

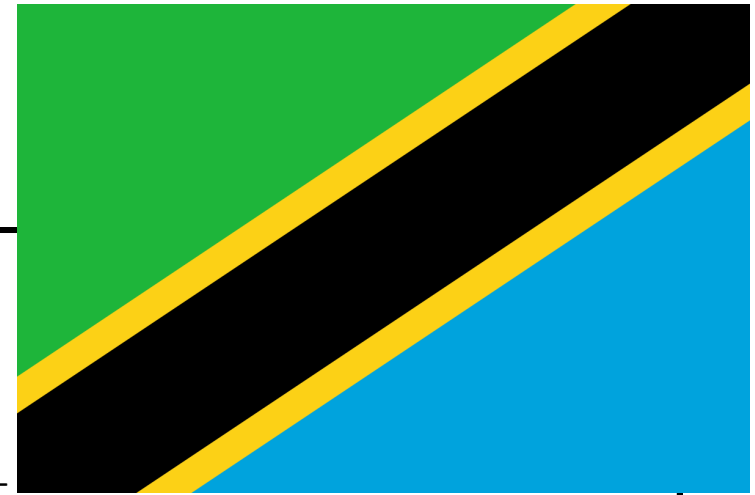
Tanzania Mission

Trip 2019





Here is a brief look at the experiences of a team of 21 pilgrims with very diverse backgrounds but unified by the sense that God had led us to making the de-



cision to fly to the far side of the planet in hopes of being able to serve Him and His people. We were truly blessed! Our mission was not to build a wall, or paint a fence; but rather to build relationships with the people of Tanzania through and with the Sisters of Our Lady Queen of Africa.

We carried 42 suitcases with over 2,000lbs of total supplies. This was thanks to generous financial donations, as well as in-kind donations; it consisted primarily of donations for the Sisters' school, orphanage, and medical clinic.

Our host was Sister Scholastica, the General Superior of the Sisters of Our Lady, Queen of Africa, and she accompanied us for the entirety of our journey in Tanzania. She really impressed us with her energy, her vision for her order, and her kindness to us. After loading a bus in Mbeya, we road 5 ½ hours to Sumbawanga, arriving on Tuesday evening around 9:00 p.m. (which was exactly 48 hours after leaving Marshfield). We were very weary but overjoyed to have reached our destination.



On **June 19**, the first full day in Sumbawanga we spent the morning organizing the supplies we had transported. After lunch we made our first trip to the girls' school and what an amazing impression they made on us. I don't think there was a dry eye in our group as the girls met us in front of the school dressed in their uniforms. Then the headmaster assembled them and they proceeded to sing songs that came from the very depth of their being. It was a moment many of us will not forget for years to come. We saw the new dormitories that are nearly finished, which were built with some of our donations after the fire destroyed the others last year. We had dinner in their cafeteria and then delivered the medical supplies we brought to their clinic.





On Thursday, June 20th, we had Mass with the Sisters in Swahili. Hard to imagine but the singing of the Sisters out-did that of the school girls. It was heavenly. Then we visited their orphanage. The kids were precious and even though the orphanage is understaffed, the kids are obviously loved and full of hope. In the afternoon we visited two building sites: one for a retreat center (the Sisters are growing as an order - they have 460 Sisters now, with 60 more in formation!), and the other for a new school (their girl's school is full, with over 500 girls).



Christy Kitzhaber met her pen pal Sr. Maria Ndasi





Friday, June 21 we went back to the school where we split into groups so as to teach the girls. One group taught them how to make Rosaries. Another group taught the girls about how to use the 10 laptops that we brought. There was a music class which ultimately taught them how to play a recorder. An arts and crafts class was very popular, as was the physical education class that focused on ultimate frisbee (we brought dozens of frisbees).





Saturday, June 22, we were going on safari but on the way we made an impromptu visit to the novitiate of the Sisters and that was a real shot in the arm. We were all tired from the short night of sleep, but the young aspirants, postulants, and novices woke us up with their spirited singing and dancing. People in Africa seem to sing and harmonize as if it were a preternatural gift from God. And the dancing is something that obviously comes from their soul. We ate a hearty breakfast while being serenaded by each of the aforementioned groups. Insofar as this group of girls is the feeder system for the order, the future is undoubtedly a bright one for the Sisters of our Lady, Queen of Africa.

We arrived before noon at Katavi, which is a world-famous wildlife preserve, and the action began in earnest right from the outset. As we entered the park, we drove along a river that was teeming with life: crocodiles, hippos, elephants, and even a lone water buffalo. From

there we spent the day admiring zebras, water bucks, many strange birds (including an African Eagle), lots of hippos (48 in one spot)- including one that ran a water buck off of his territory), elephants, giraffes, elands, antelope, and a huge lizard called a monitor.



Sr. Benedicta, Fr. Martin, Sr. Scholastica and Sr. Teresita (front) at hippo mud pit



Sunday June 23 was the Feast of Corpus Christi, and the Cathedral parish wasn't only celebrating Corpus Christi - it was also the First Communion of 60 kids. After Mass (which began at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 11:00 a.m.), we prepared for the traditional Corpus Christi procession. The Bishop had presided at



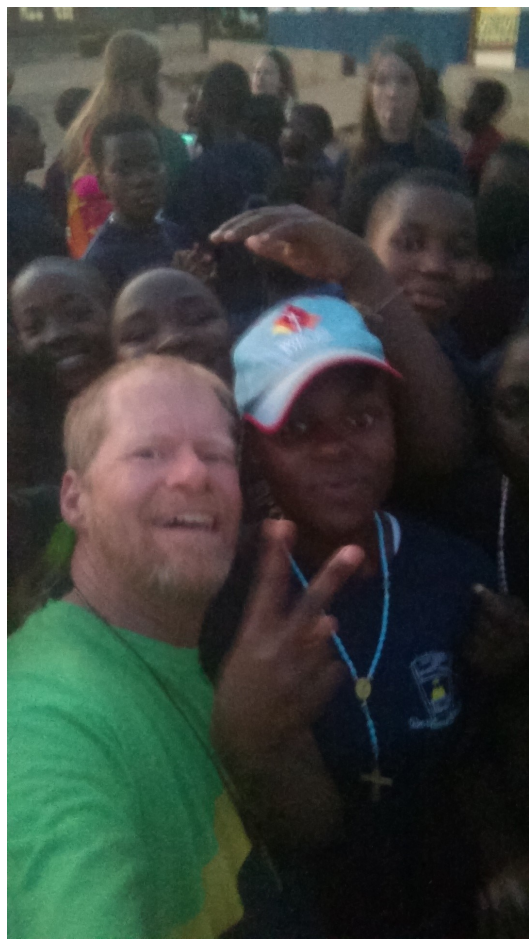
Mass and was to join us for what they said would be a shorter version of the procession than in years past. We didn't finish until 2:00 p.m., though most years they go until 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. The spiritual stamina of these folks was unparalleled and never ceased to amaze us. There were safely around 1,000 people and the whole city took notice as we carried Jesus through the streets. This allowed us to live a saying we heard daily:

Tumsifu Yesu Kristu – Milele Amina! (Praised be Jesus Christ – Now and Forever. Amen!)

Afterwards we were whisked away to the girls' school (Saint Theresia) for a late lunch.



And then the most amazing thing happened: a dance party broke out with the 200 girls showing our group an exuberance that one could only marvel at. It was an extremely entertaining afternoon and the girls had clearly opened up to our group and we reciprocated by taking them into our hearts. It was hard to say goodbye that evening and I'm sure hundreds of pictures were taken to immortalize the experience.



On Monday June 24 we celebrated the Feast of Saint John the Baptist with early Mass before departing for our trip to Kalambo Falls and Lake Tanganyika. The driving was always an adventure because of the amazing number of speed bumps used to discourage reckless driving. It was another beautiful day and we had about 6 Sisters who joined us on our excursion. The waterfalls were amazing. Afterwards we drove to the shore of Lake Tanganyika, which is the second deepest freshwater lake in the world. It was a perfect day and spot for a picnic, and we relaxed there until dusk. There were wild monkeys which our group found love watermelon. We returned to the convent for a dinner in honor of Saint John the Baptist's feast with lots of music and dancing.





After our journey in Tanzania, many of us went on to visit Rome for a weekend. That was an incredible experience in its own right, including a Papal Audience, St. Peter's Basilica, St. Mary Major, St. Paul Outside the Walls, St. John Lateran, Chiesa de Jesu, The Colosseum, Roman Forum, Piazza Navona and much more!

We stayed at guest house run by Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother—note picture on wall of Mother Frances Streitl



Tuesday, June 25, was our last full day in Sumbawanga and we spent part of it shopping in their local market. We had our closing banquet that evening, We received generous gifts (clothing and a banner with Our Lady Queen of Africa and Saint John the Baptist featured prominently) and took a lot of pictures.



Let us pray that our relationship with the Sisters of Our lady Queen of Africa may be fruitful for our parish and continue to bear fruit both locally and globally. God willing, we hope for more mission trips in the future!