

TRINITY TRIANGLE

Stewardship - A Way of Life

TIME • TALENT • TREASURE

Catholic Community of Blessed Trinity



6/28/2023—Father Pat blessed the Grotto of Our Lady of Mercy Children’s Home. The statue of Our Lady was donated by the Burzotta family and the grotto was sponsored through Father Charles.



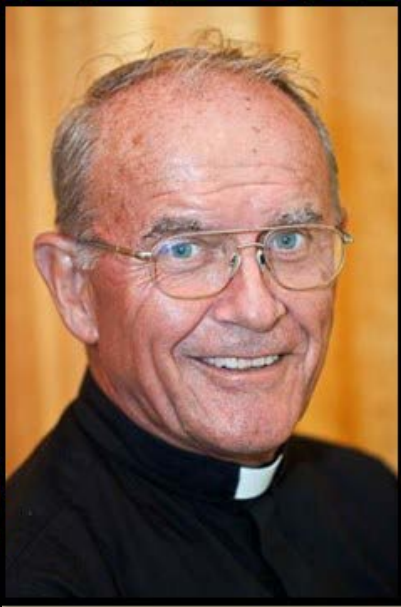
6/29/2023—Graduation Day for the first class at St. Mary’s Vocational School at Kokindo.

Uganda Issue 2023



6/25/2023—Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, along with Hon. Fred Byamukama MP, Minister of State for Works and Transport, present Father Pat with an award from the Ugandan government.

Bits & Pieces



There is never a dull moment while at our sister Parish. I go to 32 villages – 5 each day. We try to limit the village visits to 2 hours because the bad roads make travel time between villages unpredictable. Up to 5 missionaries, the parish priest, and I spend all day from 9am to well after dark. We get a multitude of requests. Here are a few:

A sister showed me a photo of her 23-year-old paraplegic brother lying on a mat. She asked, if possible, could we buy her a wheelchair so she could take him outside and he wouldn't have to spend all day inside their simple home. I told her – no problem. I'll give that one to the K of C because they have a wheelchair ministry.



We have a leaders' meeting at each village. At one village one of the leaders hoped to be married in church within a year. He was hoping for a good harvest

to come up with the rest of the dowry his bride's family was

requiring. The dowry was equivalent to \$350 USD. To them, it was more like millions. He already had 40% of it saved. I asked to see him privately after the meeting. He came with his bride and another couple in the same situation. I come prepared for such occasions. I privately gave each couple \$100 to help with the dowry. You never saw two couples so happy! They looked at the \$100, they passed it around to one another. They never stopped smiling and then fell on their knees in thanksgiving.



A member of the Legion of Mary came to me after Mass in one village with a statue of Mary. One

hand was broken, and the head was gone completely. They use Mary's statue at each weekly meeting. I told her I didn't think we could repair the statue and asked how much for a new one. "We cannot afford 350,000 Uganda shillings for a new one!!," she exclaimed. That is just \$100! USD! We gave Charles, their parish priest, the funds so he could replace the statue of Mary.



The church of Our Lady of Knock was the first village we visited. On special occasions they have elaborate ways of bringing in the Book of the Gospel. This time was very inspiring. A very large man with a home-made helicopter on his head approached, led by a



team of liturgical dancers. The helicopter was spinning, and the Gospel book was clearly visible in the front seat of the helicopter. In Ireland when Our Lady of Knock Shrine received more worldwide pilgrims, the very progressive parish priest of Knock had a big airport built nearby. I told the people that story so now they might be expecting us to build an airport at their village!

Fr. Pat

Budgets: the Bedrock of *Dreams*

Karen Fleetwood

Five of us plus Father Pat spent a long 9 hours on one day, traveling from sub-parish to sub-parish for budget meetings. As a teacher of 40 years, I have sat through many budget meetings and had my share of disappointments. However, there is a big difference between asking for new band uniforms or more Smartboards and requesting a latrine for a school or a roof for a sacristy and kitchen!

The meetings followed a consistent format: reports presented by church and school staff outlining previous contributions, progress made, and the “challenges” still facing them. Their budget reports were thorough and expertly written, with clear and concise line items and costs. In case anyone might wonder, Father Pat keeps an eagle eye on every expense and every request for assistance. In a professional but caring way, he outlined for each sub-parish what could be done, what couldn't be done, and what might just take a little longer.-

The budget results were immediately reviewed with parishioners in the church. The churches were packed with interested families who had waited for hours for us to arrive. They waved, smiled, and cheered every time they heard that a need was going to be met, even if not as completely as they would have liked.

Following the review, Father Pat came down from the altar as the families, down to the smallest child, came up to receive his personal blessing. And they did not come empty handed! They brought sacrificial offerings and gave them to us: an ear of corn, a single egg, mangoes, a bunch of bananas fresh off the tree, a few chickens (two of our young men now know how to hold a chicken safely!), a coin or two when they could.

The parishioners praised God for what they received because of the meeting, and smiled and thanked us profusely for coming. For once, these were budget meetings that I was glad to attend!



When the budget meeting concluded at St. Joseph Kinunda sub-parish, we went next door to tour the new Health Center facility. Father Pat led the blessing of this most important project. The facility is small compared to what we're used to in the US, but it looms large for those who are in dire need of this service.

The crowd followed us from the church to the new Health Center building. Our group stood on the outside porch while Father Pat and Father Charles led the blessing. Parishioners joined in the prayers as part of the ceremony.

We hope, of course, that this facility can grow and serve more people. A community can only thrive if its people are healthy, especially the children! We are counting on them to lead the sub-parish one day. As part of Pope St. John Paul II's Prayer for the Youth states, “Holy Virgin... sustain with your motherly intercession our families and our ecclesial communities, so that they may help adolescents and young people to answer generously the call of the Lord.” A healthy mind and body will always go hand-in-hand.



GOD IS IN THIS PLACE ~ Caren Thompson

One of the highlights of the mission trip is always the Sunday Mass which is concelebrated with the local priests and Fr Pat. This year, Parish Sunday for the community had a few extra surprises. Attendees included the Uganda Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja and Hon. Fred Byamukama MP, Minister of State (For Works and Transport), Grace Bataringaya the Vice Chairperson LCV Kakumiro District, the Blessed Trinity Nalweyo Parish Council, catechists, seminarians, and a great turnout of students and parishioners.



Mass here is always a very special celebration, even on weekdays. This Sunday, many tents were set up to provide shade for the two-hour celebration. A choir and conductor were in place for the music. The people's devotion was incredible, evident in the hymns and cultural dances that took place throughout the Mass. Drums and keyboards complemented angelic voices that sang in perfect harmony. Just before the gospel reading, a small boy carrying the gospel book was placed on a chair decorated with balloons. The child and chair were lifted high above the shoulders of a very tall man during the procession to the altar. The offertory procession, in which the entire congregation participated, was quite lengthy, and the gifts—monetary, fruits, vegetables, eggs, a chicken, and a goat—were later distributed between the church and the parish farm.

The Prime Minister had the opportunity to address the local constituents and promised greater focus on ending fraud and corruption. Since she had a prior engagement scheduled and had to leave early, Hon. Fred Byamukama MP stayed on for the remainder of the day's celebration. Before she departed, they presented Fr Pat with an award from the Uganda Government in appreciation for the spiritual, social, and economic transformation of their country.



Toby & Joshua O'Brien

MAKING FRIENDS IN NALWEYO ~ Toby O'Brien

Returning to Uganda was an answered prayer. After living in Uganda with my family for 6 months in 2013, my life was permanently changed. When I was given the opportunity to go on this trip I immediately said yes.

Every day, my brother Joshua and I would go to a different place in Nalweyo and help however we could. Because we weren't tasked with a specific job we were able to spend more time with the people. Throughout our trip playing football (soccer) with the locals was a constant. Except for a couple of nights, we ended our day by playing football at a nearby field or at the high school. Sometimes we would even go out after dark and students would come out of their dormitories to join us. Currently I'm a senior at Trinity Catholic High School in Ocala, and I've been on the varsity soccer team since my sophomore year. This past year I've started in multiple positions on the team. As such, I believed that I could at least contend against the Ugandans, but that expectation quickly faded. It didn't matter the age group - from 6 years old to 20 years old - I was completely outmatched! They play every spare moment they have, and can pull off moves against you that would make them a phenom in the States. It was amazing to see, and I had so much fun playing with them!

Another thing that I really enjoyed during my time there was talking to the high school students. Multiple nights a week, I, along with my brother and Josie Reed, would go up to the high school and just hang out with the students. We would talk about the different classes we were taking, and they would ask questions about what life was like in America. I made many good friends!

The two weeks we spent there went by incredibly fast and although I was very sad to leave, I knew that I would bring the love of the Nalweyo people back home to Florida. I will forever remember and cherish the time I spent there and pray it is God's plan for me to return. I am incredibly grateful for everything that was done to make this trip so smooth, from both Blessed Trinity Nalweyo and Blessed Trinity Ocala.



My 's Mission



Jessica Baker

Mission trips are an incredible source of blessings for everyone who takes part in them. They hold a unique significance in my heart. It was through various mission trips in high school I first discovered my calling

as a nurse. My first time in Uganda truly solidified and confirmed this calling within me. It marked my first return to Uganda since becoming a Registered Nurse.

Uganda faces significant challenges in its healthcare system. In Nalweyo, many cannot afford access to medical facilities or medications. A team of medical and nursing students teamed up and decided to organize a medical camp where medications and access to doctors would be available at no cost. Over 320 people were seen and not one person was turned away. Working alongside local medical professionals conducting health screenings, distributing medications, administering vaccinations and treating injuries and infections is an incredibly humbling experience. Witnessing the resilience, strength, and warmth of the people while providing much-needed medical care fosters a deep sense of connection and purpose. The collaboration with local medical professionals enhances the exchange of knowledge and cultural understanding, making this journey more rewarding. It becomes a transformative journey, not just in terms of medical assistance but also in personal growth and gratitude for the privilege of serving others.

My primary focus revolved around addressing the medical needs of the orphanage. I arrived and was warmly greeted by a sea of eager, smiling faces. However, my joy was tinged with concern when assessing the health of these children from afar. It was evident that some of them were facing significant health challenges. In response to the urgency of the situation, my mind raced with all the tasks that needed to be accomplished over the next week or so. The days and nights were long, but our dedicated team worked tirelessly to provide essential treatments the children required. We conducted malaria tests, treated respiratory infections, tended to various wounds, and other medical issues.

The experience was both challenging and rewarding as we witnessed the positive impact of our efforts for children's well-being. Their resilience and bravery throughout their illnesses left a profound impression on me. The love and gratitude they expressed reminded me why I had chosen this path of serving others. This mission reinforced the importance of extending medical aid to those in need and deepened my commitment to making a difference for the people of Nalweyo.

There are truly no words to describe what this trip does for your heart. You do not go to Uganda to save these people. Instead, these people save you.





Celebrating Eamon's Legacy:

a Tribute by the Family of Rev. Fr. Eamon Tobin

Teresa Byrne, sister

Michelle Byrne, niece

Fergal Byrne, nephew

Deirdre Morrissey, niece

Early this year, Fr. Sheedy invited us, the family of our late brother and uncle, Eamon (Rev. Fr. Eamon Tobin of Melbourne, Florida, formerly of Kilkenny, Ireland), to witness and be a part of the blessing of seven churches in the Saints Peter & Paul parish. These churches were built from the money our uncle left in his will when he passed away on 1st January 2021. We embarked on a journey from Ireland to Uganda, not fully aware

of what awaited us. We had read about the mission in the Blessed Trinity, Nalweyo book, but that was nothing compared to the experience of being there.

Fr. Henry, the current parish priest of Saints Peter & Paul, took excellent care of us, just as he had done four years earlier when our uncle Eamon visited Uganda on a mission trip with Fr. Sheedy. It was during that visit in 2019, and through his friendship with Fr. Henry, that our uncle was moved to change his will, leaving most of what he had to the parish of Saints Peter & Paul.

We had a very tight itinerary, just two days to bless seven churches! Despite facing delays, the spirits of the parishioners remained high as they warmly welcomed us. Our first church was St Cyprian, arriving around 3 hours late on Sunday evening due to a punctured wheel en-route. The aim was to arrive during the day, as there's no electricity, so Fr Sheedy blessed the church with the aid of flashlights! Another church, St. Jude's, is perched on hill. Reaching the church by car is no mean feat and the parishioners had to push us up in the end! However, the common thread found in each of the sub-parishes was the wonderful welcome of singing and dancing before proceeding to bless the churches and celebrate mass. The sermons from Fr Henry and Fr Joseph were passionate, and the parishioners participated throughout. We did too once we learned to say 'Amina'. There was even traditional dancing at the end; wonder how a jig or a reel would go down at home after Mass?!

The Mass collection primarily consisted of gifts of food, and the goats and hens were coming thick and fast. It was evident that we were in for lovely meals each day.

After celebrating Mass, we introduced ourselves, and of course, it wouldn't be enough to say a few words—Fr. Sheedy also asked us to sing! We couldn't refuse even though our singing ability didn't come close to the wonderful voices from the choir; we chose "Walk in the Light" and thankfully everyone joined in.

From our uncle's donation, they were able to significantly extend the Saints Peter and Paul Nursery and Primary school. We were privileged to visit the school following the children's mass at the main parish church on Tuesday morning. We were really impressed by the level of learning in each of the classes. The children were so engaging as we asked them questions. We received beautiful gifts from the children, just as we did at each of the sub-parishes; we have them kept safely as lovely reminders of our visit.

While our uncle's generous donation has brought an abundance of blessings to each of the sub-parishes, there is still a lot more that can be done. Some of the sub-parishes lack clean and safe water, many churches lack pews, and several of the sub-parishes lack a permanent structure for their school.

We were simply overwhelmed by the visit, not least because of the amazing welcome we received when we visited each church, but also because of the feeling of being close to our uncle Eamon again. Each time Teresa (our mam and auntie) would cut the ribbon to open the church, there was a rush of emotions—a huge sense of pride and joy, but also sadness for our uncle who is no longer with us. We adored him. He would come home to Ireland every summer and we have great memories of holidays with him. We dearly miss him. In a way, as we were retracing his footsteps, it made us feel very close to him. I'm sure he was smiling at us from heaven while we embraced the Ugandan culture and its people.



Mam cutting the ribbon at St. Andrews



Mam and Fr. Henry with a student of Sts Peter & Paul School



Uncle Eamon's picture



Offertory goat at St. Cyprian's



Mam shaking hands



Meeting with the teachers at Sts Peter & Paul School

Widening Our Focus

For years we have concentrated on building village churches in our sister parish (now 32), building village schools where there were none (now well over 20), providing deep water wells of which we have 40+, installing many water tanks, and upgrading an orphanage and a health clinic.

We have now expanded in the following three areas:

Catechists House

Every village (sub parish) has at least one, sometimes two or three catechists. It is a full-time job with no pay and the only transportation is a bicycle we provided for each of them. They are the spiritual leader(s) of each village and prepare people for baptism, first communion, confirmation, marriage, and funerals. The Catechists also teach Sunday school and lead liturgy of the word and Holy Communion services most weekends. The priest normally comes only once a month. To avoid long distance travel from their family home, we started building catechist homes adjacent to the church. Among other advantages it gives more security to the church and school. We have built quite a few with a lot more to go. The average cost for each home, which includes two bedrooms, a kitchen, a small dining room, a toilet, and a meeting room is \$28,000.



Teacher Houses

Most teachers do not live in the location of the school. They are “somewhat” qualified, and they do a good job. It is difficult to keep a good teacher unless you provide a place to stay during the week. We started by building a (staff) house that would accommodate eight teachers. We provided a latrine (toilet) outside close by. Each teacher has a small bedroom, and a small study/living room with solar lights. Unbelievably, we can accommodate eight teachers for about \$32,000! We have completed 10 of them so far with many more to go.

Village Dormitories for boys and girls

From the beginning we built large dormitories for boys and girls at Blessed Trinity grade school and Trinity Catholic high school. We have three dorms for boys and three for girls, each one filled with 150 students (i.e., 900 total). These students now have three meals a day, a strong organized Catholic life, 4-5 hours of study a day, and a very safe environment. Most excel in their state exams and that news spreads to the villages.

We are building smaller dorms in each village that have a capacity for 40-50 students. They are beginning to see their boarders earn better grades. Day students do not have light at night and mostly no means to study. But all of them love education. They have very few distractions. A village dorm, fully furnished and painted, costs an average of \$38,000. The need is great. ~ **Father Pat**





God's Instrument of Transformation

Mary McGarvey

Father Patrick J Sheedy – a name renowned throughout the Republic of Uganda. No matter where he goes, he is greeted like royalty. Hundreds of people line the streets waving, singing, dancing, and chanting his name.

For nearly 20 years, Fr Pat has committed his efforts and resources to improve the quality and accessibility of faith development and education in Nalweyo and its surrounding villages. During these years, he has been responsible for soliciting donations, obtaining sponsors, and recruiting missionary teams to help carry out this mission. Today, Fr Pat, along with Sister Juliet and Blessed Trinity in Ocala, help to support Blessed Trinity Parish in Nalweyo, 32 flourishing sub-parishes and schools, and an orphanage – all sharing in the common good of the communities.

Even though their accomplishments are great, there is still a lot of work to be done. Fr Pat spends countless hours formulating and maintaining budgets for all these churches and schools in the hopes they will soon be self-supportive and prospering.



Being my first mission trip and not being from Ocala, this was also my first opportunity to meet Fr Pat and see him in action...it was phenomenal! He was as sharp as a tack and never missed a beat. He has more energy and stamina than I ever had. His 15-hour days always began with adoration before 7am mass, a quick breakfast and then heading out on the road to visit each individual mission church to discuss their financial plan and approve their budgets. All the while, students, teachers, parents, and villagers were handing him letters pleading for various types of financial assistance. Before Father left Uganda, he took the time to read each letter and somehow, managed to squeeze them into the budget.

After his annual trip to Uganda, he returns to Ocala to start working on the next year's budget – his work never ends.

Fr Pat has been truly blessed with the opportunities and abilities to carry out such a tremendous and successful mission, changing the lives of countless people. I am looking forward to continuing my support of this mission and hope I can join Fr Pat on future trips.

When I think back on my personal experience from my stay in Uganda, I keep coming back to the same Gospel reading: Matthew 25:40.

'And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'





Our Lady of Africa

Jane Hurley

Our Lady of Africa is near and dear to my heart. I have the privilege of sponsoring this church in honor of my mom and dad, Herbert & Dorothy Hurley, and my twin sister Elizabeth. It was blessed last year on June 27, 2022, by Fr. Pat and Fr. Charles. I was unable to attend, but that very day Sr. Juliet emailed me photos of the celebration.

This year, I got to experience Our Lady of Africa in person. It was surreal and so incredibly special! My first full day in Uganda, Fr. Robert and Cornelius, the catechist, drove me to Our Lady of Africa. All the kids were waiting for us and singing and dancing. The welcoming at all the churches is truly amazing. I talked to the primary school students, visited their stick frame classrooms, toured the church, and inspected the construction of the catechist's house and primary school. Afterward, I was invited to meet some local families in their homes. It was indeed an absolute honor to be so welcomed. The people's generosity was touching.

The following week we returned, and Fr. Robert said mass in the church and baptized three babies. It was overwhelming! The uproar started afterward as Fr. Pat arrived for his annual visit. Fr. Pat, Fr. Charles, and the mission team met with all the church elders to hear their report of last year's accomplishments. The elders then presented the needs for the coming year. After the meeting, Fr. Pat and I addressed the congregation. They presented me with a gift which I treasure. My trip was truly a blessing. God is so, so good!



It's Graduation Day!

On Thursday, June 29th, we were invited and so blessed to witness the first graduation of students from St. Mary's Vocational Institute. They graduated with certificates in carpentry, welding, and garment design (tailoring).

Father Pat was the main guest, together with Sister Theresa DM, Fr. Edward (the principal), and the priests of Mary Queen of the Rosary Parish. Their presence made this day such a solemn event. The student leader gave a powerful speech of appreciation and requested Fr. Pat's help to acquire sewing machines for the graduates so that they could find employment immediately.

Father Pat responded positively. On Sunday, July 15th, the graduates received their sewing machines. With a deep sense of gratitude, the new tailors promised to give their first income to the church! ~ *Sister Juliet Ateenyi IHMR*



Ugandan Hospitality ~ Caren Thompson

My first trip with the Blessed Trinity Mission to Uganda was June 2022. I was so excited that I requested to remain longer in Uganda, with Sr. Juliet, to fully experience the culture and customs of the local community.

In 2022, I was privileged to meet two government officials. While I was crossing the street with Sr. Juliet, a motorcade transporting the Ugandan Prime Minister passed us. We stopped with other local citizens to wave. I was very surprised when the vehicles stopped. Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja greeted me, and I was able to take photos with her. A few days later Hon. Fred Byamukama MP, Minister of State for Works and Transport visited with Fr. Barnabas and Sr. Juliet at Blessed Trinity. I was introduced as part of the mission team. We took photos and promised to keep in touch. We would need his help getting the necessary approvals to bring in medical supplies for a planned medical camp in 2023.

I contacted Minister Fred when he got married earlier this year, congratulated him, and mentioned that the team was planning to return to Uganda in June 2023. When we arrived at Entebbe airport, we were greeted by a VIP team (arranged by Minister Fred) that assisted us with immigration and customs clearance after more than 24 hours of traveling. We were most grateful for this lovely surprise – Ugandan Hospitality.

At the Parish Day celebration I was able to spend some time at lunch with Minister Fred and during our conversation he invited the local priests and all visiting missionaries to visit his home on the following Saturday. Minister Fred also shared that he and his wife Gladys had a new 3-week-old baby boy. Fr. Pat was sitting across from us and immediately we started to make plans for baby Maverick to be baptized during our visit on Saturday July 1.

When our group arrived, the area outside Minister Fred's home was set up with tents and seating with individual tables and chairs, as for an intimate setting for friends. Minister Fred arrived and greeted us, and graciously invited us to tour his farm. He is very proud of its growth and development. What started out as a small acreage now has pineapple groves (very juicy and sweet), chickens, and pigs that were housed in very clean, well-kept buildings. He hopes that all families in his constituency have the opportunity to start a farm like he did from small beginnings. After the tour we got back into the vehicles and returned to his home. Baby Maverick was presented by his proud parents and godfather for Baptism and then a very delicious lunch was served!

Everyone had a great time, and we were very appreciative of Minister Fred's generous hospitality; we look forward to a long-lasting friendship with him and future visits to Uganda.



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Philippians 4:13

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