

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 and Benefactors,
Prayers and cordial greetings to you in the Lord. The seminarians and staff of Sacred Heart Seminary along with the students, staff and the School Board of Archbishop Flynn Secondary School join me in sending you our love and appreciation for your generous support. Thank you for seeing Christ in the face of your brothers and sisters. Please be aware that a number of achievements have been made over the years with your generous donations.

SACRED HEART SEMINARY: The primary goal of our apostolate is the formation of priests for service to humanity. With your prayers and sacrifices this important work on behalf of the Church in the Archdiocese of Gulu is being accomplished. I am happy to inform you that in 2011 three of our seminarians were ordained priests and three ordained deacons. In 2012, we hope to have four new priests ordained. Vocations to priesthood continue to grow every year for which we thank the Lord. The new priests received Mass Kits and Vestments for their ministry. However, a challenge we have been facing the last two years is the financial resources to provide the new priests with means of transportation (motorcycle) for their pastoral work. In this part of the world having transportation to get to the villages is important for effective ministry. Secondly, our priests depend totally on Mass Stipends as their source of money to assist them in their pastoral work. Please join the program of supporting our priests with Mass Stipends to facilitate their pastoral programs.

ARCHBISHOP FLYNN SECONDARY SCHOOL: This school is a precious gift of the American people to the people of Northern Uganda with the objective of offering quality edu-

cation rooted in strong Christian tradition to prepare our students for moral, intellectual, social, spiritual and economic transformations of their society. The goal is to accommodate 700 students (boys and girls) in the next three to four years. It is a boarding school. Lots of achievements have been made in the last few years. These include the completion of two classroom blocks, girl's dormitory, dining hall, science lab and nun's house. Work on the boy's dormitory is scheduled for completion by early January before the new school year begins in February 2012. As we prepare for the addition of another 120 students next February we need to buy additional desks, chairs, beds, textbooks, etc. I appeal to your usual generosity in support of these needs.

LONG TERM PROJECTS AT AFSS: With the growing number of students, there is need to plan on having in place the following important structures:

Three simple residential houses for the Deputy Head Teacher, Dean of Studies and a Nurse to monitor the health of students 24 hours a day.

A Chapel, dedicated to St. Joseph for the faith community at AFSS.

Administrative block with staff and Board meeting rooms. Library and computer laboratory.

Guest House for visitors.

I wish you a peaceful completion of this year, a Blessed Advent Season, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2012.

Fraternally yours,



Msgr. Matthew, Archbishop Odama and Msgr. Devine on AFSS Campus.

UGANDAN PRIEST HAS BOOK PUBLISHED ON HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE DURING 20+ YEARS OF WAR IN NORTHERN UGANDA

By Pete Truax

I recently heard from Fr. Paul, a 34-year-old Priest and good friend, that he has been successful in getting his book published. The title of the book is "The Spill of Blood & The Lamentations of Lamalo" by Paul Peter Rom Abim. If you have Internet access you can go to <http://lulu.com/product/paperback/the-spill-of-blood-the-lamentations-of-lamalo/18549362> to read a review of the book and order a copy. I read the original text of the book some time ago and found the story of his personal experience very moving. I have known Fr. Paul and his family for 10 years, visiting them when I have been in Uganda. Fr. Paul is currently in Rome studying for his PhD. I hope you will buy a copy of the book and read it.

CHAPLAIN ASSIGNED FOR ARCHBISHOP FLYNN S S

On August 6, 2011 Archbishop John Baptist Odama appointed and installed Fr. John Felix Opio as Chaplain to AFSS. Fr. Felix will be residing at the Multi Purpose Hall in one of the two residence apartments attached to the hall. The residence is 1.5km from AFSS in Pader Town. Fr. Felix's assignment as Chaplain is a real blessing for the students and staff. He is now able to have daily Mass, provide spiritual direction as well as assume some administrative responsibilities.



Fr. Felix with student altar servers at chaplain installation ceremony.

AFSS CAMPUS ATTRACTS SEMINARS

Groups from surrounding communities are finding the facilities at AFSS a very attractive venue. Seminars are being scheduled that will not conflict with day-to-day student classes and activities. The students of Archbishop Flynn S. S. stand to benefit from these seminars in the following ways:

These workshops and seminars create opportunities for informal learning through interactions with the participants as well as the facilitators.

Our students learn to appreciate team/group work as an important method of learning, which enhances their knowledge and builds their leadership skills.

It provides to the students as individuals and as a School opportunity to render valuable services to other people outside their school.

It builds and sells the corporate image of AFSS and also brings revenue to the school to supplement the school budget.

MSGR. MICHAEL DEVINE SOCCER FIELD DEDICATION

By Monsignor Michael Devine

I am a priest from Clearwater, Florida and was pastor of St. Brendan Church when I first met Msgr. Matthew ten years ago. Our people were generous towards the building of the school and when the school was built it was decided, as a token of appreciation to St. Brendan's to name the soccer field in my honor. My sister in law Kitty Devine and my nephews Danny and Arnie joined me in Amsterdam for the final flight to Uganda. Upon our arrival at Sacred Heart Seminary, we were most impressed by the large number of seminarians and their great spirit of holiness and friendliness.

On October 10th the soccer field was blest and dedicated by Archbishop Odama and myself. Following the blessing the Archbishop unveiled the memorial monument that had been erected by the side of the soccer field. Following the dedication the students of AFSS expressed their gratitude through beautiful and meaningful songs and gifts. The day was crowned with a friendly soccer match between AFSS and Sacred Heart Seminary students. I had the honor of kick starting the match commissioning the new soccer field for use. The match was very competitive ending in a draw of 1-1! Given the fact that AFSS is only two years old and does not have a soccer coach, this was a remarkable achievement! We then had a beautiful dedication Mass in the school dining hall. The singing of the students was most inspiring and brought tears to our eyes.

The school buildings are up to the highest standards and the students realize what a privilege it is for them to be there. The school and soccer field have been a boon to the area as the entire community is using the facilities. I was so impressed that I promised to help raise funds for future



Msgr. Devine, Msgr. Matthew and Fr. Felix with AFSS Soccer Team.

development. It was truly a visit to remember. I hope to go back in two years. Perhaps some of you generous donors might care to come along with me.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE PAIMOL MARTYRS SHRINE

By Fr. Samuel Mwaka Okidi

The Martyred Catechists Daudi Okello and Jildo Irwa (18th/19th October 1918) who were beatified on October 20, 2002 are commemorated every year at Paimol Wi-polo in Kalongo Parish on this date every year since their beatification. This year the Gulu Archdiocese Laity Association based in Kampala areas spearheaded the celebration. It was a very colorful occasion attended by over five thousand pilgrims from near and far. The theme for the celebration



Six bishops at the Paimol celebration Oct. 20, 2011



Liturgical dancers and pilgrims at the martyrs celebration.

was: Lord, help us grow together, rooted in Christ's Love and Truth.

The Most Rev. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Archbishop of Kampala, led the solemn Mass. Archbishop John Baptist Odama of Gulu Archdiocese, Bishop Joseph Franzelli of Lira Diocese, Bishop Henry Ssentongo of Moroto Diocese, Bishop Sabino Ocan Odoki of Arua Diocese and Bishop Sanctus Linus Wanok of Nebbi Diocese assisted him. In addition to the six Bishops, there were over 80 priests who concelebrated during the Mass, which was broadcast live over Radio Maria Uganda Gulu Substation.

Blessed Daudi Okello and Jildo Irwa will be canonized saints after performing some outstanding miracles to those who will pray through their intercession as required by the Catholic Church. May the good Lord continue to bless the Archdiocese of Gulu and the whole world with peace through the intercession of these Blessed Catechists Martyrs.

ARCHDIOCESAN SYNOD

By Fr. Jino Mwaka Okech

Archbishop John Baptist Odama recently called the second synod of the Archdiocese of Gulu. A diocesan synod is an assembly of priests and other members of Christ's faithful who assist the Bishop by offering advice about the needs of the diocese and by proposing legislation for him to enact.

The Synod was held from May 8th to May 20th at Sacred Heart Seminary in Gulu. In attendance were 45 priests and 142 laymen and laywomen (9 religious).

The SYNOD ACTS are as follows:

EVANGELIZATION AND PROCLAMATION

SACRAMENTAL LIFE

SOCIAL JUSTICE, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION

SELF RELIANCE

Committees are being formed and some dates have been set for some actions. We will tell you more in future newsletters as legislation is enacted.

RESPONSE TO DEPLOYMENT OF U. S. MILITARY ADVISORS TO L R A REGIONS

For us, the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), President Obama's October 14th announcement that 100 U. S. troops have been deployed to the region to assist with the capture of Joseph Kony and the dismantling of his Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaves us concerned. Over the past two decades, the people of Northern Uganda have endured horrific violence as a result of the war between the LRA and the Government of Uganda. Despite numerous attempts at resolving this dispute, to date, these measures have not only failed to result in the hoped for peace but led instead to the broadening of the conflict to neighboring countries.

In response to the White House's recent announcement, we would first like to reiterate our sincere appreciation to President Obama and the American Congress for your attention to the plight of our people. We are thankful for your desire for peace and justice in the world. Your efforts to achieve reconciliation and meet humanitarian needs in LRA affected regions cannot be understated and loudly communicates that we are not forgotten.

We also, however, feel the need to express our concern over the military nature of the current strategy. As history has

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.

taught us, military intervention is not the way to resolve the LRA conflict and achieve a sustainable peace. In the past, such approaches have directly resulted in the intensification of LRA violence and the increased endangerment of civilians.

While many have lost hope in any peaceful resolution to the conflict, the reality is that the peace process, in particular the Juba peace talks which began in 2006, is responsible for the relative calm being experienced in northern Uganda today. We, therefore, strongly implore all concerned parties to prioritize and creatively explore non-violent means to resolve the conflict. Instead of relying on military intervention, let us redouble our efforts to engage in dialogue. We believe this is the only way to bring about a lasting solution that will foster healing and reconciliation in a region of the world that has long experienced instability and deserves peace.

In conclusion, we strongly urge all participating entities to enter into and remain in consultations with regional CSO's, NGO's, grassroots leaders and their communities about the best ways forward to bring an end to one of the world's longest running conflicts. We also ask policy makers in the United States, Africa and elsewhere to heed the lessons of history and focus their efforts on dialog rather than force, engagement rather than confrontation. We sincerely believe that this is the only way that the LRA will be brought to an end, a sustainable peace will be reached, and the clouds of violence and chaos that have darkened our region for so long be dissipated.

The letter was signed by the Catholic, Protestant and Muslim Bishops of Northern Uganda.



Construction of boy's dormitory in progress.

HOW TO AVOID "LOST GENERATIONS" IN AFRICA

By Bobbi Vaughan

The emphasis of the Sacred Heart Seminary Apostolate is the promotion and support of priestly vocations. In addition, promoting good Catholic education fits in with that objective, since vocations are generated in good Catholic schools.

Recently, there was an article in our local Archdiocesan newspaper in which Cardinal Robert Sarah, president of the Pontifical council Cor Unum was quoted as saying, "A whole generation (in Africa) risks being lost" due to a severe lack of stability, education and resources. "Millions of people are on the move now in an effort to survive, becoming a people without a nation, home, work or community. The only way to guarantee a future for them after the crisis abates is to create schools where skills, communication and futures are built. Where there is an education, there is a possible future, there will be work for tomorrow and families will form" he said. The Cardinal launched an appeal for a school to be built in every village (in the Horn of Africa).

We couldn't agree more with this assessment by the Cardinal. This is what has been done in northern Uganda in recent years through the generosity of the wonderful benefactors of Sacred Heart Seminary. Relative peace finally came to northern Uganda in 2006 after 20+ years of war, violence, death and destruction, with over one and a half million Ugandans living in displacement camps. You, our benefactors, have helped build a secondary boarding school in Pader, about 90 miles northeast of Gulu that will eventually house and educate 700 boys and girls. At present there are 200 students at AFSS, exactly 100 girls and 100 boys, just a coincidence, but it does show the equity that is being shown to both boys and girls in getting a good education. Many of the needed facilities have been constructed, but there are still structures needed to complete the long-range plan for the school.

The first thing that Msgr. Matthew said to us when peace was re-established was the critical need for schools to be built to stabilize the communities as the people were moving back to their land to rebuild, cultivate their land and renew their lives. It was his dream to see this school built. Now you can see by the positive comments coming from people who have gone over to visit Msgr. Matthew and the school, not only is his dream being realized but it is even succeeding beyond his greatest expectations.

Sacred Heart Seminary is also a school of formation and education of 165+ young men discerning a call to the vocation of priesthood. All those who do not end up as priests are still given a good sound Catholic education that is preparing them to be good husbands, fathers and good contributing members of their communities. Those who move on toward ordination will be the Servants caring for the souls and spiritual lives of the people. You, the benefactors of Sacred Heart Seminary, can claim a joyful sense of accomplishment in responding to the call of the Holy Spirit to be a part of the rebuilding of the lives of the people of northern Uganda.

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