

Uganda Girls Project

St. Mary by the Sea Parish, Rockaway Beach, Oregon



June 6, 2020

A message from St. Mary by the Sea, Uganda Team

Please pray for St Aloysius and all of those struggling in our world!

After Dia and I (Catherine) received Sister Immaculate's information that Ugandan schools would continue to stay closed, I decided to call her. I was finally able to connect through WhatsApp.

In our video call Sister told me that she is so grateful to have food to share and can hire a few people that are desperate to work to feed their families, but she is saving all the tuition money. She is really struggling on how to help when people come to her. Most of the people around the area have small acreage with a few animals and are getting by. But those who don't have land usually earn a living in other ways. These are the people who come begging. Sister will hire some men to do work that she and the girls can not do. Some want to be paid in food and she gives them sacks of beans and sacks of ground maize. She knows though that she must make the food and the tuition money last. It will be at least another month before school can resume!

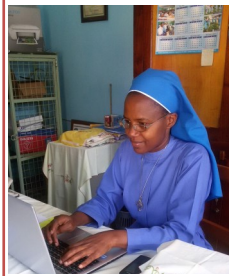
One of the hardest problems causing her the greatest anxiety is when she gets calls begging to make allowances to take this girl or that girl back right now. Some parents even say that it's not safe for their young high school girls where they live. Sr. Immaculate told me that she would love to take some back as she knows there are great hardships in some areas and the girls would be safe and happy at St. Aloysius. However, worrying about government punishment keeps her from disobeying the rules so she has not allowed even a few who live not too far to return. These problems keep her awake at night and she said her heart feels heavy with worry. She prays for God's help and says her rosary over and over at night.

Please pray for Sr. Immaculate and our school girls in Uganda!

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE. . . .

Dear Friends,

We are sorry about what we are hearing that you have riots going in the USA! As if the Coronavirus pandemic was not enough, now you are in this other situation!! It is very unfortunate that mistakes of few individuals can disorganize the whole nation! We pray for peace and reconciliation for you as the world leader.



Here, the sad news is that reopening of schools has been postponed for another month!

Covid cases are going up at a high speed. Now officially it is over 500, but I think it is much higher. It is not clear whether the tests are genuine in many cases. That's what I am hearing. It is very bad news for us as we do not have the medical advancements that you have. People are worried about our future.

My girls were so sad upon hearing that the schools will not open as had been communicated to us earlier from our government. Five girls so far have called me begging to allow them come back to school. Then three parents are begging to bring their daughters to me right now as they are so worried about their girls. It is quite challenging. Please pray for us!

Sr Immaculate, Principal

Smashing steamed bananas to make Matooke



Sister Petronilla tending the chickens



Olivia (above) was brought to St. Aloysius seven years ago. The villager who brought her to us never came back to pay any tuition or to even bring any personal requirements for the girl. So Olivia became a school dependent. When you people at St. Mary by the Sea started helping us, we were confidently able to help her and she completed her 3rd and 4th year here with us. She is an orphan and she is from a very problematic region, Karamoja land! The girl became our daughter and could not even go home to her village during school breaks. She is a very hardworking young lady and very appreciative and was good with her schoolwork too. After her fourth year, again with your support, we were able to help Olivia to join a teacher training college for two years, which was her dream.

Afterwards she got a job teaching little children. She started working last year. They only pay her 150,000 shillings a month (\$40 USD). She used her money sparingly and saved to go visit her village after being away so many years as she had younger siblings to see. Last December she visited her family after spending six years without seeing them. The whole village gathered to welcome her home! They admired her a lot because she was looking good and had some few things to share with them. It is quite expensive to travel to her village in Karamoja/Moroto Diocese. She spent 300,000 shillings going and coming back.

Then the Covid-19 lockdown found her broke and she could not go to her home or anywhere and quickly ran out of what little she did have. She begged me to come and stay with us because she didn't have any money to take her through the lockdown. So now she is happy to be here with us. She calls me Sister Mummy. We are all working together in the gardens and around school every day.



This is Joseph, our gatekeeper (to the left). When school is in session, all visitors need to pass through our gate with his permission! A few weeks ago he came begging for work to feed his family. We have hired him back to work in the fields and do odd jobs since we don't need a gate keeper right now. We made sure he had food for his family on that first day! We are SO happy we can help him. **Thank you for helping us!**

Thank you for your very generous donations! Sister appreciates all you have done for her girls. Future donation checks should be made out to St. Mary by the Sea Church and mailed to:

**St. Mary by the Sea
ATTN: Catherine Imbrie
P.O Box 390
Rockaway Beach, OR 97136**

On the 15th of each month, checks will be deposited into the account for Sr Immaculate, then wired to Uganda. She will use the money to buy food for the girls, pay teachers and continue building projects. Forty dollars sent each month can keep a girl in school! It costs \$450 a year for tuition, room, board and uniform.