



Presidential Medal Awarded

As part of the International Labour Day celebration in Uganda, President Museveni awarded Msgr. Matthew Odong the Presidential Medal on May 1st in the northern district of Agago. The award was given to Msgr. in recognition of his commitment to the advancement of people in Northern Uganda, with emphasis on his efforts through Hope for Uganda to help develop the nation's infrastructure for job creation. The President's remarks targeted the youth of the nation, but he also advised the people in the north to embrace modern commercial methods of agriculture to create wealth in their homesteads.

From the Desk of Fr. Paul



Dear Friends – This is an important year for Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS). It marks the tenth anniversary of our operational existence! With your help and support we have grown from 35 students in 2009 to 524 students in 2019,

hitting a record 198 first-year students this year. We have continually performed among the top 50 schools in national exams. We are now ranked 29th out of 3000 schools in the country. We have also constantly emerged as champions in the Coca-Cola soccer tournament and other athletics in the Pader district.

Outside of academics and sports, students often engage in manual work and community service fulfilling their responsibility for charitable activities to the community. Our Chaplain organizes retreats three times a year to assist in the spiritual formation of students. Adoration and novenas have become part and parcel of life at AFSS and have become an important component of preparing for exams. Even without a chapel, students look forward to daily Mass, squeezed in the nun's chapel, and on Thursdays and Sundays in the assembly hall that doubles as the dining room.

You would undoubtedly rejoice with us in the success of our graduates. In ten years we have graduated 201 boys and 170 girls, many of whom are qualified in technical fields, nursing and education. It is especially gratifying to see that our concern for the education of girls in this culture is paying off. Two former students, Kenneth Rolexon and Franco Oyoo, have returned to teach at AFSS. Their presence on campus provides daily inspiration to our current students. We want to thank you, dear friends,

From the Desk of Msgr. Matthew Odong

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

The staff and students of Sacred Heart Seminary (SHS) join me in sending you our sincere greetings of love and gratitude. Your faithful prayers and financial support make a real difference in the education of our young men as future leaders of our people. The people in this poor region of Northern Uganda appreciate your love and support more than you know. May God reward you abundantly in return for your generosity.

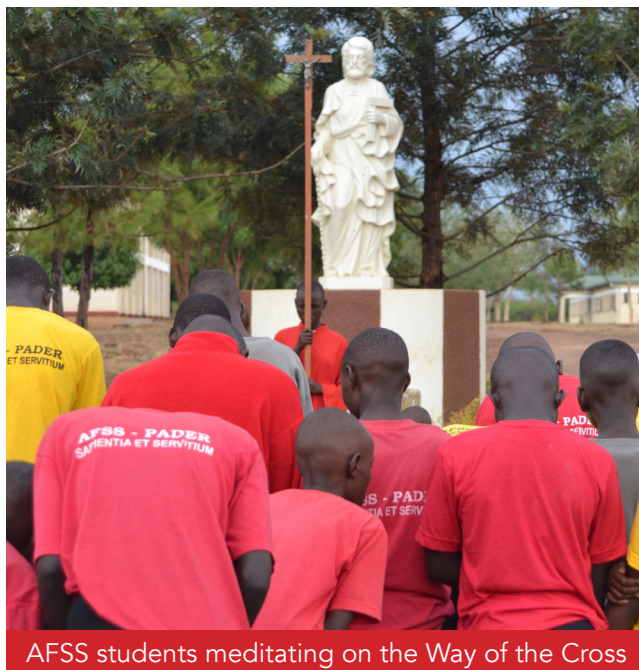
The academic year 2019 at SHS began well with God's blessings and grace. The total enrollment at the seminary is 180 young boys. Every year the number of vocations to the priesthood continues to grow. Because of your support through Hope for Uganda, SHS is able to annually send as many as 15 young men into major seminaries –one glorious step closer to priesthood. Among the group who graduated in 2018, twelve joined major seminaries. Between 1990 and 2018, sixty graduates of SHS have been ordained priests for service to humanity.

Both of the schools you support through Hope for Uganda – Sacred Heart Seminary and Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS)– remain two of the best educational institutions in all of Uganda. They are well known for the intellectual, spiritual, moral, and human formation of our future leaders in Uganda. The President of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Museveni, has specifically expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the American benefactors who helped to build AFSS. In many ways this is your story. You have been part of a miracle. (See side bar for more information.)

I want to thank the two young men who recently visited the Hope for Uganda projects from the United States. Luke Ziesmer and Daniel Smerz spent one month here doing charitable work for



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AFSS students meditating on the Way of the Cross

for your financial and prayerful support over the years. Going forward, we will be good stewards of these gifts and always strive to achieve our goal of providing the best possible education for our children. We already know the sustainability project will be critical for our future. Other pressing needs include:

- 🇺🇦 Finish and furnish Dan & Bobbi Vaughan Visitor Center - \$55,000
- 🇺🇦 Construction of computer lab and library to improve quality of study space - \$125,000
- 🇺🇦 Construction of administration building to free up space to educate more students - \$150,000

The new visitors' center, doubling as residence for the Administrator and Chaplain, is scheduled for completion later this year. You are always welcome to come see for yourself what your donations have done. May God bless you for your commitment to serving the needs of our people.

Fr. Paul Peter Rom

Farm Report

The vision for sustainability through agriculture remains one of the highest priority projects for AFSS leadership and the HFU board. So far, 100 acres of land have been cleared and are being transformed into a fruitful farm.

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AFSS staff picking cabbages to feed students

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Msgr. Matthew

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both schools and The Farm. You can read Luke's reflections on their culturally enriching adventure, also found in this newsletter. Now I would like to extend an invitation to all our American friends and benefactors. I know you would love it here in our great country, but be prepared to do without ice cream in Northern Uganda!

May God bless you and keep you until we meet again.

Msgr. Matthew Odong



2019 Appreciation Dinner

Save the date! The 2019 Hope for Uganda Appreciation Dinner will be held on **Wednesday, September 18th** at Providence Academy in Plymouth, MN.

The evening schedule:

- 5:00 – Mass in the Chapel
- 5:45 – Social Time
- 6:15 – Dinner
- 7:15 – Updates

Conclude by 8:30.

If you are interested in attending this year's event, please email info@hopeforuganda.org so you will be included on the invitation list.

We hope to see you in September!

Farm Report

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Your support has helped make the following accomplishments possible:

- 🌿 Clearing land, with additional benefit of producing firewood to fuel four years of cooking at AFSS
- 🌿 Hired professional farm and crop managers
- 🌿 Purchased tractor, plow and disc assuring reliable equipment when needed
- 🌿 Built a corn crib and temporary shelter
- 🌿 Installed 70 bee hives to enhance crop production, using honey and wax for sale
- 🌿 Harvested first crop of corn, beans, cabbage, tomatoes, and cassava

While progress of this project is very encouraging, there are challenges ahead. To assure continued growth and viability the following needs must be addressed:

- 🌿 Two motorcycles to provide transportation for farm staff - \$10,000
- 🌿 Install well and irrigation system at the Farm for staff and crops - \$40,000
- 🌿 Create road throughout farm property - \$50,000
- 🌿 Build barn for crop and equipment storage - \$65,000

Because of hard work and the generosity of HFU benefactors, sustainability through agriculture at AFSS is a becoming a reality. Please pray for its continued success and the well-being of the farm staff and workers as they labor with your love in their hearts.



AFSS students pile up wood for cooking



Locals rest after constructing temporary shelter at The Farm

Welcome Our New Board Member

The Hope for Uganda Board of Directors is very excited to welcome our newest director, **Brenda Arndt**. During the last several years, and since her retirement as Senior Attorney for Cargill, Brenda has been increasingly focused on building meaningful relationships and on "giving back" – working with community, pro bono, and mentoring programs. Through Opportunity International, Brenda visited Uganda in January 2018. In the summer of 2018, she

was introduced to Hope for Uganda by a neighbor and became very interested in its mission, including the religious, educational and sustainability aspects. She likes the long-term involvement with a Christian perspective and is convinced of the importance of educating girls. Brenda has a college-age daughter, lives in Minnetonka Beach, MN, and is an active member of Woodridge Church in Medina.



Traditional style bee hive installed at The Farm

Fr. Paul celebrates Mass at St. Aloysius in Olivia



2019 Parish Visits

September will once again bring our friends from Uganda for their annual parish visits. Msgr. Matthew Odong and Fr. Paul Peter Rom look forward to the opportunity to express their gratitude for the generous support given through Hope for Uganda to help the students and families in their Northern Ugandan communities.

The following is a preliminary schedule of parishes hosting a weekend visit:

- 🌿 St. Anne, Hamel – 9/7-8 with Fr. Paul
- 🌿 St. Patrick, Oak Grove – 9/14-15 with Msgr. Matthew
- 🌿 Immaculate Heart of Mary, Minnetonka – 9/21-22 with Msgr. Matthew
- 🌿 Holy Family, St. Louis Park – 10/5-6 with Msgr. Matthew

Several other parishes are considering the remaining available dates. **Please periodically check our web site for the most up-to-date schedule.**

Executive Notes



Dear friends – Hope for Uganda is changing lives!

Once again, we hope this newsletter will illustrate the significant impact of your support in Northern Uganda. The students at Sacred Heart Seminary (SHS) and Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS) continue to excel in spiritual and academic

development. The Farm at AFSS is steadily making progress toward the goal of sustainability through agriculture. And the Hope for Uganda (HFU) board in the United States is working hard to engage many more people of good will like you to help fund these life-changing projects.

WE'VE BEEN BLESSED – HFU benefactors were very generous in 2018. Thanks to their support, many fundraising measurements show improvement over previous years. The Advancement Committee is building on that momentum for 2019. Inspired by a direct challenge from a benefactor, the board is developing a strategy to raise \$1 million in a single year.

WE SEE THE SPIRIT MOVING – I'm excited to announce a new collaborative relationship between AFSS and NET Ministries. A local Uganda team of five young adult NET leaders will conduct two inspiring and interactive spiritual retreats in 2019. AFSS alumni will also be invited to attend a NET evangelization training program in June. The Holy Spirit is certainly working among us!



Above: NET Ministries-Uganda will visit AFSS



Above: Daniel Smerz teaches biology at SHS



WE NEED YOUR HELP – While the needs to support HFU projects are great, here are a few high-priority items for the coming year:

- 📌 Complete security fence around AFSS campus to prevent intrusion - \$35,000
- 📌 Complete roof repairs for the Auditorium at SHS - \$40,000
- 📌 Repair termite-damaged classrooms and administration building at SHS - \$135,000

WE KEEP OUR EYES ON THE GOAL – As always, our number one goal at HFU is to provide the students at AFSS and SHS with a quality education that will ultimately serve God and develop a nation. Many of you can appreciate the value of your own Catholic education and the sacrifices you made for your children. Please prayerfully consider making a gift of just \$75 per month (or one-time gift of \$900) to assist in educating another child of God for one year in Northern Uganda. With your prayers and financial support, we will all continue to change lives!

With deepest gratitude, we keep you and your loved ones in our daily prayers. God bless!

Appeal for Used Laptops

Do you have a used laptop computer that is in good condition but is no longer needed? Please consider donating it to The Farm. The computer does not have to be perfect because in addition to being a priest, a philosopher, and a farmer, Fr. Paul Peter Rom is also a computer repair genius! It would be a great blessing to the farm manager and staff as they build the sustainability project.

If you are willing to donate a laptop computer, please email info@hopeforuganda.org with your contact information. If possible include details like year, make, model, installed memory, hard disk storage, operating system, and a description of any known hardware or software problems. Let's not stump the priest, but we can give him a run for his money!



Below: AFSS students excited for more US visitors

Remembering Loved Ones

One of the greatest gifts you can give loved ones (living or deceased) is uniting their prayers and intentions to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Many parishes have Masses booked months in advance or don't have dates open meaningful to you. For a modest stipend for the priest (\$7-\$10 per Mass), you can have your special intentions offered by a priest from the Archdiocese of Gulu, Uganda. In fact, because priests in Northern Uganda receive no other compensation, a Mass offering is often the only money they receive to help perform their ministries. To honor your loved ones as well as helping to support our friends in Gulu, please send a list of your intentions, preferred dates, and a donation to Hope for Uganda and we will coordinate with the Archdiocese of Gulu.

Thank you!



Daniel & Luke with AFSS Alum, Acayo Gladace

Meet an Alum

Greetings to Hope for Uganda, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. My name is Acayo Gladace. I began attending Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS) in 2012 and graduated after sitting for national exams in 2017. I am now a university student in Gulu, pursuing a bachelor's degree in Arts Education, English, and Literature.

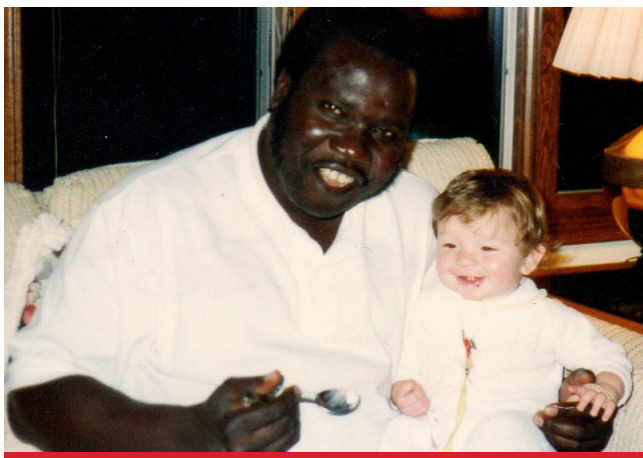
While at AFSS I received the Good Shepherd Scholarship. This opportunity through Hope for Uganda changed my life, both socially and spiritually. I believe every student who attends AFSS has a similar life-changing experience.

During and following the insurgency that ruined Northern Uganda for nearly 25 years, hope for a better Uganda was almost lost. The darkness of poor education and a difficult life loomed over the land. Now, with the help of Hope for Uganda, a new ray of hope shines on the faces of young people. Life is easier when prayers, hard work and discipline are embraced. These are the three pillars on which AFSS was founded.

The environment created by Hope for Uganda for the local people in my society is the best gift ever for Northern Uganda. We are grateful that your hearts were led to Monsignor Matthew and to helping his people. On behalf of the people of Northern Uganda, thank you for making Uganda great again by sacrificing your time, knowledge and financial resources to help Uganda's young generation in the great north.

A Grandson's Dream Fulfilled by Luke Ziesmer

Since my childhood, I have looked forward to September with much anticipation for two reasons. First, my birthday falls at the beginning of the month, and second, the Vaughan family welcomed a visitor and dear friend from Uganda, Msgr. Matthew Odong. His joyful character and determination made me very fond of him and created an urge to one day visit him in his homeland.



Msgr. Matthew with 1-year-old Luke, 1996

After graduating in May 2018 with a degree in Graphic Design & Marketing, I began to discuss with my dad, Todd Ziesmer, a plan to work with Hope for Uganda to create a new website and other marketing elements to help spread the message of the mission. I started to imagine travelling to Uganda to spend time with those who have been supported by HFU benefactors and personally capture what they have to say. A life-long dream came true when the HFU board agreed to my proposal to visit Uganda and pull together stories of how lives have been changed through the apostolate. That was my focus, but little did I know how the trip would change my life as well.

Being in Uganda was like nothing I had experienced before. Most people live in straw huts that are eight feet in diameter, with no electricity or running water. Every day I saw children from the age of five walking to school on a busy road, along with others carrying jugs of water for their days' supply. The inability to

pay school fees plagues the vast majority of families in the North due to lack of work. Many rely on subsistence farming to feed themselves, hoping that any excess could be sold to pay for their children's education. While they clearly have much less than we do, the amount of joy and gratitude they exude in everyday life was just amazing to me.

This was even more obvious in my conversations with students from Sacred Heart Seminary and Archbishop Flynn Secondary School. They take education very seriously and recognize the sacrificial giving of the benefactors who have provided this



Ugandans travelling along road to fetch water

opportunity for them. The students see their education as a way out of poverty, as well as a way to support their parents and siblings in the future. The value they place on education drives them to excellence – which is reflected in the high ranking of their schools. There is also a strong sense of responsibility among students and alumni to pay this gift forward to one day help others in their war-torn nation.

Many alumni I met are attending university with dreams of giving back to their alma mater. One such alum is Ivan Odonkonyero. Ivan was a recipient of The Good Shepherd Scholarship and Head Prefect (lead student) during his time at AFSS. He is currently attending the Uganda Martyrs University in pursuit of a degree in Business Management. He

told me he looks forward to the day he is able to start his own business and begin employing other AFSS alumni.

My new friendship with Ivan allowed for another perspective on the impact of Hope for Uganda. He invited my cousin Daniel and me to his parents' home. We walked with him to his village where we were greeted warmly by his parents and entered their hut to visit with them. Ivan's father told us with a smile on his face that we were the first white men to enter his home. He then told us he and his wife have always struggled as primary school teachers to send their nine children to school on a combined



Ivan Odokonyero and family, with Luke & Daniel

salary of \$260 per month. They believe, through endless prayer and the generosity of strangers, the Lord has paved a way for their children's education and a better tomorrow.

What changed my life the most during my time with the Ugandan people was seeing their devotion to God. Even in young students I saw a faith like nothing I've witnessed in the United States. I will never forget the love they showed me when it was time to leave. Thanks to my incredible family and the benefactors who give so generously, my presence represented a hope they have come to believe in. And we all understood how this shared experience was truly a gift from God.



“AMEN I SAY TO YOU, WHATEVER YOU DID FOR THE LEAST OF MY BROTHERS OR SISTERS, YOU DID FOR ME.”
MATTHEW 25:40



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Visit us on the web at
www.HopeForUganda.org



Hope For Uganda is a Minnesota 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation legally established in 1998 to support educational, faith formation, and relief activities in the Archdiocese of Gulu in Northern Uganda.

Make a Difference

Pray

Please keep the people of Northern Uganda and our mission in your prayers.

Volunteer

If you would like to offer your skills or time to the organization, please contact us.

Donate

Financially support the organization, which in turn provides hope to the people of Uganda.

YES! I want to give hope to the people of Uganda through my generous donation.

See enclosed donation form.