

OUR WONDERFUL SISTER PARISH

FR. JIM DALTON

We are now in the third year of our Sister Parish relationship with our brothers and sisters at Christ the King Cathedral Parish in Bungoma, Kenya. It is amazing to me how much we have accomplished.

Not only have we provided two boreholes and water for hundreds of people, but we have put a face on the body of Christ in Africa. We have brought education to children, connected teens, grieved with those who have lost loved ones, provided transportation for our beloved Fr. Christopher, helped to expand Christ the King School's kitchen and junior high school and supported the building of the new parish offices.

Thank you, Lord, for the generosity of so many and the ability of our sisters and brothers in Kenya to turn money into much needed facilities.

Why do we do all of this? The simple answer is that God has blessed us so richly that we want to and need to share God's gifts with others. In other words, we have been good stewards of God's many gifts to us.

NEWS FROM FR. CHRISTOPHER

On the morning of the election, I called Fr. Christopher to see how Kenya was handling the possibility of one-of-their-own becoming president of the United States. He said the whole country was electrified. There was already dancing in the streets no matter what the outcome of the election might be.

He also told me that he was awaiting the arrival of his new-used Honda CRV from Japan. A truck would have been too expensive but he seemed excited about the possibility of a new vehicle to help him get around to his many sub-parishes. □



CHRIST THE KING CATHEDRAL WOMEN'S GROUP

The women of Christ the King Cathedral, our sister parish, in Bungoma, Kenya face a hard life. They try to make ends meet on \$3.29 a day. There is food to put on the table, children to raise and send to school, and fees to pay. One year of secondary school costs up to \$550 per year. But rather than despair, 500 women have banded together in 23 prayer groups within different sub-parishes to do "Table-Banking" or micro-finance projects. In addition to praying together weekly, they are trying to uplift their living standard through small businesses.

The hope, instilled by the Catholic Women's Association, has encouraged some to keep bees, others to bake and made candy for sale, and others sew dresses and print head scarves. In order to do these projects, they need small loans to get their businesses up and running. So far, they have been able to save and have in circulation 300,000 Kenyan Shillings or about \$4000. If you do the math, it's easy to see that spread among all the members this does not go very far. The money in circulation is clearly not enough to satisfy members' needs. In addition, many of the members lack entrepreneurial skills and knowledge about micro-finance.

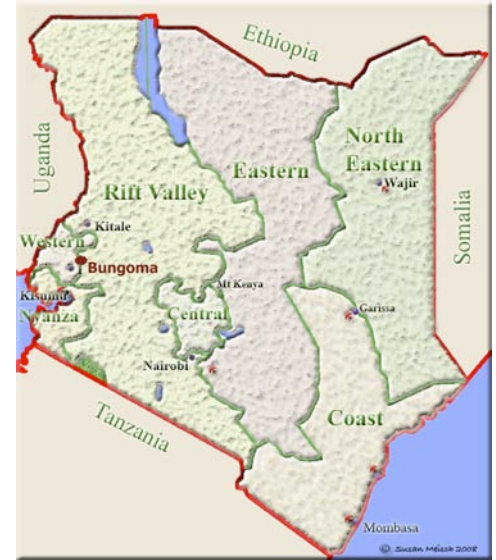
The women plan to hold fundraising projects to increase the core of the group's money and send 5 of the women for training in operation micro-finance banks. This is their goal, but they could use additional help. In response, parishioners this summer purchased embroidered pillowcases and bed covers Fr. Christopher brought these items when he came this summer. Over \$1000 was raised and sent to the women to increase the amount of money they can loan to their members. The Sister/Parish Committee will be exploring other ways we can assist our sisters to become economically empowered. And we welcome any ideas YOU may have.

Share any of your ideas with members of the Sister Parish Committee or with Gail or Barb, and pray for Florence, Eddah, Concepta and the other women as they work to improve their lives. □

POST ELECTION VIOLENCE IN KENYA – BY FR. CHRISTOPHER WANYONYI

The final period before the outbreak of violence was marked by tension over election results. There were rumors of planned rigging of the election in favor of Mr. Kibaki. In some parts the rumors were so strong that could cause the crowd to move to the nearby premises of local churches though this did not happen in Bungoma. The hell broke loose immediately after the election's result was announced, which was against most people expectations. Within less than an hour, the whole country was breathing fire of hate and agony.

The disadvantaged people had to look for protection from police stations as their houses and properties were destroyed and burnt. People were now divided on party and ethnic lines and this even brought sharp divisions in the church where all people are to take solace for their wounded souls. There was no trust any more among our communities. For the two months or so, we witnessed a catastrophe that never in our mind could we imagine. Food disappeared from market places as security was no longer guaranteed. There was no money in circulation, shops and super markets remained closed, as some of them had been looted, sanitation standards deteriorated leading to outbreak of disease and hunger. It was a situation never to be witnessed again.



Healing process

Finally when Mr. Koffi Anan led team reconciled the two principals, President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odina, people had lost hope and were in total desperation. It was later found out that despite the results, there was more that could catch the eye. This was revealed by the “National Accord and Reconciliation Commission” appointed to look into possible causes of post-election violence.

People who had camped at the police station finally found their way back to their homes though with bitterness since they had to start life again. The Church, through its leaders had to start reconciliation among the communities, though it was an uphill task. As for now, I am happy that life is back to normal, though inflation rate is high and most people have to live with less than a dollar a day.

Solutions

Two commissions were appointed to look at the probable causes of the violence and discontent among the communities. It has come out clearly that most issues raised were contained in Agenda (iv) of Accord, which deals with solving most of the problems that rocked the violence. At its core, the article is quite explicit – resolving land and unemployment issues, glaring economic disparities, inequitable distribution of National Resources and Endemic Poverty; all of which are a source of great discontent. As the post election violence showed, failure to Critically Address Article (iv) of the Accord will in future not result merely in ethnic violence engineered mostly by politicians, but an all-consuming class warfare that will know no tribe or race. The magnitude of the violence as the one witnessed, may not be stopped to occur again by putting legislations and measures to prevent a repeat. There must also be fundamental changes in attitude and actions.

Such attitudinal changes have been lacking among political ethics especially in economic sphere. Many do not fully realize that their ostentatious displays of affluence and their stronghold on national resources grates every struggling soul across ethnic divides.

The post election looting and destruction was instructive: there is a good deal of economic frustration out there.

Thanks for the general contribution we received from our dear brothers and sisters in Arlington (Immaculate Conception Parish) which went a long way to ease the frustrations of the affected community. May God bless and reward them abundantly. Peace be to all and justice be our defender! ☐

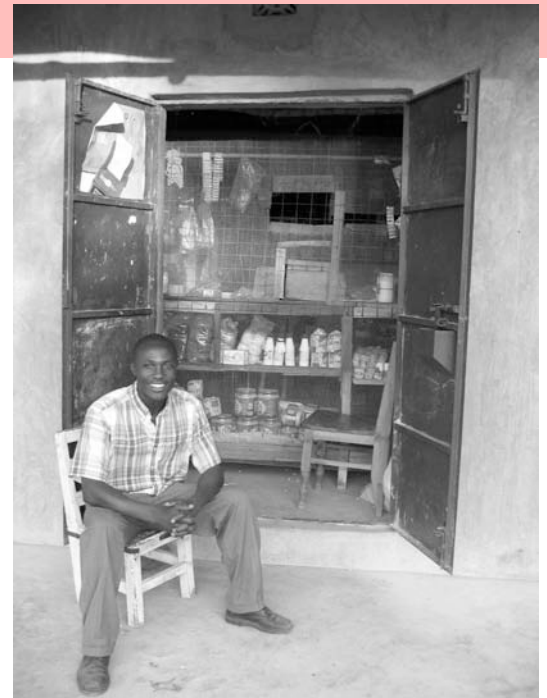
AFFLUENCE - BY ANNE BRENAMAN.

1. I have recently read an article entitled, “The Beguilement of Affluence” by Bob Stevens. I will not present the whole article but I will bring up some key points. I present these points as we reflect on our brothers and sisters in Kenya.
2. The affluence that has developed in the energy-intensive industrial west is based upon waste, indulgence, luxury, and artificial contrived needs.
3. However, at this point, socio-economic inequalities, including widespread hunger and malnutrition in many developing countries, are forcing Christians to question the consumptive western lifestyle.
4. No matter how tight the family budget, no matter the recent impact of losses in the financial sector, we are STILL enormously rich. We call this AFFLUENCE.

The U.S, average per capita income is THIRTY-FIVE (35) times that of the poorest 60% in our world.

In this day, we are caught in a trap. The more we earn, the more we commit ourselves to spend, and then the more we must earn to make ends meet. And this vicious cycle is perpetuated.

5. Jesus constantly warns us in the Gospels of the beguilement of riches. “Woe to you that are rich....(Luke 6 :24-25) The rich man and Lazarus suffered opposite fates. (Luke 16: 19-31) Yet, are we blinded to the fact that affluence is another word for riches? Our affluent luxury exists side by side with hunger. And this presents a spiritual problem. It is as if a very small part of the world is the rich man while the MAJORITY of our world is the Lazarus who eats the crumbs off (our) rich man’s table.
6. So what are we to do? How do Christians live in this affluent society? Are we able to tie our affluence to injustice toward our brothers and sisters on some other continent?
7. Is it possible that if we tie our faith and worship to the pursuit of justice and the elimination of hunger and to Christian earth keeping that attendance on Sunday morning will fall off? Or, are Christians called to live above their sub-Christian culture? The apostle, Paul, challenges us to not be conformed to this world but to be transformed. (Romans 12:12) We affluent Christians need to link our piety, our worship and mercy toward our fellow human beings. “Whatever you do for the least of these, you do to Me.”
8. Immaculate Conception, as a parish has been extremely generous. Our brothers and sisters in Kenya are very grateful. But are there still ways we can be less affluent so those who have NOTHING can have SOMETHING?



SKIPPING STONES – BY SUSAN MEISCH

As I look back to Father Christopher's first visit to Washington in September of 2006, I recall how much both Father Christopher and our Immaculate Conception and St. John Vianney Catholic faith communities touched me. In 2006, I was new to Arlington having only been a member of Immaculate Conception Parish for 2 months when Fr. Christopher first arrived. The welcome shown by this community to Father Christopher warmed my heart, just as it had been warmed when I first arrived.

I was honored to spend time with Fr. Christopher. His warm smile and kindness left an impression that has been with me ever since. Since Father's first visit, two years have passed. This warm and welcoming community reached out to him and I recalled his first visit. It is now two years ... two years since we first learned "Jambo" ... two years since we started the Adopt-a-Student program ... two years since the wells were completed ... two years... and in this short time, the parishioners of Immaculate Conception and St. John Vianney Mission have reached deep into their pockets to help a people in a country they may never visit. Although most of will never take the journey to Africa, still we've grown as brothers and sisters.

We have seen growth and we have seen heartache. This third journey would likely be Father's last for quite some time. The friend we've made would return to Kenya to serve his community; and, as he is our brother, it is important that we not let the flame that was lit within us go dim. As our family we recognize the need to continue to help improve health and education conditions for all those in need.

I've learned a lot from this wonderful man. I've learned to find peace from within and to be happy with the simpler things in life. Friendship is more valuable than any item we can purchase and the gift of friendship is what I received through Father Christopher. It is easy to find friendship in a person who does not judge one based on superficial things. When with Father Christopher, he is in the moment with full attention.

Seeing Father again I was greeted with his warm embrace and jovial low laugh and a pleasant comment noting that I'd gained weight. He said this as a matter of fact, which was (I must confess) quite true. So often we're caught up with ourselves that we hear such comments as unflattering or intentionally hurtful ~ but it was just a matter of fact. I learned that in another place this would be similar to noting that I had cut my hair. I learned to be less defensive, less insecure.

Although my time with Father Christopher was brief, I was blessed by taking him out to dinner near the ferry landing at Mukilteo. As the evening sunset, we walked on the beach and laughed as we both tried to skip rocks (he's quite good). Children were playing in the water. He would talk with the children and laugh, low and warmly; I could see his heart loves children.

I hesitated inviting him to my home, as I have often felt it is not up to par with others. Still, I wanted him to be part of my life, too. We came back to my home for a short visit. After a couple apologies for things not being perfect, Father Christopher reminded me that we cannot compare ourselves with others, there is no value in this. We are each a gift from God. We each have a role in God's plan. We must pray for God's guidance and be willing to "be". He reminded me that I was gift and that he appreciated me for being me. Although our time together was brief and 'simple' it was filled with the wealth that only friendship can bring. I am ever thankful for the time we had.

If I could give a gift to someone, it would be the gift Fr. Christopher, my friend and brother, gave to me: the gift of knowing we are each treasured for who we are in the Eyes of God. ◻



EFFECTS OF POST ELECTION VIOLENCE

— BY MR. STEPHEN MBUTU, HEADMASTER OF CHRIST THE KING SCHOOL.

The announcement of 2008 Presidential Elections brought lots of chaos, demonstrations and destruction of property in many places.

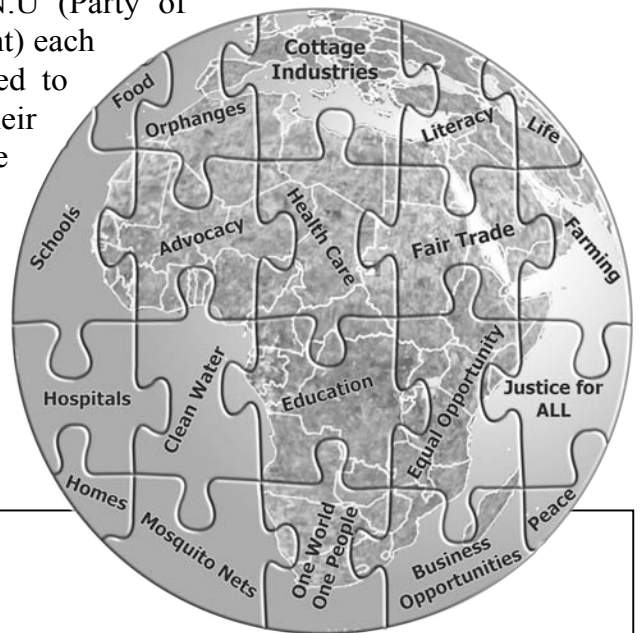
The country had two strong opposing parties i.e. P.N.U (Party of National Unity) and ODM (Orange Democratic Movement) each with a presidential candidate. People who were believed to have voted for P.N.U were violently evicted from their homes, farms and business premises by their long time neighbors who supported ODM.

ODM supporters went on rampage destroying property, looting valuables, setting on fire homes, shops, business premises, vehicles etc. that belonged to ethnic groups of people who supported P.N.U. Some lives were lost, children were separated from their parents who were on the run, women were raped etc.

Schools and school property were not spared. They were burnt to ashes. Teachers who were in those schools were also targeted. They ran away to safety for their dear life. They went to seek refuge in police stations, churches or schools, which had survived destruction and where they could get some protection from the police

Roads were impassable because of marauding gangs of looters and demonstrators. People who wanted to go back to their ethnic rural homes could only manage to with strong police and army escort. The number of Internally Displaced People became very high and unmanageable. They were moved to more spacious places e.g. show grounds, open land etc. The Red Cross came in handy to assist the many helpless internal refugees. The refugees lacked all basic needs supplies e.g. food, shelter, health facilities. There was danger of disease outbreak for lack of latrines and shelter. The tents given to them were too small, rain also added to their many woes.

Our town, Bungoma, had some relatively calm and my school Christ The King Parochial Academy opened for Term I as had been programmed. In the first few days attendance of both teachers and pupils was poor. People/We were not sure of their/our safety on the way to or from school or even at school. People did not want to risk. Then refugees started arriving in big numbers in our town. We also learnt that very many of our pupils had left to unknown places; they had dropped out of school.



CATHOLIC AFRICAN CONNECTIONS

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Catholic African Connections is a network to inform and expand ministry for parishes of the Archdiocese of Seattle who are interested in working with our brothers and sisters in Africa to inspire others and ourselves through sharing of experience.

This will be accomplished by:

- Communicating events, experiences and cultural information about Africa
- Providing advocacy for existing projects
- Sharing resources and matching needs with people who can help
- Serving as a clearinghouse for sharing of faith between archdiocesan parishes and our brothers and sisters in Africa
- Providing experiential learning opportunities through short term missions for parishes
- Offering resources for sister parish relationships in coordination with the Missions Office of the Archdiocese. □

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EFFECTS OF POST ELECTION VIOLENCE - CONTINUED

Many refugees/parents with children flooded our school to seek admission in various classes. They had scaring stories of what they had witnessed or gone through. They appeared traumatized - still scared. Fear and despair could be seen on their faces. We had to understand their problems and had to admit them to our school. Some filled the vacancies left by our children who had left. Others were to share our overstretched facilities/resources.

Our facilities were really strained because the classrooms became over crowded; we lacked enough desks, chairs and lockers to accommodate all comfortably. The textbooks and exercise books were few to meet the demand/need. Some children had no uniform, no books. They were either lost or destroyed when their schools or homes were burnt down. Health facilities like latrines became few for the increased number of children. The pupils looked emaciated and stressed, mainly because of lack of food or may be because of what they had witnessed. Many lessons were lost because of absenteeism caused by relocation of parents and pupils to safer places. Other children felt insecure because they were staying with strangers. The syllabus could not be properly covered due to absenteeism.

Change of environment was another factor. Children born and brought up in towns were not able to adjust easily to harsh conditions in their rural homes. Language barrier was also a big inconvenience to children because children bred in town communicate either in English or Kiswahili, whereas in their ethnic rural schools, the media of instruction is normally vernacular. The rate of children who have dropped out of schools is still very high. Reconstruction of burnt schools still incomplete due to lack of funds. Some of the refugees are afraid or not willing to go back to their former homes for fear of fresh attacks. Living harmoniously with people who killed some of their kinsmen, looted their property or burnt their homes will not be very easy.

Time will tell whether the children will forget and relax to pursue their studies fearlessly, mix freely after all what they witnessed during the skirmishes. Ethnic mistrust and animosity I still rife. The future is very uncertain and people fear fresh recurrence of the skirmishes.

Kriegler and Waki Commission reports have raised lots of controversy amongst our leaders. Till the reports will have been accepted and amicably implemented by our leaders, people continue to live in fear and anxiety. Learning is not going on in all schools especially where people have feared to go back. Children in some areas are not going to school. May be they will never go back. □



**SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, April 18th
3rd Annual
Catholic African Connections Conference**

Learn how Seattle Archdiocesan Parishes are serving in Africa. Listen as teenagers describe their African trips and how it impacted their lives. Learn the importance of becoming advocates for our brothers and sisters in Africa.

For more information or to volunteer,
contact Susan Meisch 360-474-0801

VISIT WITH FR. CHRISTOPHER BY LORI KIRKEBY

My husband, Al Kirkeby, and I had the pleasure of hosting Father Christopher for two days while he was visiting Arlington from Kenya. We wanted to show him a part of Washington State that he has not seen before, so we decided to take him to Tillicum Village on Blake Island for an authentic Native American experience. We wanted him to experience a culture native to our part of the country.

My mother, Donna Kazala, and I picked up Father Christopher on Thursday, July 31st at the Rectory in Arlington. We drove to our house where we picked up Al, my father, Bill, and nephew, Scotty Bardell, and drove into Seattle where we would board the boat to go to Blake Island.

While waiting for the boat, we took Fr. Christopher sight seeing along Seattle's waterfront. He enjoyed walking through the Farmer's Market and browsing all the small shops along the street. He bought a few souvenirs to take home, and we introduced him to Starbucks, which he enjoyed.

Finally, it was time to catch the boat for the 30-minute ride to the Island, which gave Father a chance to see the beautiful Seattle skyline. We were able to see Mt. Rainier, Alki Point where the first settlers landed in 1851, Bainbridge and Vashon Islands, as well as the Cascade and Olympic Mountain Ranges.

When we arrived at Tillicum Village, some American Indians in their Tribal costumes who accompanied us up to the main longhouse met us. We were served baby clams for an appetizer, delicious salmon baked on their traditional cedar planks over an open fire, Tillicum whole grain bread, new red potatoes, rice, salad bar, and a chocolate "salmon" for dessert. While we were eating our dinner, there was a demonstration of the Northwest Coast Native Americans cultural dances and traditions. It was an awesome program and Father seemed to really enjoy it.

After the dinner and entertainment, we were able to walk around outside and enjoy the beauty of the nature and wildlife on the Island. Then it was time to board to boat for the ride back to Seattle, and the long ride home.

It was wonderful to give Father the experience of our Native American culture here in the Pacific Norwest, as well as to see some of our scenic beauty. □



Sister Parish Meetings

2nd Saturday of
each month

9:00 – 11:00 AM

In the Parish Library

Contact: Chairman, Linda Clay

STEWARDSHIP

- BY MICHAEL VAN WINKLE

In the litany that begins our recently adopted Church's Mission Statement, Stewardship comes last. Its position is not intentional, but is the result of the acronym we have adopted, W-E-L-C-O-M-E-S. As a parish, we are continually growing in our understanding of what it means to give of our time, talent, and treasure, even in bad times. Stewardship must be in the forefront of our Christian consciousness. For, as followers of Jesus we are called to meet the needs of people. In the story of the loaves and fishes, Jesus commands the disciples to feed the 5000 out of what they have, not send them away to the local market. This takes on miraculous overtones when we remember that the giving was not from surplus or plenty, but arose out of a situation in which there were barely enough to go around for the twelve. Likewise, it is through our daily actions of stewardship, giving out of what God has provided, that we meet the needs of all people. It is central to who we are and what we do.



This basic sense of who we are and what we are about was recently revealed in our response to the needs of our sisters and brothers in Bungoma. While Fr. Christopher was here we managed, as a parish, to raise \$26,717.47 to meet some of their needs. \$1,123 of this total went to assist the Christ the King Women's Table Banking Program. This is part of the group's weekly prayer get-together. The women, out of what they have, gather to share and actually put their money on the table for each to share in projects ranging from poultry keeping to embroidering tablecloths. You will be hearing more about these micro-finance projects in the future.

\$15,447.91 went towards Christ the King Cathedral's Office construction. John Simiyu, Parish Council Chairman, wrote in response, "I would like to most sincerely thank you for the generous contributions you made. I know you denied yourselves so many things for the love of your brothers and sisters in Bungoma. I would assure you that all will be put to proper use and will please you and God. We are, therefore, going to start the second phase of the construction of our Parish office by completing the first floor of the building. We will keep you posted on the progress." There are plans, upon completion, to rent out some of the office space. This will enable the parish to become more self-sustaining.

The remaining \$10,146.56 will go towards the previous amount raised for Father Christopher's truck. We now pray that he will be able to secure the transportation that is so vital to him getting around his large parish and meet the needs of his 39,000 parishioners.

We should feel good about our stewardship response. But least we pat ourselves on the back too much, let us also remember that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Think prayerfully about becoming a member of our Sister Parish Committee. □

PENPAL Letters can be sent using SisterParish Website

To Sign up as a Pen Pal, go to:
<http://www.icp-sjvm.org/SisterParish>
and Select: PenPals from the menu.

Send a message to your PenPal
through the Sister Parish Website

Check it out!

Sending a message to Bungoma is easy!
Your Pen Pal will be able to compose a message and send it to you, too!
When received, your messages to you penpal will be printed & delivered to your PenPal.

When messages are sent to you, it will be delivered to the Narthex in an envelop with your name on it.