

NEWS FROM SACRED HEART SEMINARY ARCHDIOCESE OF GULU, UGANDA

Volume 1 No. 17 December 2005

FROM THE DESK OF MSGR. MATTHEW ODONG

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Peace and God's blessings to you always. The staff, students and the entire community of Sacred Heart Seminary join me in sending our cordial greetings and prayerful wishes to you and your dear ones.

It is incredible to believe that the year 2005 is soon ending. We trust that many blessings came your way this year and that God will generously open for you the door to 2006. This year has contained so many events of everlasting memories: the continued support and generosity of our friends for which we thank you; the death of our beloved Pope John Paul II and the election of his successor Pope Benedict XVI; continued conflict in different parts of the world and the pain it has inflicted on innocent lives; hurricane Katrina in New Orleans; the earthquake in Pakistan and India; the unending Northern Uganda conflict that has claimed thousands of lives and displaced 1.6 million, just to mention a few. We in Northern Uganda wish to express our sentiments of solidarity with all the victims of 2005's catastrophes across the globe. Have courage and never lose hope. Life must continue in spite of all the challenges we encounter in this world.

Some Western Diplomats have said that the war in Northern Uganda is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. We share in the experience of many in areas of conflict. We know what it means to live with little food, clean water to drink, medical care, shelter, transportation and other essentials for sustaining life. We understand the pain experienced as a result of the loss of dear ones.

Recently three Seminarians accompanied me on a visit to a refugee camp just outside the entrance to the Seminary. We stopped to visit a widow with six children who told us her husband was killed in early 2003 by the rebels. She and her six children live in a small grass thatched hut. I was moved to tears at the site of one of the malnourished children, a girl, age 5. In addition to malnutrition, this girl had malaria and hookworms in her stomach. Her mother had no money to buy medication let alone take her to the hospital. We rushed back to the Seminary to bring a vehicle to take the child and her mother to the hospital. On arrival at the hospital the Doctor on duty promptly examined her and began treatment. Her temperature was so high she was near going into convulsions. The girl was admitted and I paid for her care. Thank God, the Doctor saved her life. It makes me wonder how many children have died and continue to lose their precious lives due to similar situations in the refugee camps. A generation of our people less than 20 years of age have never seen peace. They were born during the conflict. In any situation of conflict the most vulnerable are children and women. Remember them in your prayers.

HOPE FOR PEACE

Peace is number one on the list of things the people of Northern Uganda hope for. Apart from a recent attack on one of the roads where 3 people (including a British citizen) were killed, the situation has improved in the last six months, giving high hope for peace to the people.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) based in The Hague, Netherlands recently issued arrest warrants for the four top LRA leaders to have them arrested, tried and prosecuted for the crimes they have committed in the last 20 years. We do not know how the ICC plans to capture the leaders. The Ugandan Government has been unable to end the conflict for 20 years. Many people feel the government has lacked the political will to end the conflict. There is concern about the effectiveness of the ICC. If they don't act quickly it is feared the rebels could resume their

brutal activities against the population. The people feel too much talking has been done with little action taken to end the conflict.

ORDAINED SEMINARIANS

Along with the challenges caused by the conflict, there is also some good news about the growth of faith and vocations to the priesthood at Sacred Heart Seminary. On July 31, 2005 the following four seminarians were ordained Deacons: Christopher Komakech, Venansio Okidi, Santo Onen and William Ochora. The date for their ordination to the priesthood will be sometime in July/August 2006. We are hoping that six more seminarians will be ordained Deacons around the same time. They are Martin Agwee, Anthony Nyeko, Paul Peter Rom Abim, Norbert Ocaya, Thaddeus Opio and Otim Patrick Lakwera. Your prayers and support have been instrumental in their progress toward the altar of the Lord. Thank you. Please continue to pray for our seminarians including the 11 abducted by the rebels on May 11, 2003 who are still missing.

The four to be ordained priests will need transportation for their pastoral ministry. The most economic form of transportation is a motorcycle that has a cost of about \$4,500 per unit. I appeal to your usual generosity.

GRATITUDE AND APPEAL

Once again we express our sincere gratitude to each of you for all your support over the years to the Archdiocese of Gulu, particularly your support towards the education of our future priests. May heaven bless and reward your good will, your generous heart and love for sharing your blessings with the Church in need. We continue to look to your generous support to help us give hope to our people:

- * Construction of Archbishop Flynn Secondary School
- * Renovation work at Sacred Heart Seminary
- * Regular operating expenses of the Seminary
- * Support to needy families
- * Needs of the parishes
- * Tuition fees for needy children
- * Mass intentions for our priests

Again, thank you wholeheartedly for your prayers, love and care. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Your friend,



Monsignor Matthew Odong Rector



Monsignor Matthew with Archbishop Flynn and Dan & Bobbi Vaughan.

BRIEF HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN UGANDA

The missionaries along side the British colonial government introduced formal education into Uganda. The first schools opened in the southern parts of Uganda by the Mill Hill Fathers, the White Fathers, the Church Missionary Society and others in the 1890's and the 1900's. Due to difficulty in colonizing all of Uganda, especially northern and eastern Uganda, formal education was slow to reach these parts of the country. It could be argued by historians that the British after occupying the territories around the source of the Nile, which was their long time interest; they were less interested in the northern part of the country. The northern and eastern parts were considered less socially organized under chiefdoms, compared to the southern and western parts of the country organized under kingship, and were therefore generally considered more difficult to govern.

By 1905 the sphere of the British Protectorate in Uganda had touched as far north as Gulu and some parts of West Nile. At this time the Comboni Missionaries, commonly known as the Verona Fathers, had already begun to make evangelization inroads into northern Uganda via Sudan. The Comboni's first settled in Gulu then later in the West Nile district. The coming of the Comboni's opened the first door to formal education in the North. They vigorously began to educate young men and women to become literate and self-sustainable citizens of Uganda, but above all dedicated Christians and followers of Christ. The Comboni's just as many other groups of evangelists in Africa were right to see that evangelization without incorporation of western formal education was not meaningful. The eradication of illiteracy, poverty and disease were seen to be linked with the Divine agenda of saving souls. Consequently, schools and seminaries including hospitals sprang up to support the efforts of evangelization. It can therefore be stated that without the missionary intervention into the northern parts of Uganda, the state of education in the north would be appalling. It can still be argued that the poor social infrastructure existing today in the northern parts of Uganda is a consequence of the neglect a century ago by the first British colonial authorities. It's therefore obvious that the missionaries have been the cornerstone of both the colonial and the different post-independent governments in supporting education in Uganda.

The Uganda Ministry of Education launched the Universal Primary Education program (UPE) in 1997, initially offering free education for four children per family, of whom 2 were required to be girls. During the first year, enrolment nationally rose from 2.9 million to 5.3 million, and the average class size grew from 40 to 110 children per classroom. By 2002 the UPE requirement covered all the children of school going age taking the national enrollment to near 7 million. No provision was made for secondary education (junior high & high school). The challenge for Uganda is now to provide the infrastructure as well as the resources to cater for UPE graduates who have entered secondary education after 2004. For this reason, the Government of Uganda has made urgent calls to the private sector, the Civil Society Organizations such as the NGO's, church organizations, etc to pull resources and assist it overcome the eminent and existing massive enrollment problem at secondary level. It is within this perspective that the Archbishop Flynn Secondary School will be highly welcomed by the Christians and civil communities in Pader district where there is no secondary school.

Armed rebellion has gravely affected most educational infrastructure in the northern part of Uganda. The conflict has stagnated most development programs in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader. Consequently, the districts can raise no taxes to support reconstruction of vandalized and dilapidated school buildings. Whereas the enrollment has risen, the number of schools have remained the same or reduced. Indeed education is the only way to revive and reconstruct the economy and to repair the lives of the people of northern Uganda affected by the 19-year-old armed conflict. On the background of economic retardation, any development in the north especially through education will be welcome.

CONSTRUCTION OF ARCHBISHOP FLYNN SECONDARY SCHOOL

It has long been Monsignor Matthew's dream to build this school. In 2003 it became apparent this dream could become a reality. He decided he would like to build this school as something memorable to his American friends in Minnesota and particularly to Archbishop Harry Flynn who has

been very supportive of his work for many years. On September 28, 2003, at a reception held by the Truax's at their home, Monsignor Matthew and Archbishop Odama asked Archbishop Flynn if he would consent to having the school named for him. He said he would be honored.

Monsignor Matthew purchased a 7-acre plot of ground just outside the township of Pader two years ago to be the site of the school. In February of this year a well was drilled on the property. Thanks to his American friends his dream is coming true.

DESIGN CONCEPT FOR THE SCHOOL

Population

The school is planned to have a maximum of 1,000 people, of which 720 is the maximum number of students, the rest is comprised of the staff and their families.



Drilling a well at Archbishop Flynn Secondary School, Feb. 2005

Purpose of school

The school is intended to be a boarding secondary school with both Ordinary Level-from senior one to four (age group 13-16 years) and Advanced Level-from senior five to six (age group 17-19 years). The school is expected to teach all the science subjects in accordance with the Ministry of Education's ordinance on the promotion of science and technology.

Enrolment in the school

Each class shall have 120 students in each grade level, with each classroom holding 40 students. Each pupil shall be seated on a detachable single reading desk with lockable drawers.



Mass with Knights of Columbus in Delano.

Teachers & Support staff

The staff accommodation shall be within the precinct of the school. The distance teachers are required to travel in order to enter the place of work and return to their homes is expected to be less than 500m (1/4 mile).

CONSTRUCTION PHASES

The school will be built in phases as the school enrolment increases and funding is available. The essential components of the school will be constructed first.

First stage-2006/2007

Classrooms

6 classrooms are planned. Each classroom is 7 by 9m (21'x 27')

Assembly Hall

An assembly hall with a capacity of 800 students will be constructed. At the first phase the assembly hall will serve several functions such as dining hall, assembly hall, recreation hall and chapel.

Staff room

The staff room building shall have offices for the head teacher and the deputy, including the bursar and a secretary. The staff room shall be designed for a maximum of 45 teachers equipped with all furniture.

KEY

Code Description of Building

Phase I

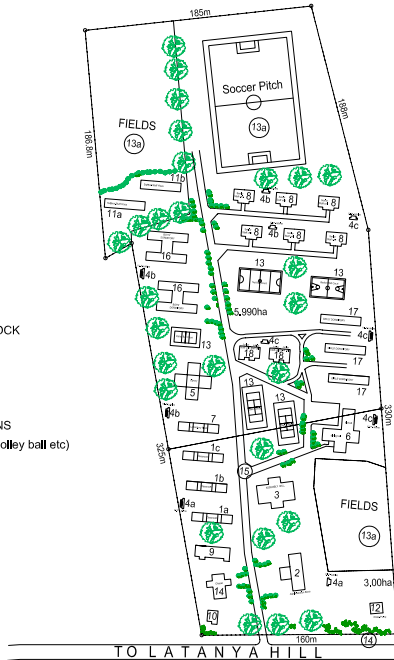
- 1a. CLASSROOM BLOCK
2. ADMINISTRATION BLOCK
3. ASSEMBLY HALL
- 4a. V.I.P, 6-3 STANCE LATRINE

Phase II

- 1b. 6 CLASSROOM BLOCK
- 4b. V.I.P, 6-3 STANCE LATRINE
5. LIBRARY
6. DINING HALL/KITCHEN
7. LABORATORY - 6 NOS ON SAME BLOCK
8. SENIOR STAFF HOUSES 4 Nos
9. NUNS' STAFF HOUSE 1 No
10. PRIESTS' STAFF HOUSE 1 No
- 11a. SUPPORT STAFF HOUSES 3 Nos
12. WATER SUPPLY/TANK INSTALLATIONS
13. PLAY GROUNDS (soccer, basket ball, volley ball etc)
14. BOUNDARY FENCE
15. ROAD PAVEMENT
16. BOYS' DORMITORIES
17. GIRLS' DORMITORIES
18. JUNIOR STAFF HOUSES 4 Nos

Phase III

- 1c. 6 CLASSROOM BLOCK
- 4c. V.I.P, 6-3 STANCE LATRINE
- 11b. SUPPORT STAFF HOUSES 3 Nos



Nuns & priests quarters

The nun's and priests' quarters shall be built to accommodate a maximum of 5 persons each. There shall be 2 WC's in each quarter. The nun's quarters shall be attached to an infirmary having a drug store and a maximum capacity of 10 beds.

Water supply connection

More reliable source of water shall be connected to the school buildings.

Playground

One outdoor playground shall be constructed with all necessary facilities.

Road work

All the connecting road links and pavement shall be completed by the end of the second phase.

Third stage-2010/2011

Chapel

The chapel shall be able to seat 500 worshippers

Classrooms

There shall be 6 more classrooms built for the advance level classes. There shall be a total of 18 classrooms.

Laboratory

Two (2) more laboratories shall be constructed for the advance level science classes.

Dormitories

There shall be two 3-storeyed dormitories for the girls and two for the boys. Each floor shall be able to house 60 students.

Staff flats

Four (4) more senior staff quarters to be constructed housing 24 more staff and families.

Boundary security fence

Wall or chicken fencing to be built all around the school perimeter.

CONSTRUCTION COSTS

First stage	\$265,000
Second stage	1,360,000
Third stage	775,000

Total \$2,400,000

We have the funds to build the first stage and have recommended the Archdiocese begin construction right away.

Through contacts at the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) we were made aware of a program they administer called American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA). We have made application for a grant of \$1.3 million. We will hear in April 2006 if the grant is approved.

Well (Borehole)

Completed in February 2005.

Latrines

There shall be one 3-stance drainable VIP latrine including urinals/wash-room for the staff and 4 similar latrines for the students.

Second stage-2008/2009

By the end of the second phase there shall be a complete ordinary level (senior 1 to 4), but not yet boarding school.

Classrooms

Six more classrooms shall be added, making a total of 12. The total enrolment shall reach 480 students.

Laboratory

4 laboratories shall have to be completed, making a total requirement for the ordinary level students (senior 1 to 4).

Library

There shall be a library capable of seating 1000 students on 3 floors.

Dining Hall & Kitchen

There shall be a dining hall capable of seating 500 students.

Staff houses

Four (4) senior staff bungalows shall be constructed. A total of 12 teachers shall have accommodations at the end of the second phase.



Monsignor Matthew with Michael Strauss (Principal) and Pat Bredenkamp (Asst. Principal) of Epiphany Catholic School.

100% of all funds received go directly to Monsignor Matthew for the work of the Church in the Archdiocese of Gulu. All the costs of mailing, printing of the newsletter, accounting, office expenses, non-profit reporting to Federal and State agencies and Dan & Pete's travel expenses to Africa and Washington, DC are paid by the Vaughan and Truax families.

UGANDA CONFERENCE IN MINNEAPOLIS SEPTEMBER 2-5, 2005

The Uganda North American Association (UNAA) Convention at the Marriott Hotel in Minneapolis was one of the most successful held with hundreds of delegates drawn from all over North America, Europe and Uganda. The hot button issues quickly became the continuing war in the north, its attendant humanitarian catastrophe and the political crisis of succession. In past UNAA conventions there was barely recognition of the continuing humanitarian tragedy in northern Uganda. That attitude has changed dramatically as many concerned Ugandans questioned how and why the war has lasted so long and affected so many. Ugandan Government Officials faced tough questions from delegates who wanted to know what their role was in the fiasco that has brought a once proud people to their knees. What went wrong, many wanted to know. Unfortunately, there was no satisfactory answer. Even so, delegates were determined to be part of the solution with many pledging support for activities aimed at highlighting the problem in the international community. Many eagerly responded to the call to be part of the GuluWalk planned for October. Incidentally, none of the government officials present participated in the Minneapolis GuluWalk organized during the weekend lead by Monsignor Matthew Odong. Despite assurances from the Minister of Security about government focus on the issue, many felt the peace option was not being pushed hard enough, leaving the generals to continue blasting away at a phantom enemy who is elusive and hard to hit.

Most surprising was the pervasive feeling that Uganda is heading toward a political abyss in a very short time. Delegate after delegate expressed fear that the gains made during the last two decades - a growing institution of the rule of law, fledgling media freedom and recovering climate of investments - would be wiped out during the ensuing political uncertainty of leadership. Despite valiant attempts to highlight many important government initiatives, the government team could not escape the barrage of questions, some outright hostile, on the issue of political leadership and the future of Uganda. As one Member of Parliament later put it, "It was very difficult to figure where that much anger was coming from." Outgoing American Ambassador to Uganda, Jimmy Kolker, further reinforced that feeling in the keynote speech to delegates when he referred to "red warning lights" due to corruption and political violence. Senator Norm Coleman, who also spoke at the Saturday luncheon and was seen as President Museveni's ally in Washington, was more blunt. There comes a time when a leader must step down, he told the cheering audience, causing one delegate to jump up to blow a horn in appreciation. Even though the senator was careful to mention Museveni's many achievements, his message was seen as a direct signal to Kampala that Washington was looking for change in leadership very soon.

Perhaps due to the continuing crisis in northern Uganda, a general mood of pessimism swept through the entire convention. The consensus appeared to be that not enough had been done both by the international community and the government of Uganda to stop the unfolding tragedy. More importantly, given the big official delegation, Minneapolis showed that there is recognition in Kampala that the annual gatherings of Ugandans is an important event with much influence and bearing in the direction of the country.

HISTORIC WALK FOR CHILDREN OF NORTHERN UGANDA

On Saturday, October 22nd, over 15,000 people in over 40 cities worldwide took the first steps toward telling the story of the children of northern Uganda. GuluWalk Day attracted people of all nationality, color, race and religion in a global show of support for the innocent victims of the world's most ignored humanitarian emergency.

With over 40 cities, from Beijing to Boston, poised to send a message of peace in the first-ever GuluWalk Day, it was over 600 students in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada who opened the event. McDonald Drive

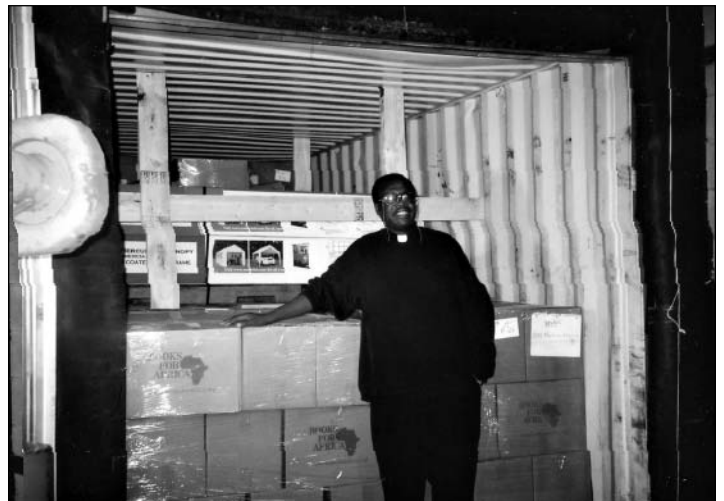
Jr. High School teacher-librarian Beth Hearn, who recently returned from a short volunteer experience in northern Uganda, initiated the student GuluWalk, which attracted national media attention. "Our pre-GuluWalk was a roaring success," exclaimed Hearn. "We had a collage of orange and the rhythms of Africa all around us." The students walked proudly, knowing in their small way they were making a difference. "GuluWalk Day developed from the overwhelming response to the original GuluWalk, which lasted for 31 days and saw Adrian Bradbury and Kieran Hayward conduct their own 'night commute' in Toronto, Canada. Every night in July they walked 12.5 km into downtown Toronto to sleep in front of city hall. After about four hours sleep they made the trek home at sunrise, all while continuing to work full-time and attempting to maintain their usual daily routine. "We never once thought we would be helping make this happen globally less than four months after we started our 31-day journey," said co-founder Bradbury. "This is an issue that has been in the shadows long enough. It's a humanitarian emergency that needs our immediate attention."

The International Community has done very little to end the LRA war. For the last 19 years of war in northern Uganda, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has never visited the region.

SECOND CONTAINER OF BOOKS ON WAY TO GULU

On October 3rd the second 40' container of books through "Books for Africa" left St. Paul for Gulu. After receipt of the first container of books the teachers using them in Uganda gave us specific topics they would like to see more of. Science text books (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) were at the top of the list. The first container provided books to over thirty schools. We hope to continue these shipments until we can satisfy the needs of all the schools in northern Uganda.

Msgr. Matthew also asked for books on philosophy and theology for use in the seminary. These books were not available through Books for Africa. However, they told us if we could find them they would ship them in the container. Several individuals provided these religious books. One of them was Archbishop Harry Flynn who donated 30 grocery bags of books from his personal library that he felt would be excellent resource material for the library at the seminary.



Monsignor Matthew in container of books
leaving for Gulu on Oct. 3rd