



Ewuaso oo' Nkidongi Parish Newsletter n. 44

May 2020

Ewuaso Kedong - Saikeri - Najile - Enkorika & Empaash Mass Centres

Greetings to you all from Ewuaso Kedong in these troubling times of Covid19 aka Corona Virus. I try in this edition of the Newsletter to give some idea of how things are going in the parish especially in these trying times.

I begin with some sad news:

R.I.P. Sr. Camillus (Mary) Walsh



On the 10th of March Sr. Camillus, who had worked most of her life as a missionary in Kenya, and the last years in Ewuaso Kedong, passed on to her well earned heavenly reward.

All the parishioners, who remembered her so well and were always asking about her, celebrated mass together with me in thanksgiving for her life.

The parishioners wish to put up a memorial to her in the parish sometime in the future and it was decided that a Marian Grotto would be a nice way of honoring her.

May you rest in peace dear Sister.

Around the same time the head teacher of our kindergarten school gave birth to a beautiful baby girl whom she named Camilla, in memory of Sr. Camillus. She was baptized in our blessed sacrament chapel last week.



Covid19 and its effects in the parish

Of course our lives and ministry have been turned upside down with the advent of the Corona Virus even though we have not had nearly as many cases as other countries.

The Government in Kenya acted quickly when the first cases appeared by closing down schools, colleges and universities on the 16th of March. They remain closed without any sign of the reopening at the moment. This, of course, included our kindergarten school where all 270 pupils and the teachers and support staff were sent home. Many workers are sent on unpaid leave and left no money for basic necessities, We decided to continue to pay our staff, despite our limited resources, for as long as we can.

As the school was closed almost 3 weeks before the end of the 1st term we remained with food from our nutrition program and were able to help 14 families of under nourished children for a while with the food which remained.

Before closing we were also able to install new playground equipment in the Kindergarten thanks to a gift from the primary school children and people of Ballyboy in Ireland.



Our last public mass in the parish was held on the 22nd of March, outdoors and with adequate social distancing. No gatherings are allowed at all in the parish since then. We continue to celebrate mass everyday in the parish for the Nuns and the girls in our Rescue Centre.



Obviously 'online' masses are not possible here as most of our parishioners do not only have no internet but many don't have electricity. So on Easter Sunday we also invited our catechists to join us and after mass they left for the highways and byways to bring the Eucharist to every family in the parish, holding a small prayer service at the doorway of each home before the members of the family received Holy Communion.

Since then we have started to celebrate what we call 'family masses' each day of the week. We invite one family to come celebrate mass in the chapel at a time. There was such an uptake of this that most days I am celebrating 3 and sometimes 4 masses a day.

From the 6th of April the Government locked down greater Nairobi area where many cases of the virus were originating. No one is allowed to enter or leave, but within the lockdown area you can continue moving freely.

This has meant that we are locked out of our main source of foodstuff and have had to travel much further for shopping for the parish, Nuns and Rescue Centre.

The number of girls in the Rescue Centre has increased recently when 2 sisters, 15 and 12 years old, were rescued by the head teacher of the primary school. Their mother ran away with them from the family home in the middle of the night to the head teacher's home as she discovered that their father had planned to marry

them off the following day. Apparently the 'husbands' had already arrived at the home that evening with the 'dowry' and the mother was told to prepare the girls. The father has been arrested by the police and the mother, who is his third wife, has returned to her parent's home in a neighbouring county as she fears for her life.

As well as caring for the rescued and reconciled girls the staff of the Centre are also involved with the families of disabled children in the area.

They have spent the last few years encouraging families to value children with disabilities and, as I have shared previously, we have been able to help quite a number with special education and hospital care.

More recently they have been organizing the families into a group so as they can avail of services for the children more easily. A group we named 'Rose of Lima' in honour of the parish of the original donors who helped us.

There are now 46 families registered. And because of this we received help of once off donation from a group in Nairobi for them to receive small amounts of foodstuff and soap. In the last week we have also received a donation from the Collotto Foundation which will help us to continue helping these 46 families and also a few more families who badly need help during these extremely difficult times.

The work on the ongoing projects of the water purification plant in Saikeri, funded by a group of dentists in Ireland, and the catechist's house in Enkorika, funded by money collected in Rosminian Parishes in the USA, have both been delayed by the lockdown of Nairobi as we cannot get the materials we need.

All though this time, indeed from October of last year, the rains have continued turning the whole of Ewuaso green and giving us an abundance of fruit, honey, and grazing for the animals.



Apple Mangoes



Pure Honey



White Sapote

We must always count our blessings

That's all for now except to wish God's blessing and protection on you all.

I thank all those who support us and continue to ask for your prayerful support.

Keep safe & keep well.

John