations.

Today, they are involved in various activities to help liberate the oppressed. The Sisters of Good Shepherd, Sisters of St. Teresa of Culcutta and Little Sisters of Jesus work in slum areas for the temporal perfection as well as Christian liberty of the slum dwellers. The Carmelite Sisters confine themselves in the convent and live a contemplative life in St. Austin's in Nairobi Deanery. This is an area that is usually neglected but they have given themselves totally to contemplate for the human liberty. They pray and mortify themselves for God's mercy and love for both the oppressed and the oppressors and for the re-establishment of Christian values and human dignity. It is

to their realisation that the love of God "is the only source of activity of Yahweh"⁴⁴ that the women religious use their God-given gifts to transform the society. The Sisters of East Africa Study Conference (SEASC), who we also find in Nairobi Deanery, address the Islamic issue in Kenya by studying the religion and having a dialogue with muslims. Islamic religion is seen as a challenge to Christianity of which they have to face. They also act as 'agents of reconciliation' within and without their congregations⁴⁵ not withstanding the fact that the religious are also vulnerable to human indignity of jealous, hatred and competition although they have radically chosen the Christ - spousal relation. The SEASC, hence, enhance mutual relations not only in the convents but also among the clerics.⁴⁶ As such, these sisters promote a healthy dialogue between the Catholics and the muslims thereby enhancing ecumenism which is in vogue.

4.2 Women and the Family

From women's ecclesial liberational participation, the logical concern now is their involvement in family affairs. The sequence is proper and fitting since, as we profoundly elaborated in chapter two, the contemporary image of the Church is that of FAMILY OF GOD thanks to the African Synod.

The virtues and values of a whollistic family are founded on an indissoluble and divine matrimonial institution.⁴⁷ According to Aylward Shorter, marriage can be defined as "i) ... a special and intimate union between men and women ... of which mating is an essential expression, in some sense sacred, ii) which establishes enforceable rights between the partners, iii) which marks a change of status for them and their parents, iv) which results in a special status for the children, higher than for children of extra-marital unions,... and v) which implies that other forms of mating and intimacy are deviant ... to marriage."⁴⁸ Marriage should also be based on the Trinitarian model; the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit should give the Christian marriage a point of reference. Marriage, therefore, should be Christocentric, Ecclesiological and Pneumatological, as originally intended by God (Gen 2: 23 - 24).⁴⁹

In the light of the above, any other form of marriage defies the Christian understanding of a family. The "Family" as one of the agendas of the Cairo Conference (1994) was initially defined variously as:

- a) Homosexual marriage;
- b) Lesbian marriage;
- c) Middle marriage where nature necessitates sexual intercourse between a homosexual and a lesbian without marriage commitment; and
- d) The normal marriage - the union of a man and a woman (Gen 2:23-24).⁵⁰

The first three definitions are, from a Christian point of view, deviant of the fourth one. These are quite oppressive not only to the victims but also to the proponents - oppressors of the victims. As Eugene Dwyer expresses:

Not everybody who cries "feminist liberation" is ipso facto a true friend of women (much less a friend of married couples, of families, and of the new human beings who will make up the Kenyans... of tomorrow) ... The prescribing doctors - the vocal feminists - are actually unrepresentative of women in general ... and may indeed have little in common with them ... To say that professional conference - going feminists in Africa are a singularly elite group is not to impugn their good faith in any way, but simply to state a fact which may raise other important questions about their empathic contact with the grass-roots, effectiveness as agents of local social transformation, 'paternalistic' attitudes to the 'unenlightened'...⁵¹

The Catholic women Family Life animators among others challenged the Conference to drop the first three definitions of marriage, hence, succeeded in retaining the Christian form of marriage as a universal norm. They worked closely with Vatican delegation in their liberative move.⁵²

Family today is faced with a number of socio-cultural problems which distabilises it. Such include sexual dissatisfaction, hasty marriages, infidelity of couples, conflict of roles, differences in education and income, alcoholism, children of the same sex and so on.⁵³ Marriage Encounter counsels young unmarried couples to avoid hasty marriages and catechises married people to persevere in their matrimonial covenant and making their respective families fruitful and authentic. Workshops and seminars, home visits by marriage counsellors help to reconcile those with diverse differences which can easily lead to separation, divorce or even murder. Couples living outside matrimonial sacraments are encouraged to seal their marriage covenant in the Church. Failure to this excludes them from the Eucharist which is very vital in a Christian life. As explained previously, Holy Communion unites the 'body of Christ' since it is "Christ himself in living, personal presence" that is received.⁵⁴ Moreover, according to Canon 210, " all the Christian faithful must make an effort with their own condition, to live a holy life and to promote the growth of the Church and its continual satisfaction".⁵⁵

To propagate and uphold the human dignity the Deanery's Catholic women participate in pro-life campaigns and Family Life Programmes (F.L.P.). Reacting to the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994, the

Holy See decried abortion policies deliberated on in the Final Document as a policy of "primary health care" and a demographic policy. The Holy See affirmed "that human life begins at the moment of conception."⁵⁶ F.L.P. painstakingly teaches couples

on the Natural Family Planning (N.F.P.) against "contraception imperialism" which is widely practised in Africa. Let it be appreciated that N.F.P. does not dictate the number of children a couple begets but rather their spacing, according to the parents capabilities to nurture and educate them. In this connection Peter Lwaminda has the following to say about African Synod which is a great inspiration to Catholic women:

The Synod noted that the African family was suffering from "contraceptive imperialism" which entailed imposing on the African peoples and their cultures any kind of contraception, sterilisation, and abortion considered effective, by the West, without any respect for religious, ethnic, or family traditions of the African peoples. It is reported that in 1985, President Daniel Arap Moi, of Kenya announced that "four children was the limit and anyone, having more would lose free primary education for all of them," and that "women who bore more than four children risked losing a number of social benefits, including maternity leave" (Synod Bulletin No.15).⁵⁷

Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are, moreover, aware of the bondage that modern science and technology has had on women who are mostly affected by the artificial recourse of fertility. They are also informed on what P. Lwaminda calls "demographic terrorism"⁵⁸ which the West use to encourage contraception. The argument being, the more the population grows the less the quality of life; this is basically true but what they propagate (contraception) is what the Church decries as direct killing of unborn babies. Modernisation has inhibited the African traditional methods of family planning such as "polygamy and breast feeding combined with post-partum abstinence."⁵⁹ According to the World Bank Report, "97 percent of women in Kenya breastfeed their children, and this is associated with about 11 months on average of lactation amenorrhea".⁶⁰ This means an increase in fertility and a direct cause of contraception.

The N.F.P. animators, guided and directed by the Humanae Vitae (H.V) (Human Life) and F.C. examined in chapter two recognise the need to protect human life which is the image of God right from the time of conception. N.F.P. conscientises women on the Billings Method⁶¹ which goes for the mucus symptoms on the virgina, hence, liberating women from artificial contraception. It also helps the sub-fertile women, that is, those who are only fertile to a maximum of three to five times a year, to retain their fertility. Contraception further suppresses such fertility which might lead to barrenness - menstrual cycle is taken by most women to be a sign of fertility which is not the case. Other effects of contraception, according to Mrs. A. Kyonda⁶², that women are liberated from include barrenness, cramps and ectopic pregnancies following the use of Intra-Uterine Device (IUD). According to Dr. M. Ogola,⁶³ scientific research has it that condoms leak due to hydrostatic pressure - a simulated sexual activity in the laboratory. Condoms

cannot, therefore, prevent the spread of HIV virus.

The Family Life Committee (F.L.C.) is made up of approximately twenty people who contributed towards the success of pro-lifers to attend the Cairo (1994) and Beijing (1995) Conferences. Under the umbrella of F.L.C. other working agents for life include Youth For Life and Family Network (FN). FN aims at educating parents on issues affecting families. The proposal of the government to introduce the Family Life Education (FLE) as an examinable subject in schools was met with a lot of resistance by the Catholic women. The FLE as understood by the Ministry of Education differed from FLP which was started by the Church in 1987. The latter "is an integrated programme covering the welfare of the family in broad ranging topics such as children growing at home, sex and sexuality, youth and leisure, responsible parenthood, drugs, alcohol and unemployment."⁶⁴ The topics were discerned and designed to suit all categories of people according to their age and psychological growth.

The former differed in objectives and topics which the Catholic women thought would disorientate the minds and later become a root cause of the young people's depersonalisation. To counteract the government's move, the Catholic women among them those of Nairobi Deanery managed to collect 3000 signatories within Nairobi of lay parents who vigorously and persistently opposed the proposal and handed to the Permanent Secretary with a letter decrying the move attached. Countrywide 50,000 signatories were collected. Through such efforts the government was forced to revert its proposal to suit the needs of the public.⁶⁵ As such, it is quite clear that the government had not catered for the psychological development of the children. They were dealing with a group of learners whose level of discernment, judging and accountability on matters of life is below standard. Some of the family planning requirements are a mandatory to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) grants and loans.⁶⁶

The above efforts of Catholic women are a remarkable move in fighting for the dignity of human life. Similarly, their involvement instigated the president to direct the withdrawal of the suspected Boys Scouts and Girl Guides publication entitled "Family Life Education" - a Curriculum Scouts Programme for African Region in December, 31st 1995. The president of the Republic of Kenya had to admit that the document "contains instructions which are injurious to school children, for cultural ways of life and morals."⁶⁷ To further conscientise the parents on Family Life the FLP publishes a quarterly Letter, the "Family Today".⁶⁸

Catholic Women (FLP) are also giving an upper hand in fighting against partial birth in Canada and United States in liaison with the Human Life International (HLI) and educating people in these affairs rooting themselves in the Church's social-ethical pedagogy examined in chapter two. The argument for the partial birth abortions is the validity of a mother's right to her body and the unborn, and for health care. As long as

Education is the key to development and progress of any society, hence, there is much emphasis laid on it and the government allots a significant percentage of its resources to it, estimated as follows:

It is estimated that 9.2% of GDP was devoted to education in 1992/93 of which households contributed half. Within public spending about 60% went to primary education, and 17% each to secondary and university education. Within household spending, a little more than 25% each went to primary and secondary education, 40% to vocational and other training.⁷³

The importance of education is well asserted by Kant with the following words:

'A man can only become a man through education. He is nothing more than what education makes him'. Education should discipline man and make him cultured and moral; its aim is ultimately the creation of a happier mankind ... The child must learn to rule himself and come to terms with necessities of liberty and constraint, the product of which is true freedom.⁷⁴

It is to this awareness that the Curriculum developers, headteachers and teachers work in cooperation for the future liberty of their learners. Following the problem of unemployment among others in Kenya the 8-4-4 system of education was implemented in 1984 to impart skills which would produce self-reliant citizens.⁷⁵ But the new system has its own oppressive measures on the learners. According to Ms. Augusta Muthigani,⁷⁶ some of the problems tied to the curriculum include:

- a) Too wide syllabi which ought to be covered within a given time.
- b) The examinations are taxing and confusing since the content of syllabi are a "jungled material and not systematised according to the levels of the learners, that is, some form four material are contained in form two syllabi".⁷⁷
- c) The mode of examinations are also depressing for the learners. For instance, Christian Religious Education (CRE) Paper I and II cover all the topics from form I to IV such that students keep re-reading the material after one paper of examination.
- d) The introduction of new subjects such as Social Education and Ethics (S.E.E.) overcrowds the curriculum and becomes a burden to the learners. J.N.K. Mugambi, on the introduction of new subjects in the school curriculum, made the following observations:

The introduction of a new subject is always a problem in any education system. The Curriculum always tends to be overcrowded, and there is competition between various subjects over the distribution of available teaching periods on the timetable. When the

Social Education and Ethics syllabus was approved, the question concerned which subjects would have their periods reduced in order to make time for it.⁷⁸

The quality of education at a glance, according to the respondent, has been messed up. The current syllabus of secondary school are a clustered content of the old system of education from forms I - VI.

Following the above mentioned problems, the curriculum developers are engaged in book and syllabus reviewing of K.I.E. and private authored books. This is intended to standardise the syllabus content to suit the cognitive level of students. Similarly, the F.L.E. books produced by the Kenya AIDS society are reviewed to suit the needs of the consumers.

To promote the progress of C.R.E, whose future seems threatened by the introduction of S.E.E,⁷⁹ the curriculum developer run distant programmes on C.R.E. They educate and inservice C.R.E teachers in the fields; the K.C.S. does this in conjunction with Christian Churches Education Association (CCEA). Pastrol programmes have also been introduced in primary schools (1985) and in secondary schools to give the learners an integrated liberation. It serves to complement R.E. and to help those students who by choice, in pursuit of science oriental careers do not take R.E. The liberationists are also struggling to see that the original objective of S.E.E. as an unexaminable subject is maintained.

S.E.E. was introduced to equip the learners with diverse moral values and virtues which had otherwise been offered denominationally.⁸⁰ But this objective seems unachievable following the moral decadence in schools - strikes, drug abuse, high school drop outs. Statistics indicate that the rate of girls school drop outs both in primary and secondary schools range to 120,000 on account of pregnancies.⁸¹ Consequently, drug and HIV/AIDS awareness programmes and on interpersonal relationships are provided to the learners on community based programmes.⁸² A case study showed that learners go for "circulars"⁸³ until 12.00 am in a day secondary school. Such students are presumably said by their parents to be on school trips while teachers assume that they are under their parental care. Teachers and headteachers intervene to rehabilitate such cases. The Catholic sponsored schools in Nairobi Deanery include Loreto Msongari (Senior and Junior) School and St. Mary's School within St. Austins Parish; Loreto School Valley Road within Holy Family Basilica Parish; Consolata Primary School within Consolata Parish; and Our Lady Queen of Peace Secondary School South-B within the Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish South-B. In these schools the Catholic women participate in forming the learners as critical reflectors of what affects them and educate the learners in the pastrol programmes which entirely depend on the

volition of the teaching personnel. This helps the learners to grow spiritually.

While it is possible for the teachers to be uncommitted in their profession, the Catholic women we encountered in the above named schools seemed to be dedicated to their work. An interview with some of the learners in different schools showed their capabilities to internalise learning and their critical approach towards what is taught in class - the researchers had an opportunity of class attendance taught by some Catholic women. The kind of approach used in teaching the learners, according to the respondents, are opposed to what Paulo Freire refers to banking education - a ready to wear kind of education.⁸⁴ The students are rather helped in critical reflection which is more of a problem solving approach to life. This facilitates the learners to make judgements and to account for their conduct.

The school being a social institution, the teachers and headteachers create healthy interpersonal relationships with the parents. This has led some to participate in the counselling of the parents especially the single mothers on parentage. The Catholic women teachers also assist them in rehabilitating their children, some of whom are drug addicts, alcoholics and school vacation children prostitutes. The Catholic women, in confidence, counsel and provide motherly love to such cases with an aim of liberating them.

A case study of Arya Primary School, in Nairobi helps us to understand the role of Catholic women. The school is predominantly Asian and is manned by a Catholic woman of Our Lady Queen of Peace, South-B. The school has Asian directors and racism is an unnecessary evil. The headmistress is sometimes ordered to send away children who cannot afford to buy all classroom textbooks in order to victimise the African children whose parents are poor. This would, of course, reduce the number of African children in the school. But the headmistress has fought for the poor at the risk of uncalled for transfer and loss of privileges. If this would happen, it would be for a just cause in the light of equality of all the children. This has reduced the number of drop outs in that schools, thanks to her persistent, courageous and enthusiastic struggle towards humanism.

The educational approach by the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery targets to assist the learners attain human maturity. They aim at helping the youth to concretise what they learn and not just to be schooled.⁸⁵ Education is, therefore, an important agent of creating independent people, and for the youth, to make right decisions in their future careers.

4.4 Women and Health

The next important category of liberation work of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery is 'Health'. A person's health is an integral part of human liberty which, if ignored, would render other forms of humanity null and void. The following highlights the preoccupation of Catholic women's efforts and engagement in establishing a healthy people.

In Kenya, the political freedom (1963) from colonialism meant a free accessibility and increase of health services without an obligation of any duty or coercion to Christianity - which was a facilitator of colonialism. According to the World Bank report on "Kenya Poverty Assessment" (1995), health facilities were presented as follows:

Kenya's health system expanded rapidly in years after independence. There is presently one health facility per 12,600 people, 950 persons per hospital bed, 10,000 per nurse. About 42% of the population is within 8 Km - good figures by prevailing regional standards. These facilities generally diagnose and treat common ailments and deliver a basic package of health services (immunisation, family planning, growth monitoring and pre-natal care).⁸⁶

The current situation of health services is deteriorating as a result of SAP where the poor can hardly afford health care. The NFP is one area that Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are using to lower the cost of health care as well as promoting a healthy nation. Considering the effects of artificial contraception (see section on women and the family) the most affected are the rural women.

The mode of life in rural areas is characterised by hard toiling in the farms for a source of income and food. Women hardly rest and spend most of the time bending in the shamba or doing donkey work of fetching water and firewood. This is in itself another form of exploitation and oppression⁸⁷ which will be further explicated in Section 4.8 of this chapter. Any effects of contraception such as headaches and backaches are associated with the day's work. By the time a woman decides to seek health care, not withstanding the number of kilometres one will have to walk, the effects are already at an advanced stage. These at times develops to permanent health problems. The F.L.P animators visit rural women to educate them on N.F.P. with an intention of dealing with the root causes of such forms of captivity.⁸⁸

Catholic women are also trained in health sciences to assist in public health services.⁸⁹ Workshops are provided in Nairobi Deanery to educate women on nutrition for the common good of the society especially for the rural women.⁹⁰ Research has it that :

malnutrition of young children contributes to low future productivity, seriously constraining the development of both individuals and

societies. Undernutrition can raise the risk of premature death (mortality increase exponentially with declining weight for age in young children) increase the incidence and severity of sickness by 50%, reduce learning capacity by 10% and adult productivity by up to 20%. The prospective costs of micro-nutrient deficiencies, which can cause diseases, disabilities and death are, ... even higher. The poor are disproportionately affected by malnutrition, and their status is more likely to have intergenerational consequences. ... malnutrition could constrain their capacity to benefit from ... education.⁹¹

A case study is the projects manager, Health and Nutrition Department of Catholic Relief Service (CRS) intention to help the marginalised. Her role is to monitor and design Community Based Health Projects (CBHP) by giving technical assistance. Although they work through the Kenyan groups to implement the projects and the NGO's, the CBHP concentrate on mothers and children in the Deanery and nationally.⁹² Mothers are the caregivers of children and to educate them is to invest educational resources. Some of the areas that the CBHP concentrate on include Nairobi, Nyeri, Homabay, Ngong, and Garissa in North-Eastern. The Projects are funded but not given direct financial assistance. Community health workers are also trained to educate mothers on nutrition and hygiene in order to shun child mortality and malnutrition.⁹³ This way, the poverty malnutrition nexus is broken and human resources improved thanks to Catholic women involvement. These liberational struggles follow the evidence that "the major community level factors that affect child nutrition are nutritional education and hygiene."⁹⁴

Another health problem striking the society is the scourge of HIV/AIDS with devastating impact on the plight of families. According to the World Bank Report, 750,000 to 1 million Kenyans and 30,000 children under five are HIV positive, the prevalence being higher, 10 - 11%, in urban areas than in rural areas 4 - 5%.⁹⁵ This is affecting the Kenyan economy since the most affected and dying are the most productive. As such, there arises an urgent need to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS through conscientising people on the dangers of trivialization of sexuality, which is the major agent of AIDS transmission. The Catholic women attend AIDS control programmes facilitated by the K.C.S. in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Kenya AIDS Society. The aim being to facilitate the HIV/AIDS awareness at the grassroot level. Such skills include coping mechanisms with the AIDS victims - mostly given to family members. The victims are instructed on how to fight the stigma and discrimination that they suffer from the society. Basic training in counselling skills is inevitable to help the Catholic women relate and care for the victims at home as well as in hospitals. The HIV/AIDS awareness animators also facilitate workshops at parish levels for the common good.⁹⁶

Such efforts are faced with a lot of challenges since the Catholic moral theology does not comply with some aspects of the Ministry of Health on issues regarding Family Life and HIV/AIDS control. For instance, condoms are generally propagated as a health care and targets the largest population in Kenya. The Catholic Church, as sighted above, does not approve artificial contraception. Contrary to this teaching, the Catholic women are expected to act in liaison with the Ministry of Health in which they conflict.

According to Laurenti Magesa, the Eastern and Central Africa have alarming cases of AIDS. He further observed that those countries that have a high prevalence of AIDS are predominantly Christian countries with few exemptions such as Angola.⁹⁷ This calls for a complete metanoia which involves true practising of ones faith for the promotion of quality of life. The Christians have a duty to renew the human life. As such, Catholic women have been working antagonistically with the government at the risk of their careers and to evangelise people. They, as our informants disclosed, are well aware of their Christian mission and are determined to sustain human dignity in their liberational struggles.

The HIV/AIDS awareness animators particularly medical nuns at Mater Misericordiae hospital in Nairobi Deanery train staff at the grassroot level to help the public. But the problem of staff turn-over is prevalent. Trained nuns leave for other areas in obedience to their respective mother superiors while the lay go for job transfers.⁹⁸ The major problem is the financial constraint of training other faithful while those who leave their mission areas stop practising the HIV/AIDS awareness promotion. Such understandable limitations do not discourage women in rendering their needed services in this realm. In our field work research, we came across some women from Nairobi Deanery who work voluntarily or with some humble remunerations at the Cottolengo Centre in Karen which is a home and hospice for HIV/AIDS children particularly the orphans.

Cottolengo is a congregation that deals with the needy. It was founded by an Italian priest, Cottolengo, in the eighteenth century. They believe in the divine providence. The Cottolengo Centre caters for the HIV/AIDS orphans. These children are estimated to increase to 600,000 by the year 2000 and almost a million by 2005 in Kenya.⁹⁹ The main objectives of the Centre are:-

- a) To provide psychological, physical, social and spiritual care for the HIV/AIDS orphans;
- b) To provide feeding and treatment of ailments - HIV/AIDS related or otherwise to the babies;
- c) To provide love and a necessary environment for normal development of HIV/AIDS abandoned babies;
- d) To channel the babies to ordinary children's homes or original family homes

after they test HIV negative;

- e) To advocate for general support of HIV positive orphans;
- f) To provide other services necessary for child development, for instance, education; and
- g) To contribute to the pool of knowledge in HIV positive children.¹⁰⁰

The Cottolengo Centre receive HIV positive children as young as three days old from, for instance, Kenyatta National Hospital, provincial and district hospitals, orphaned homes and other children's homes. They also receive children from Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia. At present there are thirty-three children, the eldest being nine years old. There are two doctors on call and nurses. 8% of the children (0 - 18 months) turn HIV negative while only 2% of them remain positive after proper medical care. Those who turn HIV negative are given for adoption or channelled to other children's homes. The Centre has well equipped medical facilities with a sick-bay of four beds for isolating the very sick, who, most of the time pass away. A rich balanced diet is provided to keep them alive. A visit to the home indicated its growth by the number of buildings and extensions that are coming up.

The Catholic women perform priestly and prophetic roles of Christ by counselling and baptising dying children in the absence of an ordained priest. The lay priesthood is put in the service of Christ who has no room for procrastination. His death on the cross was for the liberty of our bodies and souls. Hence, the caring for the Cottolengo children is a radical sacrifice, which is most of the time taken as a waste of energy, time and money on dying human beings by some members of the public. All the children undergo Catholic catechism in preparation for baptism, confirmation, the Holy Communion and death. It is to their faith in the Katoris of the divine God to save the captives, rejected and to heal the sick, and God's fundamental option for the poor that the liberators feel more obliged to save such HIV/AIDS children. They are also taught how to recite the rosary at their tender age. The very sick are given the final unction by ordained priests.

A family, as directed by F.C., involves having an open heart to such children, the orphans and the social rejects. Hence the Catholic women adopt them as their own; as the matron respondent thus expressed:

it is painful to see our children die because once they are here they become our children and the most painful thing for a mother is to see her child pass away. Nevertheless, as Catholic believers, the conviction that they go to heaven is consolation enough for us to carry on with the demanding ministry.¹⁰¹

The catechises of these children is seen as a preparation to inherit the kingdom

of God and the dead are referred to as the "COTTOLENGO'S HEAVENLY ANGELS." The author verified this joyful hope by personally viewing numerous photographs of the children who have passed away through Cottolengo home on a big notice - board and a big lettered headline reading : "COTTOLENGO'S HEAVENLY ANGELS."

The children's psychological health is also catered for by avoiding publicity in the media; some of the children had happened to view themselves on the television which was quite distressing. The Cottolengo children are also provided with social amenities and education to make their life seem normal since they are unaware of their situation. A classroom has been provided, teachers and school uniforms. In the above activities the women liberators like Mrs. L. Thang'a rely entirely on divine providence and are inspired by the B.V.M, whom, they believe loves the children. Their motherhood is compatible to the "sacrifice, love and devotion" of the B.V.M's generation of life. Through the children, the liberators have in return learnt to carry their own cross silently. Tony Bellagamba, a former professor of missiology in the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (C.U.E.A.) exemplifies the family of Nazareth the liberators in Cottolengo Home get inspiration from in mission in the following words:-

The cross is the faithful companion of mission. To close our eyes on this reality is to deny the experience of Jesus, Mary and of the Church for the last 2000 years. It has been this way for Christ and Mary from the beginning of their life together, to calvary together : in the moral sufferings of Mary and Joseph over the virginal conception of their son, in the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem as a poor and needy infant, in the presentation to the temple where Mary heard of the sword which would pierce her heart : the misunderstanding of Mary about her son's mission, and finally in his physical death on the cross and her psychological death at the foot of the cross.¹⁰²

The children are also assigned "mothers" whom they entirely depend on for motherly love.

Such active divinising and liberative activities by the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery may go unnoticed. But from our field work experience, this is not just an occupation of being a doctor, a matron, a nurse or a worker, but rather, it is a remarkable pre-occupation of an obligation of one's duty as a baptised and confirmed Christian. It requires a special charism to help those whose temporal life seem least hopeful.

4.5 Women in the Social Realm

This sub-section examines the liberational involvement of women in the wider society. The above sub-sections are integral parts of the entire society which needs

emancipation if the Family of God, the Family, Education and Health of a people would be incorporated to form a liberated nation. A free nation would promote the nourishment of free interpersonal relationships in all other dimensions of life as highlighted above, hence, the logical sequence.

The health of a society depends on the contribution of the family as a basic cell of a people towards the entire social set up. A proper physical, social intellectual and psychological health of a child, therefore, calls for a complete family. Proper parenthood is the basic source of a healthy nation.

Motherhood creates a special link between a mother and her child, what some would preferably call 'the mysterious link'. A baby does need a mother's care for proper growth and good content of character at the formative stage. This mysterious link dictates why a mother should nurture her children, deserve a right to work close to her family, good working conditions and proper remuneration to cater for her family.¹⁰³ Life teaches that :

a sensitive mother seems constantly to be 'tuned in' to receive her baby's signals and is likely to interpret them correctly and to respond to them both promptly and appropriately ... A paediatrician at London teaching hospital says: "Danger or distress seem to be the trigger. Often a mother knows before we do that something is wrong. And many is the time ... a mother's presence speeds a sick child's recovery. There is no medical explanations. No scientific way of proving it."¹⁰⁴

A case study of a mother's sacrifice is Mrs. Lucy Thang'a, one of our main respondents who resigned as a nurse at Kenyatta National Hospital for the sake of nurturing her children. She sought a lesser job as a Dental Surgery assistant (Health services) which meant a lesser pay. As a nurse, she had observed the psychological distress in her children especially during her demanding night duties. She recognised her duties in her domestic Church which is 'deeply rooted evangelisation'. As the Yoruba of West Africa say : " 'Mother is gold, father is mirror; the mother is the one who contemplates and deliberates with the child all through life' ".¹⁰⁵

Such sacrifices are not always at hand. This is shown by the order of the day media reports on increase of street children, child prostitution, the dumping of children and abortions. Mrs. Thang'a's motherhood is extended to caring for the Cottolengo HIV positive orphans as we saw previously.

Catholic women are also participating in alleviating poverty which has rendered many as captives. A case study is the S.V.P chairlady, Jane Amalua¹⁰⁶ of St. Peter Claver's Parish. The S.V.P is named after St. Vincent de Paul's who had a charism for the poor, street beggars, the handicapped and for the service of the people. He was born in 1581 in the South of France and was a son of peasant parents.¹⁰⁷ Through his

generous concern and participation in liberational struggles, the poor recognised their dignity and worth as children of God. He faced challenges in his ministry, for instance, corporal punishment by the rich, ridicule and opposition but had courage to fight on.¹⁰⁸

The S.V.P. stems from his ministry which has gradually developed from what he founded. In 1617 he founded the Ladies of Charity, an association of lay women and on 29th November 1963, he also founded the Daughters of Charity congregation of sisters "initially consisting of simple, poor girls, who like Vincent, felt called to serve the poor."¹⁰⁹ The S.V.P. preferably refers to the poor/needful as 'cases'. They try to establish genuine cases through interview and home visits. Some, "tourists", move from one parish to another seeking help while they are comen. Such problems have led the S.V.P. to revert to using S.C.Cs in the parishes to identify true cases in their local areas. Some cases are poor because they are jobless ; in that case the S.V.P. provides money to help them leap over their problems to become self-sufficient through small businesses. The amount of money provided depends on the capacity of the victim to utilise it ; one has to be accountable to the money provided. The S.V.P. aims at fighting the root causes than making them dependent.

Another category of the recipients of S.V.P humanistic generosity are the aged. Such are provided with necessities as food and clothing. The S.V.P. works in liaison with the S.C.Cs to provide for the aged at the grassroot. This is a response of Catholic women to the promulgating laws of Christian teachings to protect the aged (Ps 71 : 9 ; Ex 20 : 12). They are not expected to work due to their frail bodies.¹¹⁰

The S.V.P. has also established a workshop for the needy women especially the school leavers, single mothers, the jobless and those in dire poverty at Eastleigh, Lozani in Nairobi called "Jitegemee". The workshop trains them in such skills as dressmaking and basketry. Within the same workshop the needy young men (especially the school leavers) are trained in carpentry and tailoring. This helps them to attain employment. The S.V.P. face the perennial financial constraints but do receive donations of food, clothes and money from local faithful and well wishers. Some of the money is banked under the societal name to cater for emergency cases.

The Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery serve the poor, the needy and the rejected as taught by their founder, St. Vincent de Pauls, that "Christ, who is present in the suffering body of the poor, was venerable and associated with the cross and the altar of the Eucharist, where the sacrifice of Christ gets re-enacted,"¹¹¹ hence, serving the poor means serving Christ. The struggles of establishing liberty requires a charism, sacrifice and love for the oppressed. As Jane Amalua expressed:

It is very hard to communicate with the poor who keep harassing us. The cases think we have grabbed all the money and that is why, though not rich, dress properly. So when we enquire their problems

they abuse us but we do not give up, we keep going back to them. When a case asks for money we have to provide because all they care about is money and not the source. Some S.V.P. members have declined because of emptying their pockets to the poor.¹¹²

Jane Amalua is also a physiotherapist and helps the sick and the disabled. According to her, some patients - the lame - walk after a long physiotherapy treatment. She thus visits them at St. Teresa Home for the disabled and the sick in the hospitals. She also works in close unit with doctors who identify cases that require her treatment, for instance, those suffering from stroke.

Another striking case study of women's liberational roles is that of the Kibarague Good News Centre which was founded by Sr. Martin Wanjiru. Sr. M. Wanjiru was the first African woman to join the Assumption Sisters in 1955 but got dismissed from the congregation due to her special concern for the welfare of the common people which her superior did not comprehend by then. She defied the rule of the thumb in the convent by mixing and going out to the people with an intention of learning their affiliations. Her refusal to quit sisterhood after her dismissal, insisting on her final counsels (1959) saw her confined/secluded to a disciplinary confinement next to her superior's house for a year. She later went to found the Centre which is situated next to Kibarague shanties neighbouring the posh Loresho residential area for the rich. Today, this Kibarague Centre has an international repute. Sr.M. Martin's decision complies with the father of liberation theology, Gustraro Gutierrez's, concept of liberation that: "in order to know and to love God, one must come to grips with the concrete life situation of poor today, and undertake the radical transformation of a society that makes them poor."¹¹³

Imbued with the spirit of liberation, Sr.M. Martin risked being a mother to the poor by inserting herself into their situation in life and hearing their cry for freedom and redemption. She started the Centre in 1980, with the help of then the archbishop of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga. This was, of course, after a lot of struggle as an African woman determination and courage. The Centre started as an insignificant feeding place for the destitute children. It later developed into a boarding institution for the destitutes which also offered education for them.

Every liberationist expects to be confronted with evil forces. As Wachege emphasises in his book, African Women Liberation, to be a liberationist is to make an option for a dangerous and, in many cases, thankless undertaking. In November, 1990 Kibarague Centre was ruthlessly demolished by the government. The wailing and cry of the destitute children left in the cold did not stop the evil doers from their malice. Emulating her master Jesus and B.V.M. with her liberational efforts coupled with boldness and chancing risks (cf Lk 4 : 16 -30), Sr.M. Wanjiru boldly condemned the act through

the mass media thereby seeking public support without much success. Like Esther who took the initiative to intercede with the King against the Jewish extermination as we saw previously, Sr. M.Martin sought to use a spirituality of non-violence.¹¹⁴

The compassion for the poor led her to re-establish the Centre which was again systematically demolished in January, 1994 by the civil authority. The tyranny of the government could not offer an alternative solution even at its awareness that most children were the 1992 ethnic cum political clash victims who had found their way to the 'mother' Centre, while some were dropped at the gate by their mothers who had no option rather than abandoning them in the streets. The persistent option and effort to liberate the afflicted saw the establishment of the present Kibarague Good News Centre. Her 'spirituality of resistance' against violence, injustice and oppression to preserve life is biblically inspired by Shiphrah and Puah. The two resisted the decree on Hebrew midwives by the Egyptian King to kill all male Hebrew children. Thanks to their resistance Moses, who later delivered the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, was saved.¹¹⁵

Currently, the Centre boards 800 children but feeds 2000 children for lunch. The Centre also caters for the aged whom Sr. M.Martin has rehabilitated from the slum as changaa addicts and criminals. The Centre comprises a primary school, a secondary school both boarding for boys and girls, a health clinic, a chemist, a seclusion bay for the HIV/AIDS and a Church which is currently under construction. Through Sr. Martin's liberative efforts, she has created jobs for people ranging from security guards, dormitory 'mothers', cooks, cleaners, a nurse, a matron among others. She has also been exemplary in effectively confronting evil forces despite being a woman.

From our long discussion with her, we came to know that she gets her inspiration from the B.V.M. and Her Son Jesus Christ whose statues 'guard' the gates of the Centre. She performs "priestly" duties of baptising the very sick before they die, teaching them how to pray the rosary and Catholic catechism. Children at tender age are nostalgic and crave for parental love and care which she readily provides. The impediment of financial resources impoverishes the running of the Society and this has rendered her a 'beggar' for the sake of the poor. Owing to her strong personality and dedication, well wishers and foreign donors support her efforts. Her need to sustain the dignity of human life and the inspiration from the Church's social teachings gives her as a Catholic nun the enthusiasm to work tirelessly for the children.

The main diet for the children is a mixture of maize and beans which the children like especially those fed once in a day because its a heavy meal to sustain them till the next day. When the Centre was founded at least three children died of malnutrition in a week. For the form four school leavers, Sr. M.Martin takes them to training and vocational polytechnics and colleges to help them attain employment. This Centre has produced such people as doctors and lawyers under harsh struggle of Sr. Martin. As

such, the Catholic women, lay and religious have had a remarkable stance in the transformation of the marginalised and dehumanised in the social set up. The following section on women's role in communication and recreation is an important component of the wider society.

4.6 Women in Recreational and Communication Services

Recreational and Communication Services are two important dimensions within a social set up that Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery use to channel their humanistic generosity. The two dimensions are vital not only to the oppressed but also for the liberationists to enhance awareness for a better society. Recreation and communication services are important components of the political and economic realms of a society which will be further looked at in section 4.7 and 4.8 below.

The social welfare of a healthy people accounts for recreational activities. The Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) in Nairobi Deanery social welfare department is manned by a Catholic woman, Ms. Jacinta Waite. The department incorporates five social clubs namely :

- a) the AFC Football Club.
- b) the AFC Netball Club.
- c) the AFC Darts Club.
- d) the AFC Choir Club.
- e) the AFC Scrabble Club.

According to Marshall *et al* , active participation in exercises increases the efficiency of lungs, heart, body's maximal oxygen consumption, improves the tone of muscles and body vessels, slows down ageing process and physical deterioration.¹¹⁶ This improved body mechanism helps to increase an individual's output in the world of economy.

According to Jacinta Waite, the AFC social welfare officer, animating such a department involves the following duties :

- a) Ensuring that the club members have enough money to sustain them.
- b) Ensuring that they have proper games wear.
- c) Travelling along with the teams for their leagues to such places as Mombasa, Busia, Kakamega and in the Eastern and Central African countries to ensure their comfort. Despite being a woman, Waite lodges in the same hostels/hotels to ensure both men's and women's security.
- d) Ensuring that the matches are held as scheduled.

- e) Booking transport means for them through the travel management in AFC.
- f) Ensuring that their sports wear are repaired.
- g) Equipping the First Aid kits.
- h) Visiting the sick members in hospitals and homes.
- i) Organising social functions for the clubs.
- j) Organising tournaments.
- k) Accountability and responsibility to the Administrative Division which is directly under Personal Administration manager of AFC.

The AFC social welfare clubs are made up of staff members of AFC and at times guest players. The clubs are affiliated to Nairobi Provincial Association, Kenya National Association, Kenya Football Association, Kenya Darts Association among others. The tournaments help the teams to socialise among themselves as one family and with other institutions as Kenya Institute of Bankers through which they acquire better remunerating jobs. Through her diplomacy, Waite organises tournaments for the teams to promote inter-personal relationships and to help the players tap their potentials and capabilities.

The teams comprise people of different cultural background and beliefs. To shun any forms of misconduct, Waite has laid out a set of rules and regulations which the teams are expected to adhere to. Her dignity as a mother and a woman plays an important role in disciplinary cases and in the running of the department. Guided by Church's social teachings on the dignity and role of a woman in the society, and the model of B.V.M., Waite incorporates the teams as one family. She counsels the players and engages them in spiritual exercises such as inter denominational prayers and bible study. A visit to her office disclosed her motherhood to the players, they significantly call her "mathy" (mother) and have a great respect to her rulings. Waite believes in active participation in games and uses the slogan: 'work without play makes Jack a dull boy'. She has also succeeded in instilling the same qualities in her son who actively participates in different games.

The above case study is an ample example of women's roles in the recreational services. To many people, sporting is a waste of time which Waite uses as a means of rehabilitating the alcoholics and drug addicts. Another important participation of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery is the communication services. A case in study is the role played by the Daughters of St. Paul in the media. The Daughters of St. Paul congregation was founded in 1915 to specifically work (evangelise) through the mass media.

The congregation is responsible in maintaining the Catholic Bookshop of the Archdiocese of Nairobi in Nairobi Deanery. They have a printing press in Westlands, Nairobi through which they publish books for local consumption and international market such as Asia, Italy, England and America. Their publications are also available in

Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique and Seychelles. They publish books that cater for all categories of people - the youth, old, theologians, parents, children among others. The Pauline Publications include literature on biblical studies, spirituality, religious life, Catholic catechises, liturgy, Church history, social ethics, family life, formation of youth, psychology, Church's social doctrines, papal encyclicals and children's books. Other forms of communication include videos and audio cassettes.

The Daughters of St. Paul visit learning institutions, orphanages, hospitals, parishes and even the army barracks to sell their publications at a standardised price in order to evangelise more people. Since not all citizens can read English and Swahili, Christian books are also translated in various languages. They also advertise their new publications in newspapers for public attention.

From our field work research, we encountered a respondent author, Dr. M Ogola who is a fundamental feminist. Her published novel "The River and the Source" won the African Region Commonwealth First Book Award for literature. The book highlights the unbearable spirit of African womanhood whose inspiration is passed from mother to daughter through generations, an inspiration, according to the respondent, that is peculiarly African. Dr. Ogola is currently working on an anthology of poems, "The song of The Sparrow and other Verses" which looks into the plight of the street children. According to her, publishing is not a militant feminism which denies the fundamental feminism. Similarly, in the field of media, the A.O.S.K. is an important body in disseminating liberative works. They provide audio cassettes necessary for the formation and education of nuns and novices which include such topics as 'Spirituality of Human Relations and Sexuality for Women Religious', 'Apostolic Spirituality in Community', 'Personal Formation for Apostolic Community', 'Commitment of Apostolic Community - Integration, Responsibility and Discipline' and 'Religious Poverty in the African context in the Perspective of the Option for the Poor'. Radio programmes on Catholic Talk for the faithful are also produced in various dialects, Meru, Borana, Turkana, Kikuyu, Kikamba, Maasai, English and Swahili to cater for different ethnic groups. The programmes enlightens people on their Catholic faith as well as evangelisation.

The forum for communication is hence used to evangelise and to create awareness by the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery. It is an effective means that caters for many people within a given time.

4.7 Women in Public Life

This section looks at the liberational efforts of Catholic women in the political realm or the public life. Two case studies, that is, the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of the A.O.S.K and women's role in liberating the refugees, will be of significant explication.

JPC was proposed by the AOSK in March, 1991 and established in April 29th the same year. It comprises eight members and an executive representative of the AOSK. To diversify its work JPC works through a representative council made up of members from each congregation of the AOSK. This commission of the nuns work through twenty AOSK district units of the twenty dioceses of Kenya.

The JPC seeks to conscientise and educate the members of the AOSK on issues concerning peace and justice within the AOSK body and the entire society. This facilitates eradication of any forms of oppression within the congregation meted out against the nuns. It also educates the public on their civic rights and duties on issues concerning oppression, peace, gender sensitisation, child abuse, land issues among others through the AOSK.

To disseminate such awareness and to reach the grassroot level, the JPC uses such strategies as seminars, published materials like the JP-AOSK Newsletter and IMARA, videos, educational workshops, through relief aid for the displaced persons, advertising and circulating articles and press release. According to the respondents, the JPC works in cooperation with NGOs, other churches and religious organisations. The JPC is guided by the Church teachings especially G.S. No.1 and the Gospel values such as : "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10 : 10) ; "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their task masters" (Ex 3 : 7).

The JPC trains the formation groups on leadership management to help women participate in leadership roles. Most people are ignorant of their civic duties such as voting and public affairs as dirty politics. In the political arena, the JPC stress on the sexist stance : "I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen 2 : 18). Women are too gifted in leadership qualities and should thus complement the male dominance for better justice, peace and equality. In close unit with Kenya women lawyers, the JPC is fighting for the equality of women before the constitution. For instance, in regard to the Constitution of Kenya, the Commission explains that:

The legal status of Kenyan women can be a confusing issue. On the one hand, the constitution lists the rights and freedoms of every person. It says that both women and men share these rights and freedoms. On the other hand, the Constitution allows discrimination against people on the basis of sex. Discrimination means to treat someone differently. The Constitution says it is illegal to treat

someone differently because of their race, tribe, religion or political opinion. But the Constitution does not say you cannot treat people differently because of sex. The Constitution allows women and men to be treated differently before the law.¹¹⁷

Following the injustice meted out against women such as domestic violence, rape and property disinheritance after a husband's death, JPC of Nairobi Deanery is creating awareness on laws concerning these forms of oppression, and the precautions to take when victimised; for instance, directing them to such organisations as Kituo cha Sheria (Legal Advice Centre) and the International Federation of Women Lawyers - Kenya Chapter (FIDA - Kenya) in Nairobi where legal advice is offered at affordable charges.¹¹⁸ JPC also works in liaison with The Kenya Anti-Rape Organisation to fight against rape. Records has it that 80% of women are said to be victims of violence in homes while 95% women workers are sexually harassed.¹¹⁹ If justice has to prevail, then discrimination, subjugation and oppression must stop. But the question remains, when shall the oppressors realise the dignity and image of God in oppressed?

JPC - A.O.S.K also campaigns for environmental maintenance -afforestation. It is quiet clear that the most affected by land degradation and deforestation are women and children especially the girl-child. When water catchment areas and rivers are destroyed, women and children have to travel for miles in search of water and firewood. The development and quality of life does too depend on the up keep of natural resources.¹²⁰

As such the consecrated virgins in Nairobi Deanery give themselves totally for the health, development and hygiene of the people not only in Nairobi but also in rural areas through seminars and workshops. The problem of the refugees is also a great concern to Catholic women who, guided by the Church's social teachings have a Christian neighbourhood conscience for the displaced persons in Kenya and the refugees. In view of this, Peter Kanyandago critically looks at the causes of the refugee problem as unequal distribution of resources, persecution, violation of human rights, armed conflicts, famine and intolerance. The question of their dignity and self-esteem depends on the Christian conscience of neighbourhood. Kanyandago scrutinises the biblical references towards the refugee problem. In the O.T he points out the Jewish laws towards strangers, for instance, Ex 22 : 21 warns against molesting and alienating aliens (cf Ezekiel 22 : 9, Jeremiah 22 : 31) while the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10 : 25 - 37) is a directive towards those in dire need.¹²¹

From our field work research we encountered Mrs. Mary Juma,¹²² who, with the Christian neighbourhood conscience, started the Department of Social Services in the Pastoral Development Office in St. Peter Claver's parish. The Pastoral Development works under the Kenya Episcopal Conference. Mrs. Juma deals with

refugees mainly from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Zaire, Angola, Mozambique, Malawi and Sri-lanka. She refers to Nigerians as "economic refugees" who came to seek help following economic crisis at home. Besides the refugees, the respondent also caters for the displaced persons, the poor, the aged, the stranded and street children.

According to Mrs. Juma, there are five categories of refugees in Kenya that seek help from the mentioned social welfare office in Nairobi Deanery. These are:

a) Full Status Refugees: These have been accepted by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and have full rights to work, own property, die and get buried within the country (Kenya). They are from the second country of asylum. The only limitation they face is that they are not granted Kenyan citizenship, hence, they have no legal right to acquire National Identity Cards and cannot, therefore, vote.

b) Mandate Refugees: These have been accepted by UNHCR but are not recognised by the government. They are protected by the UNHCR. They have no right of working or acquiring remunerating jobs unless they are issued with permits. The mandate refugees have no right to move to other countries and can be resettled elsewhere.

c) Rejected Refugees: These are totally rejected by the government and the UNHCR. But the government cannot chase them out of the country since they are protected by the Church.

d) Asylum Seekers : They are protected by the UNHCR but cannot give them status. They receive protection while the UNHCR looks for other countries to resettle them. The government tolerates and sympathises with them. They are more or less like the mandate refugees and can be easily resettled in other countries. The only difference is that asylum seekers have an advantage of facilities offered by the NGOs such as education, but they cannot seek remunerating jobs at all.

e) Conventional Refugees : UNHCR has nothing to do with them but are accepted by the government on the light of their plight. They are mainly from Ethiopia. UNHCR can only assist on humanitarian grounds.

All these categories of refugees are attended in the social welfare department for their temporal and spiritual liberty. The sick are referred to 'special' hospitals manned by the Catholic Church. Such hospitals include :

- i) Our Lady of Mercy, Makandara.
- ii) Kariobangi Catholic Dispensary.
- iii) Kangemi Catholic Dispensary.
- iv) Nazareth Catholic Hospital where the very sick are admitted. According to our respondent, the Jesuit Refugee Services provide medical vouchers for the refugees medical expenses. Mrs. Juma makes it her responsibility to visit them in hospitals.

Some of them are vulnerable young girls who conceive due to sexual harassment in the streets. The respondent refers such girls to Jamaa Home for the destitutes. The very desperate cases - with no accommodation - are provided with money to rent houses. The respondent painstakingly attends about 200 refugees in a week plus other needy Kenyans. Her schedule days for the service of both Kenyans and the refugees is as follows :

- a) Monday - Dishing out food.
- b) Tuesday and Wednesday - i. Issuing clothes.
ii. Referring them to hospitals.
iii. Visiting the sick in hospitals.
iv. Counselling them.
- c) Thursday - special refugee day to cater for their needs all round.
- d) Fridays - special Kenyan's day for the displaced, poor and aged.

In all these services she is assisted by one Catholic woman on voluntary basis and trustworthy refugees.

In cooperation with the government, the respondent ensures that protection papers are issued to refugees since they cannot acquire National Identity Cards. The maintenance of refugees and the displaced persons is an expensive exercise which depends on donors, well wishers and local grants. Mrs. Juma does not confine her work in the office, she feeds and house some of the desperate cases while some go for identification by the police in her house even at night. She works as a lawyer, a benefactor and mother to them ; her services at home have also involved her family. Her husband accompanies her to the police station especially at night and to hospitals to visit the sick, while the children cook for the rest. This, she says, is a taxing role due to financial constraints. She sacrificed her profession - teaching - to work with the Church and the poor. According to the VI SECAM General Assembly in Yaounde, Cameroon June 28 to July 6, 1981, a Christian conscience of neighbourhood to the refugees gains ones spiritual growth.¹²³ The fact that the Family of Nazareth were once refugees in Egypt inspires Mrs. Juma in her liberative efforts among the refugees in Nairobi Deanery.

From the above we can learn the Catholic women humanism and the mode of a true family ; a family that encompasses the rejected and the displaced. The love of strangers is truly a special charism for the service of God and the community.

4.8 Women and Economy

The last section of this chapter endeavours to present Catholic women's liberational roles in the field of economy in Nairobi Deanery as highlighted in Section 4.6. For our purpose, the case study of Pastoral Development Self Help Groups (PDSHG) will be examined.

Following the increase of international debts, the African countries were forced to introduce the SAP system to make themselves self-sufficient. But what has been the outcome of international debts and the SAP? The African families have resulted to unemployment due to "large-scale retrenchment of workers in the formal sector, as parastatals are privatised, civil service is trimmed, and many industries are closed down".¹²⁴ The reduction of the government structural expenditures to raise its GDP has tremendously impoverished the Africans due to its non-wholistic implementation in all structures. This has rendered the poor as victims of SAP while the rich accumulate more riches. On the whole, therefore, the health services, education, good food (proper diets) and basic infrastructure has become a luxury rather than a necessity to many people.¹²⁵ SAP has also resulted to what the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) refers to as "jobless growth".

In a response to the above mentioned economic problems the Catholic women use PDSHG to coordinate at grassroot level spiritual, social and economic activities which include self help savings and credit, agricultural programmes, small business and lay apostolate. The Deanery's social workers and part time workers are trained to diversify the productivity - based economy to alleviate poverty. Guided by the magisterium, Populorum Progression (On Development of Peoples) of Pope John Paul VI to necessitate development programmes, the PDSHG seeks to raise the spiritual and socio-economic levels of individuals. According to our respondent, Mrs. M. Mburu,¹²⁶ the programme targets the middle class and the low class with no denominational affiliations. The socio-economic projects include dressmaking, agricultural activities, tailoring, making of candles, building water tanks, buying plots to build rental houses and building of schools and nurseries. These projects are necessary for improvement of the quality of life and health which the Holy See felt were essentially neglected by the Beijing Conference. Some of these issues adversely affect women and children at the grassroot level but were inadequately represented as expressed below:

The Holy See had also hoped to see a broad range of health concerns addressed in the platform and concrete means to address the serious problems women face in this area, particularly the poorest women and those living in the poorest regions. Yet the actions in the health section and other related paragraphs provide an imbalanced and largely superficial treatment of the major health needs of most of the world's women. Relatively scant attention is given to essential

aspects for health such as access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation facilities and adequate housing.¹²⁷

The PDSHG come in handy to cater for the people at grassroot levels. The projects are endorsed and funded by the Pastoral Development Programme in St. Peter Claver's Parish.

Due to the financial constraints that face PDSHG, the loans are credited to self help groups depending on their needs by the Credit Committee. The groups are expected to apply for their loans indicating the amount of money needed and a lay out of the project purpose, their repayment terms and the security for loans. The security include shares and deposits of any one member of the group. According to our respondent, she visits the project sites to access their sustainability ; such projects have to be recommended by the parish priests.

The amount of loan required dictates the time taken to grant them credit. The programme may not be well funded to finance big projects but the K.C.S. funds projects to a maximum of KShs.100,000. Emergency loans and small loans are given a priority depending on the number of applicants. The credited loans are expected to be repaid when the self help projects start running at an interest rate. Many groups benefit from the projects, for instance, in 1991 the savings and credit coordinated 99 groups in the diocese of Nairobi.

Membership of the self help groups include only the registered members. New members are eligible only if the person's conduct is known to be good and is a resident within the proposed site of the project. New members are also required to register themselves through application and a majority vote of the managing committee dictates the membership. Entrance fees are also paid for membership qualifications. It is important for the applicant to nominate a beneficiary of his/her shares in case of death. Membership withdrawal from the projects is given within 60 days of notice. These regulations are set for smooth running of the projects and to ensure repayment of loans for the benefit of other needy people. The targeted people often times realise their objectives of raising the status of women, children and men as well. Development which involves small scale production and full participation of the people is, therefore, geared towards alleviating poverty, creating job market and self sufficiency of the common man.

As such, the initiative taken by our respondent, Mrs. M. Mburu in promoting self help groups is mainly aimed at alleviating poverty and improving the standard of living especially among the low class. This helps them further to participate in the wider economy for the common good.

SUMMARY

This chapter has examined Catholic women's liberational struggles in various aspects namely: the ecclesial, the family, education, health, the social realm, recreational, communication services, public life and economy within and without Nairobi Deanery. The field work research reveals to us that these liberational efforts are not an occupation but rather a subjective preoccupation to help the indigent. It is out of a generous humanism rather than on humanitarian grounds that the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery painstakingly involve themselves in risky and challenging roles.

From our respondents, an awareness is created that these liberative works are guided and directed by different charisms which they utilise for the service of the community. As baptised and confirmed Christians, the Catholic women take it as an obligation to resurge the Christian spirituality and to perfect the temporal dimensions. This is facilitated by their existential philosophy to the sitz im leben of the marginalised. The chapter also enlightens us that the oppressors too are captive of their own forms of oppression which dehumanises them.

In their liberational roles they work in liaison with the government, the NGOs both local and international, the Church and the Vatican See. They are guided by the Church's social teachings which they use to catechise and to liberate the marginalised, the oppressors and to perform their priestly, prophetic and royal roles as baptised and confirmed Christians.

From our respondents, the main inspirations to their liberative works are the B.V.M and Her Son Jesus Christ who not only performed liberational works but also suffered indignation in their mission.

What the chapter has presented and examined verifying that Catholic women are already involved in diverse liberational roles within Nairobi Deanery provides a vital impetus into the next chapter. What has been identified and explicate in this and previous chapters will enable the author to peruse and come up with a critical analysis of the subject matter. Such an academic exercise will form the subject of the next chapter. Furthermore from the same rooting will emerge the invaluable recapitulations, conclusions and recommendations.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5. AN APPRAISAL OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LIBERATIONAL ROLES

Bearing in mind what has already been discussed in the preceding chapters, it is our concern now to assess the liberational roles of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery. The approaches used by these women to establish and re-establish authenticity are appraised. The chapter also examines the model of the B.V.M. to Catholic women in their liberational struggles and the extent of Her impact in them in their diverse ministries.

Notwithstanding the fact that women have been domestically and structurally cultured and socialised in paternalistic and patronising social set ups, the consciousness of women liberation, as par the respondents, has become a forthright aspiration to Catholic women's participation in liberational roles. Such consciousness has been facilitated by the Church's social teachings already handled profoundly in chapter two and the deliberations of World International Conferences on Women. The World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women held in Copenhagen, 1980, deliberated on the equality, peace and development of women. The recent Beijing Conference (1995) focused on the dignity, role and rights of women in the society. This awareness, as affirmed by the respondents as elaborated in chapter four has promoted women's activities and sensitivity towards their quest for freedom, peace, love, justice and unity.

In response to the contradiction of full humanity, Catholic women have occupied and pre-occupied themselves with vital roles in the society namely: educationists, economists, mothers, accountants, house wives, doctors/nurses, catechists, nuns, councellors among others as clearly examined in the previous chapters. For the purpose of our study, Teilhard de Chardin's¹ theory of evolution and phenomenological concepts will be used as a yard stick of assessing Catholic women's liberational participation in diverse realms.

5.1 Teilhard de Chardin : Liberational Concepts

Teilhard de Chardin was a Roman Catholic priest, palaeontologist, philosopher, theologian and exponent of a synthesis of Science and Christianity. He was born near Clermont - Ferrand, France on May 1, 1881. He entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuit Society) in 1899 and was ordained Priest in 1911. In 1925, the Jesuit superior general condemned him because of a paper he wrote on the relation of evolution to the doctrine of sin. His two major works are The Phenomenon of Man and The Divine Milieu. His

phenomenology and theory of evolution are liberational, hence, their importance to this study.² Among our other major interest in Teilhard de Chardin is that his scientific/liberational ideas or concepts had a great impact on the outcome of the Documents of Vatican Council II including the internationally renowned Second Eucharistic Prayers in the liturgy of the sacrifice of mass.³

5.1.a The Divine Milieu⁴

The Divine Milieu, according to Teilhard de Chardin, is a Centre of convergence towards which all the elements of the world are concentrated. In the reality of convergence the properties/elements of the universe shed their imperfections and incoherences towards perfection.⁵ The external and internal imperfections that Chardin hopes to be discarded before the final convergence of all that is good is that which corrupts the full meaning of humanity. From our study we have shown these as the phenomena of street children, corruption, oppression particularly those inflicted on women, street mothers, street beggars, school drop outs just to mention a few. In Divine Milieu gradual concentration of human beings is the shedding of all that corrupts true Christian living.⁶ Accordingly, the diverse roles of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery as liberationists can be equated to the perfection of the world; both in temporal and spiritual matters. As realised from the field work research, this is precisely made possible by inserting themselves among the poor of the Lord who, too, strive to become and act as part of the entire society, be it in the slums or in the streets.

The reality of a centre empirically does constitute properties of convergence or divergence. In this case, the Divine Milieu has three converging properties or what Teilhard refers to as rays within which the world unites. These properties are Purity, Faith and Fidelity;⁷ they are at the very heart of Christian faith as discussed below.

5.1. b Teilhard's Christocentric view based on Pauline Tradition

According to Teilhard, the basis of Christian living is its relation to the incarnate word. His Christology is Pauline, in which he sees the earthly history as eschatological, Christ being the final and permanent concentration.⁸ The three rays mentioned above, Purity, Faith and Fidelity, according to Teilhard, will necessitate consumation.⁹ This reality is found in the basic movement of the Catholic women, that is, their Christian faith thanks to their baptism and confirmation as explicated in chapter two. Their faith in God and a response to become witnesses of Christ (Acts 1: 8) strives to true purity, faith and fidelity. According to Chardin, prayers to the Holy Spirit helps in humanity's

perfections which leads to the eschatology or Divine Milieu.¹⁰ This, as we have already discussed in chapter four finds fulfilment in Catholic women's devotional groups and apostolate ministries. Jesus Christ, who the Divine Milieu assumes for the human perfection, is a Liberator par excellence to the Catholic women. The Catholic women's faith in God is important towards full humanity as further expressed by Jon Sobrino in his theological examination of the role of Oscar Romero in the liberation of the poor in El Salvador in the following words:

God is the prime source of all that life, justice, love and truth, and the ultimate horizon to which all these reach out. It is God who lays upon us the absolute demand that we live our lives in a way truly worthy of human beings, that we strive always to make ourselves more human by continually ridding ourselves of that which makes us less than human. ... Faith in God begins with the defence of life here and now.¹¹

Although Chardin's call for true faith, purity and fidelity is detected in the Catholic women's witness in the Gospel, chapter four of our study discloses to us that some Christians are Sunday Mass Christians and barely know their faith deeply. It is true, no wonder, that some women Christians are indifferent as far as involvement in liberational activities are concerned. This, we could say, is one of the factors that inhibit the prophetic Divine Milieu of Teilhard de Chardin. That is why, may be, Teilhard sees it as a gradual process of evolution which will be attained "little by little".¹²

5.1.c God and Evolutive Creation¹³

Teilhard's theology of the doctrine of God within the context of the theory of evolutive creation has a dual setting : that the knowledge of God can only be understood in His self revelation and through Christ ; and that God can only be understood not without the world.¹⁴ Moreover, as Teilhard explains, in the Divine Milieu, the Centre of convergence is the Point Omega which is to be found in the beginning, on going and the final consummation of creation. Teilhard uses a Trinitarian reflection in the evolutive creation which he explains that the creation work should only be understood in the unity of God, the Son and the Holy Spirit.¹⁵ While the Point Omega is described as the love energy within which the consummation of the world is to be actualised, the need of Christian living is imperative if at all humankind has to experience it.

In this we ask ourselves, how is the love energy to be experienced by the Catholic women if they need to address their liberational struggles towards the Point Omega? From our field work research and experience, we found out that the Catholic women have their own sources of instructions, guidelines and challenges found within the

Church. The social teachings of the Church are an important pedagogical succinct of their liberational roles. Such documents, as examined in chapter two, help the liberationists to insert themselves among the marginalised. The Point Omega, according to Chardin, tangily appears in the person of Jesus Christ¹⁶ who identified Himself with the poor and the women, and came to liberate them through His suffering on the Cross. Within this context of Christian faith, the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery too serve the poor with the understanding that they serve Christ in the dehumanised persons.

Moreover, the Catholic women emulate the model to the B.V.M. who is a perfect paradigm of who a liberated woman and a liberator should exercise her liberational concepts. Chapter three of this study has noted that all Catholic women respondents in Nairobi Deanery emulate the model of B.V.M.

From Teilhard's theory of evolutive creation, the Christians understand or have the knowledge of God from the cosmology. From the biblical perspective, God in the creation and on-going creation has been described in both feminine and virile anthropomorphic language. For instance, God is compared to a sensitive mother who cares about her unborn child (cf Is 49 : 15) ; "at history's end God will perform the classic gesture of a loving mother in wiping the tears from our eyes so weary with weeping (Rev 21 : 4)"¹⁷. The Christian understanding of God as a loving, caring, redeeming, tender Father and Liberator aspires Catholic women in their feminine touch in liberation. In these, we find such women as Sr. M. Wanjiru, one of the respondents we encountered in chapter four, who feeds the hungry and shelters the destitutes. But on the contrary it would be unrealistic to imagine of perfect women liberators who fully utilise their femininity as understood from the knowledge of God.

From our field work research we encountered Catholic women liberators who were also perpetrators of oppression. The bipolarisation of humanity both in the O.T. and the N.T. as the rich and the poor, the oppressed and oppressors and, the humble and proud, does not also negate the fact that women (men included) are a characteristic of dehumanisation.¹⁸ As Comblin further explains, both women and men are oppressors as well as oppressed.¹⁹ As such, some Catholic women in their search for leadership roles in the Church end up oppressing other Christians. For instance, some of the CWA members especially the married women, as we gathered from our research and documented in chapter four look down upon the single mothers as a disgrace to the society and the Church. They (single mothers) are made to feel unwanted and inferior. Some of the youth members who incidentally become pregnant are forced out of the group. These have rendered some becoming de-evangelised while others join 'better' accommodating denominations and religious faiths. The researchers encountered a case of a youth who almost got converted to Islamic religion but got better of the advise of the parish priest.

Other Catholic women administrators in Nairobi Deanery depersonalise their secretaries especially when they seem to dress better than their bosses thereby making men appreciate them more. Extreme cases of such secretaries losing their jobs maliciously were encountered. Such administrators are active liberators of the poor but are oppressors of their workers.

Although women liberationists and feminists are struggling to have women incorporated in the ordained priesthood in the Catholic Church, some of the respondents, due to their conservative beliefs are against it. Some Christians, as disclosed by the respondents, cannot receive the Holy Communion from women Eucharist ministries. The reason given is that some women Eucharist ministers are unhygienically clean following their feminine menstrual period. As such, if Catholic women are both oppressors and liberators, enemies of their own femininity (although we cannot discard the point expressed above as valid - unhygienic women Eucharist ministers) we cannot stop to wonder how and when the Divine Milieu will be actualised.

5.1.d Teilhard's Phenomenology of the Universe

Teilhard's concept of phenomenology signifies a descriptive study of the whole phenomena. In his historical approach to phenomena, he establishes a coherency between the antecedents and consequents. He argues that a phenomenon can only be understood in its antecedents and consequents ; dealing with a phenomenon in isolation is to negate the whollistic approach towards the universe. Cosmology, from a historical perspective as stated by Chardin, helps to understand the interiority of a phenomenon.²⁰ This is an important component of liberation if true humanity is to be directed towards Point Omega.

What we are trying to establish here is whether the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery seek to find both the antecedents and consequents of their liberational struggle which in a sense determine the capacity of their liberational efforts. Following our discussions in chapter three and four we find that Teilhard's phenomenology is an effective humanising course. Most of the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery try to establish the causes of the dehumanising situations among the poor. This gives them a stance on what move to take ; that is why different Catholic women, as elaborated in the previous chapters, target different dehumanised groups of people which they seem to understand well and to liberate.

In the light of the above, we can cite the Cottolengo HIV/AIDS children to verify this working theory. The Catholic women are aware that these children are orphans and are abandoned as dying human beings. The understanding that these HIV/AIDS

orphans are in a transitory stage, has led the Catholic women to help them die in dignity and to prepare them for eternal life through catechising and baptising them. This as explained previously is a remarkable liberational ministry.

The understanding of the totality of cosmic phenomenon has led the Catholic women to blend their temporal and spiritual liberational ministries and efforts. This, as profoundly explained in chapter two is the spirit of Vatican Council II and other magisterial documents the chapter examined. Apart from the spiritual aspect, the Cottolengo children are provided with social, intellectual and health facilities. This gives a whollistic approach towards liberation. However, such liberational roles cannot overshadow the fact that some liberators deal with the problem at hand. Some of the respondents are triggered by their Christian conscience to donate money to the street beggars. After close observations of Christian's response to the beggars outside the Churches, many of the Christians (women) give not more than KShs.10. Among them, the biggest number donate one to five KShs. This just helps them (the beggars) to sustain themselves as street beggars. If the antecedent - consequent approach is radically applied by the Catholic women in their liberational roles, I think the capacity of humanism would be greater. Having discussed the strengths and weaknesses of Catholic women's liberational roles using the parameter of Teilhard de Chardin's phenomenological theories, we now turn to examine the approaches used in these liberational struggles.

5.2 Catholic Women's Approaches To Liberating The Marginalised

The roles of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery reinforce one another in trying to eradicate that which destroys humanity. Although these activities have not been well coordinated as a wholesome unit, they participate in their own humble ways as lay and religious people. The following is an assessment of the Catholic women's liberational approaches emerging from chapter three and four.

5.2.1 Educational Approach

As agents of pedagogical transformation of humankind, the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery use a dialogical approach to the problems of the poor and the dehumanised. The importance of education is well understood by the Catholic women as an effective means of humanising a society and assisting in self-emancipation. Paulo Freire further expresses this as follows : "The pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation."²¹ Different aspects of

education inspired by the library and field work research are discussed below.

(a) Civic Education

Through civic education, the JPC-AOSK educates people on their civil rights and duties. The Catholic women also conscientise the marginalised on the contradictions of economic, political, social, educational and family structures. The awareness creates people who can critically reflect on their oppressive situations especially those that are domesticated in a distorted humanity and have come to accept their situations as part of their entire life. This has led the dehumanised to cooperate with Catholic women in trying to establish authenticity.

From the field work research, it was brought to our awareness that many Kenyans ignore their duties by refusing to participate in electing their leaders. Others are coerced and out-manoeuvred to vote for those leaders who barely represent them in the parliament. A time like now, when Kenya is about to hold the 1997 general elections the Catholic women are entirely participating in educating people on the importance of "making informed choices in elections and informed participation in national policies and all spheres of leadership."²² From the past experiences, these efforts have faced major draw backs when people are forced to make unprecedented choices. In the famine stricken areas the masses accept to vote for the status quo because it affords them food which they fear losing if they sought for radical changes.²³ The Catholic women aim at transforming the minority dominant class over the majority. This liberational task is not approved by the government of Kenya and labels it as a waste of funds while it is a means of eradicating societal ignorance.²⁴

Following the violence meted out against women, for instance, rape, wife beating, property disinheritance among others, the Catholic women conscientise the oppressed on their legal rights. These efforts are guided by the gospel which the Holy Father expressed as the "fullest confirmation of all human rights."²⁵ The efforts of the Catholic women accentuates to uphold human dignity and equality among all people by helping the oppressed to fight for their rights.

(b) Family Life Education

This component of conscientisation exercised by the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery targets, in a very special way, the families especially those of the single mothers. As explicated in chapter four the women are enlightened on the N.F.P. This further enlightens women on the Church's stand on the use of artificial contraception. The

author had an advantage of attending a workshop organised by Catholic women on F.L.E.; the N.F.P. proved to be an effective method of restoring the human dignity especially on the women who widely use contraception. Out of forty-seven couples who had previously been educated on N.F.P., four-three affirmed N.F.P. as an effective recourse of fertility. The fight against contraception is a struggle against science and technology which has been used by people to enslave themselves. This study agrees with Jose Comblin that it is by the will of human beings that fruits of industrialisation, science and technology are used to dehumanise others.²⁶ But by the Catholic women's efforts we can come into dialogue with Comblin by saying : it is also by the will of human beings (women) that works, science and technology shall be used to liberate people, guided by the Christian teachings.

F.L.E. has also helped to resolve marriage problems which would otherwise lead to divorces and separation. Such problems include infertility, infidelity, infection with serious sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, level of education of couples especially when women are more educated, and the sex of the children. Through human psychology, counselling, workshops, catechises and seminars, such problems are resolved. The F.L.P. has helped to safe guard the value and virtues of a family, as the basic unit of a society.

The youth are also educated and instructed on the important issues of family life and the dangers of contraception. HIV/AIDS awareness helps them to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. Chukuwudum B.Okolo describes them (youth) as energetic and exuberant and what the Catholic women aim at, when educating them, is to tap these energies and richness of youthful stage which Okolo says can be used to transform their local churches and society for the common good.²⁷

(c) Health Education

This education by the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery also targets the rural women. It aims at eradicating the malnutritional problem in the rural areas where they voluntarily move out to help. The semi-literate and illiterate women are educated on domestic food production which helps to curb child health problem. Through workshops the Catholic women help the rural women in child nurturing.

Health centres and hospitals such as Mater Misericordiae are used as a medium of educating women on child care, both ante-natal and post-natal. The Catholic women also visit mothers in their homes especially in the rural areas as a follow up of clinical health education. This is a very expensive exercise especially when they have to extend their generosity by visiting rural women. Financial constraints hinder the diversification of health education

(d) Student Sponsorship

One of the basic problems that facilitate school drop outs, street children, semi-literacy and illiteracy is poverty. In most poor families, the girl-child is sacrificed at the expense of educating the boys who are said to be family assets. Other families live in dire poverty and cannot, therefore, educate their children. Through the S.V.P., the S.C.Cs, the parish priests and the school head-teachers the Catholic women identify such marginalised children whom they opt to educate or sponsor. Some Catholic women incorporate such children in their own families, educate them and provide for them food and shelter. It is remarkable of how some Catholic women out of Christian agape adopt young street children and make them their own. Other liberators opt to sponsor children in schools unanimously through the above mentioned societies and people. The CWA in some parishes make monthly contributions which they use to help in educating poor students both in lower and higher learning institutions. Nevertheless, their effort is weakened by poor coordination.

(e) Media

This is another means of creating awareness. The Catholic women, especially the Daughters of St. Paul congregation, have totally given themselves to this means of liberation. Through publishing books and audio-visual communications people of all categories are targeted : the students, theologians, lectors, teachers, politicians, mothers, children and the aged. Through their efforts the semi-literate and illiterate are educated and conscientised through workshops and adult classes. The Daughters of St. Paul diversify their work through the religious women in various parishes by selling books at subsidised prices to cater for many readers. They also use an ecumenical approach by disseminating inter-religious literature such as the Quran and other books on Islamic religion. The notion behind this is to create a dialogue with other religious faiths for the common good. According to Sr. Thomasina Madhavathu, sister-in-charge of the Catholic Bookshop of the Archdiocese of Nairobi in Nairobi Deanery, both Christians and Muslims worship one God. She expressed the fundamental aim of the congregation as evangelising and entering into dialogue with other religions.²⁸

The AOSK use newsletters, handouts and leaflets to conscientise women on violence meted out against them. The Catholic lay women both as individuals and in cooperation with their fellow women and/or male counterparts author books to create awareness on the dignity of human life and equality of men and women for the welfare of all.

The educational approach used by the Catholic women liberators aim at promoting the oppressed people's critical reflection and action towards their freedom. It aims at

breaking what Paulo Freire calls a "culture of silence."²⁹ Critical awareness as propagated by these women is an effective means of creating independence and social praxis. Through conscientisation, the Catholic women take the responsibility of coordinating and directing the oppressed towards liberation. They do not assume the oppressed to be mere objects of liberation or people who cannot reflect. According to Paulo Freire, to assume such a cause of social transformation is to invalidate the freedom.³⁰ The Catholic women's attitude towards the oppressed as critical reflectors and activists of their liberation is an answer to the magisterial teachings, as discussed in chapter two, of the need of the liberators to recognise the oppressed people's participation in liberational struggles. Otherwise forced freedom is no freedom.

From this we can discern the power of word as used by the Catholic women. Their liberational movement is not revolutionary. While it is possible to mobilise the poor, especially the slum dwellers who have the stamina and bitterness to fight oppression to resurge their full humanity, the Catholic women emulate Jesus their model of the true liberation. Jesus Christ rejected violence as a means of liberation and boldly faced his challenges. His death on the Cross was a perfect contradiction and confrontation of "violence of weaponry with the power of the word."³¹ Jesus' intention to desacralise violence has not only influenced the Catholic women liberationists, but was also a perfect paradigm to Mahatma Ghandi who sought peaceful transformation of the oppressed in India.³² As indicated earlier, education creates independence, self-esteem and self-reliance, hence, the importance of the approach discussed below.

5.2.2. Self Reliant Approach

The Catholic women employ this method to alleviate poverty and to include the poor in the wider economy by participatory approaches. Vocational training, self-help projects and soft loans are examples of self-reliant approach used by Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery.

(a) Vocational Training

The youth, school drop outs, single mothers and rehabilitated prostitutes are mostly the victims of unemployment, drug culture, violence and subordination. Catholic women have established vocational training centres where such people attain skills on carpentry, tailoring and mechanics among others. The aim is to help the marginalised seek employment. According to some beneficiaries of the Catholic women liberational struggles, such trainings have promoted a descent living as in the case of rehabilitated

prostitutes. The beneficiaries realise their talents and capabilities while their self esteem is facilitated. Poor single mothers are helped to nurture and educate their children. Most of the vocational training centres are situated outside Nairobi Deanery as far as Makueni. According to the respondents, the establishment of more vocational training centres are inhibited by their limited financial resources.

(b) The Self Help Projects

The Catholic women mobilise rural families into various group activities. These include agricultural projects, water tank projects, animal rearing projects, small businesses just to mention a few. The agricultural projects assist rural families in obtaining food and money for educating the children from the surplus. This helps to curb the problem of malnutrition and school drop outs. The water tank projects assist the beneficiaries especially the rural women and the girl child who travel for long distances to fetch water. The animal rearing and small businesses are income generating projects that assist to alleviate poverty in rural communities.

(c) Soft Loans

The Catholic women through the Christian societies and associations assist the poor to be independent by crediting them soft loans of low interests. Through these, the poor are able to start small scale businesses. They are expected to pay the loans within a given time. To obtain such loans they are asked to provide guarantors or a form of security.

Among the business women that we encountered in the field work research, a few credit their employees soft loans with no interest measures. These assist in the progress of the workers' families and self development. Through the soft loans, children get educated while health and social services become affordable. This, according to some respondents, is not a favourable means of alleviating poverty since some of the credited people end up not paying their debts especially when they lose their jobs.

5.2.3 Aid/Relief Approach

The provision of aid/relief by the Catholic women targets the refugees, the displaced and those in abject poverty. The refugees (various categories discussed in chapter four) are provided with clothes, food, medical facilities, education and shelter.

The displaced and the poor are also assisted. During the 1992 ethnic cum political clashes, some of the religious women gave their total service to the displaced not only by distributing food and clothes in their camping grounds (some of which were Church compounds) but also provided training skills to the women. The children were also taught in the camps. The religious women risked their lives by animating such activities within the clash areas; their belief that in service of the poor they serve Christ as per their liberational activities.

Through the CRS, some Catholic women volunteer in the aid/relief services in the drought stricken areas. Those in abject poverty are mostly assisted. The volition of the Catholic women to assist those in dire poverty form a crucial area in liberation theology, that is, to liberate the poor. Guided by the Church's social teachings and their evangelical counsels, the nuns make it a moral choice to help the poor and to liberate them. The choice of the religious in their total self giving helps them to be in solidarity with the marginalised. The Sisters of Charity are mainly involved in liberating the poor.

5.2.4 Community Based Approach

This approach is used by Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery to establish communities within which they cater for the needs of the destitute, orphans and those in dire poverty. The street girls, prostitutes, alcoholics and drug addicts are also rehabilitated here. Some of the communities, like the early missionary stations, are composed of a school, a church and a hospital. This is to cater for the people's/children's spiritual and temporal liberty. Some are used to confine the street boys who, most of the time, run back to the streets; Kibarague Good News Centre is an ample example of this approach.

S.C.Cs and devotional groups are also community based self help groups which emphasis the spiritual liberty of the Christians. These groups are usually formed by Christians within their area of proximity. The members contribute among themselves to help poor Christians educate their children. Some of these Christians help to evangelise their neighbours.

5.2.5 Evangelisation Approach

Before the Vatican Council II the task of evangelisation was entirely in the hands of the clerics. The Church by then was a pyramid of hierarchical duties, the pope being the head, the clergy second, and the laity at the base. According to the respondents, Vatican Council II incorporated them in the circular participation of all Christians in the

Church. By so doing clericalism has been minimised and laity's involvement promoted.

The evangelisation approach used by the Catholic women is a move to hinder an ambiguous participation of the oppressed in the social praxis. This is as a result of their prophetic stance of the danger's of such ambiguity which would in turn (temporal liberty) produce oppressors rather than what Freire calls 'new man' - that is full humanity.³³ The ambiguity of roles especially of those who have been domesticated in the structures of oppression would further inhibit woman's participation in establishing humanity. Concerning liberation theology - in the light of the above - Allan Boesak describes the word of God as "the incomparable word of liberation."³⁴ It becomes imperative, therefore, for the Catholic women to stress on the spiritual liberty in the evangelisation approach.

Through evangelisation approach, the Catholic women create an awareness of the duties of Christians in the society. Some people, as discussed earlier, are ignorant of their public duties and rights. This has been necessitated by some Church's negative stand on politics and the notion that a government, whether democratic or tyrannical is God given. A study by D. Waruta on the Kenyan situation of religion emphasis this point as indicated below:

Faith Churches which comprise the Evangelical wing of the church of Kenya led by their oldest Church refuse to support any cause that would seem to antagonise their relationship with the Government. Sometimes they have gone out in the open to support the Government from what they view as interference of other churches on Government affairs. For them the role of the church is to preach the Gospel, evangelize and pray and not to involve themselves in worldly politics. They embrace a Kingdom "not of this world" and promote an otherworldly gospel which has little interest in the "things of this world."³⁵

The emphasis of the Catholic women on Christian responsibility shows that the gospel has a social dimension. It is rather a way of life that finds fulfilment in Christian true witness of faith in God.

The Catholic women in their evangelical mission try to inculturate the gospel which, according to the respondents, is one of the most difficult tasks they have in their liberational ministries. Many people are resistant to transformed integral development. They are more conservative to change; for instance, some Christians (respondents) are still against women Eucharist ministres. Inculturation embodies the task of studying people's cultures and world-views which takes a long time and money.³⁶

The evangelisation of the de-evangelised and non-Christians takes an ecumenical approach. The stance taken by the Catholic women show a sense of freedom to choose

their liberational participation. This is a freedom of service (cf Gal 5:13-14). The Catholic women lay missionaries risk their lives to insert themselves in hardship areas. This sense of freedom and sacrifice among the lay and religious women should not be confused with any kind of slavery especially when the religious go to live in hardship areas and drought stricken places. In such situations they barely get enough food, water, social amenities and security just like the poor and the marginalised. As such, the role of Catholic women in evangelisation is a remarkable exercise backed by their charisms and self-giftedness. It is valid to say that, from the field work experience, not any person can sacrifice himself/herself to go and live in North-Eastern Kenya, to evangelise especially the Muslims or even be actively involved in city of Nairobi's marginalised ghetto dwellers.

The Catholic Church does, however, limit women's participation in their priestly roles. For instance, the hard work of Sr. M. Wanjiru in Kibarague Good News Centre entails dealing with harsh neighbouring slums environment. Most of other religious women find it unbearable to keep up with the alcoholics, criminals and slum dwellers. For this reason, Sr. M.Wanjiru's efforts to form young girls' congregation who would help the development of the Centre has not been fruitful because the Church has not approved her ideas. She expressed this by saying:

The bishop has never approved my volition to start a formation group of young girls who would take over. None of the religious women that I know of would keep Kibarague Good News Centre running in such harsh and unbearable conditions. My efforts to originate a women's congregation with my kind of charism is frustrated by the hierachy.³⁷

The papal encyclicals and other Church's social teachings have written much about the lay and religious women's equality with men in the Church. Chapter two clearly verifies this. But however much the women are challenged to participate in the ecclesial, the hierarchical/clerical structure has no significant place for women leadership. The highest religious position for a woman in the Church is heading such groups as the CWA and CA for the lay while the nuns become "censured" mother superiors. The following observation by Wachege was verified by the respondents:

In some dioceses, it was brought to our awareness that the ordinaries (the bishops) decide for the nuns how to run their congregations. They premake tough conditions for the nuns saturated with male patronisation. Such women religious congregations under such bishops sometimes receive harsh oppressive instructions to abide by under ecclesiastical obedience. Apparently, such sisters cannot do what they would like to do without being nice and pleasing to the bishops for approval, censorship and ecclesial blessings.³⁸

Decisions affecting the society are monopolised by the clerics. Nevertheless, as pointed out, women through their own efforts have had a remarkable impact on the transformation of the society. The approaches described above are used to necessitate and enhance effective liberation and to practise their humanistic generosity.

5.3 The Blessed Virgin Mary : An Attitude of Women As Women

The explication of Mariology in chapter two of this study forms our basic point of reference in assessing Catholic women's understanding and emulation of the model of the B.V.M in their liberational roles. This section hopes to form a brief dialogue with the Christological approach to liberation theology. This understanding is based within the conception that Mariology is Christocentric in the sense that it is understood within the annunciation, birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The model of the B.V.M, as elaborated in the previous chapters, plays a vital role in inspiring the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery in their social transformation. As the culmination of a revitalised image, dignity and vocation of a liberated woman and a liberator, she triggers among the contemporary an attitude that is intrinsically feminine - "an attitude of women as women".

The Church's dogmas explicated in chapter two on the B.V.M. : Theotokos, Virgin birth, Immaculate Conception, Assumption and Coredemptrix form the Christian basis of understanding the model of the B.V.M. The Church declared Her as the Mother of the Church at the end of the Vatican II in 1965. Since then 1st January of every year was set aside as the Feast of Mary as Mother of God and Church. Other post Conciliar documents, as we saw previously, have been dedicated to Her. The position of Mary is based on Her Coredemptrix which we will see when she offered Her Son at the Cross.

From the field work research we encountered Catholic women dedicated to devotional groups of Mary, as the Mother of God. Such include the Legion of Mary, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. According to the respondents, the hyperdulia is done in faith and hope of the role of the B.V.M. as a Mediator, only second to the Trinity. According to one of the respondents the B.V.M. is analogically referred to as the neck while Christ is the head.³⁹ Consequently, the concretisation of the Motherhood and Virginity in the model of the B.V.M. becomes an example of perfect humility, perfect faith, perfect hope and perfect feminine wit to the contemporary Catholic women. This is why some of the Catholic women respondents expressed enthusiastically their attitude towards hyperdulia.⁴⁰

The courage portrayed by the B.V.M in her role as Coredemptrix is another source of encouragement and persistent faith to the Catholic women liberators. Her fiat

was a brave subjective consent to generate and preserve life, which the Catholic women emulate with a lot of admiration. Through Her action, all the faithful are made sons and daughters of God. According to the respondents, the B.V.M's courage is visualised in questioning God's intention to incarnate Jesus Christ through Her femininity. In connection with this view, Mrs Kyonda emphatically expressed the following:

Looking at Her life and what She said and did, she was a liberated woman and had a higher position than men in God's salvation plan. She had the courage to question God's decision in order to get clarification: "You will bear a Son...". Mary: "How, I am a virgin?". She did not just accept the angel's message, but questioned it. I imitate Her courage and Her willingness to play the role of a mother.⁴¹

As such, Catholic women get encouragement in their liberational struggles from the model of the B.V.M. They gain the courage to question the status quo and the Church in case of any misdeeds.

The discipleship of Mary is another source of encouragement to the Christian witness and proclamation of the Gospel. The challenges that the C.L.M. face among others get support from Mary's test of discipleship. According to Gerald Caron the Virgin Mary passed Her test of discipleship which Simeon had implicated to Her in these words: "A sword will pierce your soul" (Lk 2 : 38).⁴² The Catholic women, independent of their occupations seek to attain conversion and to liberate others through their charisms and self-giftedness. As explained in L.E, the person at work rather than the work done becomes the subject of women's dignity. In their own capacity they have become mothers and liberators to the dejected, poor, destitutes and the depersonalised.

The life of B.V.M. as poor and lowly in a patronising Jewish society strikes the Catholic women's understanding of the Virgin Mary's exaltation. As Teresa Okure enlightens us, God works through women as He did to Mary, the Mother of God.⁴³ This view, according to the Catholic women, encourages them to live a life of service. In transforming the oppressive social set ups and liberating the poor, they serve God as well as the people; in the poor they love God more and carry their own crosses as explained earlier as in the case of the Catholic women in assisting the Cottolengo children. In their service, the Catholic women believe that "God can use anyone for His noble jobs as long as one is faithful and determined".⁴⁴ Their dignity as women is well understood in their pre-occupation to help the marginalised and in their motherhood.

As baptised and confirmed Christians, the Catholic women displayed an awareness of their liberational participation in trying to attain full humanity and to sustain human dignity as exemplified by the model of the B.V.M. Guided by the social teachings

of the Church and by their charisms, the Catholic women make a volition that has rendered them victims of harsh climatic conditions and poor environments, banditry attacks, robbery among others. According to the Catholic women respondents, the B.V.M.'s life as a refugee in Egypt is their source of inspiration. Concerning the B.V.M.'s awareness to Her mission in the world, Tony Bellagamba explains that:

She became aware of her mission and that of her son from Simeon: a salvific mission through suffering and personal sacrifice (Lc. 2, 34-35). She accepted from the very beginning to be persecuted and to become a refugee (Mt, 2, 13-15), to walk alongside her son in the fight for justice and love, and finally consummated her mission on Calvary where she stood at the foot of the Cross (Jh. 19,25), as a heroine who still believed in the final victory of a peaceful revolution over evil and its allies.⁴⁵

The B.V.M. lived a contemplative life. She pondered on the words of Jesus even when He seemed to give His Mother evasive answers (Jn 2:1-12). The Catholic women, in trying to emulate their Mother, devote themselves to praying for the conversion of the non-Christians. Of remarkable importance to this study is the contemporary unparalleled mission of the Carmelite Sisters, who have chosen to liberate the world by means of prayers. They pray for the conversion of the people and for God's grace and mercy.

The Virginity of Mary before and after the birth of Christ encourages the consecrated virgins to sacrifice their inalienable rights as women. Her life of poverty, chastity and obedience concides with the evangelical counsels of the nuns. According to the respondents, the nuns identify themselves with the B.V.M., and it is through Her model that they sustain their dignity and get inspiration for their ministry. They are, hence, able to live in simplicity, purity, commitment and love.

The Family of Nazareth is a good model for contemporary families. People are called to deal with the problem of contraception ; to live in holiness as taught by the Church. In view of this we find the Catholic women F.L.P. animators engaged in the propagation of N.F.P. In this the Catholic women guide both men and women to live in holiness. Mary also becomes exemplary to Catholic women in their sacramental marriage : Her humility, humbleness and perseverance.

As discussed above, the Catholic women's understanding of the model of the B.V.M. as a Mother and a Virgin is personal and existential. They take Her as their Mother as well as the Mother of the entire Church. Henceforth, the model of the B.V.M. is important in their liberational roles.

This brief mariological analysis emerging form the previous chapters with a Christological touch points at something of immense importance : that many women

liberationists encountered in the field work research and discussion scrupulously confine themselves to the B.V.M. virtually ignoring Jesus Christ. It became explicit that in their feminist "pious" enthusiasm, they convince themselves that, being a woman the B.V.M. is their ONLY and absolute model. By implication, Jesus Christ, being a male is put in the periphery or ignored all together.

In the light of chapter two whereby we examined the Catholic Church's social teachings which guide, support, direct, challenge and instruct women's liberational struggle one is compelled to state that an exclusive confinement of oneself strictly to the B.V.M. is a distortion of the Christian doctrines. Moreover, as explained earlier, Mary is so interrelated with/to Jesus Christ that some enlightened people view Her symbolically as the neck and Jesus Christ as the Head.

The suggestion is that, for a more significant involvement in their liberational roles Jesus Christ too must be taken seriously. Wachege has explicated Jesus Christ as an exemplar in African Women Liberation that it is idle to revisit the issue. What can be added is that Mariological approach to women's liberational roles complements Wachege's Christocentricity in women liberation.

SUMMARY

This chapter has assessed the role of the Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery in their liberational roles. It has used phenomenological concepts of Teilhard de Chardin as a parameter for scrutinising strengths and weaknesses in their involvement in liberational roles. From the assessment one can validly assert that Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are doing a remarkable exercise of transforming the society despite the limitations that have been observed.

Further, the chapter has examined the approaches used by the Catholic women in liberating the oppressed and the oppressors. These are Educational, Self Reliant, Aid/Relief provision, Community Based and Evangelisation. These approaches have made their work more effective. Such efforts for the plight of women and humankind in general is a further significant manifestation of the impact of the magisterial directives and teachings on the liberational activities of the Catholic women.

Finally the chapter presents a Mariological understanding and inspiration on the Catholic women in their liberational roles. Moreover, a brief dialogue between Mariological approach and Christological perspective to women liberation was examined. Such a dialogue highlights the complementarity involved in the two diverse yet inter-related contexts.

The foregoing is a verification of the affirmation of the objectives and a thorough testing of the hypotheses of the study as contained in chapter one. A way is, therefore, paved for the final chapter : the chapter on the recapitulations and conclusions will thus be an overview of the study and author's recommendations for effective women's liberational participation in the transformation of our society and the contribution thereby.

Endnotes

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3. For a detailed verification of this read : Rodger Charles and Droston Maclaren, The Social Teachings of Vatican II (San Francisco : Ignatius Press, 1982) ; Alberic Stacpoole (ed.), Vatican II By Those Who Were There (London : Geoffrey Chapman, 1986).
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11. Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Martin - Baro' (eds.), Archbishop Oscar Romero : Voice of The Voiceless (New York : Orbis Books, 1985) pp 1ff.
12. Teilhard de Chardin, Let Me Explain , p 130.
13. For further detailed consultations on this read : Anthony Hanson (ed.), Teilhard Reassessed (London : Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970).
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19. Ibid. , p 166.
20. Chardin, Let Me Explain pp 15ff.
21. Freire, Pedagogy of The Oppressed , p 25.

22. Sunday Nation, February 24 1997, p 24.
23. Cf Comblin , Being Human , p 163.
24. Op Cit. , p 24.
25. John Paul II, Crossing The Threshold of Hope, p 197.
26. Comblin , Being Human , p 160.
27. C. B. Okolo , The Liberating Role of The Church in Africa Today (Eldoret, Kenya : AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1991) , pp 50 -57.
28. Sr. T. Madhavathu, interview, 7th February 1997, sister-in-charge, Catholic Bookshop , Holy Family Basilica.
29. Freire, Pedagogy of The Oppressed , pp 10ff.
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31. Comblin , Being Human , p 179.
32. Ibid. , p 179.
33. Freire , Pedagogy of The Oppressed , p 25.
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35. D. Waruta, " Religion as a Source of Oppression or Resistance : An Analysis of The Kenyan Situation" in EATWOT, African Continental Conference Report on Culture, Religion and Liberation, 6 - 11 January 1991, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, p 77.
36. Cf B. K. Nwazojie , "The Nigerian Hierachy and Inculturation in the Liturgy" in CUEA, ACS, Vol. 11, No. 4, December 1995.
37. Sr. Martin Wanjiru, interview , 24th October, 1996.
38. P. N. Wachege, African Women Liberation. pp 143ff.
39. Fr. R. Woof, interview, 29th October, 1996.
40. Bertha Muia, one of the Catholic Women respondent, Holy Family Basilica.
41. Mrs. A. Kyonda, interview , 23rd December, 1996.
42. Gerald Caron, "Seeing 'Mary' With New Eyes!" in AMECEA, AFER, Vol. 27, No. 4, August 1985, pp 242 - 243.
43. Teresa Okure, "Women in The Bible" in Virginia Fabella & Mercy Oduyoye, With Passion and Compassion , pp 49ff.
44. Mrs. M. Gathigia, interview, 21st December, 1996.
45. T. Bellagamba , "Mary and Mission Today" , p 24.

CHAPTER SIX

6. RECAPITULATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Recapitulations and Conclusions

The foregoing study has been an attempt to critically investigate, present, interpret and assess the participation of Catholic women in liberational activities in Nairobi Deanery of the Archdiocese of Nairobi. It profoundly expressed the effort of Catholic women in confronting unauthenticity through the spirit of liberation both as Christians and independent beings. The new revitalised image of equality and dignity outweighs the inferior conception of women as such.

The study comprises six chapters. Chapter one introduced us to the concept of liberation theology within which the study was triggered. It identified the problem of the study: that a number of studies view women as objects of liberation and oppression; but none has been conducted to investigate, present, interpret and assess the liberational participation of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery. The chapter further gave the rationale, the scope, the objectives, the hypotheses, the methodology and the operational definitions of the study. Limitations encountered in the field work research and relevant literature review to this study were also provided.

Chapter two examined the fundamental social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on and about women in view of liberation. A historical critical method was applied in presenting an analytical pedagogical succinct of the O.T and the N.T as the primary sources of Christian living, witnessing and proclamation. In the O.T. purposive exemplification of six women namely : Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Judith, Esther and Ab'igail in the transformation roles of their people for the common good were discussed. N.T. women in social praxis were also presented. The chapter further examined the fundamental magisterial directives, instructions and social teachings of the Catholic Church on women as liberators of the oppressed, dehumanised, marginalised, indignified as well as the oppressors themselves. In this chapter, diverse basic encyclicals and apostolic exhortations were also examined. The works of prominent theologians and indigenous Catholic episcopate on issues concerning women liberational roles were discussed.

In this chapter, among the observations made include:

(a) The core of liberation theology involves a Christian spirituality of liberation which calls for a true and complete metanoia. Such a spirituality becomes the threshold of commitment to God and to temporal perfection through an interpersonal milieu.

(b) Concern for humanisation among the women liberationists leads to the recognition of the dehumanised both the oppressed and the oppressors. In this, the

liberationists have an obligation of existentially emancipating the oppressed and the oppressors.

(c) Liberation theology is an integral form of genuine humanism. It caters for both the spiritual and temporal needs of the oppressed.

(d) Jesus Christ is a Liberator par excellence. Liberationists should emulate Him as guided by the teachings of the Church. Moreover, the B.V.M., as a Mother of the Son of God and of the Church, is a perfect paradigm of how a liberated woman and a liberator should exercise her liberational roles. She is also a perfect and genuine exemplification in the pilgrimage of faith to contemporary Catholic women.

(e) The dignity of a woman is inherent to any liberational activity. The Catholic women should, therefore, entail in upholding and uplifting their dignity in the social setup.

Chapter three formed the background information of the area of study. It presented the historical setting, the geographical spread, the population and the hierarchial structures of the Archdiocese of Nairobi within which Nairobi Deanery can be visualised being one of its ecclesiastical districts. The economic setting of the Nairobi area was discussed to assist the reader concretise the forms of marginalisation such as poverty, joblessness, alienation, oppression and depersonalisation which the Catholic women seek to liberate. The chapter further introduced us to Catholic women's participation in liberational roles as drawn from the field work research and experiences. Various reasons, as given by the respondents, for their volition to liberate specific groups of the depersonalised were listed. Their sources of liberational pedagogy were also discussed.

Chapter four was the core of our library and field work research and experiences. It used various case studies to test and affirm our hypothesis that Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are already involved in liberational roles. As such, the chapter presented diverse liberational realms that Catholic women already participate in namely : the Ecclesial, the Family, Educational, Health, the Social, Recreational, Communication Services, Politics and Economics. The aftermath of their liberational efforts among various categories of the marginalised were discussed. The chapter, furthermore, provided us with a revitalised image, dignity and vocation of women as sharers in common humanity.

Chapter five presented a critical assessment of the Catholic women's involvement in diverse liberational activities. To assess their strengths and weaknesses Teilhard de Chardin's theory of evolution and phenomenological concepts were used as a parameter to Catholic women's liberational participation. Moreover, the chapter assessed the effects of these activities in the realms mentioned above (see chapter four). This necessitated the author to discuss the approaches used in liberating the marginalised

and dehumanised people within which their volition to be liberated is made possible. Finally, a Mariological understanding of the Catholic women was appraised. In this chapter, our hypotheses are critically affirmed ; these are:

(a) The Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery are already involved in liberational efforts and ministries in order to transform and humanise the society.

(b) The Catholic Church magisterial directives and teachings provide fundamental guidance, support, challenges and instructions to Catholic women's liberational participation.

(c) The model of the B.V.M inspires the Catholic women to help the oppressed find freedom from their oppressive states and to live authentically.

From the foregoing study, the underlying major conclusions can be made:

(a) The Catholic women's participation in liberation movements is triggered by the situation of marginalisation and depersonalisation of the oppressed people in Nairobi Deanery. Such situations are found in the phenomena of destitute children, street mothers, street beggars, prostitutes, joblessness, HIV/AIDS patients among others. As discussed in chapter three, the economic setting of the Nairobi area which we described as a dual economy has contributed to much of the situation of unfreedom and alienation among the oppressed. As such, the Catholic women aim at restoring authenticity among these people. The need to liberate the oppressed find the Catholic women attach themselves to the plight of the marginalised with an accentuation of conscientising them in their human indignity. As such, pedagogy of the oppressed becomes imperative to activate the oppressed as critical reflectors and full participants of their own social transformation.

The anthropocentric element of liberation theology reveals the Catholic women's want to transform. Their liberational participation involves a conscious and critical transformation of the society which is profoundly expressed in their capacity to identify themselves with specific categories of the oppressed and their volition to transform unauthenticity even outside Nairobi Deanery. As such, the Catholic women pre-occupy themselves with the humanisation of the society both as individual and group apostolate, thanks to their baptism and confirmation.

(b) The liberational participation of Catholic women can be analytically defined as ecclesiocentric. They identify themselves as equal members of the wider society and as a part of the family of God - which is a community of believers. With an effort to incorporate the dehumanised and the oppressed into the family of God, the Catholic women witness and proclaim the gospel with an ecumenical bend. They provide insights and living hope among those that conceive God as an "immovable mover". In order to evangelise the non-Christians and the de-evangelised, the Catholic women are involved in youth apostolate, family apostolate, S.C.Cs, devotional groups such as the Legion of

Mary, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Such an effort joins the family of God into a challenging pilgrimage of faith as a unit but in diverse ways.

The distinctive understanding of a family has rendered the Catholic women to have a credible whollistic existential approach towards liberation. They reveal an open heart towards the afflicted in whom they liberate and become mothers, benefactors, counsellors, mediators and even lawyers. They identify and visualise the image of God among the least in the society which is the essence of every individual. The family of God, strengthened by the notion of the body of Christ sensitise the women's liberational efforts and ministries. In the vital service of the poor and the underprivileged, the Catholic women serve Christ who suffered for humankind on the Cross. Their understanding of an ecclesiocentric perspective towards liberation motivate them in assisting the non-Christians and the de-evangelised to attain true metanoia. They are also supportive of one another in deepening their faith through catechism and discussions on Catholic moral theology in their S.C.Cs. Through seminars and workshops, the Catholic women help the oppressed make the pedagogy of the oppressed their own with a prophetic stance of making them liberated and liberators of all.

(c) The liberational participation of the Catholic women is both orthodoxy and orthopraxis, rooted in God. The understanding of the Kingdom of God by the Catholic women is facilitated by the S.C.Cs in which they read, discuss and interpret the sacred scriptures. Their experiences help them concretise the word of God within their sitz im leben. The Catholic Church's social teachings and the liturgy assist them to further deepen their understanding of the kingdom of God with a prophetic stance. Moreover, their recognition of the essence of humanity as the image of God qualifies their liberational participation as co-workers of re-establishing and resurging human dignity, peace, justice and love. Their orthopraxis in more concretised interpersonal milieu is further promoted by their consciousness as liberated and liberators of all. This has been made possible by the international conferences on women liberation, dignity and equality from a theocentric perspective. As such, the Biblical anthropomorphism becomes a centripetal force within which the love energy (as discussed in chapter five) activates the Catholic women's liberational ministries. Their faith, purity and fidelity in God is ministered in their orthopraxis. In this, Jesus Christ's humanity becomes a paradigm to their liberational roles.

(d) The Catholic women's liberational participation is Christocentric. They emulate Jesus Christ from whom we can identify a number of correlations. Such include sensitivity to human suffering and misery, a universalistic approach towards liberation, an integrated/whollistic approach towards liberation, a challenging and at times unappreciated role. However, the model of the B.V.M. is more appreciated by the

Catholic women through their hyperdulia and emulation of Her genuine faith, courage and generation of life. Their attitude towards Her as a woman inspires the Catholic women mostly. This attitude has become centralised in their liberational roles thus ignoring the model of Jesus Christ in the periphery which as pointed out earlier could distort the kernel of the Gospel message.

(e) The Catholic women use various approaches which facilitate and promote their liberational activities namely: Educational, Self-reliant, Evangelisation, Aid/relief provision and Community-based approaches. Such approaches and concern for the poor and underprivileged lead the Catholic women to volunteer in liberational activities in distant areas such as North Eastern, Makueni and Nyeri, in which some forego their inalienable rights of marriage and comfortable life as in the case of the consecrated virgins and C.L.M. Others live among the poor in the slums where they experience harsh environmental conditions.

(f) Some of the Catholic women are caught up in the unnecessary evil of jealousy and oppression although they participate in liberating the oppressed. They perpetrate evil as well as good. As such they participate in the bipolarisation of humanity but which is on the other hand outweighed by their Christian faith and concern for the poor. Their liberational participation reveals a vital and dynamic force within Nairobi Deanery that fight against oppression and dehumanisation. But their ongoing struggle to build a more humane society is not well coordinated.

6.2 Recommendations

This section provides invaluable insights or recommendations into the study which would both enrich and offer new dimensions into more effective Catholic women's liberational participation. The following recommendations emanate from the foregoing study.

(a) The Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery should have a network of their liberational activities. They should form an organisation that coordinates their activities according to their charisms and self-giftedness. This way, they would involve more women in humanising the society and equally distribute the liberationists among the oppressed; for instance, the number of women liberationists targeting the oppressors, as discussed in chapter three, is negligible. Moreover, attention would also be paid to the most needy category of the oppressed. This would help to intensify their liberational roles.

(b) The Catholic women should apply Christocentric approach towards liberation too. Their enthusiasm to emulate the model of the B.V.M. should be understood within

the context of Jesus Christ as a Liberator par excellence. As such, they should not confine themselves to the model of the B.V.M. as the only perfect paradigm to liberation. In view of this, the author suggests a deeper researched and scholarly work to complement the brief Mariological - Christological dialogue already presented in the previous chapters. This could not, however, have been comprehensively achieved due to the limits of the present study in terms of scope and the level at which it was carried out. Such a scholarly work would give the Catholic women a new impetus to integral liberation without distorting the kernel of the gospel and the doctrine of salvation.

(c) The Catholic Church should introduce first degree courses on theology for the lay and religious women in Kenya. Currently, theology is mainly done in seminaries where they can hardly accommodate women. Theology is mainly done at a masters level in CUEA which hinders the laity from pursuing the course. Hence the number of Catholic women theologians in Kenya is negligible. Introduction of such courses for the lay Catholic women would facilitate and promote the Church's theology at a deeper level among the faithful. Liberation theology would thus assume an effective and intensive liberational activities among the Christians.

(d) Women should be given equal opportunities in the job markets. The academic credentials of both men and women should be used as a determinant of job qualifications than the gender biasness. This would open up more fields for the Catholic women to humanise the society within their interpersonal milieu as more marginalised and dehumanised cases will be identified and corrected.

(e) Catholic women should also seek to liberate and appreciate themselves as the image of God. They should seek deep formation guided by the Christian moral theology. As such, they would become true liberators without perpetrating oppression which is a great hinderance to liberational commitment.

(f) To have a better impact in their liberational roles the Catholic women should utilise Teilhard de Chardin's phenomenological theories expounded in chapter five. Triggered by such an approach, as already elaborated, one can not only insert oneself better into other people's situation in life. One can also be enabled to come up with more significant social analysis and existential praxis for the good of all.

As we end the thesis, we re-assert that one of the most striking inferences is that there are all kinds of women groups, for instance FIDA and FEMNET aggressively promoting recognition, self-esteem, unity and liberation among women. Our study has in its own way contributed in the encouragement of such women recognition, self esteem, unity and liberation. It has also gone beyond that invaluable state of affairs by encouraging women to involve men too rather than discriminate them by a one - sided approach in the struggle for authenticity. As Wachege rightly argues, "the uncompromisable truth is that women's business is men's shauri too and vice versa."¹

Besides, in point of fact, the study has profoundly verified how invaluable Roman Catholic Church social teachings on and about women are through Her Biblical analysis, Documents of the Vatican Council II, the Papal Encyclicals and Apostolic Exhortations, reflections from some prominent theologians and Pastrol Letters of KEC in women liberational and empowerment tasks. In this connection, it is also important to point out that the study should significantly assist the feminists and gender sensitisers who make prevalent unwarranted allegations that the Roman Catholic Church ignores women to change their attitude if only they can peruse our study in a detached objective manner. Ours is a challenge to them to liberate themselves from being under-achievers by enriching themselves from what is valuable in this so called "conservative" mainstream Roman Catholic Church. Obviously we do not intend to proselytise. Our concern has been : to examine the fundamental magisterial directives and social teachings of the Catholic Church on and about women in relation to liberation; to examine the impact of the Church's social teachings and instructions on the liberational activities of Catholic women; to investigate and assess the liberational activities and roles of Catholic women in Nairobi Deanery in the socio-cultural, political, economic, religious and other realms; and to assess the role of the model of the B.V.M in inspiring Catholic women in their liberational activities. The belief is that we have adequately achieved the objectives within the confines of the thesis. It can only be hoped that the recommendations the study has come up with will enhance and make more significant women's liberational roles not only in Nairobi Deanery but all over and for all.

Endnote

1. Wachege, African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective, p36.

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LIST OF INFORMANTS

Name	Designation	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Akelo, Sr. J.F.	Youth Coordinator	Holy Family Basilica Parish	14/10/96
Amalwa, Mrs J.	Chairlady of S.V.P.	St. Peter Claver's Mission	03/11/96
Andriana, Sr. K.	Sister-in-Charge	Cottolengo Centre	30/10/96
Canzian, Fr. F.	Priest-in-charge Consolata Shrine	Consolata, Westlands	20/12/96
Dooley, Sr. E.	Health Coordinator	K.C.S	04/12/96
D'Souza, Fr. A.	Father-in-Charge Holy Family Basilica	Holy Family Basilica	07/12/96
Gichuki, J.W.	Single mother	Kiambu Market	30/12/96
Healy, Fr. M.	Father-in-Charge St. Paul's Chaplaincy	St. Paul's Chaplaincy	11/11/96
Juma, Mrs. M.	Secretary	Development office, St. Peter Claver's Parish	06/11/96
Kamiri, Fr. V.	Father-in-Charge St. Francis Xavier	St. Francis Xavier Parish	29/10/96
Kareko, Mrs. Z.	Housewife	St. Francis Xavier Parish	14/10/96
Karingu, Fr. S.	Kenyatta Hospital Chaplain	Kenyatta Hospital Chaplaincy	04/11/96
Kimondo, Ms. J.	Administrator of C.L.M	K.C.S.	27/11/96

Kingori, Mrs. J.	Housewife	Consolata Parish	13/10/96
Kiruri, Mrs. J.	Secretary	Consolata Parish	24/10/96
Koskei, Mrs. M.	Businesswoman	St. Peter Parish	26/10/96
Kuria, N.M.	Secretary	Kiambu Town	31/12/96
Kyonda, Mrs. A.	National Family Life Coordinator	K.C.S.	23/12/96
Lavelle, Sr. M.	Nun	Kenyatta National Chaplaincy	04/11/96
Leonard, Fr. P	Father-in-Charge St. Austin's Church	St. Austin Mission	10/10/96
Madhavathu, Sr.	Sister-in-Charge Catholic Bookshop	Catholic Bookshop	07/02/97
Makuma, Ms. J.	Secretary	Her House, Kariobangi, South	11/11/96
Mathenge, Mrs.M	Housewife	Her Home, Buru Buru Phase II	16/10/96
Mburu, Mrs. M	FLE and women initiative Promoter	Development office, St. Peter Claver's Parish	14/10/96
Mugo, Mrs. J	Secretary	K.C.S	08/02/97
Muthama, A.M.	Single mother	Makueni	11/10/96
Muthigani, Ms. A	Curriculum Developer	K.C.S	03/12/96
Muraya, Mrs. P	National Secretary, C.W.A/Teacher	St. Mary's School	21/11/96
Mutete, N.K.	Housewife	Wote Market, Makueni	11/10/96

Mutiso, Miss M	Clerk	Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish	10/12/96
Ndungu, Fr. F.	Director of Sacred Heart	Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish	10/12/96
Ndungu, Mrs. M	Youth patroness St. Peter Claver's	Mombasa Cathedral	27/10/96
Ngigi, Ms. E. N	Company Director	Amazon Motors Co.	01/11/96
Ngigi Mrs, J	Business woman	Kiambu Town	30/12/96
Ngumba, Mrs. L	Businesswoman	Westlands	25/12/96
Njihia, Fr. P.	Education Secretary	St. Peters	11/11/96
Njoka, Mrs. E.	Headmistress	Arya Primary	21/10/96
Njoroge, Ms. N.	Secretary	K.C.S	22/10/96
Obae, Mrs. M	Cashier	Catholic Bookshop	21/10/96
Ogola, Dr. M	Director or Cottolengo Centre/Paediatrician/ Author	Flak Offices South-B	19/11/96
Ogola, P.	Student	St. Paul's Chaplaincy	09/02/97
Omondi, Ms. N	Teacher	Our Lady of Mercy Sec. School, South-B	19/11/96
Omondi, P.O.	Patient	Mother Teresa Home	08/02/97
O'Neill, Sr. G	Lecturer	St. Paul's Chaplaincy	13/10/96

Oneko, J.K.	Student	Mombasa Cathedral	27/10/96
Prangan, Sr. N	Secretary of JPC	A.O.S.K Offices	04/10/96
Rafferty, Sr. M	Hospital Administrator	Mater Misericordiae Hospital	19/11/96
Thanga, Mrs. L	Matron of HIV/AIDS Orphans Hospice	Cottolengo Centre	04/11/96
Thuita, J.M.	Carpenter	Jitegemee Workshop	08/02/97
Thuo, Mrs. J	Chairlady of C.W.A	St. Peter Claver's	27/10/96
Waite, Mrs. J	Welfare Officer	A.F.C.	22/11/96
Wambua, P.S.	Tailor	Jitegemee Workshop	08/02/97
Wambugu, Mrs.R	Businesswoman	St. Paul's Chaplaincy	27/10/96
Wambugu, P.K.	Student	St. Mary's School	21.11.96
Wamvuria, Sr. J	Nun	St. Austin's	26/10/96
Wanjiru, Sr. M	Administrator	Kibaragwe Good News Centre	24/10/96
Wanjiru, J.	Nurse	Kenyatta Hospital	05/11/96
Wanjohi, Mrs. M	Community Development	K.C.S.	22/11/96
Wekesa, J.N.	Businesswoman	City Market	19/11/96
Wesonga, Ms. J	Businesswoman	Kenyatta Hospital	05/11/96

Chaplaincy

Woof, Fr. R

Priest

Shrine of Mary
Help of Christians

29/10/96

APPENDIX I

**A STUDY OF PARTICIPATION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN IN LIBERATION
ACTIVITIES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO NAIROBI DEANERY OF THE
ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CATHOLIC LAY WOMEN

My name is Jane N. Kabugi from the University of Nairobi. As part of my work towards a degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies, I am currently conducting a research aimed at investigating the role of Catholic women in liberational roles. To conduct this study, I will need your participation in filling the attached questionnaire. All information will be handled in confidence. This is duly done with permission from the office of the President.

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Marital Status.....
4. Occupation.....
- 5 Level of Education.....
6. Place of birth.....
7. Date of birth.....
8. Place of residence.....
9. Parish
10. Leadership role in the Church if any?.....
11. What role do you play as a Catholic woman to help other people?.....
.....
12. What groups of marginalised people do you target and why?.....

13. Do you belong to any Catholic Christian community? If yes, what activities do you participate in to help others uplift themselves (or even yourself) socially, economically, educationally and in any other area?.....

.....

14. In which ways does the Blessed Virgin Mary help you in liberative struggles?

.....

15. How has the awareness/consciousness of women liberation or independence helped you in active participation of liberation struggles?.....

.....

6. Is your occupation fundamental to your dignity as a Catholic woman?

If yes, how?.....

If no, why?.....

17. Does this occupation help you to realise your potential and capabilities? If yes, how and in what ways do you use them to help other people?

If no, why?.....

18. Do you combine forces of your liberation efforts with other women or women's groups within your own parish or other parishes? If yes, how?

.....

If no, why?.....

19. What obstacles or problems do you face in your efforts to liberate others?

.....

20. What possible solutions do you suggest for the above problems?

.....

21. What can be done to improve the efforts of Catholic women in helping the marginalised?
.....

22. Does the Catholic Church offer any guidelines and encouragement to women in their liberational struggles? If yes, state them
.....

If no, how do you carry out your plans to help others/where do you base your commitments?
.....

23. Have you participated in any redemptive ministry as a baptised and confirmed Christian. If yes, how?
.....

24. Is there any other information you would like to add concerning the participation of Catholic women in liberation activities?
.....

APPENDIX II

A STUDY OF PARTICIPATION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN IN LIBERATION ACTIVITIES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO NAIROBI DEANERY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CATHOLIC NUNS/SISTERS

My name is Jane N. Kabugi from the University of Nairobi. As part of my work towards a degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies, I am currently conducting a research aimed at investigating the role of Catholic women in liberational roles. To conduct this study, I will need your participation in filling the attached questionnaire. All information will be handled in confidence. This is duly done with permission from the office of the President.

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Date of birth
4. Place of birth
5. Congregation.....
6. Parish.....
7. Place of residence.....
8. Occupation.....
9. When did you take your religious vows as a sister/nun?
Why and where?.....
10. How do the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience guide you in liberating others?.....
 - 1) Poverty

ii) Chastity.....

iii) Obedience.....

11. In what ways do you participate in the redemption ministries?

.....

12. In what ways do you assist your fellow Catholic women in liberation struggles?.....

.....

13. How do you regard the model of the Virginity and Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary in your liberation efforts?

.....

14. In which ways does Her model inspire you to help the marginalised?

.....

15. Has your sisterhood (religious occupation) helped you to realise your selfworth or womanhood? If yes, how?

.....

If no, why?

.....

16. Do you regard your other occupation (if any) as liberative? If yes, how?

.....

If no, why?

.....

17. What groups of marginalised people or individuals have you been able to

help and how?

.....

18. What targets of people do you have in mind (in future) in your efforts to help them live authentically and why?

.....

19. From where do you get your guidelines or challenges to participate in liberation struggles?

.....

20. What limitations do you encounter in such struggles?

.....

21. What possible solutions do you suggest for the above problems?

.....

22. Is there any other information you would like to add concerning the participation of Catholic women in liberation activities?

.....

APPENDIX III

A STUDY OF PARTICIPATION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN IN LIBERATION ACTIVITIES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO NAIROBI DEANERY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CLERGY

My name is Jane N. Kabugi from the University of Nairobi. As part of my work towards a degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies, I am currently conducting a research aimed at investigating the role of Catholic women in liberational roles. To conduct this study, I will need your participation in filling the attached questionnaire. All information will be handled in confidence. This is duly done with permission from the office of the President.

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Parish
4. Clerical position
5. Any other occupation.....
6. How far and in what ways are Catholic women involved in apostolate ministries in your parish?
.....
7. Do you encourage women participation in these activities. If yes, how?
.....

If no, why?
.....

8. In what ways are the Catholic women involved in helping the oppressed?

.....

9. Do you encourage such liberational struggles? If yes, how?

.....

10. From where do they get the guidelines to their liberational efforts?

.....

11. Which are these guidelines?

.....

12. What other challenges do you give them to increase intensity in these efforts?

.....

13. Do you think that the Blessed Virgin Mary gives any insights and encouragement to Catholic women in their liberational roles as the Mother of the Church? If yes, how?

.....

If no, why?.....

14. To what extent is she a role model to Catholic women?

.....

15. What support do you offer such women to enhance their liberational activities, either financially or morally, as a priest?

.....

16. How many and which Catholic women's groups do you have in the Parish and what are their duties with regard to helping the marginalised?

.....

17. What positions do you give them in the Church in terms of leadership to help them tap their potentials as dignified Catholic women?

.....

18. Is there any other information you would like to add concerning the participation of Catholic women in liberation activities?

.....

APPENDIX IV

A STUDY OF PARTICIPATION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN IN LIBERATION ACTIVITIES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO NAIROBI DEANERY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE BENEFICIARIES OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LIBERATIVE ACTIVITIES

My name is Jane N. Kabugi from the University of Nairobi. As part of my work towards a degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies, I am currently conducting a research aimed at investigating the role of Catholic women in liberational roles. To conduct this study, I will need your participation in filling the attached questionnaire. All information will be handled in confidence. This is duly done with permission from the office of the President.

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Date of birth
4. Place of birth.....
5. Area of residence
6. Educational Level.....
7. Status.....
8. Occupation.....
9. What social, religious, economic, educational or political problems did you have before you were assisted by the Catholic women?.....

10. How did they discover your problems?

.....

11. Has their assistance been of any use to you up to now? If yes, how?

.....

If no, why?

.....

12. What is your opinion on the role of Catholic women in assisting people to live in a state of freedom?

.....

13. What cooperation do you give them in order to make their work effective?

.....

14. What other forms of assistance do you give them to make their work easier?

.....

15. What difference has their assistance made in your life? In your attitude to yourself and to other people; men, women and children?

.....

16. Is there any other information you would like to add concerning the participation of Catholic women in liberation activities?

.....

APPENDIX V

ADDRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS 8TH PLENARY SESSION, THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, BEIJING, 1995.

THE DIGNITY OF THE AFRICAN WOMAN DR MARGARET OGOLA MB Ch; M.MED (Paediatrics) KENYA

Acting Chairlady, Honourable Mrs. Nyiva Mwendwa, Your Excellencies, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is an honour and a privilege for me to get this brief opportunity to address the August gathering who are here to deliberate upon a subject, which is dear to my heart — 'The empowerment of the woman'. I am a paediatrician and the director of a hospice for HIV and AIDS orphans. I am also the Vice-President of Family Life Counselling (Kenya). I am a published author of a book, "The River and the Source", which recently won the Africa Region Commonwealth First Book Award for Literature. It deals with the story of four generations of African women.

The woman is the heart of the family, and the family is the corner stone of society, therefore, it is very fitting that we should be here in Beijing for the Fourth World Women's Conference seeking new ways to enhance her well being, natural talents and gifts.

The woman is a powerhouse of creativity, development and peace. Conflict between men and women is therefore unnecessary because a woman brings an equal and powerful complementarity to the common human condition. Women have been entrusted with the capacity to transmit life which is the most precious gift that any body can give or receive. Without life no other good is possible. Motherhood should therefore be treated with the respect and seriousness it deserves.

1. Let us realise that men and women share one world. Equality must not be seen to deny anyone of their rightful due. Indeed equality would be self defeating if it were based on injustice. Injustice cannot be corrected by another injustice. I personally would lay down my life for each and every one of my children — three sons and two daughters, who are at present being ably cared for by my husband to enable me come to this conference.

2. We must not allow women's health needs to be torpedoed by other peoples agendas. All our African delegates here and our people know that our health systems have deteriorated alarmingly under the weight of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and the eternal burden of foreign debt. The priorities for the African woman and her family are therefore:

a) The strengthening of the health care systems by making them effective, affordable and accessible to all women and the African population as a whole. It would be a great injustice to talk about safe abortion in countries where drugs for common ailments are either unavailable, or where it takes a heroic feat of endurance and

determination just to get to a health facility.

b) The training of traditional mid-wives should be re-introduced and strengthened as they deliver 80% of the women in Africa.

c) Investment in the training of middle level health care providers who can reach more women at the grass-roots level.

d) Ensure the availability of cheap and safe methods of child spacing such as Natural Family Planning which has been recognised and recommended by WHO and reputable medical journals such as the British Medical Journal and lancet as having 98% effectiveness and being totally safe.

e) As a doctor, I am distressed that there seems to be conspiracy to keep women in the dark, especially the African woman, regarding the dangerous side effects of contraceptives, some of which are irreversible and life threatening. I especially abhor the experimentation and damping of untested and harmful drugs in Africa and other developing countries.

f) We must ensure the urgent provision and strengthening of quality basic and secondary education, middle level professional and vocational facilities to make education accessible and affordable to all, as education is a basic human right.

g) We need to recognise fully the irreplaceable role of parents and the family in educating and in forming children in matters of sexuality, with recognition of and with full respect for African culture and religious beliefs. While recognising that there are some undesirable aspects of our indigenous cultures, we must not abandon them wholesale in preference for imported Western values as contained in the document, which are unclear about important issues like family and gender. Each nation has a sovereign right to protect its peoples from values which may be detrimental, especially in the face of new epidemics such as AIDS.

Unless we recognise that each individual is irreplaceable and valuable by virtue of simply being conceived human, we cannot begin to talk about human rights. This includes the right to be born, as all of us have been. True justice should be for each human being, visible and invisible, young and old, disabled and able, to enjoy their right to life. The accidental attributes that we acquire such as colour, sex, intelligence, economic circumstances, physical or mental desirability should not be used as an excuse to deprive a person of life.

In ending I would like to give my accolade to the undefeatable spirit of African women which I have dealt with extensively in my book. The inspiration for this book came from my mother who handed down to me the wisdom and lives of her own mother and grandmother. This strength and support that is found in the African family is the most important part of our culture, and should be preserved and nurtured at all costs.

Thank you for your stamina in staying so late to hear what we have to say.

APPENDIX VI

Life in an Urban Slum in Nairobi

According to the 1989 census, there were about 50,000 people living in Mathare location, of them men. Mathare Valley is one of the oldest slums in Nairobi, in existence since 1939. It started as quarry where people used to come and dig stones for building houses; the quarries were owned by Indians and Europeans. Since the workers were not provided with accommodation, they built some shelters. Later on workers from other areas were attracted to the site, and in the early seventies, land buying companies and societies invaded the valley. They built single-roomed blocks of seven to ten rooms for rent, many low-income workers rented them.

They provided toilets and bathrooms for blocks of houses, and employed workers to keep the latrines clean. As for the squatters, the City Council provided latrines and bathrooms. The value of land increased however, and new landlords demolished the toilets and bathrooms to replace them with rental rooms. All residents have now to use the City Council toilets which are few and far spaced. Some of them are permanently bolted, others are overused and there is no regular cleaning. Garbage collection is non-existent and uncollected garbage heaps are common toilets for children, and at night, for adults.

Most adults begin the day with just something to warm their stomachs - coffee or tea. Adults often do not take lunch if they are working outside the area, the main meal is supper, a relatively simple meal of ugali with vegetable or beans, and perhaps a little fish and meat. The lower income groups typically pay more for the same quantity of food than those who can afford to buy in larger quantities. They buy in small quantities because they cannot afford to spend much money at any one time or one item. People walk long distances because they cannot afford to pay public transport, and do not own bicycles.

According to a small (non-representative) survey done, the proportion of single women-headed households is very high. While 90% of men were married, less than 40% of women were. The women were predominantly in the lower income groups.

As the respondents in the Participatory Assessment indicated, a number of women living in the poorest slums had to leave their rural homes because of divorce, separation or because other members of the family — the brothers and parents-in-law — chased them out. Thirty-three of the 60 migrant women interviewed said that they had left because the marriage broke (10), the husband turned violent (7), abandoned them (18) or because they were widowed (8). Another 8 said they had left because they had children outside marriage. Only 11 said that they had migrated to join their husbands (8) or look for business(3).

"My brothers chased me from home because I had two children. You know, living where people hate you is difficult. So I decided to leave. I got my room in Korogocho.

The death of my Dad led me to my not going to school when I was in the village. In the process I got my first child, which led to the second one. I wish my father did not die”.

When my husband died, my in-laws told me to get out. So I came to town and slept on the pavement. This Lady who gave me this house found me and brought me here. I am her maid and I also sell the water for her. She pays me 30 shillings a day”.

“I disagreed with my brother and was beaten for taking Dad to the hospital. I still bleed as a result of the injury I got from the beating”. (A woman who fled home and came to Nairobi).

“Both my parents used to drink and therefore neglected the children. They could not do anything worthwhile to assist us. I got married in 1982 and divorced in 1987. We divorced because my husband was an alcoholic. He started selling property to get money for alcohol. We had no shamba. When I stopped from selling things, he beat me. He chased me, and I came to Korogocho”.

As these quotes testify, the majority of women living in the poorest slums of Nairobi, Mathare Valley and Korogocho, have had to leave their rural homes because of significant stress. These women speak of an experience similar to many women in the slums.

Source: Dr. Margaret Ngau; A Survey of Mathare Valley, May 1994 and Kenya PPA Study, 1994.