

Reflection for Thursday 3rd December 2020

Are you looking for a really worthwhile charity to make donations to this Christmas? As shopping may not be such an attractive proposition this year due to the current situation why not make a generous donation of money to The Apostolic Society which helps the missions in Africa. However, I'm not talking about organisations which dig wells or build schools in remote villages, there are many charities which do that and of course they are very good and necessary activities. The Apostolic Society, which is based in Ireland, specialises in providing Mass kits for missionary priests in very remote and inaccessible places in places like Kenya and Uganda.

The Mass kits contain items necessary for the celebration of Mass and other liturgies such as, vestments, altar linen, chalice, ciboria. These items are not provided by the Church and individual priests have to acquire them, which is very difficult and expensive. Here are some of the testimonials which have been received by the society;

I am from Paidha Catholic parish in Uganda and I must thank all the generous people who have helped our poor parishes, particularly with vestments, chalice, ciboria, thurible and monstrance. This has made the celebration of Mass and Benediction much easier as we do not have to borrow from neighbouring parishes. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament has been made possible as well as visiting the sick and elderly. Bishops do not supply us with liturgical vessels, they expect the parishioners to provide them but they are very poor and cannot afford the high taxation imposed on these items by the government. For example, a monstrance bought in Italy costs 350 euros whereas in Uganda it costs 1500 euros.

I am Fred Silvio, a school inspector in north west Uganda and my parish priest has recently received the parcel you sent with the vestments, sacred vessels and monstrance. We are hoping to build an Adoration chapel next to the main parish church where the monstrance will be used by the Mill Hill Fathers.

They say that the aim of the missionaries is to make the local churches self sustaining. There is a growing number of priests and religious, catechists and well trained lay men and women who are now fully involved in parish life. New parishes are being opened up every year, the number of Catholics continues to grow with big numbers being baptised, confirmed and making their First Holy Communion. It is not uncommon for one priest to baptise 10 babies per week in each out-station in the parish and there are parishes with more than 20 out-stations. We have also seen an increase in commitment to activities such as the Legion of Mary, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Divine Mercy, Sacred Heart and Padre Pio prayer groups. Each year the pilgrimage to the site of the Ugandan martyrs attracts more than 3 million pilgrims and the faith is very strong and vibrant.

So, if you would like to assist in this work please contact me and I will put you in touch with the organiser, Mrs Mary O'Reilly, who is based in Ireland. A full Mass kit costs 350 euros and it is possible to have a name inscribed on the chalice for remembrance at Mass as donors are prayed for every day. They suggest that you could have the name of a member of the family who does not attend Mass inscribed on the chalice so that they will be helped to return to the practice of the faith.

Deacon Kevin