



## Archbishop Flynn Rural Development Education Center (AFRUDEC) - AKA

### “The Farm”

#### Boldly Building the Future of our Farm

by Dr. Father Paul Peter Rom

Dear Esteemed Friends and Benefactors,

Warm greetings from everyone at the Archbishop Flynn Rural Education Center (AFRUDEC)! As we enter the new school year, we are excited to update you on our progress and showcase how, with your unwavering support, we have been able to further develop the farm into a symbol of hope and opportunity for Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS).

In 2025, our farm faced severe flooding that disrupted crop production and threatened our progress. Despite these setbacks, we persevered, harvesting 20 bags of sunflower seeds which are now being processed into oil for our school. We are determined to never lose heart, no matter the challenges we face!

We responded to the flooding by launching a climate-smart, off-season vegetable initiative, powered by a solar irrigation system. Your gift of a well made the irrigation system a reality. We are eager to expand this initiative with your continued support.

With the irrigation system, we have been able to plant high-demand crops such as tomatoes (400 sq mi), onions (500 sq mi), okra (1,000 sq mi), cabbage (200 sq mi), and two varieties of eggplant (500 sq mi). These vegetables fill critical gaps in local markets during the dry season, providing both nutrition and income for families in Pader, Kitgum, and Gulu. Our staggered planting ensures a steady market supply, maximizing both yields and income for the farm. Alongside this, we continue to nurture our perennial crops which include bananas, coffee, and pineapples, securing a sustainable agricultural future.

We have also diversified into livestock as another source of protein for our students. Our cattle herd increased from 12 to 15 in 2025, and we aim to keep expanding. The fishpond, under careful management, will soon provide fresh fish to the school. Additionally, the new pigsty will be finished by July 2026, further enhancing our food security and training opportunities.

Looking ahead to Season One 2026, we are implementing a strategic plan that builds on lessons learned from recent floods. We plan to strengthen our perennial crops and expand acreage for seasonal crops, targeting the most resilient and profitable varieties. This careful planning is our best line of defence against climate uncertainty.

Our ambitions for 2026 include: Longe 5 maize - 80 acres, rice - 40 acres, sunflower - 30 acres, groundnuts - 20 acres, cassava - 10 acres, and vegetables - 3 acres. We are also expanding perennial crops, adding 2 more acres each of pineapple, banana, and coffee. These efforts will not only boost local nutrition but also create jobs and support a thriving rural economy.

*AFRUDEC continued on page 3*

## A Season of Joyful Milestones at SHS

### Spring Renewal and Celebration at Sacred Heart Seminary

by Msgr. Martin Agwee, Rector of SHS

While our friends in the Northern Hemisphere celebrate the blossoming of flowers, here at Sacred Heart Seminary (SHS) in Gulu, we are celebrating the arrival of the first rainy season. After the long, scorching dry spell, the heavens have opened, turning our grounds from dusty brown to a vibrant, hopeful green. In the Ugandan context, this is the true season of “spring”.

Spring is a season of renewal, growth, and joyful expectation. At SHS, this time of year has become a profound reminder that God continues to bless our mission with new life, new opportunities, and new milestones worth celebrating.

#### Celebrating New Vocations

We are delighted to have received 24 new students in Senior One (S.1). Their presence has already brought vibrant enthusiasm to the seminary community. We continue to expect a few more young men to join us, and we entrust their discernment journey to God’s providence.

We are also eagerly preparing to welcome back our returning students, along with new entrants to Senior Five (S.5) starting on March 7, 2026, for a total of 19 young men. Their arrival signifies a crucial stage in advanced formation, where academic focus intensifies and vocational reflection becomes more deliberate. These transitions serve as clear indicators

that the seminary continues to be a fertile environment for cultivating the seed of a priestly vocation.

#### Celebrating Advancement to Higher Formation

Another major cause for celebration is the progress of our former Senior Six (S.6) candidates, totaling 17. Throughout this year, candidates who have been positively evaluated will be joining the National Major Seminaries of Uganda to further their ecclesiastical studies in social and philosophical subjects. This transition marks a significant step forward in their path towards priesthood.

As they move on to Major Seminary formation, we celebrate and give thanks for the foundation laid at SHS. Their advancement is not only a personal achievement but also a sign of continuity in the mission of the Archdiocese of Gulu. Each seminarian who progresses to higher studies strengthens the future of the local Church.

#### Celebrating Holistic Formation

Formation at SHS continues to embrace the full development of the human person. Our daily rhythm of prayer, academics, community work, conferences, and sports shapes disciplined and balanced young men.

*SHS continued on page 2*



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*AFRUDEC continued on page 3*



Students in computer lab



SHS football team reaches semi-final round

## A Day in the Life of a Student at SHS

### My Experience at Sacred Heart Seminary, Lacor

by Seminarian Otim Emmanuel S.6 (Disciplinary Chairperson)



My time as a student at the mighty Sacred Heart Seminary Lacor has been one of the most meaningful and transformative experiences I have had. I was quite young when I first arrived, and I was trying to understand what the future held for me. However, as time passed, the seminary became another home for me, shaping me academically, spiritually, and personally, and helping me grow into a more responsible and thoughtful person.

During my first days at the Seminary, everything felt new and a little overwhelming, and I had to adapt to a completely different environment from what I was used to. Adjusting to the seminary routine was not easy, as the expectations were high, and I was surrounded by many new faces from different places and parishes. We had early morning prayers, classes throughout the day, communal activities, and time set aside for personal study. However, as time passed, I began to understand that this structure,

which I initially saw as strict, was meant to help us grow in discipline and responsibility. Gradually, the seminary began to feel like another home far away from home.

Academics are taken very seriously at SHS. We are constantly encouraged to work hard in our studies and to strive for excellence. The teachers expect us not only to memorize what we are taught but also to understand and think critically about what we are learning. Subjects like Latin, history, religious studies, geography and other academic disciplines help expand my knowledge and understanding of the world. The forested environment around the seminary, with its rich history, encourages curiosity and learning beyond the classroom.

*A Day in the Life continued on page 3*



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## 2025 Grant & Projects Update - Thank you!

Your generosity funded grants for scholarships and projects totaling \$1,015,124 last year. Items that are completed and being worked on include:

### Sacred Heart Seminary (SHS)

#### Completed:

- Student scholarships 2025
- Furnishings for new home on SHS campus for Archbishop Emeritus Odama
- Developing design drawings and construction estimate for "A" level classroom remodeling
- Grant request & funding for Phase II technology upgrade
- Grant request and funding for new accounting software for the school

#### In Progress:

- Student Scholarships 2026

### Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS)

#### Completed:

- Student scholarships 2025
- Construction of Providence Medical Clinic on the AFSS campus
- Phase I and II foundations, columns, beams, 2nd floor slab, and roof structure for administration building
- Development of campus master plan
- School brass band instruments
- Developing design drawings for the new girl's dormitory, bathroom facilities, and construction estimate
- Seven Sisters Mass & celebration
- Grant request & funding for Phase II technology upgrade
- Grant request and funding for new accounting software for the school

#### In Progress:

- Student scholarships 2026
- Phase III administrative building construction buildout

### AFRUDEC (the Farm)

#### Completed:

- Salaries 2025
- Developing drawings and construction estimate for Phase II road construction
- Grant request and funding for 2nd season crops

#### In Progress:

- Construction of new pig barn
- Developing drawings and construction estimate for the new warehouse

### DF Medical Centre - all completed

- Monthly Operating Expenses
- Grant request & funding for new ambulance

### Gulu Archdiocese - all completed

- Motorcycles, Mass kits, and chasubles for seven priests ordained in 2025
- Grant request & funding of Motorcycles, Mass kits, and chasubles for two priests to be ordained in 2026
- Grant request & funding for building upgrades to Blessed Daudi & Jildo parish in Pader

## Development Director Updates

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings to you in this holy season! As Easter gathers Christians in joyful celebration, it feels especially fitting that HFU's annual Celebrate newsletter reaches you at this time. Your generosity over the past year has been extraordinary. In addition to sustaining tuition support for students at both AFSS and SHS, your gifts have helped advance a wide range of vital construction projects that are now completed or nearing the finish line.

In this issue, you'll read about the meaningful milestones our Ugandan partners have reached over the past year. These accomplishments are a testament to what steady, faithful support can achieve. They also remind us that the work continues. Providing excellent education and strong priestly formation requires long-term investment, careful planning, and facilities that are safe, functional, and built to serve growing communities.

As we move forward in 2026, several important priorities lie ahead:

Scholarship support for AFSS and SHS remains at the heart of HFU's mission and at the top of our priorities. These scholarships change the trajectory of lives, opening doors to education, leadership, and service to the Church. If you already support a scholarship, please consider renewing your commitment. If you are able, an increased gift would help us meet rising needs. Increased costs in Uganda have led to tuition increases at both schools, which in turn raise the level of scholarship support HFU must provide. Your partnership in this effort is more important than ever.

At AFSS, we've been excited to share updates, especially progress on the long-awaited administration building and Providence Clinic. Yet as the school continues to grow, new needs emerge, particularly for its female students. Enrollment growth has filled existing housing to capacity, making a new girls' dormitory an urgent priority. Providing safe, appropriate accommodations is essential to supporting these young women and their academic success.

Sacred Heart Seminary, though also growing, faces a different challenge: time. Several classroom buildings have served generations of seminarians but now require significant structural repair. Age, weather, and termite damage have created safety concerns and forced some classes to relocate, disrupting formation. We are pleased to share that construction on the first phase of much-needed A-Level classrooms and dormitories will begin soon. However, additional funding is still needed to complete that project and to support the future construction of O-Level classrooms for younger students.

Beyond the classroom, the Farm plays an essential role in sustaining AFSS. To strengthen food security and operational efficiency, plans are underway to build additional grain storage and a warehouse. We are also seeking support for a modern flour mill to enable on-site grain processing. Together, these improvements will enhance harvest preservation, expand processing capacity, and improve equipment management—practical investments with lasting impact on the Farm's long-term sustainability.

Lastly, we are deeply grateful to the donors who have already funded motorcycles, chasubles, and Mass kits for the Archdiocese of Gulu's 2026 class of newly ordained priests. Thanks to the abundance of vocations in Gulu, this is a need we will have the privilege of supporting for years to come.

You'll find a fuller summary of current funding priorities elsewhere in this newsletter. I invite you to review them and discern how you might take part. Financial gifts are vital, but so are your prayers and your willingness to share this mission with others. Every form of support helps this work flourish.

Thank you for your continued faith in what we accomplish together. It is a privilege to work with you in serving the people of Uganda.

With gratitude and prayers,



Joe Pratt  
Development Director  
Hope For Uganda



SHS students in front of the Sacred Heart of Jesus chapel

*SHS continued from page 1*

This academic year, our students placed fourth (making it to the semi-final round) in the Fresh Dairy Secondary Schools Football Tournament, a highly competitive sports event that culminates at the national level for successful teams. Their participation reflects our commitment to excellence not only in academics and spirituality, but also in physical development and teamwork. Their involvement is a celebration of youthful energy and fraternity.

### Implementation of Technology Upgrade - Phase Two

In line with our dedication to institutional advancement and in compliance with the directives from the Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, SHS will begin phase two of our technology upgrade this term. This will involve purchasing additional computers for student use and security cameras to enhance the safety of the seminary and its property. This phase builds upon previous improvements and focuses on strengthening digital infrastructure, enhancing access to learning resources, and improving administrative efficiency.

The integration of upgraded technological systems supports modern pedagogical methods, ensures improved communication, and positions the seminary to meet contemporary educational standards. This development is a strategic investment in the future of formation, equipping both staff and students with tools necessary for effective

learning and administration. We are grateful that our request for grants to HFU has been approved and the funds are now available at SHS to facilitate implementation.

### Celebrating Legacy and Partnership

This season has given us many reasons to celebrate: new students beginning their journey, continuing students deepening their formation, S.6 graduates advancing to National Major Seminaries, participation in national-level sports competition, and technology upgrade phase two. All these milestones remind us that the seminary is alive, growing, and moving forward with confidence.

We are thankful for the strong legacy upon which we continue to build - particularly the long and dedicated service of Monsignor Matthew Odong. His commitment to formation has influenced generations of priests, and we are grateful for his contributions.

We are equally thankful for the unwavering support of HFU. Your generosity sustains every dimension of seminary life - You are truly partners in this mission of raising future shepherds for the Church. You are a Hope For Uganda!



## Hope For Uganda Top Funding Priorities

**2026 Scholarships** for talented students unable to afford tuition and fees

- Goal - \$475,000
- Raised - \$277,480
- Needed - \$197,520

### SHS A Level Classroom Block

- Goal - \$250,000
- Raised - \$55,000
- Needed - \$195,000

### AFSS Girls Dormitory

- Goal - \$250,000
- Raised - \$0
- Needed - \$250,000

### AFRUDEC Grain Silos

- Goal - \$64,000
- Raised - \$0
- Needed - \$64,000

### Auditorium Repairs for Sacred Heart Seminary

- Goal - \$150,000
- Raised - \$0
- Needed - \$150,000

For additional funding priorities, please visit the projects page on the website:  
[www.hopeforuganda.org/projects-funding-priorities](http://www.hopeforuganda.org/projects-funding-priorities).

## Notes from HFU Board Member, William Kottemann

Dear Donors and Friends of Hope For Uganda,

The Easter season is the time to celebrate the Risen Christ and all that it means for us in our daily lives. It is also a time for us to celebrate the incredible transformation that has taken place in Northern Uganda, thanks to your prayers and support.

As many of you know, 35 years ago a young priest, Father Matthew, visited our parish of St. George in Long Lake, Minnesota, for a mission appeal. A few very generous benefactors realized the incredible need that the people of Northern Uganda had for education.

The first years after that visit were spent repairing and updating the Sacred Heart Seminary. It soon became apparent that there was a much greater need for education for both female and male students. Hope For Uganda was started at that time, and the Archbishop Secondary School was established. Following that came a 250-acre farm, and most recently, an infirmary was built on the campus of AFFS.

The details of this growth have been well-documented in the last several newsletters. In this Celebrate Newsletter, you will see how the transformation has continued to expand beyond my wildest dreams. Please take the time to read every article!

My wife, Jean, and I have been blessed to be part of this growth since the first visit to St. George's. In addition to supporting the mission, we have had the privilege of hosting Monsignor Matthew and Father Paul over the years.

As Uganda continues to experience growth, it is crucial for HFU here in Minnesota to also expand in order to provide support. I am eager to see more individuals get involved with Hope For Uganda. If you feel the same calling that Jean and I did, please consider volunteering or becoming a board member for HFU.

You and your loved ones are in our prayers. Let us all celebrate our many blessings and acknowledge the significant impact your support has had in changing the lives of numerous people in Northern Uganda.

*William Kottemann*



AFSS students helping prepare vegetables



SHS students tending garden



Renovated science lab on SHS campus

*save the date*

The 2026 Hope For Uganda Shareholder Meeting will take place via Zoom on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at 4:30pm.

Contact Joe Pratt [jpratt@hopeforuganda.org](mailto:jpratt@hopeforuganda.org) for details.



*uganda pilgrimage*

**Please keep our Summer 2026 Uganda Pilgrims in your prayers!**

HFU supporters will be visiting our various institutions and to meet with our Ugandan brothers and sisters.

*AFRUDEC continued from page 1*

Education continues to be central to our mission. In collaboration with the National Agricultural Research Development Institute (Ngetta ZARDI) and Gulu University, we are conducting essential research to improve bean varieties for local farmers. Your support enables us to train the next generation. Between December 2025 and February 2026, we hosted seven interns, and we are excited to welcome six more from top universities this year.

### Remaining Challenges and Opportunities

Despite our progress, critical infrastructure gaps continue to pose a threat to our operations. Challenges persist with harvesting equipment, post-harvest handling, and storage. These bottlenecks lead to reduced efficiency, increased losses, and limit our ability to quickly achieve profitability.

With your help, we can overcome these hurdles by investing in grain tanks for secure storage, building essential roads for access, acquiring a combine harvester, and constructing a warehouse to protect our harvests. Each of these improvements will not only increase our productivity and market value but will also ensure stable income and sustainable growth.

The impact of your generosity goes beyond AFSS and AFRUDEC; it shapes lives, inspires innovation, and uplifts our entire community. We are incredibly grateful to you for being an essential part of our journey. Every gift, no matter the size, brings us closer to our vision: to transform the farm into a center of education, a financial hub, and a comprehensive resource for rural development. Your ongoing support will enable us to turn these dreams into reality. May God bless you all abundantly.

With gratitude and hope,

*Joe Pratt*

*A Day in the Life continued from page 1*

Over the years, punctuality has been ingrained in the minds of every seminarian as a key aspect of our discipline. It is especially important in the various activities we engage in here. I have learned how to effectively manage my time, prepare for exams ahead of schedule, and stay dedicated to my studies even when faced with a heavy workload. Embracing these disciplines has been a fundamental pillar for our future.

One of the most important aspects of being a seminarian is our spiritual life. Prayer plays a central role in our daily routine. Each day begins and ends with prayer, especially after evening preparations. We also regularly participate in Holy Mass, spiritual reflections, moments of silence, and even singing classes. These practices have helped us grow closer to God and have allowed us to reflect deeply on our faith, calling, and purpose. Being in such an environment has encouraged many of us to seriously consider our vocation, service, and relationship with God, as well as important values like humility and patience. Whenever we face uncertainties, we receive proper guidance and support from our spiritual directors and formators, who are always ready to listen and advise us accordingly.

Another important experience is learning to live in a community with people who have different personalities, opinions, and backgrounds. This teaches the importance of cooperation, respect, and patience. Along with sharing meals, we study, pray, and work together. Through these shared experiences, strong friendships are formed, and the sense of brotherhood makes challenges easier to face.

Looking back at my past five years at SHS, I realize how much I have grown since the day I first arrived. I have matured not only academically, but also emotionally and spiritually. I can feel growth in discipline, self-control, and a sense of responsibility. I have learned how to respect others, work as part of a community, and reflect deeply on important questions about life and faith.

Perhaps most importantly, SHS has helped me to better understand my strengths and weaknesses, as well as my hopes for the future. I am grateful for everything I have experienced, and the lessons I have learned here will always remain with me. Values of discipline, faith, service, and commitment will continue to guide my decisions. The seminary has given me a strong foundation for whatever lies ahead. The lessons, values, friendships, and different experiences and disciplines I have been trained with have been deeply rewarding and will forever remain a part of my life.

# Bringing hope to the people of Uganda through FAITH, EDUCATION, HEALTH, and SUSTAINABILITY

## Remember Loved Ones Through Mass Intentions

One of the greatest gifts you can give loved ones is uniting their intentions to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Many U.S. parishes have Masses booked months in advance or do not have dates open that are meaningful to you. For a modest stipend, your special intentions will be offered by a priest from the Archdiocese of Gulu, Uganda. Because priests in Northern Uganda receive no other compensation, a Mass offering is often the only money they receive to help perform their ministries.

Masses may be offered for an intention, for the living, or for the deceased (suggested stipend of \$10 per Mass). A series of Gregorian Masses (suggested stipend of \$300 for 30 consecutive Masses) may be requested for a deceased individual.

To honor your loved ones, as well as to support the priests in Gulu, visit [www.HopeForUganda.org/support-our-mission](http://www.HopeForUganda.org/support-our-mission). Include 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!



Monsignor Matthew with a group of newly ordained priests in the Archdiocese of Gulu



AFSS Admin Building



Providence Medical Clinic on AFSS campus



HFU 2023 Uganda Pilgrimage with members of IHM parish Minnetonka MN



**“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](http://www.HopeForUganda.org)



## HOPE FOR UGANDA

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.

See enclosed donation form, scan QR code, or visit [www.HopeForUganda.org/support-our-mission](http://www.HopeForUganda.org/support-our-mission).

