

HOPE FOR UGANDA

NEWS

SPRING 2018

From the Desk of Monsignor Matthew Odong

Dear Friends and Benefactors of Hope for Uganda:

Warm greetings from Sacred Heart Seminary! The wonderful song *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* is common to our Liturgy, and singing it never fails to bring thoughts of you who are so dear to us. Your continued generosity fills us with joy, gratitude, and appreciation. God bless you!

It also gives me great joy to relay news of Archbishop Odama's appointment of Fr. Paul Peter Rom Abim to the position of Administrator of **Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS)**. Fr. Paul is a very energetic, hardworking and talented young priest. He will make positive contributions at AFSS, as he oversees further development and decision-making for the school.

He has also been entrusted with responsibility for the new farm, assisted by Fr. Felix, chaplain at AFSS. Together with the school board, students, and staff, I congratulate Fr. Paul on this appointment. I wish him a warm welcome to AFSS and continued success in his great service.

Fr. Paul Peter Rom Abim has been appointed to position of Administrator of AFSS.

Sacred Heart Seminary continues to grow in quality and quantity. The number enrolled this academic year is 174 seminarians, and the

school is rated among the best in the district and nationwide.

Proudly we announce that two of our seminarians will be ordained from the major seminary into the priesthood in July 2018. Three others will be ordained transitional deacons. We give glory to God for these gifts of vocation to the ministry, especially those who have benefited from your generosity at Sacred Heart Seminary. These young men know in their hearts that what they received from you was hope – hope for the Church, and hope for the people of their nation.



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Above: AFSS leaders witness the historic "groundbreaking" of The Farm. **Below:** AFSS Chaplain, Fr. Felix, cooking for workers on The Farm.



The Farm Report

This past March we announced the launch of an exciting new project at AFSS. The Archbishop Flynn Rural Development Education Center (now affectionately referred to as **The Farm**) is a collaboration between **Hope for Uganda** and its partners at **AFSS**. Born of the need to cut operational costs at the school, this effort will significantly reduce the cost of food, generate revenue by selling crops and animals on the open market, promote modern crop and animal husbandry techniques, provide a center for learning for students and community, promote research, and offer jobs for students and farm workers.

Fr. Paul, the newly appointed Administrator at AFSS, will oversee the progress at The Farm. We will update our readers and benefactors in all

forthcoming newsletters, as the project grows from 50 acres of cleared land to a thriving 261 acre farm where beans, maize, and sunflowers grow and animals graze for the glory of God. With land available, students wanting to learn and participate, and local farmers eager to work for their livelihood, this seems a perfect recipe for sustainability. The final ingredient is you. Please consider helping us qualify for a matching grant of \$60,000 established by a loyal donor.

Every Dollar You Donate will be matched and go directly towards the farming project.



God has blessed us with yet another way to share in the hope and promise of a better, long-lasting tomorrow.

News from AFSS

From the Desk of Fr. Paul



Warm greetings to everyone! Thank you for your ceaseless support and prayers for the mission in Northern Uganda – Sacred Heart Seminary (SHS), Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS) and the

Archdiocese of Gulu. I am a product of SHS from 1993 to 1999 and I benefited most from the apostolate of **Hope for Uganda**, especially the sponsorship program.

In February, the Archbishop of Gulu appointed me as Administrator of AFSS due to the expansion of the apostolate and the recommendation of the US board of directors. It is a new challenge for me going from lecturing to administration, a challenge I take in full confidence and as an opportunity for contributing hope to people of my country. My role as Administrator will be to develop the sustainability program, coordinate the developmental activities of the school, and monitor and evaluate the daily running of AFSS



AFSS students turn to Our Lord in Eucharistic Adoration for divine inspiration and guidance.

in conjunction with the Head Teacher. My personal challenge is the commute from 20 miles away because there is no residence for priests at the school!

This year we had the best performance in the history of AFSS. A total of 48 students sat for the Uganda Certificate of Education exams – 44 passed with the highest grade and four with the second highest grade. AFSS is ranked number 33 (out of 3,235 secondary schools) in the whole country and #1 in Northern Uganda! Students worked very hard to accomplish these great

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In this Issue

Open Arms. Open Hearts. Open Minds.

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News from AFSS continued from page 1

results, but not without the help of their chaplain, Fr. Felix, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Fr. Felix coordinated a nine-day holy hour novena of Eucharistic Adoration in the evenings prior to the exams, where students met and prayed to standing room only. These young people truly understand the power of prayer.

Next year we shall celebrate ten years in existence and we want to make it big.

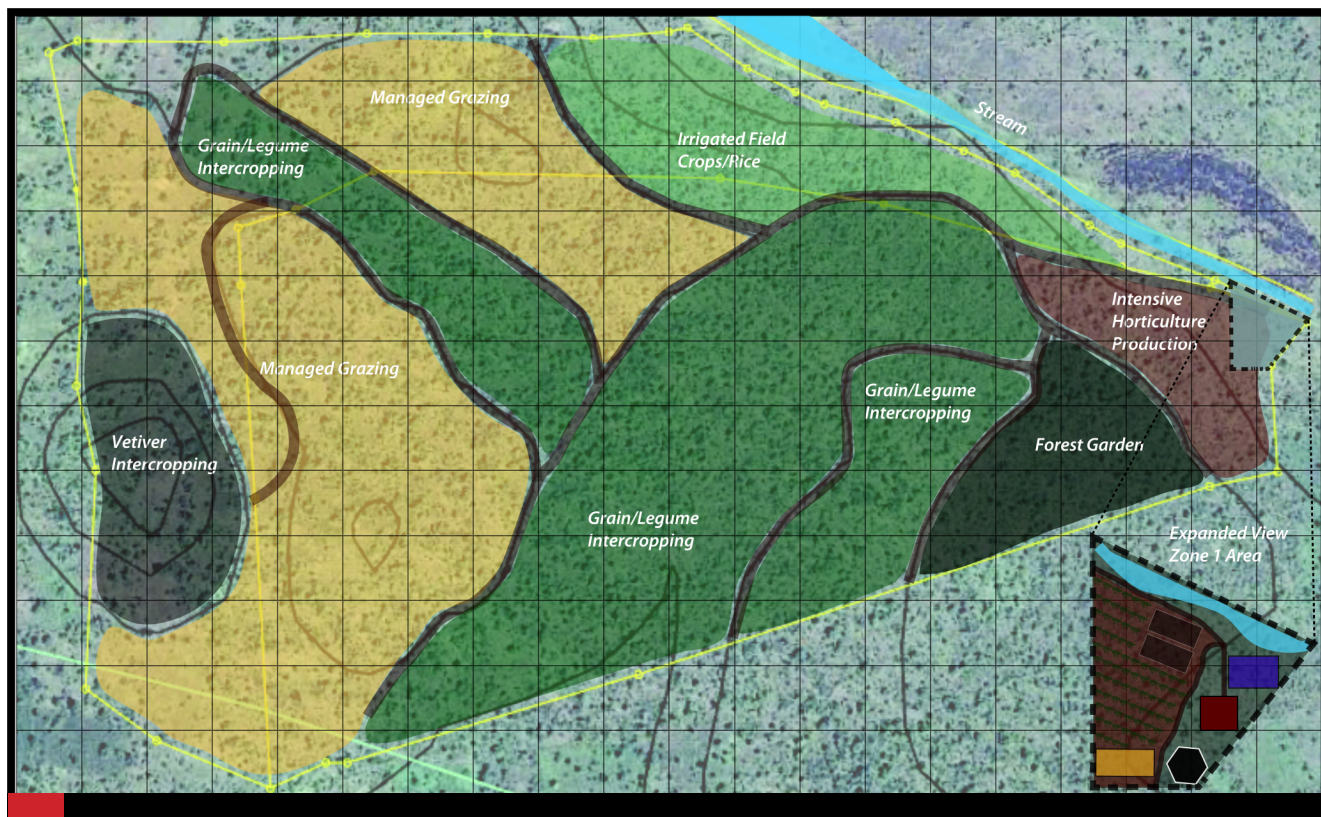
The school is blessed with a student body of 498; 214 girls and 284 boys. We all invite you to come, see, and celebrate the fruits of your generosity – always, but most especially during our festive 10th year commemorative celebration. With your help and the Lord's guidance, this will be the

beginning of taking AFSS to the next level. Together we will continue sustainability, build the library, computer lab, the church, and finally the administration block. Needs are many, but one by one we shall achieve our dreams and give hope to the hopeless.

It is with sincere gratitude and joy in my heart that I send my greetings and best wishes. May God bless you abundantly!



Fr. Paul Peter Rom Abim
abimrom@hotmail.com



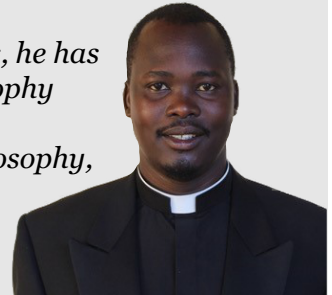
Land Use Map of The Farm showing topographical grading and how the land is intended to be used.

Who is Fr. Paul?

Fr. Paul Peter Rom was born on June 29, 1977 – one of eight children. He graduated from Sacred Heart Seminary in 1999.

After studying at Uganda Martyrs and St. Mary's National Seminaries, he was ordained a priest on July 14, 2007. Fr. Paul studied in Rome from 2010 to 2013 earning a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and Theology, Master's Degrees in Philosophy, Pastoral and Theological Studies, and Bioethics, and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Theological and Pastoral Studies.

For the last nine years, he has lectured on the Philosophy of Nature, Philosophy of Science, Moral Philosophy, and the History of Modern Philosophy.



Msgr. Matthew continued from page 1

Lastly, I want to recognize the retirement of my dear friend, David Fagerlee, from the board of **Hope for Uganda**. David has been one of the pillars of this apostolate for many, many years, giving generously of his time, talent and treasure. He has worked tirelessly in the areas of education and humanitarian needs for the poor people in Northern Uganda. Through this work, David's dream gave rise to building a medical clinic in Adilang. That dream is now a reality, with the opening of the **David Fagerlee Medical Centre** last July. Words cannot express my gratitude to this incredible servant of Christ and our people.

Thank you, my friends, for your continued prayers and financial support of this mission. May God bless you abundantly for giving hope where it is so desperately needed!

Wishing you God's peace,



Msgr. Matthew Odong
 Rector, Sacred Heart Seminary Lacor



Brothers in Mission - David Fagerlee and Msgr. Matthew Odong

Advancement Committee Report: **Seeds of Hope**

A new committee has been formed to give you and others like you an opportunity to move from donor to activist within the organization. There are many ways to sow the seeds of hope and to share talent and enthusiasm. Hope For Uganda is seeking volunteers to assist with and improve in the following ways:

- Newsletter
- Parish visits
- Website
- Donor Appreciation Dinner
- Radio/TV events

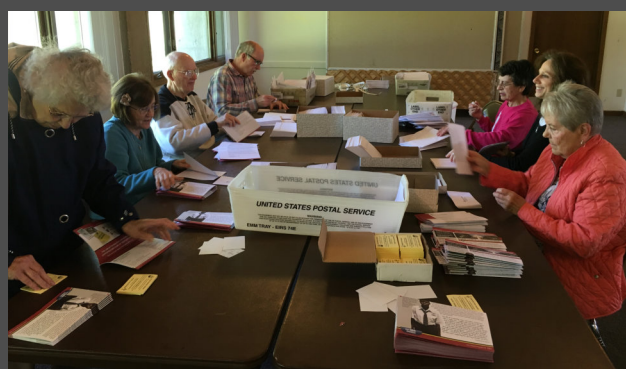
This newly formed Advancement Committee is chaired by Peter Westerhaus, who recently said this about the committee's quest:

"Olympic dreams bank on human spirit and the seeds of hope. This past winter we witnessed the drama of those dreams in full color. The purpose of the Hope For Uganda Advancement Committee is to help witness another drama. This drama is taking place on the African equator where our Ugandan brothers and sisters in Christ often struggle for survival. We want to tell their story. It too is full of human spirit and seeds of hope. But more than just telling their story, we're inviting you to enter it. Will you please join us?"

Currently assisting Peter are Exec. Director Todd Ziesmer, former board member Holly Leuer and board President, Bill Kottemann. They welcome a chance to put your experience to work in public relations, event planning, advertising and website design. Please contact Holly at info@HopeForUganda.org to enter the story.



L to R: Todd, Holly, Bill and Peter



HFU Volunteers working together on the newsletter mailing.

NEWSLETTER GETS A FACELIFT



What do you think about our new layout? We're interested in your feedback so please send comments to info@hopeforuganda.org



Executive Notes

Dear Friends of Hope for Uganda,

2018 is off to a good start, beginning with my visit to Uganda in February. I met with the leaders of Sacred Heart Seminary (SHS) and Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS) to discuss how we will move forward together. Progress is being made but the needs at each of the schools are so great!

The biggest challenge is to overcome significant operating deficits at both schools. The median family income is about \$150 per month, meaning there is deep and widespread poverty in the region. To date the majority of your support has helped students who are unable to pay their tuition. This of course remains at the very heart of our mission, so our challenge is to:

■ **Reduce School Operating Costs**

Our recent investment in farmland and equipment nearby AFSS will allow food to be grown to feed the 600+ student body and staff instead of being purchased on the open market, resulting in tens of thousands of dollars in annual savings.

■ **Increase Financial Support**

We are expanding the number of host parishes during the September 2018 visit. We will also be pursuing more grant writing opportunities and utilizing online outreach platforms.

So much has been accomplished by your generosity, yet much more can be done. For example, our farm initiative is generating great hope and excitement in Uganda. This project is expected to contribute significantly to the future financial viability of the school.

Please consider supporting this enterprising venture that will help change the lives of the students and their families forever.



Executive Director: Todd Ziesmer and student Gladys

A generous benefactor has offered a challenge grant that will **match dollar for dollar donations up to \$60,000** made directly to our farming effort.

Another simple but very clear need is security at AFSS. Currently, there is no fence or barrier around the perimeter of the campus. Area livestock roam freely, eating whatever they can, including students' clothing hanging out to dry! Other animals and unwelcome human intruders threaten student safety. Keeping the students safe seems as basic as food and water, but it comes with a hefty price tag of \$36,000. Please prayerfully consider helping to fence the perimeter of AFSS so the beautiful children within those walls can thrive.



Women and children collect water at a well drilled by an HFU benefactor.



Cows roam roads and the AFSS campus - eating whatever they can find - including clothes off the line.

Thank you for all you do to help fulfill our mission of bringing **HOPE** to the people of Northern Uganda through improved health, education, and faith in God. You are in our daily prayers!

God bless, *Todd*

Parish Visits: Coming this September

Once again we are planning the annual parish visits in September 2018. Second only to a personal visit to Uganda (which I strongly recommend), is a handshake or hug from one of our beloved priests. Come hear their stories and renew your inspiration to be the hands and feet of Christ in a distant land.

Watch your mail for dates and locations as plans are finalized.



David Fagerlee Medical Centre Update

It's been nine months since the David Fagerlee Medical Centre (DFMC) opened its doors to patients in the small Northern Ugandan village of Adilang. During that time the center has treated 5,254 patients – 3,392 were treated in the Out Patients Department, 557 were admitted for further treatment and management, and 121 were transferred to regional hospitals. A total of 396 expectant mothers attended Ante Natal Services, and there were 160 babies born in the facility, five prematurely. The center also provided 408 immunizations, and administered over 2,000 blood draws for various tests for diagnoses in the laboratory. Of the 5,254 patients, 2,034 were female and 1,868 were male.

Recently, the medical center has received word of two very important and useful donations. **The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** vetted and approved reimbursement for all babies born in the facility, and the cost of transporting patients by ambulance (also donated) to the nearest hospital. The center had been charging the patients about \$4.00 per birth, based on their inability to pay more. USAID will reimburse between \$20 and \$25 per birth, depending on degree of complication. The other exciting donation is coming from the **Philips Foundation**, who has agreed to provide an

ultrasound machine. They will deliver, install, train staff, and maintain the equipment for the medical center.

These areas of medical assistance are critical for delivering good health care to a very needy population, but there are so many other major conditions also treated at DFMC. In March alone, there were 385 patients seen for more than 25 different maladies, ranging from snake bite, sexually transmitted infection and malaria, to acute diarrhea, hypertension, pneumonia, urinary tract infections and eye injuries. A total of 267 pregnant women reported for Ante Natal Services, and 33 babies were delivered – a marked increase from past months. Perhaps not your average American emergency center profile, but it is somewhat reflective of the human condition existing in rural Northern Uganda.

The facts validate the need for assistance, but they only tell a part of the story.

It's the hope behind the facts that is most important. Most people in Adilang have never seen a nurse much less a doctor before, never had an examination or been given any medication. Yes, lives are being saved, but mostly what the clinic represents is an

invitation to the poorest of the poor to enter a world beyond basic survival – a world where hope exists for them to thrive.

We thank God for inspiring David Fagerlee with the love and generosity it took to create this amazing medical center. And David, along with the staff and grateful villagers, continues to work tirelessly to ensure the clinic's long term success. We ask for your prayers and support to help sustain the "miracle of Adilang". Please consider a donation today.



The DFMC provides quality care for approximately 400 patients monthly.

An Alumnus' Story: A Journey to Hope and Happiness

The following is the success story of a Sacred Heart Seminary graduate. As you know, many young men earnestly seek the priesthood but are diverted in their quest, most with no less love for the Lord and the desire to serve Him. One such man is **John Bosco Komakech Aludi**.

John was one of eight children, born of peasant farmers in Ariaga Village in Gulu District. He developed an interest in attending seminary at a very young age by watching the priests perform Mass every Sunday for the villagers. One Sunday after Mass, his mother told a missionary priest about her son's dream. Fr. Guido advised John to begin by getting involved in his parish so the priests could get to know him better. Taking that advice to heart, John was on a mission. Two years later his parish priest encouraged him to interview at Sacred Heart Seminary and he was accepted. The school tuition and expenses were daunting, but with the help of produce sales from the family garden and a mattress from a younger cousin, John attended the first semester.

Second semester, however, his mother could not raise the funds for John to return to school. After two weeks of selling mangoes and losing all hope of continuing his seminary education, he was walking home one evening when a car – the seminary car – stopped in front of him. Msgr. Matthew called to him, asking why he had not returned. John took Msgr. to see his mother, who explained the dire family situation. The Rector asked John to pack his bags and come back with him, beginning what John describes as his firm belief in divine providence. *“This act of mercy, began by the Rector, was sent by God. Otherwise it would stop. I knew Fr. Matthew, I admired him for his faith, for his trust in God and his love in promoting education for the needy and destitute.*

I put everything in the hand of God. And I prayed to Jesus, asking him to send people to help Fr. Rector.”

To remain in school, John worked summers at the seminary until he completed his minor seminary formation at Sacred Heart. He then entered the National Major Seminary, receiving the same support from Fr. Matthew and his benefactors.

Through his pastoral work at Caritas Gulu Archdiocese, John's life began to change again.

He requested a year away from the seminary, and it was during this time that he met and married his wife Rosemary. That ended his seminary formation, but began a career that led him to his current position in 2008 as Executive Director of **Caritas**. It is one of the largest charity organizations in Northern Uganda, supporting the most vulnerable in society, i.e. the elderly, young mothers, widows, refugees, and those with special needs.

The journey was often difficult and even dangerous. As the Emergency Relief Officer of Caritas in 2003, John entered the rebel ambush and was shot in the thigh and lower abdomen. When he returned to work a year later, Msgr. Matthew asked John to help him find land for a school – land that would become Archbishop Flynn Secondary School. He was then appointed to the steering committee of AFSS, a position he still holds today.

John Bosco is the proud father of five children, supports six children of his late sister and brother, and has been godfather to twenty-one



SHS alum John Bosco Komakech Aludi smiles cheerfully and humbly from his Executive Director office at Caritas in Gulu

other children over the years. He lives with his family in a small home in Gulu, thanking God every day for the great blessings of his journey. *“I have hope and I am happy that I am able to extend this same hope to others in need. As I reflect on my life, I know my life was transformed by people I've never met who helped with my formation at seminary. I would not be who I am without the generosity and goodwill of those benefactors. To them I say **THANK YOU** for touching my life so that I could become a leader within the Catholic Church. God is great and miracles are real!”*

John's life is a compelling testament to our mission and to your incredible generosity.

To read John's story in his own words, please go to our website @ www.hopeforuganda.org

Welcome New Board Members

In December 2017, Hope for Uganda added two new board members – **Doug Williams** and **Joe Ditsch**. Doug brings almost 40 years of experience as an intellectual property lawyer and will be a tremendous resource for HFU legal issues. He has been a parishioner of St. George Church in Long Lake for 30 years and has served the parish as President or Trustee for many years, while also being a member of the Knights of Columbus, Serra Club, and other Catholic volunteer groups. Doug is married with five children and 7 grandchildren and has been a long-time supporter of Hope for Uganda.

Joe also practices law and has been a partner in the Fowler Ditsch Law Firm since 2013 where they focus on labor law, criminal law, and civil and administrative law for employment and law enforcement-related cases. He has accepted the position of secretary of the HFU board and will chair the Operations/Administration Committee. His wife, Marcia, has seen the impact of our work during two trips to Northern Uganda while visiting Msgr. Matthew. Marcia currently teaches at Providence Academy while she and Joe raise their beautiful family and sow the seeds of hope.

YES! I want to make a donation to: HOPE FOR UGANDA

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of:

- \$1,000 \$500 \$250
 \$100 Other \$ _____
 Make this a monthly gift
 I want to Donate Stock (please call me)

Please designate my gift as follows:

- General Fund (area of greatest need)
 Sacred Heart Seminary Support
 AFSS Support
 The Farm Project
 David Fagerlee Medical Centre

Please mail checks made payable to: **Hope for Uganda, PO Box 1863, Minnetonka, MN 55345**. You may also make a credit card or PayPal donation via the website.

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MAIL. The Contribution Form to the right with a check made payable to **Hope for Uganda**