

BY MATHIAS MAZINGA

A decade ago, Pope Francis issued a letter *Laudato Si* (Latin for praise be to you), in which he invoked all people, irrespective of their religious, political or ideological inclination, to commit to conserving the environment.

The Pontiff highlighted the interconnectedness of environmental and social issues and the urgent need to address climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

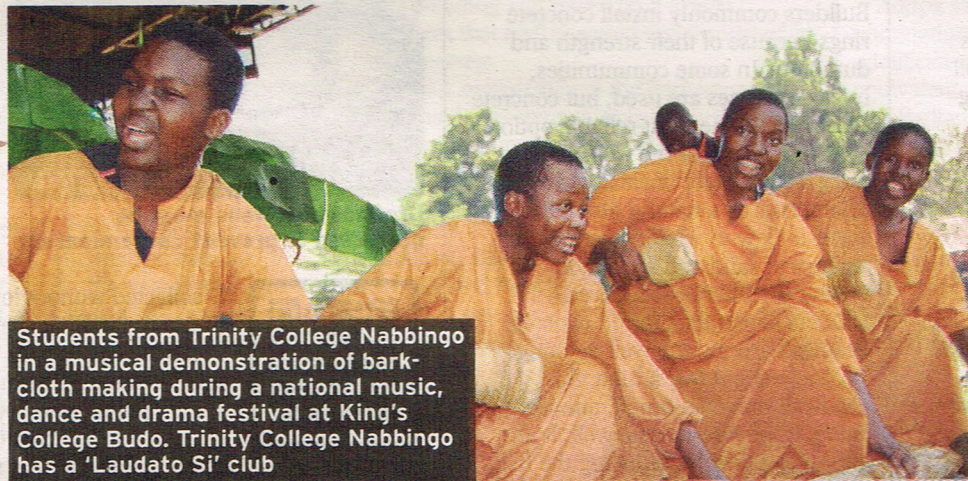
He criticised technocrats who elevate technology over ecology before calling for sustainable development, and a more integrated approach to human and environmental well-being.

Impact of Pope's 'Laudato Si' letter on Uganda

It is now 10 years since Pope Francis issued *Laudato Si*. But has this globally acknowledged pastoral letter made any impact on Ugandans and their sensitivity to climate change?

Apparently, yes. Today, if you attend a Catholic Mass or conference, it is unlikely that you will go back without hearing the homilist or conference speaker alluding to Pope Francis' environmental conservation ideas in *Laudato Si*.

The Church has also taken action to address the climate change issues that the late Pope Francis issued in the letter. For example, many Catholic-oriented schools



Students from Trinity College Nabbingo in a musical demonstration of bark-cloth making during a national music, dance and drama festival at King's College Budo. Trinity College Nabbingo has a 'Laudato Si' club

and other institutions have established *Laudato Si* clubs.

Through these clubs, the students come up with

strategic advocacy and practical initiatives and innovations for ecological conservation.

The clubs are active in schools such as Trinity College Nabbingo, Our Lady of Good Counsel Senior

Secondary School Gayaza, Holy Cross Lake View Senior Secondary School Jinja, St Mary's College Kisubi and Uganda Martyrs High School Lubaga.

More so, the education department of Kampala Archdiocese has, over the past two years, dedicated the annual diocesan education week to environmental conservation awareness.

Early this year, the Catholic Archdiocese of Kampala, together with a number of its partners, celebrated 10 years of *Laudato Si* at Uganda Martyrs Catholic Shrine Munyonyo, in Makindye Division. The function was presided over by the Archbishop of Kampala, Paul Ssemogerere.