

Loyola Secondary School Shines; By Fr. Martin Waweru, SJ



**Head of Schools Await the Announcement of the 2017-18 Form Four Exam Results
Loyola Sec School scoops the 1st Position**

It's the afternoon of Monday, August 27, 2018 and students are slowly swarming at the school's notice board after spending the morning part of the day in the compound of the Ministry of Education where we had gathered to receive the form four 2017-18 national exam results. Seemingly, the anxiety that has been there for several weeks and months has evidently faded into jubilation and excitement. Once again, the figures of the 2017-2018 exam results show yet another

outstanding performance by Loyola Secondary School, Wau (LSS). Our students have achieved an incredible 100% pass rate and the school topped other secondary schools in Wau State. Students are in tears of joy, others shouting and making ululations, while some jump high "leaping like calves from the stall." Momentarily, some boys have gathered behind me and without my knowledge I find myself being lifted up and thrown into the air as if I were that light. I am begging to be let free but the strong boys won't listen! There are shouts of celebration all over!

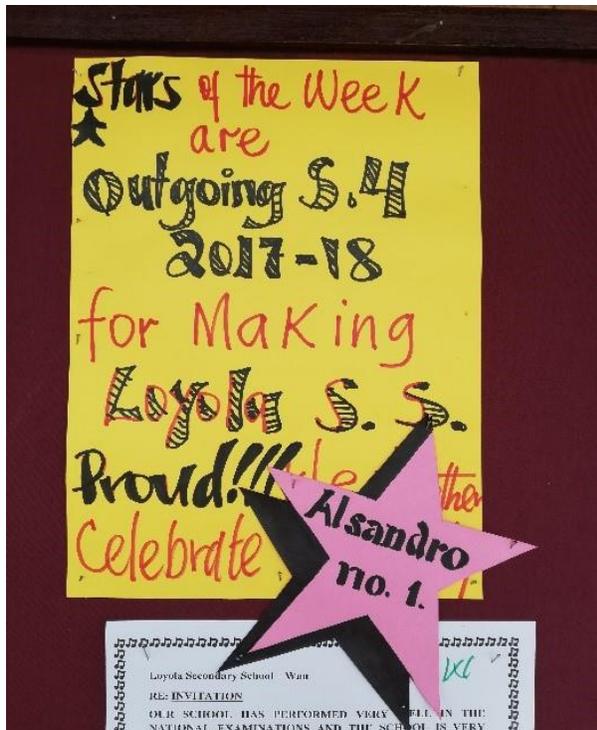


Then I encounter one nice and decent improved kid whose performance has left many people dumbfounded. Nelson is one lovely young man, transformed from being a truant—the

reason behind being nicknamed “a business man” by his fellow students—to an active, responsible, optimistic young man. Nelson was a student who, previously and on many occasions, narrowly escaped being expelled. Surprisingly, he has beaten the odds; he is third overall in the school with a deservedly and timely average grade of 81.4% (A) and second in Christian Religious Education (CRE) scoring 94% (A+). Talking to him about his achievement gave me an impression of a Loyola alumnus (a matured South Sudanese citizen, for that matter) who has not only achieved academic success but one who is undeniably rooted into the indispensable centrality of faith that is key to Jesuit schools, and in particular here at LSS. This has been our desire: to build students in the true Ignatian way. His achievements and those of his colleagues probably give a better purview of the 2017-18 LSS results: English Language 70.3%, CRE 82.6%, Maths 84.8%, Physics 67%, Chemistry 67.7%, Biology 89.5%, Agriculture 70.1%, Additional Maths 73.8%, Geography 68.2%, History 74.3%, Commerce 79.6%, and English Literature 67.6%. Mathematics is the most improved subject followed by CRE.

When I asked how he felt about his outstanding performance, he spread his hands straight, and got the finger tips interlaced softly together and then his face lit up with a grin of confidence. He answered in a manner that proved that he had, without a doubt, assimilated the values of being in a Jesuit school in the midst of complex socio-political conflicts and struggles connected with them.

“I thank God for my results” he said. “I have no word. I cannot believe that this is me. Even though I come from a very humble family and live in a devastated country, where there isn’t too much hope, I have to thank Loyola because it is here that I have learnt that given the opportunity one can do very well. I worked hard even days before and during the exams. I used to wake up early, do other things before going to school. Then my father died just some weeks before starting the examination. But I could not stop working hard. I did this over and over again and I also prayed a lot. In doing these things I learned one thing: that I should always do good and never grow weary of doing good.”



That last phrase drew my attention. It sounded familiar to St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Paul writes, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).

The performance of students this year is the outcome of a continuous struggle, hopeful resilience, and faith in God’s love. These are students who have recently (2016-17) watched their fathers and brothers being killed in cold blood, their sisters and mothers raped at gun point; but instead of losing hope, they stood up strong to face the many risks and challenges. Without ever wavering, they attended classes not far away from the zone of metal and gunpowder.

LSS stands on a hill and from every side of its slopes one sees abandoned houses, a vivid testimony of desperate moments through which the students have gone for a very long period of crisis and struggle. Nevertheless, within such a situation, LSS continues to excel. The students

come in and go, as noted by Noelle Fitzpatrick in the last news update: a “white ribbon of peace and hope.” They have, with lots of courage, fought the battle against all odds and desperation. Our outstanding class of 2017-18 comprises of students who stayed behind and braved the harsh reality of accessing the school on less-walked footpaths and between-and-through abandoned homes.

They have had the opportunity to grow and develop within the vision of a proud Jesuit school in the harshest of frontiers. There is no doubt that they are now matured and grown into well respected, confident and delightful young men and women ready to face even more challenges of a young South Sudan and the world at large.

Undeniably, the students of LSS have worked incredibly hard and we are very proud of their achievements. I want to thank all those who have contributed to their outstanding achievement. I express my congratulatory remarks to the 2017-18 class of form four students for making LSS proud once again. My gratitude and thanks go to all the teachers with whom they toiled to get the best outcome (with special appreciation to their Mathematics teacher, Sch. Thomas Machuki, SJ), parents, benefactors and all those others who work in partnership with LSS, as well as the companions of the Eastern Africa Province of the Society of Jesus. With these successes, we all deserve a round of applause. As we engage in the mission and vision of *No One Left Behind*, as well as keeping to the motto of the school, "Light to the Nations," the administration of LSS continues to plead for your esteemed support and prayers.