

HORIZONS

QUARTERLY OF EXPERIENCES OF RSCJ AND FRIENDS
OF THE UGANDA-KENYA PROVINCE
OF THE SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS



August 2016

*A word from
the editors, Sister Margie Conroy, rscj and Sister
Jo Wright, rscj, assistant editor.*

In this issue we have four articles that seem to dance around the theme of positive change.

Sr. Mary Grace Nakato tells of her glad surprise, coming back to Moroto after 8 years, to find it the destination of a beautiful paved highway and with so many new, handsome buildings and well-dressed men and women that it is hard to recognize the small, scruffy town it used to be. All we need to complete the transformation is regular collection and burning of the plastic rubbish that disfigures its streets!

Sally Graham, an old friend, tells us of her joy at returning to find Choose Life Home Based Care Centre for HIV+ people a strong, thriving organization that is transforming the lives of the many clients in the Moroto area and giving hope and happiness to their children.

Sr. Consolata Khakaali, one of our sisters studying in Japan, tells us of her dream of implementing what she is learning about agriculture in Japan when she returns to the Uganda-Kenya Province. We have land under cultivation but we have a lot to learn about getting the profit from it that we need to sustain us and at the same time respecting and enriching the land that is feeding us.

Finally, Sr. Nancy Koke reflects upon the Truth and Reconciliation Committee set up by Bishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa to help bring about forgiveness and healing of wounds caused by apartheid. She gives the example of the heroic love and forgiveness of one black woman.

Good reading.



CHANGE AS A FACT OF LIFE

Nakato Mary Grace, RSCJ

It is now two months since I joined Naoi community. While on the way, I thought that I was coming to a familiar place that I knew 8 years back but on the contrary, I arrived in a greatly changed world altogether. Now I see lots of transformation and modernity, for example, tarmac roads - at least around Moroto, with electricity, modern permanent houses and many hotels.

I have not only seen change out there, but witnessed it even in our ministry of journeying with HIV/AIDS clients. We now have a center where various activities take place. It is the place where the volunteers meet to make reports and give feedback of their findings after home visits to the clients, where the educators come together to find means of helping the children of clients whom they revise with, supervise to see that they do their home work, visit both in school and at home to check on their regular attendance at school, their hygiene and their progress in academics. Both volunteers and educators mobilize meetings in this centre for either clients or parents to discuss issues of concern.

Beside volunteers' and educators' activities, the center also runs activities for women affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. These women were previously concentrating on



tailoring and paper bead work. By the time I arrived, they were finalizing a two weeks' workshop in which they gained more skills of craftwork. Sr. Rebecca RSCJ taught them how to make bead bags and tie-and-die which they mastered. I joined this group and it has been a joy to work more closely with young mothers specifically in these past two months. These young

mothers are children of our HIV/AIDS clients and they come with their children whom they have to cater for.

I have been touched and challenged by these women's lives as well as their little children. I have come to enter their life experiences through story telling as they often share openly their struggles among themselves and they either console or advise and encourage each other. Although story telling is often in Nyakaramajong which I do not know, those



among them who know English often translate for me, thus helping me not only to get to know them but also to find better ways of handling each of them. My presence among them has helped me to learn that it is not only money that these women gain at the end of the day, but both encouragement and motivation to approach life in a positive way. I have also come to understand that this coming together has helped them to overcome tendencies of over drinking due to stress and idleness.



All in all, I have been inspired by these women's progress in producing well finished bags, becoming more interested in what they are doing and struggling to find a market for their finished products which is not easy, given the set-up of where we are. I am grateful for the changes that I have witnessed and to all who have contributed to such changes.

VISIT TO NAOI

Sally Graham

Imagine the joy of returning to Naoi Community where I first worked with Sister Frances Lynch on her mobile clinic, some 30 years ago. As I approached the house memories came flooding in. For sure there must have been changes but one thing for certain had not changed - the warm welcome and hospitality that I remembered when I lived with the community and shared their life for almost 2 years.

This time my visit was for business. I had been asked by the Volunteer Missionary Staff (VMM) to evaluate the Choose Life program. This program has been going since 2007 and continues to grow and expand its influence. Its impact is certainly being felt in the Moroto area. It is a truly inspiring program which is influencing the lives of literally hundreds of people and their families and helping to remove the stigma of HIV/AIDS.

My task was to get as much feedback as possible about the program so that VMM can have a clear picture about how it all works. The hope is that it will be possible for them to send 2 lay missionaries to work alongside Sister Itae and her team and to help with the organisational/structure side of the program which has grown well beyond all dreams and expectations.



After over one week of intensive discussions with the staff and teams of volunteers, I began to appreciate the scope of the program which is truly marvelous. The enthusiasm and cooperation of people made my work very straightforward and interesting. Deeply touching were the personal stories some of the clients shared with me, how their lives had been totally changed from despair to hope by the care and encouragement they had received from the volunteers, for they had previously lost all hope in any future due to their illness and social problems.

The experience has been for me an inspiring and joyful undertaking. An experience, if you like, of resurrection in action. I want to say a big thank you not only to Naoi Community for their hospitality but for all those who gave me so much help during the evaluation. It was really appreciated.

It is with absolute confidence that I can support this work and will urge VMM to send personnel to work with Sr Itae and her team who are deeply committed to the care of people needing help on this program.



My Life and Study at the Asian Rural Institute, Japan.

Conso Amisi Khakaali, RSCJ

It is four months since I arrived at the Asian Rural Institute in Japan and it seems like only a week. I would like to register my gratitude to all of you my sisters for supporting me with your prayers.

I would like to share with you now a little about my life and study here at ARI. The college is in the Northern part of Japan, about 160 km from Tokyo city.

We are 24 participants from 13 countries of Asia and Africa. In addition, we have long term and short term volunteers, working visitors and staff members.

The Asian Rural Institute is situated on 15 acres of land that includes a forest, a poultry farm, a piggery, goats, vegetable farms and fish ponds.



The official opening ceremony for ARI took place on the 16th April and the following day our classes began. Our daily schedule, Monday to Saturday, begins with morning exercise which is a form of prayer and preparation of the muscles for the day.

After the exercises, we do our cleaning chores for 20 minutes.

At 7.00 a.m. we start Foodlife work. (Foodlife is a word used at ARI to show that food and life cannot be separated; they depend on each other.) 8.15 is time for breakfast.

After breakfast, we gather together as a community of ARI and share the Word of God. We are an ecumenical group, not all of us are Christians and some have no Religion but each individual shares according to his/her interest. We rotate the sharing of the prayer, taking a day each at a time.



We have classes from 10:00 am until 12.20 pm. The lunch break is from 12.20 to 2.00 p.m. After lunch some go to work in the fields or wherever else one may be assigned. From 5.00 to 6.00 there is foodlife work and supper is at 6.30.

We work in groups of eight whereby each group is responsible for a field where we carry out our practical farm work; we have individual gardens, and we also have livestock management. We grow our own food in organic farming.

We are taught how to care for the animals, food management, diseases the animals and crops may get and what to do about them. On the right is a picture showing the carrying out of castration on piglets.



On Sunday the participants go to different churches. We are five participants and two staff members who are Catholics and each of us is assigned a time to prepare sermons to share with the Christians. The Christians are small in number and many of the churches where we are could have perhaps 20 in the congregation and they are old; there are no young people.

In integrated farming we have learned how to have an integrated farm with the practice of keeping animals and the growing of crops in the same area that in turn, provide resources to each other and contribute to the success of the overall system.

Other topics we have studied include:

- The making of natural fertilizers and pesticides.
- Natural organic management in livestock
- Making of feeds at home for the animals etc.

There are moments when we also get together with our supporters and share about our learning progress in the College.

In this photo, taken during a luncheon with supporters from Tokyo, are Sister Toshiko Tahakashi RSCJ, Joseph from the Sacred Heart, Philippines, myself and Sister Yoshiko Aoki RSCJ. This is a time prepared by the college so that sponsors can meet with the students they have supported.



I close in saying thanks for the opportunity to be learning so much at the Asian Rural Institute.



Moments of Mercy

Nancy Koke, RSCJ

Recently I was reading an autobiography of Desmond Tutu, an Anglican Archbishop. He received the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to bring about a lasting peace in South Africa. Desmond Tutu is the one who was also instrumental in developing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which helped in the healing process once all South Africans were freed from apartheid. He insisted that those who had wronged must, first of all, be given the opportunity to confess their sin. "They must be willing to say, 'We have hurt you by this injustice, by uprooting you from your homes, by dumping you in poverty-stricken resettlement camps, by giving your children inferior education, by denying your humanity and trampling down your human dignity and denying you fundamental rights. We are sorry; forgive us.'"

Secondly, Tutu said, the victims were under a "Gospel imperative" to forgive and thirdly those who had committed wrongs had to make restitution. "If I have stolen your pen, I can't really be contrite when I say, 'Please, forgive me, if at the same time I keep your pen.' If I am truly repentant, I will demonstrate this genuine repentance by returning your pen."

Several months ago I heard about a case that went before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. A woman whose son had been murdered was willing to listen to the murderer's apology. She was then asked if she was willing to forgive him. She said to the judge: "I am willing to forgive him under three conditions: First: He lets me give him a hug. Second: He comes to visit me once a week. Third: He allows me to call him son".

In the 1982 Constitutions of our congregation, the Society of the Sacred Heart, in paragraph 31 we read:

*Through our mutual trust,
the sharing of our prayer and life-experiences,
through our love and loyalty towards one another,
we come to find real joy in living together,
welcoming our gifts and differences
of culture and mentality.*

*Our desire to live in mutual love
helps us to overcome our egoism,
and to work through moments of tension,
open to forgiveness and reconciliation.*

Can we also make untiring efforts to forgive and be reconciled with one another when there is a need?