

Welcome to Tamale

I arrived in Tamale on a Friday, around lunch time, delivered via a Catholic Relief Services Landrover. I had been up north at the border with Burkina Faso with the Water Access Now (WAN) group, but, for the next five days, the WAN group would be off doing things near the border and I'd be at our sister parish, Our Lady of the Annunciation (OLA) in Tamale.

The OLA partnership committee (the committee comparable to our Sister Parish Committee) had thoroughly planned for my visit, including my lodging at the OLA Guest House. The OLA Guest House has six guest rooms, a kitchen, a dining/lounge area, sleeping quarters for the lady who manages the Guest House, a porch, and a gated wall going around the premises. The lady who manages it, Patience, was not there when I arrived, but Clementia, her helper, was, as was the daytime security guard (there is a nighttime security guard, providing 24/7 coverage). Clementia and I hugged and greeted each other, as it had been 2 years since we had seen each other. I borrowed her phone to call Joseph Amikuzuno, who is the head of the OLA Partnership Committee to let him know I had arrived.

I settled into my room while waiting for Joseph to arrive to take me to lunch. The Guest House has electricity (usually) and is plumbed for running water. However the water was not flowing while I was there, so I used water in buckets from the polytank in the back of the Guest House. There was a wonderful fan in my room which operated quite well and even an air conditioner which kind of worked.

Joseph and Nicodemus Gampi (whom I had come to know on my previous visit) arrived and took me out to Enesta Café for lunch. The café is owned by Ester and Ernest, parishioners at OLA, and also hosts for my visit. Ester served me jollof rice with meat and vegetable sauce -- delicious! During lunch Esther, Nicodemus, Joseph and I went over the agenda for my visit and made adjustments as appropriate. In consideration of my having traveled that day, nothing was planned for the rest of the day and evening, so I could rest and settle into the Guest House.

After lunch Joseph and Nico took me to get a SIM card and minutes for my Ghana phone so I could communicate with them. Then back to the Guest House where Patience had returned. We had a lot of catching up to do and that occupied a happy afternoon and evening. Patience cooked a wonderful dinner for me and Joseph went out to buy some provisions for my small room refrigerator-- bananas, bottled water, coke, and Malta (a soft drink popular in Ghana, kind of like Guinness beer without the alcohol). It was such a thoughtful thing to do and made me feel very appreciated and welcome.

That night I went to sleep happily, having been able to talk to my husband for the first time in a week, well fed, and reasonably cool. My room was strung with my laundry, drying under the breeze of the fan. I was lulled to sleep by the sound of the Moslem's praying at the nearby mosque (the prayers seem to go on for pretty much most of the day and night and are so melodic). I was looking forward to the next morning, when I'd get to work on the catechist's house at OLA that MQP is helping to fund -- but that is a story for another bulletin!

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