

NEWS FROM SACRED HEART SEMINARY

ARCHDIOCESE OF GULU, UGANDA

www.sacredheartseminary.com

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FROM THE DESK OF MONSIGNOR MATTHEW ODONG, RECTOR

Dear American friends and benefactors,

May the peace, blessings and joy of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts with lasting happiness. Time flies by so fast. We trust that 2007 has been a year of blessings for you and your loved ones. Know that our love and prayers are always with you.

We have recently learned with great joy of the appointment of Bishop John Nienstedt of the Diocese of New Ulm by Pope Benedict XVI as Co-adjutor Archbishop to His Grace Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of the Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis. The staff and seminarians of Sacred Heart Seminary join me in sending our sincere congratulations and prayerful best wishes to Archbishop Flynn, Co-adjutor Archbishop



Six seminarians at Ggaba Seminary with Msgr. Matthew and Pete.

Nienstedt, the Priests, Deacons and all the people of God in the Archdiocese for the gift of a new shepherd, given to you by God. May the ministry and witness of the church in that portion of the Universal Church bear fruit for the salvation of humanity. We share in your joy and thank God with you.

On behalf of everyone here in the Archdiocese of Gulu I want to thank you for your continued prayers and generosity. Whenever I think of you I am reminded of the words of Jesus to His Apostles: "...whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters that you do it to me: "...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me..."(Mt 25: 34-43). May Heaven reward you abundantly for shar-

ing your blessings with those less fortunate in our society.

Permit me to update you on some of the events, plans, challenges and needs related to our apostolate here:

In February 2007 we were blessed with the visit of our friend Pete Truax to Uganda. Truly his visits are always a source of encouragement to us.

Sacred Heart Seminary's Rector, staff and seminarians are doing well and appreciate your prayers and support which is instrumental in the priestly education of our young men. This year Sacred Heart Seminary has 148 seminarians; 54 are in the Major Seminaries, all of them aspiring to become priests. What a blessing.

Ordination to Priesthood and Diaconate: I am pleased to inform you that between June and August 7 men will be ordained priests and 2 will be ordained transitional deacons that will be ordained priests in 2008.

The Archdiocese of Gulu Welcomes the Jesuits:

Everyone has received the coming of the Jesuits to our diocese with great joy. It is a sign of the love of God for his people. Following the motto of their founder, St. Ignatius Loyola, "Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam or all for the Greater Glory of God", the Jesuits come to Acholiland as Apostles of peace and hope to bring new life to our people especially their renowned contribution in the education sector. Sacred Heart Seminary is happy to offer them a place to live. We shall work together to resurrect those values destroyed by the conflict for the good of humanity. I am sure that St. Ignatius is supportive of this plan. Welcome to the Archdiocese of Gulu, dear Fr. Tony and your Jesuit confreres.

Construction of Archbishop Flynn Secondary

School: Significant progress has been made. The two classroom blocks have been raised above the window level. Our goal is to have the school begin to operate by January 2008. We also have a well and an electric generator completed. The Planning Committee, of

which I am the chairman, are very dedicated, talented, self-giving men and women with a wealth of diversified professional backgrounds and experience. After 21 years of civil unrest and conflict denying our young people the opportunity for quality education we think that this is one of the best gifts the Church can offer to Her people. I invite you to continue extending your hands in support of the construction of this school, which is so dear to our hearts, a hope to our young people and a source of encouragement to us all. I know that without you, we cannot succeed. But with you, we can achieve the dream.

On-going Peace Talks in Juba, Sudan: Though major progress has been made since the peace talks began in July 2006 between the Government of Uganda and the Rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), we still need your prayers. The big issue at the moment is the intervention of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has, in the name of justice, indicted the top LRA leaders for crimes and atrocities against the people. The LRA leaders are demanding the withdrawal of the indictments by the ICC from the case so that dialog can continue to a conclusion. The people and the Church, who are the victims of the conflict, are advocating forgiveness and reconciliation as an alternative justice for peace. The question is "Will the ICC bend to the demands of the LRA and the wishes of the victims?"

Challenges and Needs: The 21 years of conflict has generated a magnitude of needs on behalf of our people. It covers areas such as reconstruction and rehabilitation, of social and educational infrastructure, care for HIV/AIDS victims, orphans, counseling of the trau-



Secondary School Planning Committee at building site.

matized victims of conflict and economic empowerment to set our people on the road to a productive life. Indeed, the humanitarian situation provides an opportunity for you to continue with your involvement and make a difference in the struggle of your brothers and sisters.

Again, we thank you for your friendship, prayers and support. Peace and blessings to you.

Yours in the Hearts of Jesus and His Mother Mary,

Msgr. Matthew Odong

JESUITS IN GULU

By Fr. Tony Wach, SJ

Missionary to Uganda from Wisconsin



Ready to pour footings for classrooms.

"Slowly, slowly" or in the Acholi language of Gulu, "moat, moat!" Two years ago Msgr. Matthew Odong, in eagerly welcoming us Jesuits, said, "Here you can have this house." He was showing me the small but adequate house at Sacred Heart Seminary, formerly housing the American Sacred Heart brothers. Three houses later, all much closer to our land, but not as available as first thought, we took his offer.

By June 1st, not as planned for February, two Jesuits will begin our Gulu mission. "St. Ignatius is great," so exclaimed Msgr. Matthew (referring to our Jesuit founder) when he recently told me the huge tree the renovators were trimming, had NOT fallen on our house!

Meanwhile, the land donated for our secondary school and eventual parish, has increased to 112 acres. The land is being cleared, boundaries marked by fence and thousands of nursling trees, a well for water being dug, etc. I even have 2-3 groups of local sisters ready to partner with us (remember, this Jesuit school will have girls). I'm thinking of naming it Ocee ("o chea", Acholi for "He rose!") Champion (after our former school in Wisconsin) Jesuit College. So the possible name will be "Ocee Champion". The Risen Jesus is rising up both Acholiland and Champion from their years of death to new and more abundant life! (Ezekiel 37).

In June my partner, Fr. Jim Strzok, SJ, will meet with three architects in Omaha who have volunteered to help. I've also learned that Jesuit mission appeals in St. Paul/Minneapolis parishes this summer will go for this project. Finally, on July 7 at Gulu Cathedral, Archbishop John Baptist Odama will ordain as a priest his former seminarian and our Ugandan Jesuit, Pius Ojara. God is truly with us. I'm very happy to be collaborating with Msgr. Matthew as well as his US team, Dan and Pete.

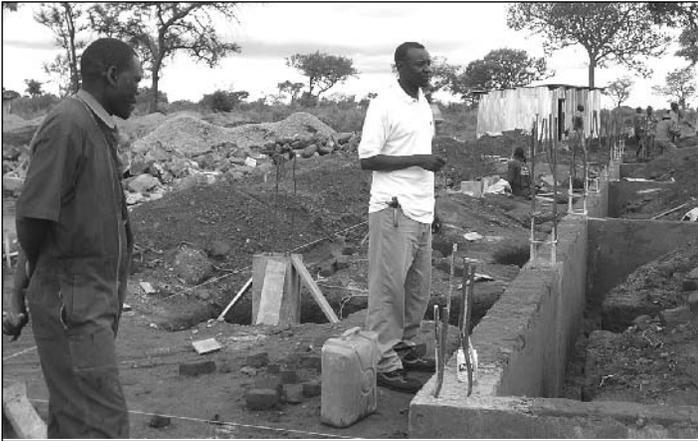
The architectural design for the nun's quarters has been finalized and adopted. Work shall commence in June and be completed by the end of October.

The construction of the latrines is scheduled to begin in July to be finalized by the end of September.

Architectural plans for the dormitories are at the final revision stage. Construction shall start on July 1st and be completed by the end of October. The teacher's house (administration building) is also planned for the July to October time frame.

The contract document for the construction of the dining hall is now being compiled, but it is unlikely the work will commence before August. This is the only facility that may not be ready by January 2008 when the school will open.

A generator for the water pump has been procured so we have a means of pumping water from the well. A water system, which would require an elevated holding tank and water pipes, is not part of the first phase. Details of the water supply are being worked on for implementation in 2008. It would be good if we could build the water supply yet this year if we can find funding. If not jerry cans of water will be carried from the well.



Footings completed for classrooms.



Walls coming up on classrooms.

CONSTRUCTION REPORT ON SECONDARY SCHOOL IN PADER

By Robert Odong – Architect & Superintendent

Construction began in February on phase one. This phase consists of 8 classrooms, 4 dormitory buildings (2 for girls & 2 for boys), a nuns quarters to house 8 sisters, 6 drainable latrines, a dining hall & kitchen and 1 teacher's house that will function as an administration building.

Work is progressing well on the classrooms. They are planned to be completed by the end of August.



Msgr. Matthew and Bishop Sabino at the well at the secondary school site.

The first phase of the tree planting and compound design will be done in June. It will consist of:
 Planting of slow growing commercial tree fencing along the external boundary of the school,
 Planting of short life-fencing along the internal boundary of various plots,
 Clearing of road network of tree stumps and general brush clearing of the school area,

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.

Compound dressing and planting of shrubs and trees within constructed areas,
Playground clearing.

Rise in fuel prices: There was a breakdown of the supply line to Uganda from Kenya. This was created by poor contingency planning of the upgrading project meant to increase the supply line between Uganda and Kenya. The fuel shortage hit hardest in the month of April with a near doubling of fuel costs in some fuel stations. These prohibitive prices bogged down progress on stockpiling of materials. Fortunately, fuel supply is now steady although the prices are still high and is predicted not to normalize until the end of the year when the new pipeline is commissioned. This unforeseen cost increase in fuel affects costs of getting building materials to our remote building site.

Overall good progress is being made and we plan to be ready for the first 120 students in January 2008.

RECENT VISIT TO UGANDA

By Pete Truax

I was in Uganda this past February. It was great to spend some time with old friends and make new ones. I went with Msgr. Matthew on a pastoral visit for five days visiting a number of parishes. During this time I had the opportunity to be with Bishop Sabino Odoki at liturgies in Pader and Pajule to see the confirmation of hundreds of people and the blessing of several marriages.

Early in my visit Msgr. Matthew took me to Ggaba National Major Seminary to meet six young men in their final year of theology that will be ordained priests between June and August of this year. The seventh to be ordained is Deacon Seraphine Opio who was at Sacred Heart Seminary while I was there. I was extremely impressed with these young men who are dedicating their lives to serve the Church and the people of God.

Since the LRA attacks stopped in July of last year the people in the villages seemed much more relaxed than what I remember from my last visit. Some of them are beginning to move out of the camps back onto their land and were beginning to plant crops in anticipation of the rainy season beginning in April. I also saw many more animals (cows, goats, pigs, chickens, etc.) than I remember seeing earlier. I imagine this was because the LRA is not stealing them.

The high point of my visit was working with the seven people on the planning committee for the secondary school (Archbishop Flynn Comprehensive Secondary School) in Pader, which is chaired by Msgr. Matthew. I was also at the ground breaking. The first phase (1 of 6) will have a cost of \$480,000. It is planned to be complete by December of this year and be ready for the first 120 boys and girls to begin the first Senior 1 class in January 2008. The total project will have a cost of approximately \$2.5 million. Mother Viola Akulu, who is a member of the planning committee, has committed the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate to run the school.

BISHOP SABINO ODOKI VISITS TWIN CITIES

By Pete Truax

Bishop Sabino was in St. Paul/Minneapolis from May 2nd through the 8th for meetings with several benefactors and clergy in the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis to explain the challenges being faced by the Archdiocese of Gulu. My wife, Dottie, and I had the opportunity to host the Bishop during his brief stay. Even though I have know Bishop Sabino almost as long as I have known Msgr. Matthew I had not had much time to spend with him one on one. It was a great experience to hear from him what he sees as needs and what he wants to do to implement changes that are needed. I developed a great respect for him as a man and as a priest during our brief time together. I think he brings a great deal of talent to the leadership team of Archbishop Odama and Msgr. Matthew to guide the diocese in the years to come.



Marie Altman (IHM Parishoner) with Bishop Sabino following Mass on May 6th.

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