

FROM THE PASTOR 'S DESK

I am often asked what struck me the most from my recent trip to Uganda. I think there are two different ways of looking at our time in Mukono. On the surface we saw lots of negatives. Unbelievable poverty was all around us. Things that we easily take for granted – things like clean water, electricity, and paved roads – these are things that most of the Ugandan people live without. On the surface it's easy to see the toll that years of violence and government corruption have taken upon the majority of Uganda's people.

But when we looked deeper, beyond the surface, we constantly saw God's amazing grace right in front of us. The people of St. Paul's Parish in Mukono were the face of Jesus for us. From the moment we stepped off the plane, so many Ugandans welcomed us with open arms and incredible hospitality. What little they had, they readily shared with us. We shared stories, we talked about the projects we were working on together, and had lots of laughs.

Our Ugandan friends were overjoyed to receive our gifts of rosaries, school supplies, playground equipment, and letters from our children. During Mass on Sunday, August 2, we presented to Fr. Paul, the pastor of the parish, a special surprise gift which he opened in front of the congregation. The parish has never been able to afford a tabernacle, and as a result they have had to lock the Blessed Sacrament in a closet in the sacristy. So the people of St. Paul's Parish erupted in applause, shouts of joy, and dancing in the aisles as Fr. Paul opened the gift of a new tabernacle for the parish. These people whose love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is so evident, can finally have it kept in the church. They were so overcome with joy that I got choked up as I blessed the new tabernacle at the end of the Mass.

While our Ugandan friends may not have many material possessions, they are certainly rich in faith and joy and generosity. They kept teaching us to look deeper, to look beyond the surface to find Jesus in the many ways he comes to us.

~ Fr. Dan