“ROTA & AMDP JOIN IN BUILDING PROJECT TO BENEFIT PRIESTS & THEIR PEOPLE”

In one of my visitations with ministry colleagues including my good friend Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa of the Diocese of Masaka I learned an important difference between the way Western countries and mission countries compensate their clergy. In western countries priests get paid by their individual parishes while in mission countries the monetary collections of the parishes barely cover the operating costs of each parish as well as assist many of those who are more destitute than most. Mission clergy in Masaka Diocese depend upon an average of $25 USD per month from the Bishop to supply food, clothing, petro for their vehicles, etc. It was also shared with me that the monthly funds for the clergy were the product of individual bishop’s successful begging from generous benefactors. Those benefactors in many European countries are getting fewer and fewer making this system unsustainable. We speculated about some sort of investment that the Diocese could make that could be an income generator for the AMDP: Association of Masaka Diocesan Priests. Soon an idea was conceived. It was proposed to us that ROTA partnering with AMDP could work to invest in the building of an office structure on Diocesan property that would be leased to a for-profit business. The lease holder would take care of maintenance in the building, paying utilities etc. and pay funds for the lease agreement. These funds in turn could supplement the amount shared by the Bishop with mission clergy. Dialogue was opened with Rural Centenary Development Bank as a way of giving people in more remote areas of the Diocese an opportunity to keep their saved funds safe from robbery, the possibility of gaining interest on their savings and the availability of small interest loans for starting small businesses. With the project accepted, for three consecutive years, ROTA provided transportation assistance for Fr. Peter Paul, Fr. Emmanuel Katabaazi, and Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa of Masaka Diocese. ROTA facilitated their presence at the Mission Cooperative preaching weekends at parishes in Buffalo and transported them as well to conduct Mission Appeals in the Albany Diocese. These collected funds made the building project possible. On Pentecost Sunday, May 20th, 2018 the Church gathered at Sembabule Parish to begin the festivities. After a Spirit filled Liturgical Celebration the gathered assembly processed to the front of the new building. After a few speeches the ribbon was cut and Bishop Kaggwa made his way into the structure and with a grateful heart began blessing every room and area. This was followed again by more speeches by bank officials, clergy leaders, and guests. Many thanks to the contributing Buffalo Diocese parishes of: Nativity of the BVM, Queen of Angels/Lackawanna, Holy Angels, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Mary/Swormville, All Saints, St. Philomena, St. John the Baptist/Lockport, Our Lady of Perpetual Help/Lakeview, St. Mary of the Lake, and St. Gregory the Great. Thank you also to the Parishes in Albany Diocese of: St. Joseph/Greenfield Center, St. Stanislaus/Amsterdam, St. Mary/Amsterdam, St. Stephens/Hagaman, St. Albert, St. Anthony and St. John the Evangelist all in Schenectady. Blessings to all who worked so very hard to bring to completion this most worthy work for the people of Sembabule Parish and Masaka Diocese. God is truly a God of abundance.
“A NEW PRIEST FOR WAR TORN TORIT”

Who would have thought that a Kenyan assistant to Bishop Paride Taban would respond “Yes” when Bishop Taban asked him to consider being a priest for Torit. Because he was a bit older than most seminarians he was sent to Pope John XXIII Seminary in Weston, MA where he began his four years of Theological Training. While there he discovered ROTA and requested that we be able to assist him with some supply fees each semester. Our board willingly agreed and our relationship with Richard Odour began. Three years later he shared with us a video of his Deaconate Ordination that took place at Holy Family Parish in Nairobi, Kenya. Richard made a brief visit to Buffalo to meet some of his benefactors and to personally invite us to his priesthood ordination that was to take place the next year.

The Papal Nuncio, a delegate of the Holy Father to Kenya and South Sudan presided over his Deaconate Ordination and was scheduled to preside over his ordination to the priesthood. This however was not to be as the Nuncio took ill and returned to Rome. However he delegated the now retired bishop of Torit, Paride Taban, the same one who invited Richard to first consider such a vocation to preside. Early May 2018 found me making my first journey to Kenya to support Richard at his priesthood ordination. The USA delegation included myself, a deacon classmate, and newly ordained priest, and a seminary professor from John XXIII in Weston, MA. A grace filled moment was to be had before the ordination when I had the opportunity to visit again with Bishop Taban. He had been our guest in Buffalo back in December of 2003 and I thought I’d never have the chance to see him again but as the Holy Spirit would have it the impossible is made possible and we would have the chance to catch up; I being constantly impressed by the wisdom of this Shepherd of the Church. As soon as we saw each other we ran to greet each other; it was like one of those slow motion “Kodak” moments. In his retirement, Bishop Taban had been working tirelessly with primitive peoples who have little exposure to the outside world. Now he was with us in Nairobi being greeted constantly by many who traveled far and wide for even the briefest visit with this holy Man of God. On Saturday morning, May 12th the church was prepared and populated with a generous cross section of peoples from Richard’s family, Kenyan friends, members of Holy Family Parish where Richard served as a lay person, representatives of the Diocese of Torit, and our USA delegation. After the Gospel Richard’s parents brought him into the church so he could answer the Deacon’s call to orders. The ordination was extra special due to Bishop Taban’s presence, as well as all who attended. The choir, tribal Liturgical Dancers, community marching band all made the ceremony of Holy Orders so very special. The Sacrament of Holy Orders includes a welcome to the priesthood by all the priests in attendance. The Mass concluded with Richard bestowing his first priestly blessing upon his humble bishop and friend, his parents, and adopted parents.
“YOUTH HELPING YOUTH AROUND THE WORLD”

A few years ago the Pontifical Mission Societies ministry changed the name of its youth division from “Holy Childhood” to “Missionary Childhood” Association putting more emphasis on the fact that children should be called upon to assist children around the whole world. For the last few years we at ROTA have been invited into a number of public, private and Catholic schools to share a “clean water” workshop inspired by the middle school’s reading of “A Long Walk to Water” by Linda Sue Park. The seventh grade reading level novel chronicles the incredible life story of the “Lost Boy of the Sudan” Salva Dut who is of the Dinka tribe and parallels it to a contemporary story of a young girl of the Nuer tribe named Nya who also walks a distance for water each day. In the recent past violent uprisings in South Sudan often occurred between both of these large tribes and so the book is very timely. At the end of the story Salva, now all grown up has a current life mission effort to bring clean water drinking wells into Nya’s village and they both meet and see that peace between the tribes is possible through humanitarian assistance and a spirit of real caring for each other.

When ROTA conducts our workshop we begin with a short video which helps the youth to understand the twenty-five year civil war that produced the reality of the “Lost Boys” of the Sudan. We also share with them the story of one of our own “Lost Boys” Fidele Dhan. Through three and five gallon Jerri Water Can relays we help selected students experience the arduous task of walking long distances for water. We then introduce them to one or more of the “Lost Boys” that are here in the Buffalo area. The students prepare questions based on their reading of the book and their general inquiry about the boy’s survival and adaptation to the USA.

Finally the students do targeted fundraising that is then contributed to ROTA for clean water projects. This past May I had the chance to visit four of the five schools that have received the benefit of their fundraising. Though the many students were on their one month break from school, I did get to meet those who had come to their schools for additional summer school help. It was a great pleasure to view for myself the water tanks that had been sponsored by: Our Lady of Black Rock, East Aurora Middle, and West Seneca East Middle Schools. The water tank sponsored by Cleve Hill Middle was a bit too far a distance to make in this trip. However in addition to the water tanks I had the extreme pleasure of inaugurating a new classroom addition to one of the most poor schools in the area. In the near future, the funding received by ROTA from Nativity of the BVM School in Clarence will provide life saving water for this school as well. A Mass of Thanksgiving, blessing of the new classroom addition, and most joyful welcome by the children and their families, all made this visit to Uganda one filled with thanksgiving at the miracles that can happen through missionary efforts of children helping children! Great job!!
HELPING HIS CHILDREN UNDERSTAND WHY HE HAS TO TRAVEL BACK TO HIS HOME VILLAGE OF KOIYOM, SOUTH SUDAN

Former “Lost Boy of Sudan” Fidele Dhan shows pictures from the construction of the medical clinic and family members in his village of Koiyom, South Sudan. He was preparing his children for his eventual absence of one month in order to travel back to inspect the clinic building, shipping container and water wells constructed by ROTA a few years ago. Through the continued support of ROTA and SouthSudanVillagesClinic.org organization, Koiyom Clinic medical staff and medicines will be procured enabling the clinic to become operational. Fidele’s visit was safe and successful as he met with leaders of governmental health care agencies and others to lay the ground work for the clinic’s eventual operations. What a blessing such a clinic will be not only for Koiyom but the whole surrounding area. More info at: www.southsudanvillagesclinic.org

YOUNGEST BOARD MEMBER, JENARO AKEN ACHIEVES SUCCESS IN FORMATION OF A FUTBOL TEAM IN KHARTOUM

Only a few short months ago Jenaro Aken made a journey back to his birth home of Khartoum, Sudan. Along with many celebrations of family reunion he came with a mission: to assist many younger youth in their aspirations and skills at what the world calls Futbol and we call Soccer. Heavy laden with bags of uniforms, socks, and collapsed soccer balls, he made his way to some familiar places of his youth. With the assistance of other acquaintances he was able to organize and equip a youthful team of enthusiastic youngsters. Congratulations to Jenaro and his companions who are providing hope, enthusiasm and joy to the lives of many young people back home in Khartoum.

ROTA TO THE RESCUE

When Fr. Joseph, the head of Communication of the Diocese of Masaka, Uganda had a terrible car accident he put his car into the shop. It took over a year for him to save about half of the repair costs. For a whole year he had to borrow vehicles and make other arrangements to be able to attend Diocesan functions and cover and report on them for the Diocesan Communications Office. He appealed to ROTA for assistance. It took us a great deal of time as well for we do not have a great deal of undesignated funds at our disposal. But Saints be Praised it’s now fixed and Fr. Joseph again can be traveling to all the Diocesan events more conveniently. Fr. Joseph is currently embarking upon a new initiative of starting a local Catholic Radio Station in order to proclaim the Good News to many more people even in remote parts of his Diocese. Blessings.....

ROTA CONTINUES TO FORM PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER WORTHY AND SIMILAR CAUSES........

Over the years ROTA has forged relationships with partner organizations who share similar values in order to expand our effectiveness with ministries in the motherland. We invite you to visit their own particular websites. Contributions to them may be made directly or through ROTA. We are excited to be able to expand our “Reaching Out” to include them. Thanks.

The Franciscan Sisters of St. Bernadette
https://franciscansistersofstbernadette.wordpress.com

The Village Angels of Tanzania
https://thevillageangels-tanzania.org

Building Minds in South Sudan
http://www.bmiss.org/

South Sudan Villages Clinic
www.southsudanvillagesclinic.org

REMEMBERING THE START OF ROTA 365 CLUB....

Our good friend, the late Patricia Vincent, back in 2013 & 2014 brought the idea of the ROTA 365 Club to us. We are most grateful to the many who over the years have contributed $1 a day for our ongoing work. In her memory we’d like to begin this initiative again with this writing. Contribution in whole or part may be made all through the year. Please mark the enclosed envelope as appropriate. As always we at ROTA are most appreciative of your prayer and sacrifices that you share for our mission ministry.