

OUT OF AFRICA

UGANDA PILGRIMAGE: HOSPITALITY

By Linda Fehl, Parish Council Member

**“We welcome you! We love you! We are grateful to you!
Please thank the others...!”**

Throughout our pilgrimage to our sister parish, St. Paul the Apostle in Mukono, we experienced the warmth, love and welcoming nature of our sisters and brothers in Uganda. Here are some examples.

- At 9:30 pm on a Tuesday night, after an hour's wait while we went through customs, more than 30 smiling St. Paul parishioners and clergy greeted us warmly as we exited the Entebbe airport, embracing us, taking charge of our luggage, and leading us in the darkness to the hotel bus that would take us to a place we would call home for a week. After a prayer of thanksgiving that we had arrived safely, many joined us on that bus to ensure that we would be well cared for at our destination.

- Each day, no matter where we visited, we were greeted with smiles and Ugandan handshakes (a triple version of our U.S. handshake). Depending on the situation, embraces (usually double, one for each cheek) were also common. Invariably, the greeting would be something like “You are welcome. . .thank you for coming!”

- We were invited to people's homes to enjoy dinner, breakfast, and/or refreshments as the guests of honor among up to 40 attendees, including priests, seminarians, St. Paul's twinning committee and women's guild members and others.

- When we visited schools, the children clapped and cheered with incredible enthusiasm and excitement. They sang and danced for us. They eagerly, sometimes shyly, reached to shake our hands. At several schools, there were welcome songs especially prepared for us, like this one by nursery school children:

**“We are happy very much indeed of this kind of day,
you have done well to spend time to let us welcome
you. Visitors from Borgia, you are really welcome,
you have made us merry, to let us welcome you. . .”**

Please know that the warmth of this visit was meant not only for the pilgrims but for all of you as well.

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