

Worshipping With Our Sister Parish

On Sundays, our sister parish, Our Lady of the Annunciation (OLA) in Tamale, Ghana, worships at three Masses: 6:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m., and 11:30 a.m. The first Mass is the most attended and is conducted primarily in Dagboni, one of the primary languages spoken in Tamale. Because there are so many languages spoken in the area, other languages are used throughout the Mass and the different tribal choirs sing in the language of their tribe. The second Mass is also in different tribal languages, again with the choirs singing in their tribal languages. If English is used in either of these Masses, it is repeated in Dagboni, so that all can understand. The third Mass is mostly in English and does have parts in tribal languages as well. Many of the children are in religious education classes during the Masses, so there were not a great number of them at Mass.

As an honored guest at OLA, I was asked to be at each Mass so that the people could interact with me. What a pleasure it was to be with the parishioners. Their worship is joyful and participative with three dancing processions (two offering processions and the procession to receive the Eucharist) and wonderful music. At the end of each Mass, a member of the parish leadership would introduce me to the parishioners and I said a few words and showed them the suitcases full of rosaries, books, school supplies, lanterns and soccer balls that MQP parishioners had donated for me to bring. I was warmly welcomed by all and very much enjoyed talking with the parishioners after the Masses.

I was honored to be asked to do the second reading at the third Mass. All of the readers at OLA wear white robes with colorful trim; they had to search for one that was short enough for me so that I wouldn't trip on it! As you can imagine, the robe was hot over my clothes. Fr. Francis had asked if I'd be okay wearing the robe, and I said I would. But after I finished with the reading and returned to my seat, Esther, who had done the first reading, noticed my red face and the perspiration running down my face. She insisted we move to the back and sit in the open doors of the church, where there was a breeze. Ah, blessed relief! The church does have an open construction, with vents in the walls, and ceiling fans, but it was much cooler sitting in the doorway than in the pews.

I was also honored to be asked to participate in the presentation of the gifts and collection. Among the things donated were money but also eggs, bread, and other kinds of food.

The community at Our Lady of the Annunciation is faith filled and being with them was a blessing. The reading that I did at Mass began "Brothers and sisters, . . ." As I looked out over the congregation and interacted with the people, the fullness of that greeting began to sink in: we are truly brothers and sisters in God's creation, though each of us is unique and in different life circumstances.

Barb Luxenberg



Presenting MQP gifts to OLA with Joseph Amikuzuno



In the procession carrying up the bread and wine