

Uganda Revisited

Our second visit to our Sister Parish Blessed Trinity, Nalweyo, West Uganda took place from July 16th to July 29th. Nineteen of us made the journey, 13 from Ocala, one from Daytona, one from Orlando, one from Miami and three from Dublin, Ireland.

The members of the group were, including me, Helen Deines, Carole Hanegan, Sr. Juliet Nakalema, Stephen Coddington, Kelly Roberts, Joyce Lemek, Thomas M. Hilton, Christine Hildner, Eva Pelski, Paul Franck, Jane Jones, Janet Koch, James Casey, Celeste Reckamp, Luz Euribe, Aoita O'Connor, Clare Keenan and Barney Sheedy, plus Jack and Barbara Spencer (already there).

Our dreams and expectations were more than realized. Once again the hospitality and welcome bestowed upon us by Bishop Deogratias, Bishop of Hoima Diocese, government officials, Fr. Joachim, Pastor of Blessed Trinity Nalweyo, Fr. Peter, Pastor of the mother parish, Our Lady of the Rosary in Kakindo, and the thousands of people, men and women and countless children especially from Blessed Trinity area, was delightful, inspiring and most entertaining.

This issue of the Triangle is dedicated to some of the events and planning that took place during our visit. I want to refer to just a few events and impressions that I have come away with.

I thank God from the bottom of my heart that Blessed Trinity Ocala adopted Blessed Trinity Nalweyo four years ago. I wish every single one of you could get a glimpse or a taste of the mighty work for God being carried out in Nalweyo because of your ongoing support and prayers. There is no doubt in my mind that it is all Spirit led.

This time around I had the added privilege of having morning prayer at 6 AM and Mass with the nine Cistercian Sisters who run the retreat mission where we stayed. It was like a little piece of heaven invaded the Chapel each morning. Their voices were angelic. What a way to start each day.

Most evenings Bishop Deogratias dropped by for a private visit with me and an update of the events of that day. He is most supportive. We all enjoyed joining him for the formal blessing of St. Nicholas Center – the Diocesan gathering place for all kinds of events. It was completed last year under the direction of Jack Spencer with money from Blessed Trinity Ocala (approximately \$40,000.00).

Bishop Deogratias had me preach (in English) in the Cathedral at his two Sunday morning Masses on the topic of Stewardship. I have no idea if I was understood by many but the teachers present (there were over 1,000 students at the 7 AM Mass) requested a copy of the Homily so they could break it down and teach it in their schools.

We had only one real long Mass – over four hours – on the occasion of the blessing of the new convent, the new priests' house and the eight classrooms – all built since our last visit. Of course the Mass was prolonged by at least one hour for the Baptism of 48 babies they had me do. I was informed of the 48 Baptisms just before the Gospel was proclaimed. Fr. Joachim tells me they

have an average of over 1,000 Baptisms each month over the past seven months. Yes-the Church and facilities will be well used.

I had very fruitful private discussions with 1) their Pastor, Fr. Joachim regarding present and future plans for the parish. 2) With Mother Lawrence, Superior of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix, who will be sending three nuns to Nalweyo in January. We went over the details for a contract about to be set up between the Sisters and the Diocese of Hoima – a contract that will be agreed to by both Pastors of Blessed Trinity Nalweyo and Blessed Trinity Ocala. 3) With Jack and Barbara Spencer whose work each year for six months is a pearl beyond price. If they were not there we would have to immediately search for a suitable replacement if the work is to go on smoothly (yes, Jack, I said smoothly) and efficiently as it does at present.

We all had a safe, healthy and enjoyable mission. We had many, many talents possessed and used by the various members of our group. Some of those talents will be evident in the reports that the different members supplied for this issue of the Triangle.

I want to thank each member of the group for making the decision, for taking the time, for spending the money, and for all the hard work they put into this mission trip. In spite of few mad rushes to make the flight at two airports and the countless miles of bumpy bus trips it was really worth it all.

I especially thank the people of Blessed Trinity Parish Ocala for your missionary spirit and support of the Kingdom of God beyond our own Parish boundaries. You are in my prayers.

In Christ,

Rev. Patrick J. Sheedy
Pastor