

## AFSS/ACADEMIC YEAR 2010

Archbishop Flynn Secondary School opened on Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup> with the on-going 35 students, who are now in Senior 2. 81 new students reported on February 15<sup>th</sup> as the second Senior 1 class. Msgr. Matthew was at the school on February 21<sup>st</sup> to officially open the academic year with Mass in the newly opened dining hall. The new students were particularly happy at the way their brothers and sisters now in senior 2 welcomed them to the school and the way they are introducing them to the culture of AFSS. The boys now sleep in some of the classrooms while the girls are in their dormitory. Due to the current limited space the School Administration could not take more than the 81 new students admitted. The challenge of accommodating the boys in particular has been real. However, we are happy the school population has grown to 116. We clearly see our objectives unfolding into reality and this is very motivating. The teachers this year will have a heavier workload but we do not anticipate hiring any additional teachers this year. His Grace the Archbishop, Msgr. Matthew and the Head Teacher have started the process of licensing and registering the school with the Ministry of Education. We hope to have the operating license by midyear. The overwhelming influx of students this year is an indication of its growing popularity as well as confidence of parents in the school. But it is also a very big challenge to us to provide the required space and facilities that the students and parents expect to get in the school. We pray and hope that God will walk with us to see us through these challenges.



AFSS Students

We really need to build the Boys Dormitory within the next year so we can accommodate the next class in 2011. We ask for your prayers and generosity in helping us raise funding for this project.

**On April 14th** President Yoweri Museveni visited Pader District. His helicopter landed in the soccer field at the school late in the afternoon. Msgr. Matthew, Sr. Viola Akullo (Headmistress), the staff and students warmly greeted him with singing and clapping. Some staff and students had the opportunity to shake hands with President Museveni. He admired the school, enjoyed the singing by the students and encouraged them to study hard. He presented an envelope containing 220,000 Ugandan shillings (about \$100). We hope the President will donate more the next time when he comes on an official visit.

#### **APRIL 22 UPDATE FROM MSGR. MATTHEW**

The work on the additional classrooms began several weeks ago and is proceeding well. The science laboratory is about to be completed. It is the long building with a green roof near the classrooms. Dr. Gary Ivins laid the foundation of this building. We received 20 used computers from Computers for Africa for the school. The computers will be installed in the one of the new classrooms when they are completed.

The students and staff of AFSS send their love and prayerful best wishes to you and your families.



Science Laboratory

The drilling of **FOUR NEW WELLS**: three in Pader District and one in Gulu District have recently been completed. The beneficiaries of these wells are grateful to the donors and promise their prayers.

## ST. MARY'S EDIOFE SCHOOL RECEIVES GENERATOR

**THE SCHOOL:** St. Mary's Ediofe Girl's Secondary School is one of the three boarding schools for girls in Arua District in northwestern Uganda. It is located three kilometers west of Arua town. Arua is approximately 150 miles west of Gulu. The school was founded in 1983 with the aim of increasing opportunities for the girl child to attain formal education and to prepare her to be a self-reliant citizen. The school started after a period of turmoil of the Liberation War of 1979. The people of West Nile had to flee to Congo and Sudan. On their return it was difficult to travel outside the region. St. Mary's Ediofe was started to provide easy and safe access to education for girls in the region. It was also meant to chase academic ignorance and backwardness from the area. St. Mary's Ediofe offers both Ordinary and Advanced level education. Since its foundation with 80 students as the first enrolment, the school has steadily grown to over 700 students currently. In 2008 the school celebrated its Silver Jubilee under the theme "striving to attain perfection for the girl child."



Sr. Grace with the top class (Senior 6 students)

**BRIEF BIO OF SR. GRACE ACIRO:** I am the first born of the eight children of Matthew and Caroline. Of my seven siblings three are boys and four are girls. As first-born my dad always cautioned me that my siblings will be successful if I am and on the contrary, if I fail in life, none of them will ever succeed! This thought never left me, so I worked very hard in my primary school and passed to secondary school. I successfully completed my secondary education and went to the University for my Bachelor Degree in Education. By the grace of God, in 2007, I received my Master's degree in Linguistics from Makerere University. When I graduated, I heaved a sigh of relief even though I recognize my education continues every day of my life. Also in 2007 one of my brothers was ordained a priest. Fr. Paul Peter Rom now teaches philosophy at Alokolum Major Seminary in Gulu.

I was inspired to be a nun when I was in primary two. I was a flower girl in a wedding and my colleague and I were adorned like little princesses. After the wedding, I never wanted the dress to be removed from me. The person who prepared us was a nun, which was the beginning of my journey. This dream was realized on January 6, 1990 when I professed my vows and became a member of the **Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate**, which is a diocesan order in the Archdiocese of Gulu with over 400 nuns.



Students in front of some classrooms and thatched hut where staff have their tea breaks and lunch

**CAREER:** I loved teaching and my students as well. Even the stubborn students attended my classes. They always said I was strict but they enjoyed my lessons. The feed back from them testify that I have been a successful teacher and mentor. I hope I will be a good administrator. I was also the Vocation Directress of the congregation of the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate for ten years. During that time the number of girls who joined the congregation increased. I requested to be relieved from that office because of my new assignment.

**MY RECENT APPOINTMENT:** I was assigned as headmistress of St. Mary's Ediofe on Feb. 16, 2009. This appointment took me by surprise and my first reaction was objection to it. I sought guidance from friends and people I trusted and all of them encouraged me to accept the assignment. They said my ability in management is unquestionable, I should just go. My little sister, Teddy, told me that there is no challenge greater than the Grace of God. I had to come to terms with myself and report to my new place of work.



The generator

**CHALLENGES:** The challenges are many:

- Learning a new language. Some of the parents do not speak English and I don't speak Lugbara, the local language. The secretaries are my translators. I will learn Lugbara among many other things I will need to do.
- Nobody likes change. Some of the students and some members of the staff are hesitant to receive this new headmistress.
- This region had no electricity so it was very hard for me to start ironing my clothes using charcoal. To charge a cell phone and laptop one has to go for miles. It was painful to see students struggling with kerosene lamps to read at night. Now we are so relieved because of the generator.



The School Prefects

- Solving problems of the needy students e.g. school fees, uniforms, scholastic materials, personal needs, etc. is difficult because the means to solve these problems are not available yet a solution has to be reached.
- As administrator of the school I am also the accounting officer so I no longer have time to do any teaching. Since the students spent most of their time in school, my staff and I play the role of parents looking after their needs. When one of the girls is sick they need love and attention. I think I need a bigger heart!

We are most grateful for the gift of the generator. We will pray for you, please pray for us.

Sr. Grace Aciro

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