

Uganda News: Celebrations and Donations

The last few months have been eventful ones for the twinning groups of St. Paul Mukono and St. Francis Borgia. Here are the highlights.

Lenten anniversary and cathedral plans

During Lent, the fast-growing diocese of Lugazi, which includes St. Paul Mukono, celebrated its seventh anniversary. The diocese had previously been part of the Kampala archdiocese. Bishop Ssekamanya of Lugazi was the chief celebrant at a special Mass. A fund-raiser was also held for the construction of a new Lugazi cathedral, and Fr. Ignatius Kibowa, St. Paul's pastor, served as the commentator for the event.

Good Friday Procession

On Good Friday, Bishop Ssekamanya and the Anglican bishop led a joint Good Friday procession through the streets of Mukono. Thousands of people participated in this ecumenical event, the first of its kind for the diocese.

Hosting Ugandan Martyrs' Day

As of this writing, plans were still being completed at St. Paul Mukono for Ugandan Martyrs' Day (June 3). In 1886, only about ten years after missionaries first introduced Christianity there, 22 Ugandan Christians gave their lives rather than yield to the local Bugandan king. This event symbolizes, for African Christians everywhere, Africa's coming of age as a Christian continent. The Martyrs' Shrine at Namugongo, the scene of most of the brutal executions, is hallowed ground. Last year's celebration there drew an estimated 800,000 people, many of whom made the pilgrimage on foot. This year St. Paul's, located about 15 miles from Namugongo, is playing a special host-parish role and will figure prominently in the event. The parish choir has been practicing overtime, and many other preparations are in progress.

Constructing sanitary facilities

In addition to hosting the Martyrs' Day celebration, St. Paul Mukono hosts other faith gatherings. Our parish has offered to help St. Paul's build sanitary facilities to help accommodate the large number of people who stop at the church, located along the highway to Kenya. We recently sent \$2,500 to St. Paul's to help fund the estimated \$4,000 construction cost of the facilities.

Helping women and children

The SFB Women's Guild donated \$360 to benefit women's initiatives at St. Paul Mukono. Another \$1,265 was forwarded for school children and orphan education projects.

Purchasing bikes for catechists

St. Paul's has been hoping to recruit ten catechists to provide religious instruction for its school children. Because of the great distances the catechists need to cover in traveling from one school to another, the Mukono parish asked for funds to purchase bicycles (at \$70 apiece) for each catechist recruited. Our religious education students raised \$453 for this effort. Girl Scout Cadette/Senior Troop 316, under the leadership of Laurel Hornick and Mary Frank, contributed another \$70. Combined, the contributions will make it possible for St. Paul's to purchase seven bicycles for prospective catechists.

Thank you

Our Twinning Committee expresses its sincere gratitude for the continued generosity shown by parishioners to our sisters and brothers of St. Paul Mukono.