

Ecumenical Effort Provides a Church Roof



A few months ago Blessed Sacrament was made aware of a need of a very poor Catholic parish in Uganda. Sue Waechter of Memorial Presbyterian Church along with her husband, John, are coordinators of an African mission initiative of their church to Ikamiro Village in southwestern Uganda. In the course of their work they became acquainted with Father Byomuhangi Bruno, who is trying to build a church in the area.

Father Bruno's parish, Muko Parish, is one of 28 parishes in the diocese of Kabale. Muko parish has 25,000 Catholics which comprise 66% of the population. There are 14 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, a health center, and 21 "out stations", some of which are designated as Eucharistic centers. The church Father Bruno is trying to build is intended to be one of these Eucharistic centers and will be called Uganda Martyrs Catholic Church.

These photos, taken last fall, show Father Bruno with one of his parishioners, and walking in what is hoped to become the new church. Since that time more work has been done on the church and it is ready for a roof. In a meeting at Blessed Sacrament in March, Sue outlined the need for this church roof, asking whether the Catholic parishes of the area would be interested in providing the \$7,000 needed for the materials needed to put a roof on Father Bruno's church. St. Anthony/St. Joseph Parish of Auburn provided \$2,000 and Blessed Sacrament provided the remaining \$5,000.

We have been waiting for more current photos to be sent via email but Father Bruno has to walk quite a distance to a town that has electricity where he can send email messages. It's hard to imagine just how little the people of Ikamiro Village have. Not only is there no electricity, there are no vehicles. There are two trucks that pass through the village each morning and villagers needing to travel simply pile on without regard to safety. It takes 2 and a half hours on one of these trucks to get to Kabale, the nearest large city. Needless to say, many are injured on these trips.

Until recently, villagers in need of medical care had to be taken to the nearest health center, nearly 40 km from Ikamiro Village. They would be carried on a stretcher for six hours around a mountain. Four men would carry the stretcher while another four would rest while walking until it was their turn to carry again. As part of their church's mission project, our friends at Memorial Presbyterian Church spearheaded an effort to raise money for a Toyota van to get those who are sick or injured to the clinic more quickly and safely.



We are grateful to Sue and John Waechter for the opportunity to contribute toward the completion of Father Bruno's church, and look forward to hearing from him concerning the progress being made. Please keep Father Bruno and his parishioners in your prayers, as well as Sue and John as they continue to coordinate the program to help the people in Ikamiro Village.

Mike Jankowiak