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Sr. Teena Menomparampil works in early May with young girls from pastoralist families who are hoping to become nuns. She has mentored and inspired many girls in northern Kenya to join a Catholic sisterhood. (GSR photo/Doreen Ajiambo)



by Doreen Ajiambo

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In this remote village of eastern Kenya, a Catholic church teems with the youthful exuberance of young girls from pastoralist families who are hoping to become nuns. They sing songs of worship and pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

"I'm always dreaming about becoming a Catholic nun," said 17-year-old Lorna Karwitha from Lodosoit, a village in northern Kenya. "I want to serve vulnerable people the rest of my life. I pray to God to give me strength so that I can avoid negative influence."

Karwitha is among the more than 200 semi-nomadic girls from the ethnic Samburu and Meru communities in northern Kenya who are being inspired by Sr. Teena Menomparampil, a member of the Franciscan Clarist Congregation, to become nuns.

[In 2017, GSR featured Roseline Lenguris, the first and only [Catholic sister in the Samburu community](#) at the time, as she returned to visit her village 13 years after joining the Sisters of Mary Immaculate.]

Growing up in India, Menomparampil has rescued hundreds of young village girls from the cultural realities of early marriage, female genital mutilation, child trafficking and child labor that plague so many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. These girls are taken to Saint Francis Children's Home in Meru where they receive care and education. The sister began this mission 13 years ago and the first girls she rescued are sitting for their high school national exams this year. They will now be able to join a sisterhood after high school.

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