



News from St. Patrick's

Congratulations to the six catechists from St. Patrick's Parish who were blessed to be among those selected to be trained to become Extraordinary Ministers or Holy Communion last December. St. Patrick's now has fourteen EMHC. They are an immense help to Father Henry and his curate in distribution of Holy Communion at Mass and to the sick and home bound.

The Soroti Diocese men's conference in January drew six thousand men! The theme was taken from Luke 24:29 "Stay with us, Lord, for it's getting dark."

From the November, 2023 St. Patrick Twinning newsletter: "We are apparently blessed with incessant rains which are helping the second season crops grow healthy." "Continue praying for us since we predominantly rely on farming." "The lady in the photo is handling sweet potatoes which is one of the lifesaving serial crops, and photos are maize and sorgum."

They expect a fair harvest if the rain continues. As of this writing they have continued.



Autobiography for Catechist Julius Epudu, New Twinning Member

My name is Julius Epudu born on the 15th September, 1982 from the family of Yuventino Oluga and koronorina Asekenye of Angaro B village, Dokolo Parish, Gweri county, Soroti district.

Education - I started my primary education in 1988 while 6 years. I finished primary circle in 1994 and joined secondary education from 1995 to 1998. After secondary level four in 1998, I still had interest to do a course, which wasn't possible because my parents couldn't afford to raise tuition. I had no option that to drop out of school and get back to the family in full gear to support my parents with mostly farm work.

Marriage - In 2003, my parents advised me to get a partner (woman) to settle with since I had fully been natured by them for family life. God blessed me with Immaculate Agado whom I married traditionally in the same year and wedded with in the church on 29th September, 2006 by Rev. Fr. Simon Peter Wankya.

We have been blessed with four children and my sister I take care of. Their details are stipulated on table below;

| S/n | Name | Age | Education/class |
|-----|------------------------|-----|---|
| 1. | <u>Julius Opolot</u> | 19 | Entering senior six class |
| 2. | <u>Lydia Asekenye</u> | 16 | Sat Primary leaving exam and waiting for results. |
| 3. | <u>Timothy Epudu</u> | 14 | Joining primary six class |
| 4. | <u>Veronica Anyait</u> | 09 | Joining primary four class |
| 5. | <u>Melda Alubo</u> | 16 | Sister (sat for primary leaving exams and also waiting for results) |

A call to catechist life - My dream initially from childhood was to become a priest, which got affected by factors stated above. After settling with my family, I still had a conviction to serve the people of God in

that capacity of a catechist. In the year 2011, God used Christians of my local chapel of St. Gabriel Telamot who identified me to lead prayer meetings and other liturgical activities.

I served under the guidance of a senior catechist up to 2012 when Fr. Simon Peter Wankya then sent me to open a new chapel called St. Mathew Telakum where I worked for three years before getting transferred to St. Philip chapel Awaliwali in 2016, then to Madera main church from 2019 to date.

Formal catechists' training - In 2016, I was recommended to go to Bukedea pastoral training center for a grade one course which I successfully completed. My parish priest encouraged me to go back to the same training center in 2017 for grade two course which still by the grace of God got finished successfully.

After getting back from the training, I was appointed to serve as area catechist and a coordinator of Madera zone. In 2021, a diocesan program to train extra ordinary ministers of Holy Communion came and I was privileged to be among those chosen to go for that course. The course ran for two weeks before getting commissioned by the bishop. I also did a training of trainer's course for Basic Christian Communities empowerment.

Pastoral success stories - I praise God for calling me to serve His church as a catechist. Catechists play a significant primary role of;

- Catechizing Christians for various sacraments (Infant Baptism, First holy Communion, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, Penance & Anointing of the sick)
- Conducting liturgical prayers in the absence of the priest.
- Visiting and praying with the sick, elderly persons and the homebound.
- Conducting burial ceremonies incase a priest has other pastoral engagements.
- Conducting trainings for Basic/Small Christian Communities.

Being a catechist calls for a lot of commitment. One has to therefore spend more time in the church than his/her family, which creates gaps at times hard to bridge since the care of our families remains our responsibility.

Personal experience/testimonies - Family expansion; All the Christians I have served are part of my family life (brothers and sisters). As a catechist, God has blessed me with distant friends (pen pals from USA) Through our friends, God has blessed us with oxen and plow, Bibles, Water. I have also seen my faith grow and learnt more spiritual experiences through sharing with fellow Christians.

Conclusion - I am once again grateful to be part of the twinning ministry. I thank Fr. Simon Peter Wankya for being a bridge between St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. Patrick's parishes. I also thank Fr. Henry Agit our pastor, you Dan with your team, our pen pals and all the donors for the contribution you have rendered to the twinning ministry and Christians of St. Patrick. May God bless the works of your hands.

We are One Family of God!

Our first parish wide invitation to go on an immersion trip to Uganda drew nine from St. Max and one from Indianapolis.

Kyle Schafer, Connie Spott, Maureen Normoyle, Nancy Prince, Stacie Rusk, Jesse and Tangie Roper, Rita Jones, Maria Servizi, and Grace Lutz traveled to our sister parish, St. Patrick's Church Madera, Soroti, Uganda, at the end of September. In December, they shared pictures and stories of their travels with fellow parishioners.

A journal is being prepared and will be shared soon...



Holy Angels College Grades 7-11

Established in 1945, Holy Angels College is a secondary school within Madera, Soroti, Uganda. In the early 1970's during the government of Idi Amin, the Mill Hill Missionaries who founded the school were expelled from the country and the school collapsed. Fast forward to Fr. Simon Peter, former pastor of St. Patrick's, Madera, and St. Max's most recent parochial vicar, who worked with the local community to get

the school back up and running again, starting with four classrooms. Since 2019, St. Max worked with Fr. Simon Peter, and now Fr. Henri Agit, current pastor of St. Patrick's, and the head of the school to make it sustainable for the poor. Your support will help the school and change lives. Thank you for your generosity! Learn more at www.saint-max.org/LentenProject2024.

Emmanuel Okello's Story (Head Teacher of Holy Angels)

Hello, my name is Emmanuel Okello, a 35-year-old man blessed with a

journey that speaks of resilience, triumph, and gratitude. I came into this world on October 9, 1989, at Moroto Hospital in Uganda, the son of Late Mr. Okello Charles and Late Mrs. Apiny Rose from Obalanga Village in Kapelebyong District. My life's narrative unfolds in the rural landscapes of Karamoja, where my father made a living selling corn flour until escalating insecurity forced my family to relocate to Soroti.

My educational journey began in 1996 at the age of 7, attending a government school in Soroti. Life took an unexpected turn when my father fell ill in 1998, reaching its tragic end. Left without tuition, I was compelled to stay home. The financial strain worsened as my elder brother dropped out of school to support our ailing mother. Despite these challenges, my passion for education persisted, and with the help of a compassionate teacher, I resumed my studies, excelling in the Primary Leaving Examination in 2002.



Secondary education brought its own set of hurdles. My father's absence meant financial struggles, and relatives advised me to abandon my studies for a job grazing animals. However, my determination to pursue education led me to take on part-time jobs. I worked as an office clear from 2007 to 2010, saving enough to complete my O level in 2006. Despite the hardships, I stayed focused, working as a turnboy and luggage man on a truck to raise funds for my S5 and S6, which I completed in 2012.

In 2011, I faced the challenges of fatherhood as a young man. Economic hardships strained my relationship, and my partner left to find work, eventually marrying someone else. Left to care for my son, I leaned on the support of my mother and brother. In 2018, after joining Holy Angels, I found love again and married Rachael Akwii. Together, we welcomed our beautiful daughter, Samantha Joan Apiny, into the world.

My journey took a professional turn after graduating from university in 2016. Driven by a desire to make a difference, I formed a group for marginalized youth in Otucopi, offering guidance to those living on the streets. Financial constraints led me to Olila High School in 2017 and, in August 2018, to Holy Angels, where I became a classroom teacher. Meeting the needs of underprivileged students became an opportunity for me to transform lives.

My personal experiences are a testament to a life filled with twists, moments of despair, and the ultimate triumph of becoming a teacher. I celebrate every student's success, knowing that my love for teaching was shaped by the challenges I overcame.

In conclusion, I extend my deepest gratitude to the twinning ministry for making Holy Angels a beacon of hope. With your support, Fr. Simon's dream has become a reality, touching countless lives. As Holy Angels continues its mission, it now needs additional support to reach a level of sustainability. Your generous contributions can make a significant difference in the lives of students, ensuring they have access to education, mentorship, and a chance for a brighter future. Whether it's providing financial assistance, educational resources, every effort counts. I thank you from the bottom of my heart and pray that God blesses each one of you.

UPDATES



Waterwell Update - "Water is Life"

All fifty wells drilled from May 2022 to November 2022 are being mapped via coordinates for future locations and monitoring. Currently, two catechists from the nearest outstation/chapel are responsible for monitoring and reporting any problems or issues to the pastor, Father Henry Agit. In November, 2023 Twinning Ministry members Dan Suer and Paul Groh traveled to St. Patrick/Holy Family Parishes to primarily visit all 50 wells. Dan and Paul reported visiting 46 of the 50 wells, indicating excellent tasting clean water and fully functional pumps. The communities surrounded them with joy of thanksgiving. They witnessed the depth of poverty too. Some told of the distances they were still walking for water every day was still too far. There were also many stories of conversion to the Catholic faith!

The original Lenten project of 2022 goal was to drill 34 water wells, 160-260 feet deep. Our generous parish responded by funding 50 at a cost of \$270,000. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of those in these 50 communities.

"Agriculture Anew"

The Twinning Ministry voted unanimously to support a new agricultural subgroup and named Leo Vanderburgh the leader with members Kyle Schafer, Dana Gruenbacher, Tony Louder, and Dora Nabatanzi. The group will learn more about the culture and operations of their farms, as well as find ways to track progress and communicate challenges. They will also determine if there are means to help. Prayers are grateful as we know our brothers and sisters have struggled due to drought the past three years.

Twining Ministry Leadership update:

Mission – Fr. Henry Agit & Deacon John Back

Pen Pals – Maureen Normoyle, Carol Klinker, Joy Hunter & Lana Elliott

Prayer – Deacon John Back

Event planning – Paul Groh & Mike Gardner

Communications – Dan & Mary Jo Suer

Appreciation – Lana Elliott

Education – Bruce Murphy, Nancy Tereba, Nancy Prince & Paul Groh

Charity/resources – Nancy Tereba

Physical needs – Mike Gardner

Agriculture/harvest – Leo Vanderburgh

Connecting catechist families - all

**May God continue to bless you abundantly,
Dan Suer
Twining Ministry Chair**

St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish | 5720 Hamilton Mason Road, Liberty Township, OH 45011

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