



News from Uganda: School Plans Proceed; Bishop to Visit SFB

by Tobey Neuberger

Plans for St. Francis Borgia Buguju School in our twinning parish of St. Paul Mukono (SPM) are moving along. The Ministry of Education in Uganda has given approval for the new school to move forward. Though the property belongs to St. Paul's, the government reviews land use to ensure that it will be properly allocated for educational uses. Final "bills of quantity," commonly known here as bids, are being finalized and reviewed.

St. Paul's celebrated its parish festival on August 3. Hundreds of people from the 11 sub-parishes traveled, many an hour, to participate in the full-day event. Most walked – cars, even old ones, are considered luxuries. Our own Fr. Paul travels by motorcycle, which is difficult to keep clean on dirt roads! Mass was celebrated, followed by a meal (planned and provided by each sub-parish), cake and a dance.

The food crisis experienced in parts of Africa is being felt by our brothers and sisters of St. Paul parish, too. Food is more expensive in Mukono because food distributors can make more money selling it in Sudan. Despite the increased dangers of going to war-torn Sudan, Fr. Paul explained, the people live in a "culture of risks" and many are willing to make the trip.

In Uganda, people proudly retain their clan identities and kingdom affiliations. In the Kampala region, where St. Paul's is located, the Buganda kingdom prevails. Recently, three members from the Buganda kingdom, one from SPM, were captured because the Ugandan government feared they were meeting with rebels to plot to overthrow the current administration. Fr. Paul explained that it wasn't true, that the Bugandans were exposing some of the government's "tricks." Their freedom, while still celebrated, comes with far less ability to criticize their leaders.

Ever thought about visiting our twin parish? Another opportunity will be available in the summer of 2009. Watch for details and discern whether this is where God might want you to be!

Bishop Matthias Ssekamanya, from the Lugazi diocese, will be arriving at SFB on the weekend of October 18-19 to speak further about the Church in Uganda and the continuing hopes and challenges it continues to experience. How happy he will be to meet the generous hearts of SFB! Please persist in prayer for our brothers and sisters at SPM. Only God can do what seems impossible to us. All we must do is ask.