



“Offertory Dancers, Holy Eucharist Church”

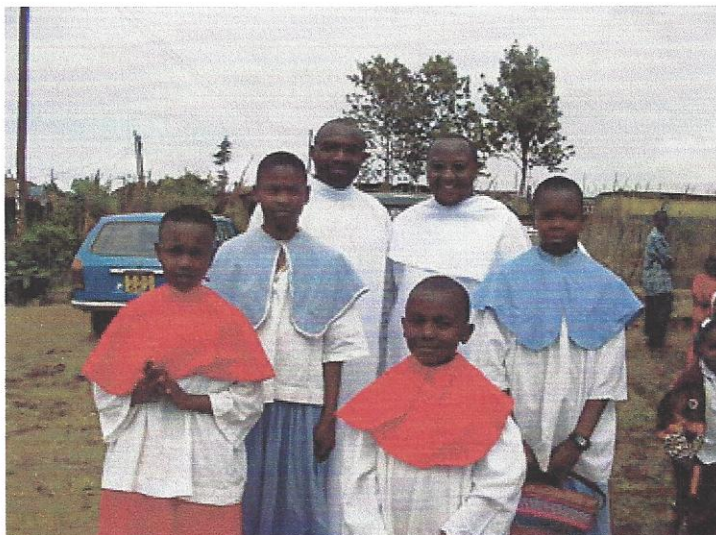
After that Mass we drove down to the Upper Kabete Campus of Nairobi University and dropped Fr. Kieran so that he could say the Mass there in a large campus meeting hall. I had been to that Mass several weeks ago so I went on with Fr. Martin for another Mass.

Again, we ended up on roads that were rivers of mud and Fr. Martin wanted to show me the little mission church of Our Lady of Fatima - close to his families home and where we did the funeral for his brother a few weeks ago. I asked where they were in the Mass when we got there and he said, “They’re at the Creed. The priest from town comes up here for the Mass.” I looked inside the little tin-sided building and said, “It looks like there’s just a deacon there.”



“Our Lady of Fatima Mission Church, Muguga (ma-GOO-ga)”

So, Fr. Martin went in, got vested and “finished the Mass for them.” This one he did all in Kikuyu, one of the many local languages that exist in areas next to or surrounded by places where people are speaking Swahili. We had to leave right after the Mass and I only had time to click a couple of pictures. The Altar Servers are very proud of their duties and take careful care of their outfits.



“Fr. Martin Ndegwa and Altar Servers, Our Lady of Fatima”

The Mass in town was at St. Joseph’s Church and it is much bigger and was still packed to the walls with people. This was the first time I heard a congregation use an organ and I think they would have done just as well without it! Most of the time the accapella singing is rich with rhythm and harmonies and lots of easy repetitions so that I can already join in with some of the more common acclamations. They had dancers, acolytes, and a large offertory procession with people bringing up all kinds of “gifts” for the church.



“Offertory Procession, St. Joseph’s Church, Muguga”

By the time we were finished, Fr. Kieran had arrived via Matatus and was waiting for us outside the Ursulines Sisters gate. When the sisters heard us they told us that

they had prepared lunch for us and that we should come in. The three resident sisters are from Eritrea (near Ethiopia) and belong to an Italian congregation of Ursulines Sisters. They have a novitiate and a dispensary right next to the church and were most gracious to us.

It was a perfect end to what had been a multi-cultural experience and the sisters topped it off by offering us an all "Eritrean meal" which consisted of a very hot and spicy chicken dish, sauted vegetables and a kind of pita bread called ngera (nin-JER-a) that they make from a rice flour which ferments with yeast for several days. It is very much like a thin pancake batter and cooked on a hot grill like a crepes. It is served warm and used - like similar breads in other cultures - as a kind of edible eating utensil. It had a strong, sour-dough flavor to it which went very well with the spicy-hot chicken.

By the time we were ready to hit the road on our way home the sun had dried up the mud! Of course, the ruts that we made on our way in were the bumps and grinds that we had to endure on our way home. Is there some "proverb" in all that?

From Africa, it's Brother Daniel
Sunday, October 7, 2001
that's the way to celebrate a Sunday!