



2024 NEWSLETTER

ROTA: Reaching Out 2 Africa Development Group, Inc.

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KOIYOM MEDICAL CLINIC, SOUTH SUDAN

Former “Lost Boy” Fidele Dhan took the opportunity this summer for a five week visit to the Koiyom Village Medical Clinic. He was sent by our not-for-profit partners of South Sudan Villages Clinic in order to deliver medical supplies, inspect procedures, inventory equipment, and support the medical staff there. He also was to make the preparations for ROTA, for the new project of building the **Koiyom Residence** in the Town of Aweil, S. Sudan. ROTA is supporting this initiative by its **Golden Shovel Campaign**. Individual and/or family donations of \$1,500 and Business and/or organizational donations of \$2,500 qualify for this award of gratitude.....



Land purchased for the new Koiyom Residence in Aweil, SS.



A TIME TO SAY “THANK YOU”

We at ROTA are totally at the disposal of God’s direction as well as the most generous gifts of our benefactors which help these many miracles to move forward. We began to plan an appreciation gathering to be held in early spring. We were planning on having our colleague, Fr. Emmanuel Katabaazi, from Masaka Diocese in Uganda, who was to be in town to conduct Mission Appeals in Buffalo and Albany, to be our guest speaker. Well the early June date was coming too quickly and thus the date had to be moved down to early Summer. However it just so happened that around the same time, God permitted our new friend, Most Rev. Serverus Jjumba, Bishop of Masaka to be in town for a Mission Appeal visit at St. Gregory parish. Thus we were blessed to have a three person delegation from Uganda present for the event. Bishop Jjumba, who traveled with Fr. Peter Paul, was our guest speaker. He took the opportunity to recall the history of our involvement in the Diocese of Masaka and thanked everyone for their dedication and commitment to ROTA. Special thanks to the Jesuit community of Buffalo, and Fr. Thomas Slon, S.J. for their kind hosting our whole event at Loyola Hall on the Canisius College campus. God’s coordination is impeccable!



FAMILY RESETTLEMENT IN BUFFALO BRINGS BLESSINGS

A few years ago, a gentleman from Uganda came through Buffalo in order to plead asylum in Canada. He was not accepted and thus landed back in our country as an undocumented individual. According to international law, the country you first flee to and arrive at is the one you must plead asylum within. He was thus detained and sent to a number of detention centers until arriving in Batavia, NY. While awaiting his asylum case he endured a medical stroke which impaired his walking and speaking. His case finally came before an immigration judge, and he won his asylum case. Thank You Lord, Hallelujah!



Free, but impaired and homeless, a resettled South Sudanese woman opened her doors to him and assisted him throughout his long ordeal of physical therapy and doctor's appointments. When he had recovered sufficiently, now being able to walk short distances with a cane, and regaining labored speech, he began to make plans for his wife and children to join him. With assistance, he was able to investigate and secure a second floor apartment in a home owned by a South Sudanese family, who themselves came to Buffalo as refugees years earlier. Not knowing where to turn for help, his companion, herself a new resettled person, suggested he get in touch with Abuna, Fr. Ron. He called and shared some of his story with me. A colleague and I went to meet him to assess the situation.

Immediately I began to pray. How can I assist this gentleman and his family when I no longer have a parish community behind me? It was after my prayer that the Lord laid upon my heart who it was I was to call. Immediately I began placing calls. The RIMM: Refugee, Immigrant, Migrant, Ministry group at my former church just happened to have set up a furniture collection date on the last weekend of the month which we anticipated would be the weekend the resettled family was to move into the new apartment. The RIMM group, which was to meet the same day I called, immediately jumped on board. Others I was inspired to call were providing me fresh ideas and local assistance. This was confirmation that this indeed was a miracle plan of our loving God.

All was going according to plan until we received word that, due to immigration timelines, the family needed to arrive ten days earlier. Panic ensued as again I poured out my concern to the Lord. I was reminded that years earlier I had lived in a parish church rectory in the city where ROTA had furnished multiple rooms to accommodate various African Clergy visitors. The parish rectory had been unoccupied for a few years. Calls were made, and an agreement reached that the family would be able to move to the parish rectory temporarily. Now it



was a matter of resetting and cleaning the rooms for the new family. Young African men, whose parents arrived formerly as refugees in Buffalo, came to my assistance to rearrange furnishing in various rooms. We even made room for an American woman to reside in the house with the new family to assist in any of the fam-

ily's immediate needs and/or deal with those items that may occur with the house security system etc. Again, people from the RIMM group came to the rescue to clean the multiple rooms and bathrooms. Another colleague shopped for the household supplies including pillows, sheets for all the beds, face soap, etc. Finally, a couple took the husband of the family



food shopping, making sure the family would have all the food they would need for this temporary stay. All was now set, and word came to us that the family was on the last leg of their long 30 hour journey. Mom was coming with four young daughters and one son. They would be arriving late at night. We had secured a large church van for the family and others with their vehicles to assist in the transport of the family to their new temporary home.

We waited and finally the time had come as the children, seeing their father whom they had been separated from for four years, ran to embrace him.

Knowing that the family would be both tired and hungry, we received a generous gift that enabled us to order some prepared food for the family's arrival. We ordered from the Nile River Restaurant in Buffalo operated by another former South Sudanese gentleman. The family enjoyed the food and their temporary surroundings. God blessed us in the safe arrival of the family. Thank You Lord, Hallelujah!



Through the generosity of a young man who worked with an area resettlement agency, the enrollment process of Social Security Cards, Medicaid, immunizations, and school affiliations began. In my continued discussions with the parish administrator, I learned that due to the parish property's impending sale, he was calling on various people to reclaim items that they may have left on parish property. Because ROTA equipped most of the guest rooms we were temporarily using he agreed to allow us to move the beds, mattresses, box springs, dressers, etc. with the family to their new dwelling. The RIMM group supplemented the needs with some living room furnishings.

As the time in their temporary home was coming to an end the children were able to be accommodated by another local family so that the preparations for the move into the new apartment could be made. Again, I relied on the young African men I contacted to meet early in the morning at the rectory to dismantle the beds and move them to the lower level for loading into the moving truck later that morning. They finished their work, and I thanked them for the generosity of their time. A few hours went by, and the next crew arrived. About ten men

and a truck. The miracles continued as they made such a difficult task so easy by their love, care, and strength.

I was also appealing to the Lord. The weather forecast was not too favorable with predictions of heavy rain and thunderstorms that were forecasted to last all day. I asked the Lord to push the clouds south of us. When the truck was being loaded, we had mild blessings from the heavens. Upon reaching the apartment the rain had ceased and the sun was beckoning to emerge through the clouds.

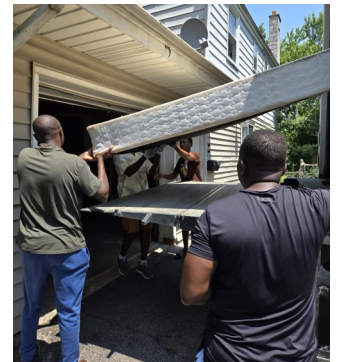
Because we were arriving at the apartment a few days earlier than expected, there was an additional workman present connecting the hot water tank, installing electric outlets, etc. With the water back on and most of



A DOUBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR BLESSINGS

While plans were underway for the reunion and resettlement of the new Ugandan family to Buffalo, we received word of a Rwandan family relocating from Chicago to the queen city as well. Because our resources were so limited we were not able to assist that family immediately upon their arrival. However, their own relocation efforts proved insufficient for their family. They were a large family moving into too small of an apartment. With the help of others of the Rwandan community they were able to identify and rent a much larger dwelling. Appealing again for assistance from ROTA I took the need up to the Lord in prayer. Again, with the help of our partners of the RIMM outreach at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish in Clarence and after negotiating for an additional donation of household furniture from the parish of St. Lawrence, we were able to assist the family in their move to their new home. As we brought the newer donated goods into their home we were able to see the reality of their need.

Thank You Lord, for Your incredible timing and the privilege of being part of your marvelous plan. Many thanks to all who assisted in making our new neighbors feel welcomed here in Buffalo as we continued Reaching Out 2 Africa....Amen!



the utilities in working order the mom and dad were rejoined by their five children to begin their new life together in the city of good neighbors. Thank You Lord for your most generous assistance by calling so many to assist our new neighbors and never abandoning us in our hours of need. It truly takes a village! Thank You Lord, Hallelujah!



SUPPORT OF AFRICAN CLERGY/RELIGIOUS

Since our last printed newsletter, the Lord has provided us many opportunities to assist our colleagues in ministry in Africa. The first was the opportunity to welcome back for a much needed rest, Fr. Japheth Tibui from Cameroon. Coming for a visit last April, we quickly had to secure a warmer jacket and sweatshirts for him. Being able to secure some much needed funding, upon his return he was able to purchase a motorbike to assist him in his transport to the various out-stations/mission churches which are his responsibility. Thank You Lord!



While cleaning out a basement closet, a longtime friend of mine discovered the remnants of two church stained glass windows. They must have belonged to her parents and unnoticed by her, moved into her new home many years ago. She asked if I could find a home for them.

The first window was an image of Saint Anthony of Padua. Through the artistic skill of Mr. Glen Albigh and his company, Images in Glass, Inc. of Hamburg, NY, the image of Saint Anthony was cleaned, glass added, and remounted into a rectangular oak frame crafted by the artisans. I knew just the perfect home for this most precious gift.

Back in the summer of 2022, I was made aware of a new group of Franciscan Sisters from Kenya who had relocated into a donated property in Perry, NY. I contacted them and made my way for a visit. Their chapel was actually the sun porch of the home. I had mentioned that I may have some stained glass that might work well in their chapel. Time moved on and I lost contact as well as the contact information for the sisters. When the funding was secured and the window finished I diligently searched for their contact information to no avail. It felt like it was lost forever. I'm sure I'm not the only one who misplaces a data file, item, or contact, because one doesn't know how it was filed, am I? When all the doors seemed to be closed I prayed to Saint Anthony to help me find the sisters contact information I had lost.

In our Diocese, at a priest's gathering I just happened to mention my search to a colleague who was newly assigned within the Perry, NY area. He knew exactly whom I was seeking and soon texted me the information. I made contact with Sr. Anne Celestine and the window made its final journey to its new home: The Franciscan Sisters of Saint Joseph-Asumbi in Perry, NY. Thank You Lord.....Hallelujah!



The second window segment was in the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We were able to find funding to have this window cleaned and resized. The new home for this wonderful work though was many miles away.

Back in 2018 I had an opportunity to travel to Nairobi to attend the ordination of a seminarian ROTA had supported. While in the country I resided at the Discalced Carmelite Monastery in the city. Returning to Buffalo, and through a former Carmelite Seminarian from Kenya, I learned of a building project that the monastery had undertaken. Joash, the former seminarian, and I thought this may be the perfect gift to support the Carmelite efforts. The precious cargo was carefully and safely packed in its own piece of luggage and carried in a flight to Kampala, Uganda. Joash flew into Kampala to take possession of the cargo and carry it back by bus to Kenya. Finally, a week later the luggage made its way to the Carmelite Monastery by car. On Sunday, June 30th 2024, 2nd Councillor, Br. Richard Samoi, received the gift from Joash and from ROTA. The luggage case was opened and cargo unpacked.

The support continued this past summer with contact from a New York State Council of the Knights of Columbus. They were wondering if I knew of any priest in need of a chalice. Customarily, they gift a chalice to a newly ordained. The names of knights who had passed that year are inscribed on it and they ask that the recipient offer prayer for their deceased.



During the summer I received an email request from one of our colleagues in Masaka Diocese describing that the new parish, St. James Kyansi, to which he had been assigned, was in need of a Chalice. While Bishop Jjumba was with us at St. Gregory, the Knights presented him with the Chalice which in turn was shared with Fr. Joseph Kasangaki, of St. James.

JOIN OUR TEAM TODAY!

We take this time to thank our many supporters over the years. We are not a big charity with massive budgets. What we receive that we share. We have little overhead and no paid staff. We kindly ask for your prayerful support. If you are able to share some of your financial blessings with us....WOW... that would be great. You and your family or organization may be able to respond to our **Golden Shovel Challenge**. (See p.1) No matter what the amount, your donations assist us in assisting so many. Thank you for the sacrifice you may be able to make so that you may join us in **"Reaching Out 2 Africa."** May God multiply your blessings for your act of kindness to our ministry.

Fr. Ron

