

### Uganda Committee Looking for Better Things in 2003

Frustration and sadness marked the efforts of SFB's Uganda committee in 2002. But the group is responding to these setbacks with renewed hope for 2003.

Much of last year's work involved preparations for a visit by five representatives from St. Paul the Apostle parish in Mukono in September. Many of our parishioners had graciously offered meals, accommodations, gifts, or services to help with the visit. Unfortunately, the travelers' visa applications were turned down by the U.S. embassy. The application process, difficult for Ugandans under normal circumstances, was complicated by international tensions.

On a brighter note, we were encouraged in September by a brief visit from Bishop Matthias Ssekamanya of Uganda's Lugazi diocese. The bishop urged us to maintain our focus: witnessing to the growth and development of the universal Catholic Church, casting aside any social and economic differences between the Cedarburg/Mukono parishes. He also advocated the continued sharing of parish news and the development of people-to-people contacts.

October brought the sad news that Cate Kitooke, a member of the St. Paul-Mukono sister-parish committee, had died suddenly. Cate was part of a group that organized an unforgettable visit there in 2001 by five visitors (including myself) from St. Francis Borgia. She was also a gracious hostess to us. We later learned of a medical condition Cate was fighting that, while serious, could likely have been treated if there had been adequate resources. That Cate, a widow with four children, should die at age 43 because proper care was lacking, served as a sobering reminder of the "economic differences" the bishop had spoken of a few weeks earlier.

But the new year has brought fresh hope for strengthening the relationship. Our parish sent \$3,700 to St. Paul-Mukono, all raised in collections during 2002. On behalf of St. Paul Parish, Fr. Ignatius Kibowa wrote: "It is not easy to express the gratitude we feel. On behalf of the whole community we would like to thank you.... May the good Lord bless you all." The money will be used for children's school supplies, scholarships, and general parish needs.

Planning has also resumed for a May visit by the Uganda parish delegation. The two sister-parish groups hope to succeed with the second visa application. Fr. Peter Ntege, a Ugandan priest and doctoral candidate at Marquette University, has been an invaluable guide in the development of the Cedarburg/Mukono parishes' sister parish relationship.

Fr. Ntege is also helping arrange a visit to Milwaukee this year by a choir of Ugandan seminarians. One of them comes from St. Paul-Mukono. Funding for the project is still incomplete. The choir might pay a visit to St. Francis Borgia, but plans are not yet firm.

Our parishioners continue to show their generosity to St. Paul-Mukono. February's bi-monthly collection raised \$1,098. The committee also raised \$480 during the 2002 Christmas card sale.

Finally, the Uganda committee is hoping to install a Uganda bulletin board in the St. Francis Borgia-north church hall to post correspondence, photos, and news from our friends in Mukono.

-Written by John Schauble for the *Messenger* parish newsletter, Easter 2003.