BRINGING FRIENDS TOGETHER AGAIN ACROSS THE MILES
By Fr. Ron Sajdak

Back in 2008, we made our second Mission Trip to Uganda, East Africa. This time we were there to bless and dedicate the new young ladies dormitory building named “Evarist House” after the name of our young, deceased, good friend and priest of the Masaka Diocese, Fr. Evarist Lubega. While there we had the opportunity to preside at Mass at the local parish church. The church’s name was Nkoni Parish. The Mass was a real celebration complete with local tribal dance and a beautiful choir that led us all in song. The Pastor, Fr. Jude Charles welcomed us warmly and his youthful assistant, Fr. Joseph also welcomed us and attended to many of our needs. Through the years since we have been able to stay in touch with some of our new friends, Fr. Joseph, who had been working with youth ministry across the Diocese was sent to school to get a degree in Communications. Now he is the director of communications for the Diocese of Masaka. Ever since he had been in school, we at ROTA had been able to assist him with Mass stipends. We also encouraged him and spoke to him about the opportunities some African priests have had working an “internship” with the Communication office here in the Diocese of Buffalo. Fr. Joseph didn’t forget our offer and neither did we.

When we returned to the Masaka Diocese in May of 2012 to dedicate the Kitovu Medicine Store, Fr. Joseph was front and center; taking photos with his digital camera and recording the events. It didn’t take long to resume the discussion about his coming to America for the first time and to experience the “internship” with the Diocese of Buffalo Communication Office. With the permission of his Bishop, Fr. Joseph was invited by ROTA to be our representative for the Spring Mission Cooperative here in the Diocese of Buffalo. He will be arriving in Mid-May and will be with us for six weeks. In addition to preaching Mission Appeal at St. Gabriel, St. Lawrence and St. Martin de Porres in Buffalo, Fr. Joseph will travel with the St. Martin Choir to Baltimore Washington and enjoy some of the sites. He will attend the Diocese of Buffalo Priest’s Convocation, two weeks of Internship with the Communications Office, touring around the Buffalo area and a one week Charismatic Conference for Priests and Deacons at the University of Steubenville, Ohio. ROTA is proud to sponsor him, providing his flight expenses and covering all the costs of his visit. This is just one example of the multiple ways ROTA: Reaching Out 2 Africa assists African Clergy and Religious. Welcome to America………Fr. Joseph….
As our international projects continue to grow in number, our concern began to grow as well. How will we be able to maintain and support our current projects as well as continue to be open to new locations and new projects that present themselves? We began to be aware that the charitable donations we’ve been collecting just won’t sustain the volume and costs of maintaining our international projects.

Our ministry needed other sources of financial support as well as those most generous donations from you, so many of our most faithful benefactors. In November 2011, we formed the ROTA Development Group Inc., which will function as our non-profit 501(c3) entity that we hope will be able to receive grant funding to help assist us in maintaining and continuing our African Outreach. This has been a real learning process for each of us. After the official Incorporation Papers arrived they needed to be certified by the Department of State of New York. They then had to be sent to the United States Department of State to have our country’s Secretary of State sign them as well. Once signed they needed to be presented to the South Sudanese Embassy, a fee needed to be paid and then they needed to be stamped by a South Sudanese Official First Secretary. In January 2013, former “Lost Boy of Sudan,” Fidele Diing Dhan, Executive Director of the Corporation, traveled to Juba to present our official documents to the South Sudanese authorities so that ROTA Development Group, Inc. can be recognized as an official NGO: Non-Governmental Organization that will have permission to take on projects within the country. Once recognized, we could open a bank account within an international bank in South Sudan thus allowing us to more easily move money into the country to sustain, continue, and expand our projects.

An additional piece of business yet to be accomplished would include getting registered and approved to open the Medical Clinic within the Village of Koiyom. Several pieces of support have to converge at the same time to open the clinic for healthcare for the people who need it the most. We need to identify the medical professional(s) who will work for us within the clinic. At the start they will be invited to live within the structure as part of their salary. Second we need to purchase and ship to the clinic both the medical equipment we’ll need to start along with the medical supplies and medicines. All these steps need to be carried out in a coordinated fashion so that the equipment and/or medicines don’t end up in the wrong hands or dissipated indiscreetly.

We are happy to report that in January 2013 Fidele Diing Dhan had returned home and has presented us with the official approval certificate of the ROTA Development Group, Inc. which now is officially recognized as an NGO: Non-Governmental Organization in South Sudan. This means that ROTA can operate legally within the country, open its own bank account and conduct business. Thank you to our team for working so hard on this significant accomplishment.

KOIYOM MEDICAL CLINIC
PHASE 2 BEGINS FOR SOUTH SUDAN

Now that the medical clinic building is constructed, we turn our attention to Phase 2 of our project: equipping the clinic with the supplies it needs. Fr. Ron and Fidele Dhan were informed and invited to attend the Public Auction at Sheehan Memorial hospital. The hospital had been closed and was purchased by the McGuire Group which operate a variety of nursing homes within Buffalo. After a discussion with our Board it was agreed upon that collecting and shipping medical equipment from the US, while expensive, would be more advantageous than the purchasing of used equipment on the African continent. Issues of quality of the merchandise etc. were considered. Having been initiated by programs like “Auction 63” from Atlanta, Fr. Ron, Board Member Fred Mills and Fidele Dhan ventured out to the Public Auction. For a small investment of funds, Fidele and Fr. Ron were able to purchase three examination tables, weight scales, plastic portable shelving, medical carts, and many other supplies. Our board also approved and the “Hope Fund” of St. Vincent de Paul parish helped supply the funding for a “sea worthy” shipping container to store and continue to collect the goods that will eventually make their way to the Village of Koiyom. Our ROTA 365 efforts as well as other donations will assist us in the acquisition of other equipment as well as the shipping costs that will help transport these goods to our clinic in Koiyom Village.
Introducing...

“ROTA 365”

Dear Friends,

Our ministry organization has moved diligently to establish Third World Connections. Amidst turmoil in Sudan and great economic challenges here in the United States, our current project of building a free standing Medical Clinic in the town of Koiyom, South Sudan has made great strides from humble beginnings. The dream of Fidele Diing Dhan one of the “Lost Boys” of Sudan, to provide medical services in his homeland is near fruition. Water wells have been dug which provide a twofold purpose; fresh water for the clinic and a source of clean, safe drinking water for the residents of the Village. The Koiyom Medical Clinic is no longer an idea; it is a fully constructed building waiting for equipment and staff to serve the community.

Our Campaign

Our Board members have generously supported the “ROTA 365” initiative and now

We ask that You Donate $1.00 Per Day for One Year

What amounts to the cost of a pack of gum, can contribute towards providing lifesaving medicines, equipment and staff in South Sudan. It is through your generous donation that we continue to make headway in ROTA projects and efforts of humanitarian assistance.

Your financial support is greatly appreciated and we ask that you extend the opportunity to two of your friends, family or co-workers, an invitation to pledge with us.

To make this as convenient as possible, various methods of payment can be utilized. Contributions can be made monthly, quarterly, or paid in the full ($365.00). Use the enclosed envelop and mark the donation card accordingly. Your payment can also be made via Paypal; please refer to our website: www.reachingout2africa.com and donate there. All donations are tax deductible.

Your support means building a better Africa. It starts with you – Join us.

Rev. Ronald P. Sajdak
Director

“OPFC: ON POINT FOR COLLEGE” RECOGNIZES FIDELE DIING DHAN AS AN “OPFC GRADUATE STAR”

On Friday, April 19th, “On Point for College” held their Annual Silent Auction and Dinner Celebration in Syracuse, New York. This year, former “Lost Boy of Sudan” Fidele Diing Dhan was recognized as a “Graduate Star” from their program. For more than 10 years, On Point for College has helped over 2000 first-generation youth to get into college, stay there, and succeed afterwards. Having started with providing assistance from the trunk of a car in 1999, they have grown to a multi-leveled non-profit organization in several locations. They help students find financial aid, fill out the forms, and get the resources to survive and succeed. They drive them to colleges, visit them to help them stay on track, and go to their graduations. Since 2008, they have also helped them get jobs afterward.

Fidele met the organization in 2003 shortly before he was to relocate from Syracuse to Buffalo and begin attending the University of Buffalo. In the program from the dinner it stated: “Fidele Dhan will graduate from D’Youville College in Buffalo in January 2015 with a B.S. in nursing. He would like to get a nurse practitioner degree after that. Like more than 100 other On Point for College students and graduates, Fidele is a Lost Boy of Sudan, one of many thousands of young people who were forced to flee civil war and walk a thousand miles to a refugee camp in Kenya. When Fidele came to the U.S., he was accepted to the University of Buffalo in 2003, but there was no housing left. Fidele was able to connect with Father Ron Sajdak, Pastor of St. Martin de Porres RC Church, with whom Fidele was able to live in the rectory. On Point continued to help with basic needs, shopping for necessities, and transportation along with being a trusted support system. Father Sajdak has been like a father to Fidele, and has visited South Sudan with Fidele. He has also helped with funding for a medical clinic in Koiyom, Fidele’s village in South Sudan.” Congratulations Fidele!!!!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW????

Back in the Jubilee Year, 2000, a family of ten were welcomed to Buffalo from the war embedded county of Sudan. The Rieang family found their new home in downtown Buffalo and members of St. Bernadette Parish Church in Orchard Park assisted in equipping their apartment as well as exposing the family, especially the children to a number of different experiences including a visit to the famous Erie County Fair. Early during the time of their first fall season, Fr. Ron and Mrs. Joan took the family “apple picking.” One of the young ladies in the family, Ajak, carried her load of apples like so many other women in her village. After her few years going to school at Southside Elementary, Ajak attended Grover Cleveland High School and received her Associate Degree from ECC: Erie Community College majoring in Science. Currently Ajak is a student at Buffalo State College. While going to school she had a number of different employment opportunities one of which is being her very own Amway Distributor. Amway of course is known for their line of Nutrilite Health and Wellness products including XS Energy Drink, Inspired Style Personal Accents and Jewelry, as well as True Beauty Artistry products. Check out her own website at: www.amway.com/ajakrieang

WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT YOU!!!!!!

Oftentimes people ask me, “how are you able to do all that you do?” Left to myself, I’d go crazy. However because of all the prayer, confidence, and donations of support that continually come in, miracles continue to happen. As I often say, “I just try to stay out of the way…..” Bless you all for all your support….

CLARENCE ROTARY COMES THROUGH AGAIN WITH ANOTHER HOLIDAY PARTY

For a third consecutive year, the Rotary Club of Clarence teamed up with ROTA and provided a Christmas party to many of our African Refugee families in Western New York. Through the generosity of the Pastor and Parishioners of Assumption Church in Blackrock, the party hosted the largest group of young people in its three year history. Thank you Clarence Rotarians for your generosity.