

Mission Office, Catholic Diocese of St. Cloud

March 2017

11—8th Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301

(320) 251-1100

<http://mission.stcdio.org>

Our Journey

I just swallowed down the last of my anti-malaria pills (not the most pleasant experience, I can assure you), signifying the full week it has been since I returned from my trip to Kenya. *Has it really been a week already?!* I had similar sentiments when it came time to leave our partner diocese of Homa Bay, after a very short time there—*has it really been a week already?!* But albeit short, it was good—well worth the journey (it always is)!

Journey really is perhaps the best description of this particular visit. With nearly as many days spent in airports to get there and back as was spent in country, and with those brief days in Kenya consisting of a good deal of driving—to parishes on all ends of the Diocese—it was definitely a time of “journey.”

And for those of you who have not traveled in Kenya before, let me tell you that “journey” takes on a whole new meaning! The tarred roads consist of “speed bumps” every few kilometers, so even if you can get up to speed and think you’re smooth sailing—*woa*, think again, and start all over after coming to a nearly complete stop so as not to bottom out. The dirt roads consist of what feels like more ditch than road, and bottoming out on these is pretty much inevitable. And regardless of what kind of roads you are driving on, you will share them with a good deal of others—other cars, a plethora of *piki-piki*’s (motorbikes), grazing animals, and the beautiful people walking—often with large bundles on their heads and/or babies on their backs. Sharing the road with all of this (at once!) takes focus and courage. It’s true, a journey in Kenya is not easy, it does not happen quickly, and it requires much.

But lest you think that this is a “bad” thing, let me tell you what else a journey in Kenya means. It means friends! Some old, some new, but always a friendly “*Karibu*” (welcome) and a hug

offered (usually more than one of each of these things, both at the beginning and end of your greeting). It means seeing beauty—in the grandeur of God’s

creation seen in the landscapes you pass, in the grace of God’s mercy in the people you encounter, in the miracle of unity in diversity in the Catholicity we share with those a half a world away. It means growing closer to others who share the journey with you, and the many more who offer “journey mercies” or “safe safari” prayers as you go. It means feeling closer to Christ than you knew was possible!

We are well on our way on our Lenten journey. I invite you this Lent to think of your coming days like my journey around Kenya: Remember that it will not always be easy (there may be bumps in the road). Keep in mind that it takes time (don’t expect to arrive at your goals like you’re Mario Andretti). Recall that bettering yourself, and the church that you share with a plethora and variety of others), takes focus and courage. But know that if you are willing to make the journey, you will come to know the face of God, feeling His friendship and embrace. You will see beauty, finding meaning and miracles in new corners of your life. You will grow closer to others. You will grow closer to Christ.

So don’t wait! There is an incredible journey waiting for you, but *time flies!* And I have a feeling that come the end of Lent, we may all be asking, *has it really been 40 days already?!* Don’t waste a minute of this precious journey!

Words of Wisdom:
“When you meet those most in need, your heart will begin to grow bigger, bigger and bigger! Because reaching out multiplies our capacity to love. An encounter with others makes our heart bigger. Take courage!”
~Pope Francis~

Don't Forget:



Mar 15: Mission Office closed for Diocesan Staff Retreat

Mar 19-24: Missionary Childhood’s Prayer and Penny Week

Mar 26: CRS Collection

Mar 24-26 & 31-Apr 2: Castaways Retreat

Mar 31: Festival of Forgiveness

Apr 16: Happy Easter!

Apr 20: Mission Rally



Give it a Try!

Try incorporating these resources and activities into your ministry.



Mission Education Resources:

Is your community praying the Stations this Lent? Consider one with a mission feel. The Pontifical Mission Societies have put out a “Stations of the Cross / Via Crucis Misioneras” for teens available in English and Spanish, available at: <http://mission.org/resources> Or walk with this year’s Maryknoll Mission Education Stations, featuring text by Fr. Joseph Venerosa, MM and artwork by Tanzanian artist Charles Ndege. Find them at: www.maryknoll.us/home/resources/resources-for-lent/2017-stations-of-the-cross

And of course, don’t forget to be taking advantage of the great resources from Catholic Relief Services’ Rice Bowl: www.crsricebowl.org

Mission Service Idea:

Invite your young people to partner with the parish community for the CRS Collection to take place

the weekend of March 26th. Learn about different offices of USCCB that deal with global concerns, talk about different countries and their needs, do a fundraiser to put towards your parish’s CRS Collection, or have a classroom or youth group write letters to send to other young people around the world in addition to their financial support to this important collection that helps the organizations helping so many of our brothers and sisters this Lent!

National Prayer and Penny Week for Missionary Childhood, one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies, is also happening this Lent. Visit www.missio.org/resources or download the *missio* app on your devices to learn about many great ways kids are helping kids around the world, for prayers and other resources to help get your young people involved on any variety of levels.