

Out of Africa

Uganda Pilgrimage: Acceptance, Love, Appreciation, Hope

By Cindy Poling, Twinning Committee Member

I was very fortunate to travel with Twinning Committee members this summer to Uganda. It was my first trip and my decision to go was made with much anticipation and concern. Many people have asked me, "Was it as you envisioned? Did you find it life-changing?"

In Uganda, I experienced acceptance, love, appreciation and hope. The people we met at St. Paul Parish and throughout Uganda were much like ourselves. They had love of God, family and community. Many sent their children to boarding schools to give them the chance for the best education possible. This meant working hard to financially support their family and meet the many needs of others around them. They are so much like ourselves, but with greater difficulty to accomplish many of the everyday tasks we take for granted.

I had wondered how the money is used that we provide to our twinning parish. My eyes have seen the good the people of St. Paul's have accomplished with the support of SFB. From schools, latrines, the church, medical care, bikes and much more, they use the support we provide to pave a path of *hope* in the lives of the young, old, widowed, orphaned and those in despair.

Did I find this trip life-changing? "Eye-opening" is a better term. Was it what I envisioned? No, instead I witnessed faith, hope and love. Don't get me wrong, for there was poverty and despair enough to bring tears to our eyes many times. The people of St. Paul helped me look beyond the physical appearance and into the hearts of the people.

We bring back greetings, many thanks, and appreciation from St. Paul's for all the prayers, cards, letters, and financial support you have provided throughout the years. No words can express their gratitude for St. Francis Borgia other than "family." Know that you have extended family in Uganda who pray for you daily. If you ever have the opportunity to travel to St. Paul Parish in Mukono, Uganda, you will experience this as we have.

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