



August 24, 2025

WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

I bring greetings, blessings, much love and GRATITUDE from Father Vincent, Holy Trinity, and St. Mary's High School, Uganda. It was a truly wonderful visit and I am very grateful that I had this opportunity to spend so much time with Father Vincent and our twin parish. I kept notes each day and I am in the process of writing a journal. I look forward to sharing it with you, and will schedule a time to show pictures and talk about my experiences.

In the meantime, from a multitude of stories, here are just two that I think you will enjoy and give a flavor of my time there. Over the years since we began twinning, I hope you know what a difference you have made in the lives of so many in Ziroobwe. More recently, Father Vincent has had the dream of building a parish hall, which will serve much like our parish center, giving shelter and a place for large and special gatherings. It is still under construction, waiting a finished floor, windows and doors. One of the reasons for the delay is Father Vincent's schedule. He is so conscientious and oversees every step of the work. When he is not around, the work ceases.

Towards the end of my visit, the plan was to visit St. Augustine's, the parish grammar school which is right next door. They have almost 1,000 students! Before we could visit, it started raining, literally putting a damper on our plans. As I stayed in my room, waiting for word on our plans, I could hear loud laughter and cheers from the children. It sounded like they were at recess, but wondered how they could be playing, since it was raining rather heavily. Then I realized, a suspicion which was later confirmed, when it did stop raining and we could visit. The children were using the unfinished parish hall (which is right next door, between the parish church and the school) which offered them a place to play out of the rain. I was thrilled to know, that even though not complete, your generosity is already being put to use and is a great blessing, even now. Beyond its current practicality, it offers the possibility for many more uses to come. The joyful laughter of the children that day, as the rain came down, was a celebration of what has already taken place and what will yet be!

This second story I shared at morning Mass here after I returned, and it still brings a smile to my face. When we go out visiting with Father Vincent, Mary Goss and I are the only white people around. Other than being a simple fact, it never occurs to either of us and makes no difference in our time spent. Well, one day while visiting at the home of one of the Christians where we were going to have Mass, we were surrounded by people, including many children. As I stood there, I felt something on my arm. I looked down and there were two cute children, rubbing my arm and looking up at me. As they did so, I heard them say, "mzungu." I was familiar with the word, but had never heard it used before while visiting in the villages. It is the Swahili word and is used in places in Africa for a visitor, especially a "white" person. These children had probably never seen "one" before, and so it was a novelty. I still smile when I remember that moment! As I told them at morning Mass in St. Mary's after I got back, some people get confused and are not sure if they should call me Monsignor or Father. Don't worry, I said. Just call me Mzungu! I look forward to sharing more stories and answering any questions.

"They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number whose were being saved." (Acts 2:46a)