

Out of Africa

Our Five Loaves and Two Fishes

By Tom Guskowski, Twinning Committee Member

Why do we send money from St. Francis Borgia parish in Cedarburg to a church in Africa half way around the world? My answer to this question has changed over the course of the last nine years.

Initially, when my wife Karen approached SFB pastor, Fr. George Gajdos, about having an international twinning relationship, I felt it was appropriate that we share our blessings with those less fortunate. Wasn't it part of Christ's Great Commission that we go forth to teach all nations? Many other Catholic churches had such twinning relationships, so it was a very "Catholic thing to do." And when it was settled that we would twin with a parish in Africa, my thought was "it doesn't matter to me where we send our money."

My answer changed when Sisters Fran Cunningham and Rosemary Huddleston of the Milwaukee Archdiocese World Missions Ministry challenged us by saying that if we wanted a true twinning relationship, we must **go** to visit our twin parish. Frankly, I hadn't planned on responding to the Great Commission quite so literally! But **go** we did and our lives have been changed forever. On our first visit as "pilgrims" we experienced the overwhelming love and hospitality of our brothers and sisters in Christ who live in such challenging circumstances. My sense of Christian responsibility changed to a personal desire and need to work with our new friends and to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this process.

On our most recent visit, we were privileged to witness these results of the generosity of St. Francis Borgia parish to St. Paul parish in Mukono: improvements to the church building, including stained glass windows, some pews, a keyboard and sound system, an overhead projector, and most importantly, their first tabernacle; a two-classroom nursery school; a latrine; construction of St. Francis Borgia Secondary School (the walls are up); and numerous Women's Guild projects.

Our brother and sisters have been faithful and responsible stewards of your generosity. And there has been an overall deepening of their church life as a result of our twinning relationship.

Our parish will not be able to solve all of the challenges faced by Africa, by Uganda, by the Diocese of Lugazi, or even by St. Paul Church in Mukono. But, like the young boy in Matthew's gospel, we can offer our relatively small gifts, watch Jesus bless them and work His miracles. To God be the glory!