

OUT OF AFRICA

UGANDA PILGRIMAGE: The Children of Uganda
By Nathan Siudak, Eighth Grade Student, SFB School

We recently returned from Uganda. Many things that happened there will be told here, so listen up and get ready for the experience of a lifetime.

When we went to Mukono, Uganda, children and adults waited outside the airport with great excitement to greet us American pilgrims. They looked a little curious about who we were and what we do for fun. It was unusual for them to see a young American boy. I was welcomed with smiles, handshakes and hugs.

I met five seminarians, who are young men studying to be priests. They were home on holiday to visit their families and us. Their names are: Fred (whom I now consider to be my brother); Simon Peter, Francis Xavier and Michael and Andrew. Michael is studying in Northern Uganda where war is going on.

Each morning we went downstairs to eat breakfast. Then we would often go to a sub-parish or school. The children sang beautiful songs and danced the coolest dances. At most of the schools we gave both pencils and footballs (which we call soccer balls) to the headmistress for the children. In the States, many children wouldn't like pencils for a gift; they would probably say, "Oh thanks, a pencil. Who cares about pencils?" But in Uganda, a pencil is like a new car to a 16 year old who just got his license, or like an Xbox or a PSP. When those kids saw the gifts we had brought them they almost screamed the ceiling off of the school.

The children at school who don't have enough money for lunch don't eat. How hard would it be to eat if your best friend didn't have money to join you? Then spend the rest of the day listening to his stomach growl from hunger pangs. Children of our parish, many of you probably don't like school or don't care if you go or not. You might complain about your teachers and homework. Well . . . Think again.

If you want to live like the poor people in Uganda with a single pencil being a light of hope, then don't go to school. But if you want to live a long and successful life, go to school and do your homework. Education is a way for us to be able to work with others and help each other. Then, you will be happy with what God has given you.

Thank you for reading my article and God bless you all.

- 10/8/06 St. Francis Borgia Parish Bulletin