

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 Friends,

Prayers and cordial greetings from your brothers and sisters in Northern Uganda. We wish to thank you for your prayers and continued support to the education of seminarians here at Sacred Heart Seminary as well as in the major seminaries working in their formation to become priests in the Archdiocese of Gulu. Currently we have 157 seminarians at Sacred Heart Seminary and 45 in the Major Seminaries studying philosophy and theology. This year we ordained 6 men to the priesthood and 4 were ordained transitional deacons who we expect to be ordained priests in 2011. Having more priests in our parishes is answering God's call to bring the Gospel message to His people. Many of you are supporting the education of our seminarians at a cost of \$600 per year. A special thank you for this support.

ARCHBISHOP FLYNN SECONDARY SCHOOL
Education is the key to poverty eradication and transformation of society. A very big THANK YOU to our American friends for the gift of this new school, which is seen by many as light in darkness. Life would not be the same for the people here without your solidarity. You cannot imagine the



Msgr. Matthew, Sr. Viola & Students in front of classroom block.

magnitude of achievement we have made over recent years with your help. You have indeed improved the lives of many of our young people. Many families here live on less than \$100 per year and are unable to pay for the cost of education for their children. Eight additional classrooms, bringing the total to 16, will be completed within the next two months. The school is now two years in operation and has a student population of 117 boys and girls under the supervision of 11 teaching staff and 7 support staff. Some significant achievements have been made recently which include completion of the science laboratory. I strongly believe the new science laboratory will help produce responsible leaders who will use their skills to serve the people of Uganda. We plan to enroll 120 new students in the new academic year beginning in February 2011 in addition to the 117 existing students.

CHALLENGES

We need to construct a boy's dormitory to accommodate about 260 boys. Currently the boys are sleeping in extra classrooms. We hope to begin construction within the next month and have it completed by the second half of this year. Funding is also needed for furniture and fixtures for new classrooms, science lab and dormitory. I have every confidence that the funds will be there when the need arises.

My dream is to see in the near future many of our American friends come to visit us for periods of time to assist in teaching or just meeting the students and staff.

Wishing you and your loved ones God's choicest blessings and graces,
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, 2011.

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Msgr. Matthew Odong".

Msgr. Matthew Odong

REFLECTIONS OF DR. MIKE WESTERHAUS

During my current trip to Northern Uganda, I had the privilege of witnessing progress on two major initiatives designed to improve health in the region – the arrival of a shipping container full of medical supplies to Lacor Hospital and the official opening of the science laboratory at Archbishop Flynn Secondary School. Many readers of this newsletter supported both of these initiatives and many peo-



Hope for the City container of medical supplies arrive at Lacor Hospital.

ple here asked that I convey their utmost gratitude for your generosity. These initiatives represent progress at two ends of the spectrum in the effective delivery of healthcare: providing opportunities for young, curious minds to receive an excellent education to prepare them for eventual work as health workers and equipping trained health professionals with the tools needed to serve their communities.

The opening of the science laboratory at Archbishop Flynn School was a day of great celebration. Staff, students, priests from surrounding parishes, the District Education Officer for Amuru District, and other well wishers gathered at the school for a full day of festivities. Msgr. Matthew officially opened the lab with Mass and a blessing of the facilities and the head engineer gave a tour, including a demonstration of working Bunsen burners and running water in the sinks. All, including myself, were extremely impressed by the facilities. They are indeed amongst the best labs that I've seen in the country. Thrilled with the opportunity to

study science in such a well-resourced environment, the students concluded the day with a wonderful presentation of local song and dance.

At the other end of the spectrum, the shipping container, prepared by HOPE FOR THE CITY based in Minneapolis, successfully arrived to Lacor Hospital after a two-month journey on the seas. The container contained an enormous amount of medical supplies from hospital beds to anesthesia equipment to examination tables to needed equipment for surgery. The hospital staff eagerly off-loaded the container and are currently processing all of the equipment and distributing it to the most useful locations within the hospital and the affiliated health centers. These supplies will undoubtedly help in responding to major challenges facing the health system here: well-trained clinicians who do not have the appropriate equipment or supplies to act on their knowledge and skills in the service of the community.

While these initiatives represent wonderful steps forward, much work remains to be done. As Martin Luther King exhorted, "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhumane." Let us continue to work in solidarity to confront the great health inequities of the world through education of the coming generation and undying support for clinicians here who are committed to addressing the great suffering they see each day.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH PROVIDENCE ACADEMY

Msgr. Matthew Odong was greeted with a wonderful welcoming spirit by the Providence community in the beginning of October. He visited classrooms, celebrated Mass, and shared lunch with Providence students, faculty and staff. He spoke with Lower School students about the normal life of a child in Uganda, and shared what luxuries we take for granted – television and proper shoes. Msgr. Matthew encouraged Providence students to reach out to the people of Uganda in prayer, in writing and through donations.

Since his visit, the Middle School has decided to donate proceeds from their annual fall party to the Archbishop Flynn Secondary School. The Upper School PACMAN (Providence Academy Committee of Ministry Addressing Needs) has identified Msgr.

Odong as a beneficiary for their annual fall Candy Apple Sucker Fund raiser. Providence Academy is

through the Grace of God and the support of his friends in America that he has been able to serve his people.



Msgr. Matthew & Fr. Corey Belden (school chaplain) with staff & students of Providence Academy.

excited to continue to support Msgr. Odong and his ministry in Uganda in as many ways as possible.

MSGR. MATTHEW HONORED WITH THE “TIME FOR HOPE AWARD”

Monsignor Matthew Odong was presented with the “2010 A TIME FOR HOPE AWARD” in honor of his humanitarian efforts and selfless service to the Archdiocese of Gulu. The annual award, given by Hope For The City, recognizes individuals who exemplify the ideals of service to others. Msgr. Matthew was chosen for his advocacy on behalf of the people of northern Uganda and courageously speaking for those who have no voice. Msgr. Matthew accepted the award by stressing that it is

STEPS TAKEN TO STOP LRA ATROCITIES

November 24th is the day President Obama promised Congress he would present his strategy to help stop atrocities committed by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and help affected families rebuild their lives. The strategy the President will hand to Congress represents a major step. It is the first time in history an American President – or any world leader – has developed a comprehensive plan to stop the violence perpetrated by Joseph Kony and his LRA commanders. It will be our job to make sure the bold words in the President’s plan become bold actions for peace. You can follow progress of the President’s plan at www.theresolve.org/blog.

ELEVEN YEAR OLD DONATES SOCCER BALLS

While Msgr. Matthew was answering questions about life in Uganda, eleven-year-old Quinn Courteau asked him what games the kids play in Uganda. His immediate response was “Oh, soccer. All of the kids play soccer. Typically they make their



Msgr. Matthew with the founders of “Hope for the City”, Megan & Dennis Doyle.



Msgr. Matthew with Quinn Courteau.

soccer balls out of corn husks or rags tied together with string.” On his way home that evening, Quinn announced to his parents that he was going to

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.

take some of his baby-sitting money and buy soccer balls to give to the kids in Uganda. About a week later Quinn arrived to see Msgr. with five soccer balls to give to the kids along with the following note:



Nov. 8, 2010 science lab completed/ready for use.

*Dear Monsignor,
For school, I had to do a project that involved community service. In September, after talking with you, I decided to use ten hours of my babysitting money to buy five soccer balls for the Archbishop Flynn School so the boys and girls would be able to play soccer with professional soccer balls like we use in America. Maybe someday I will be able to challenge them to a game of soccer!*

*Sincerely,
Quinn Courteau*

BISHOP SABINO APPOINTED BISHOP OF ARUA

On October 20th it was officially announced that Bishop Sabino Ocan Odoki has been appointed by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI as the new Bishop of the Arua Diocese replacing Bishop Fred Dandrua who retired last year. Bishop Sabino was the Auxiliary Bishop of the Gulu Archdiocese and Apostolic Administrator of the Arua Diocese. Please remember Bishop Sabino in your prayers for God's blessings in his new pastoral commitment.

October 20th was the anniversary celebration of two catechists and martyrs, Daudi Okelo and Jildo Irwa beautified by the late Pope John Paul II on October 20, 2002 in Rome. Many pilgrims turned up at the holy ground of the martyrdom called Wi-Polo in Paimol/Kalongo to give honor and glory to God through the two martyrs who witnessed to God's love with their lives.

MATCHING FUND CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

Three generous benefactors donated the matching fund of up to \$150,000, which will hopefully generate another \$150,000 to cover the cost of the needed dormitory. The school will add 120 new students each year until it has a full complement of six classes, senior 1 through 6. February 2011 will be the third class admission and there will be no room to admit the full complement of boys unless the dormitory is built.

There is a girl's dormitory, which has been in use for the past two years. The boys have been sleeping in unused classrooms but that will create space problems as the new classes are admitted.

As we go to press, we have received nearly \$85,000 of matching funds, which means we are over halfway there. If you haven't already helped, please join us in getting the \$150,000 of matching funds.



Dining hall.