



The Proposed HEKIMA UNIVERSITY MOLO MARATHON



Post-Marathon Magazine

*This issue covers highlights
of the marathon and the
Jesuits involved.*



KIIPROP KIMUTAI



Running to Build Others

Before dawn, Molo was already stirring. At 4:00 a.m., runners, organisers and volunteers gathered for breakfast, ready for a day of endurance, community and purpose at the Proposed Hekima University Molo Marathon.

The event brought together athletes and enthusiasts for the 21KM Elite and Fun Run, 10KM Run, 5KM Corporate Run and 5KM Community Run. Among them were Jesuit priests and scholastics.

The theme, “*Run to Build Others*,” captured the heart of the day. It was not simply about finishing first, but about giving one's best for a purpose greater than oneself.

Every runner had a story and every kilometer carried meaning for them. In the spirit of Magis and of being people for and with others, Molo became a celebration of resilience, generosity and community. The winners rightly earned their applause, and everyone who showed up and ran became part of something worth building.





*All the winners of 21km
receiving their awards*





Word from the Proposed Vice-Chancellor.

We thank God for the graces to successfully launch our inaugural Hekima Molo Marathon. We achieved our goals: raising the visibility of Proposed Hekima University, demonstrating to prospective donors our true commitment to establishing the main campus in Molo, and engaging the local community in owning this university. I am deeply grateful to the organizers, sponsors, security agencies, runners, and Athletics Kenya who have journeyed with us over the past four months. This marathon will now become an annual event. To everyone who took part in any capacity, thank you. Together, we are building Hekima University.

Dr. Elias Mokua, SJ

JESUITS IN ATHLETICS

The God of Gifts

On August 8, 2026, the piercing bite of the Molo air—thin, crisp, and hovering nearly 2,700 meters above sea level—set the stage for an extraordinary trial of grit. As the starting gun echoed across the highlands, hundreds of us surged forward into the Molo Marathon, immediately confronting steep, punishing hills and the suffocating reality of high-altitude running. Every breath felt earned, demanding absolute mental fortitude and raw physical stamina. Yet, the brutal terrain was no match for the electric energy lining the route. Cheering crowds roared along the streets, and tireless volunteers at hydration stations handed out water with infectious enthusiasm, transforming an exhausting ascent into an exhilarating community celebration. Bathed in a sea of my own sweat and pushing past deep exhaustion, I found an extra gear powered entirely by the crowd's unrelenting spirit.

Beyond the grueling physical test, what made the experience unforgettable was the profound, shared purpose pulsing through the event. Every stride was fueled by a collective mission to foster peace and empower youth education across Nakuru County. Sprinting down the final stretch and crossing that finish line delivered an overwhelming rush of accomplishment—a feeling far deeper than mere athletic endurance. This race will remain forever etched in my heart. It wasn't about placing among the elite; it was about conquering my very first half-marathon, braving the elements, and wearing that finisher's medal with unyielding pride. It was, in every sense, a true gift.



Jesuits in formation posing for a photo after their hard earned medals



Fred Osewe, SJ





Wainaina, SJ and Fred, SJ shortly after completing their 21km



Jesuits and other athletes at the start of the 10 km race



NEXT YEAR I WILL BE THERE

FR. CHRIS MAPUNDA, SJ

I have participated in many marathons such as the Arrupe Jesuit University Marathon in Harare, Zimbabwe, etc., but the Molo Marathon 2026 was unique. The atmosphere, terrain, high altitude, and the presence of elite runners added new experiential value to it. As an amateur runner and part of the PHU organizing team, I was overwhelmed with joy and teachable moments of encounter. The PHU Molo marathon drew people from all walks of life: elite and amateur runners, the business community, villagers, religious men and women, government officials, etc.

I can contextualize my experience of the PHU Molo Marathon in the book of Numbers 13:33, when the Israelite spies were sent to explore the land of Canaan. When they returned to give the report to the rest of the community. They said, “We saw the inhabitants as powerful giants and viewed ourselves as grasshoppers.” That is how I felt in the presence of the elite runners who had traveled from Nairobi, Japan, USA, Keringet, etc., to compete. In many ways, the elite runners were really giants as I saw them warming up.

When the whistle was blown for the runners to assemble at the start line, I positioned myself in front of the elite runners ready for a good start. Some of my fellow amateurs were happy to see me on the start line; jokingly, one of them said: “Now I know that I will not be the last because I can at least beat one person.”

Our official marathon category was 10 Km that was scheduled to start at 8:00 am. As soon as the starter's gun was fired, I saw nothing but dust; all the elite passed me like the wind, and I never saw them again until on the stage when they were receiving their awards. However, I was not an easy competitor either; I beat so many fellow amateurs, including the one who was determined to beat me, haha!

Running is such a painful exercise that needs endurance, residence and determination; several times I felt like giving up but I was consoling myself with the words of St. Paul “... so run that you may win (Cor 9:24); press on toward the goal for the prize (Phil 3:14).” I was equally encouraged by the local population who were on the roads cheering us up. Though I am still recovering from the fatigue, next year I will be there with more determination to win, haha.



A DREAM COME TRUE

FR. ALEXANDER WAINAINA, SJ

The idea of the PHU Molo Marathon came to me as one of the best pieces of news for the year 2026. I am always fascinated by any adventure that benefits someone else in a constructive way, especially in promoting health or education for the welfare of those who need these gifts most. Having run the 42-km Boston Marathon in 2014, and the 21-km Beyond Zero Half-Marathon in March 2019, both for charity, I continue to feel the inspiration to run marathons repeatedly. The PHU Marathon came in a very timely manner as God's gift for 2026. The high altitude and the multiple hills to climb or descend make the Molo Marathon much more difficult than my previous experiences, but those features also make it more memorable.

I was happy to spend many hours in training for the marathon because that gave me very personal health benefits, as I worked on fitness and endurance. The race day itself was for me a climax, to celebrate personal health, to fulfil a personal goal of charity, to participate in realising the dream of PHU, and to practically "run to build others." I was very much inspired by the passion of the runners, organisers, sponsors, service providers and the cheering squads. That revealed to me that the PHU is actually God's project, supported by His grace. It was a chance for everyone to be part of history, which will be quoted for many generations, having all participated in the inaugural Hekima Molo Marathon. The big number of Jesuits present and participating in the Marathon reflected the seriousness with which the AOR Province is determined to see the University running.

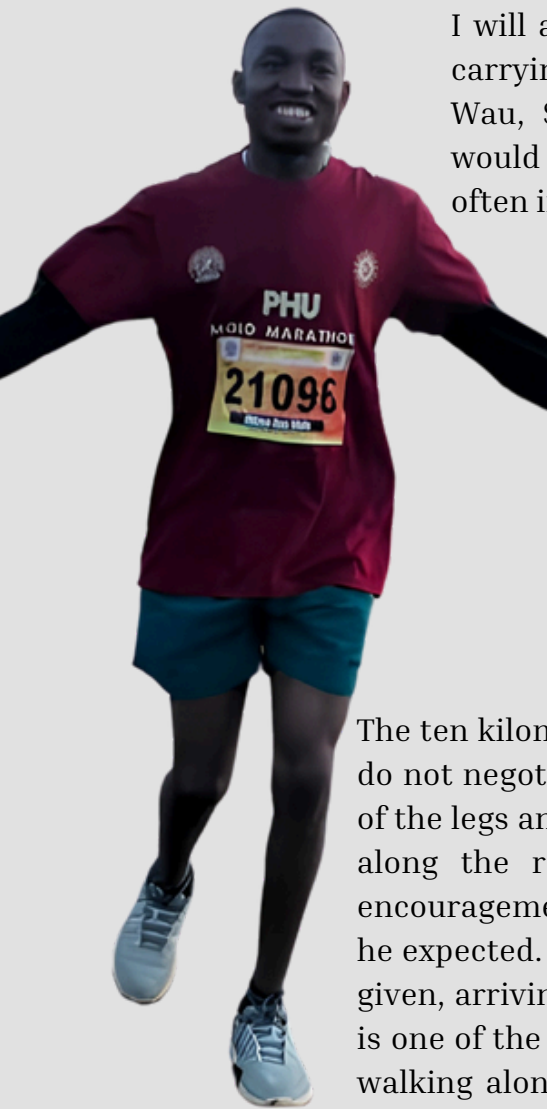
The weather prediction had indicated that there would be a very cold and rain morning. However, God gave us the kind of weather that we could only have dreamt of, marked by bright sun on a cool morning. The faces and actions of the people reflected the warmth in their hearts, a foretaste of the days ahead, when Molo, Kenya and the whole world, will be warmed by the academic environment that PHU will eventually provide. The saint of the day (August 8), St. Dominic, must have been praying for us so that we could enjoy God's favour, as we shared our blessings with others. As I look forward to the next edition of Molo Marathon, I pray that the Lord God will help us to keep the fire burning, just as St. Ignatius told the early Jesuits to "go and set the world on fire." It is our turn to start the academic fire at Molo, and keep the torch burning, long into the future.

May we continue to run and build the PHU for the Greater Glory of God. Amen.



RUNNING TOWARD GRACE

Yohana Charles, SJ



I will admit it plainly: I went to Molo without a single day of training, carrying only the confidence of a man who once ran 21 kilometers in Wau, South Sudan, and finished twentieth. I thought that memory would be enough. I was wrong, and I am grateful for it, because it is often in our unpreparedness that we discover what truly carries us.

Molo greeted me with a cold I did not expect and hills I had not imagined. We gathered before dawn, the air biting through every layer I wore, and as I stood among Kenya's finest runner's men and women who had come from as far as the United States and Japan, I felt a quiet nervousness settle in my chest. Who was I, untrained and unhurried in my preparation, to stand at the same starting line as athletes of that Caliber? And yet, is this not so often how God calls us not when we feel ready, but when we are willing to show up anyway?

The ten kilometers ahead of me were a lesson in themselves. The hills of Molo do not negotiate; they simply rise, one after another, and demand everything of the legs and the will alike. There were moments I doubted I could finish. But along the road stood the people of Molo clapping, shouting words of encouragement, offering their energy to a stranger who needed it more than he expected. In their voices I heard something close to grace: unearned, freely given, arriving exactly when I needed it most. I have come to believe that this is one of the truest forms of companionship the kind Ignatius himself sought, walking alongside others not for the reward, but because the road is easier borne together.

What humbled me most, though, was not the elite athletes or the unforgiving hills. It was an old woman, running the full 21 kilometers with a courage that put my own hesitations to shame. I remember thinking: if she can carry herself that distance at her age, what excuse do I have for struggling with half of it? That thought stayed with me long after I crossed the finish line a quiet examen on the road, asking me to look honestly at my own limits and my own courage, and to find them wanting in comparison, yet still worth offering.

I finished the race tired, humbled, and strangely full. The organization was excellent, the security thoughtful, and every hand that helped stage the event did so with a care that did not go unnoticed. But what I carry home from Molo is not the finishing time or the placement it is the reminder that we are rarely as alone as we feel on the hardest stretches of the road, that encouragement from strangers can be its own kind of grace, and that courage, like the courage of that old woman, often comes from the people we least expect to teach us. I left Molo with more questions than answers, and for a Jesuit, that is perhaps the most honest place a journey can end.



A JOURNEY OF COURAGE, PURPOSE AND SELF-DISCOVERY

My journey from Nairobi to Molo for the Proposed Hekima University Marathon, was one of those trips where the journey itself became part of the fun. My companions and I spent most of the time talking, joking, teasing each other, and bringing up stories that probably should have remained forgotten. At some point, we started singing, and honestly, we sounded more like a group trying to survive a music competition than actual singers. Still, nobody cared about the quality of our voices. We were just enjoying ourselves. There was plenty of laughter, random conversations, and funny moments along the way, which made the long journey feel much shorter. By the time we reached Molo, I realized that the best part of the trip was not just getting there, but the laughter and memories we created on the way. I took part in the 10 km race, and before the race I was both excited and curious about how I would perform. When I arrived, I was impressed by the number of people who had come to take part and support the event. The atmosphere was lively, and seeing different kinds of runners, especially the elite athletes, made the experience even more interesting for me. I felt privileged to be running on the same course with people who have reached such a high level in athletics. It also motivated me to take the race seriously and give my best.

During the 10 km run, I was mainly focused on pushing myself and seeing how far I could go. It was not always easy, especially as the distance increased, but I kept telling myself not to give up and to keep moving. Running alongside elite runners was a special experience because it showed me the level of discipline and determination needed to become better. What I took from the marathon is that you do not always have to compete with other people; sometimes the biggest competition is with yourself. For me, finishing the 10 km was about knowing that I had pushed myself and given my best. I left the marathon with a medal, feeling proud, grateful for the experience, and motivated to continue working on myself and becoming the best, I can be.



Collins Morara, SJ



BEYOND THE FINISH LINE

After a period of rest and recovery from the demanding school schedule, the excitement of participating in the PHU Molo Half Marathon kicked in. Truthfully, there was no training plan for the race. Lacking such prior preparation made me question whether or not I should participate in the race. After listening to my body, I felt fine to join the race. I had three days to warm up the body, ensuring that it was prepared to endure one of the high-altitude courses of the race. Considering that there are no miracles in beating one's personal best without a training plan, I set my goal to finish the race between 100 and 110 minutes. The journey to Molo took around five hours. Upon arrival, looking at the queue of runners picking up their bib numbers, what came to mind was that tomorrow would be a memorable day.

On race day, early in the morning, all runners were to board the designated vehicles to be dropped off at the starting points for the different categories. On the way, I had some chats with elite runners, and judging by the way we saw the course, we all felt that it was going to be a very tough race. During the warm-up session, my eyes were scanning around, identifying potential competitors. I said to myself, "Baba, you shall reap what you have sown." Getting to the starting line, I was at the back of the crew of male runners, around 88 of them, waiting for the signal to kick off.

Lo and behold, when the signal was given, I felt a strong push from my left and right sides. Looking ahead, I couldn't believe my eyes. There was a substantial gap between me and the big crew, with the runners moving as fast as rockets taking off from their launch sites. At the time, I was moving at a pace of 4:05/km, which I was sure I would not be able to maintain for the next 20 km on such a hilly route. I had to slow down a bit and continue moving forward. I finished the race in 99 minutes, some seconds ahead of my target. The PHU Molo Marathon opened my eyes to the reality of running. It reminded me to stay focused, control myself in the face of surrounding pressure, pay attention to what the body communicates, and never lose hope in fulfilling my goal despite the pain and challenges faced.

A moment that stood out to me was the support I received from the crowd along the race route. Most of them, especially the kids, encouraged me to keep pushing after I had completely slowed down in some of the hilly sections of the route. I recall words such as, "Ng'ang'ana, you are almost done."

I was surprised to encounter athletes, both male and female, who ran at a very fast pace. Experience is the best teacher, so I hope to grow from this experience and become an ambassador for smart exercise training, as well as a promoter of running for a purpose and being part of the solution in life.



Pius Kapeta, SJ



EVERY STEP COUNTS

Hundreds of us gathered in Molo to run and raise awareness for the Proposed Hekima University. I began the race with such electric energy that I briefly found myself running alongside the elite athletes. As the kilometers mounted, however, my muscles began to complain. At one point, I was surprised to find an ambulance trailing slowly beside me, waiting to see if I would give up. But my background in Shotokan Karate taught me perseverance, so I chose to keep moving.

Along the way, I heard voices calling out from the sidelines. Some were skeptical—"Aaah, hata huyu anataka kushinda?" and "Hmm, watu wengine hapa ni wa mshahara tu"—while others offered genuine encouragement: "Kazana, kazana!" These echoes left me with mixed feelings, but ultimately, an overwhelming sense of joy prevailed.

I realized that a marathon unites people with a single aim: reaching the finish line. It is good to start, but what truly matters is finishing, even if you have to take it mdogo mdogo.

Yes, I crossed that finish line. I completed the 10km race and placed in the top 156, leaving many others behind. In doing so, I broke my own personal record, an achievement made even sweeter by Molo's challenging high-altitude conditions. I couldn't tell you my exact time, but what I do know is this: I finished what I started, and I have a medal to prove it.

It was incredibly fulfilling to see so many people show up and actively participate to champion the Proposed Hekima University. In the end, every single step counts.

**AVITUS
KABENDERA, SJ**

PHU Molo Marathon





WE ARE GRATEFUL

THANK YOU FOR RUNNING WITH US



*We thank our collaborators,
partners and sponsors, for
their generosity. May the
Lord bless you.*

Run to build others

