

Mission Connections: Special Catechetical Leaders Edition

Youth Connecting in Mission

Mission Office, Catholic Diocese of St. Cloud
11—8th Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301 (320) 251-1100

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<http://mission.stcdio.org>

We do Not Journey Alone

On March 1st, delegates from the diocese returned to Minnesota after a two-week journey to Kenya, where they spent time walking with our diocesan partners of Homa Bay Diocese. Their activities included everything from visiting the death site of Father John Kaiser, missionary from St. Cloud martyred in Kenya, to visiting schools, orphanages and hospitals, as well as celebrating Liturgies, including multiple baptisms and ordinations. It was not only a fun journey, but a journey of faith.

Upon return, delegates shared these, among their many comments on the impact of the experience of walking together in Christ with others in our world:

- I never thought I'd enjoy it this much. I want to go back, and take my children.
- Wow! God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.
- It showed me how beautiful the Body of Christ is; I couldn't have made it without the Body helping me.
- It exceeded my wildest dreams. A part of me will never come home.
- It bugs me when people here focus so much on what they [in Kenya] don't have; they have so much more in many ways.
- It changed my life.
- I loved the warmth, the sense of welcome from everyone.
- I am now trying not to be so wasteful—food, electricity, water.
- We have everything here and we're unsatisfied. There they are so happy.
- [Since returning] I found myself being much more attentive to the people around me.

- I was struck by the hospitality, generosity and gratitude of the people there; I am trying to take that back.

As you can tell, it was a powerful experience. Why? Because they were *walking a journey together with their Brothers and Sisters*. They went to learn from and share with others, with those who are different, and yet so similar, for we are all made in the same beautiful image of our Creator. It was a journey that in many ways reflects the journey God made in sending His son into our reality, to walk with, learn from and share with humanity—those so different from the Divine, yet still the same through sharing in that Divine image.

And we know, and this week celebrate, that this journey on earth ended with Christ going to and through the cross. Holy Week is a reminder to each of us to follow in Christ's footsteps—dying to ourselves, our selfishness, our judgements or sense of superiority; humbling ourselves, giving of ourselves, and thus rising—allowing God's love to have the ultimate power in our lives and our world. That love that we all have in common, that which unites us the world over.

I pray that as we enter into this week, we, like the delegates and like Christ, will recall that *this is not a journey we make alone*. We are all called to journey with *the Christ in others*, be they near or far. It is only in *walking with our brothers and sisters*—regardless of any differences we may perceive—that we will truly experience the beauty of that which we all have in common—God's love, here on earth. There can be no greater journey, no greater destination!

Words of Wisdom:

"Life is a journey. When we stop, things don't go right."

~Pope Francis~



Don't Forget!



March 22: World Water Day

March 25 & 28th: Mission Office closed. **Happy Easter!!**

April 8: Mission Rally with Crosier Fathers Nana and Zawadi, at St. Louis Parish, Paynesville

April 23: Solidarity in Mission Workshop with Julie Lupien, at St. Francis Xavier in Sartell

April 27: Catholic Relief Services speaker, Shamsia Ramadhan, presenting on "Christian-Muslim Peace-building in Africa," at St. Ben's



Give it a Try!

Try incorporating these resources, projects or activities into your ministry.



Mission Education Resources & Ideas

March 8th was International Women's Day. Whether or not you celebrated that day, there is still time. This Year of Mercy we are invited to think about the women in our world who have gone before us as witnesses of faith. "Women of Mercy" is a book by Kathy Coffey and Michael McGrath, published by Orbis Books. It shares sixteen full-color paintings, each accompanied by beautifully written pieces on how these women—from biblical to modern—reflect the works of mercy.

March 22nd is World Water Day. We invite your classroom, school, parish or group to

create and take a water challenge—to cut down on your use of water, and find ways of supporting those who go without. Visit CEM's online resources for the Year of Mercy to learn more about how you can "give drink to the thirsty."

The sixteen delegates from throughout the diocese who traveled to Homa Bay last month are back and are excited to share their stories! Consider inviting them out (contact the Mission Office if you aren't sure how to reach them); their testimonies, pictures and enthusiasm will no doubt add to your celebration of the Easter season!