

Journey to Uganda

Two members of the Wolohan family witness joy and challenges in East Africa

Uganda



Above left, Mike and Ryan observe a new fresh water pump on the Lake View campus that now brings two sources of water to the school. Center, photo of boys' previous sleeping quarters. Right, new boys' dormitory stands in stark contrast to previous quarters.



Through collaboration with both Holy Cross Missions and Catholic Relief Services, we had an intriguing and engaging experience filled with tremendous insight and new understanding of the joy and challenges of the people of Uganda. We had the opportunity to encounter a broad range of emotion, people, geography, and spirituality.

One spiritual opportunity we were blessed to witness was the Ordination of 6 East Africans into the Congregation of Holy Cross. An outdoor ceremony was attended by over one thousand people from multiple countries; the joy of the gospel and the profound personal depth of the people's faith were both a marvelous thing to witness, as well as a personal challenge to increase the depth and joy of our own faith.

We visited the Lake View School run by Holy Cross and its associates. The teachers and students alike were focused, composed and determined. This school encompasses 9th through 12th grade in terms of the United States equivalent. It was clear that there was a high work ethic and learning culture present and the skills students learned at Lake View would serve them well on a lifelong basis. Many of the students reside at the school and Holy Cross is in the process of establishing a new campus so that the students can have living and sleeping quarters that are supportive of their growth in their academic studies *and* in their faith.

At every level of our interactions, the people of Uganda were overwhelming with their kindness, humility, generosity, and deep faith in God. From

Have you ever seen nuns dancing following Communion at Mass? I have, and it was one of the most joyous and spiritual experiences of my whole life. While visiting Uganda, I had the privilege of attending the Ordination of native Ugandans into the Congregation of the Holy Cross. Throughout this Ordination, the Ugandans sang and rejoiced with joy, unlike any I had ever seen before. In the United States, many Catholics view the Mass almost as a chore rather than something they really want to do, whereas in Uganda it is the exact opposite, every moment of the Mass is cherished. Mass is viewed as an actual celebration, which can explain the dancing! After experiencing this jubilant celebration, I began to examine my own faith. I grew up in a Catholic family and have attended a Catholic school my whole life, but my faith was nothing like that of the Ugandans. For this reason, I view my trip to Africa as a spiritual beginning. It made me reevaluate my faith, creating a deeper appreciation for God's great gifts for me and for the ability to openly share my faith with others.

— Ryan Wolohan



“... if we want to see the face of Christ, we need only look to see it in the kindness, spirit and generosity of the poor.”



the emotional perspective, the emotions of fear, joy, wonder and sadness were all experienced. Fear of the unknown, fear of disease (Ebola and Malaria), and fear of learning things about ourselves, our lifestyle, and our culture that we may not like were realized and contemplated.

The joy of profound faith, of overwhelming generosity and of unselfish sacrifice was evident in many of the people we met. In a household of 5 people, 3 of whom were battling AIDS, living in a physical space of 8 x 10 feet, was a matriarch of this very poor family who had adopted a 3-year-old child with AIDS out of love and compassion. This was only one of many examples of Christ living among the people of Uganda. Despite their poor circumstances, they reach out to help others in need.

Vistas and landscapes, including the Nile, Lake Victoria, the African grasslands, as well as the bustling city and the diverse population of Kampala were truly amazing and fascinating. It opened our eyes to the beauty of Uganda and its people. We realized — in terms of spirituality — we are all children of the same God, a God that loves us all equally. One of our challenges moving forward is to share our resources with our brothers and sisters in Christ. The knowledge that we gained through our trip was the realization that if we want to see the face of Christ, we need only look to see it in the kindness, spirit and generosity of the poor.

May God bless Holy Cross Missions for the wonderful work they do in East Africa and all over the world.

— Mike Wolohan

Above, Lake View students pictured during their studies. These students struck the Wolohan's as extremely strong in faith and diligent in their work ethic, both spiritually and academically.

These pictures reveal the life-changing impact your support has on Holy Cross Lake View Senior Secondary School. Lake View was founded in 1993 in an abandoned one-room school house. Several makeshift structures quickly followed, but were constructed on bedrock. On-campus residence halls on the newly purchased land are vital, as students who aren't boarders have to walk many miles.