

JOURNAL FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 16 TO 22, 2007
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SEPTEMBER 16, 2007: Sharing of the heart disclosed our need to understand how we budget and make community decisions. The St. Joseph Workers understanding of intentional community is to discuss the issues impacting all of us then to make a communal decision. To them it included hiring of domestic help, big expenditures such as purchasing materials for a solar system, and what bushes get cut down in our side yard. Some of the renovations which included the solar system were started when I was away under the Home Craft Center Project, having Maurice Otieno do our yard work was also initiated before I left for the U.S. for 2 months. Maurice had received some major donations from the Sisters of St. Joseph for himself and his family so I had asked him to do work on the church compound like clearing the yard around the Home Craft Center before I left for the U.S.. Mary Lieta had handled the major renovation of the Home Craft Center and our residence while I was away during the summer. It was a little difficult to have involved the SJW with decisions that occurred before they came to Kenya and to separate what was under the Marit Womens Group with respect to the Home Craft Center. We presently use their front room for a dining/living room, the back room for my bedroom and share their kitchen and storage room. I acknowledged my not bringing up the hiring of Judith as our housekeeper and trimming some of the tall bushes in our side yard facing the church. Having done so, the tension among us cleared up.

It seems that the SJW's budget categories have certain restrictions which were not clear to me before this. It appears that they can share the cost of food, toiletries, and transportation. Having to start up a new household has involved more spending on household items and food stuff. That should be less burdensome in the following months.

September 17, 2007: Tom the electrician and his helper installed the solar system during the day. By evening, our lights and charging power was functional. It is a relief not to have to run over to school or to the rectory to charge our cell phones and computers.

During our staff meeting, we were able to divide up our water projects among four of us: Mary Lieta, Angie, Anika and myself. I will follow up on the first ones such as Adiedo, Soko Village, and our new 4 village project with Abundu, Koliech, Nyaoga, and Miranga.

September 18, 2007: All of us left for Abundu at 9 A.M. with Fr. Aloys. When we arrived, not enough of the parishioners had come so we went off to the primary school next door to visit with the head master. OPEC had selected the school and contributed toward a new building now housing grades six to eight. Three more rooms are in construction. The primary school is church sponsored, but the teachers are paid by the Kenyan government. The head master had been there for several years and has been successful in promoting student performance in the national exams. OPEC chose to support the school because of its good record in the KCPE exams. The school has about 300 students.

We returned to the parish center of St. Bonaventure for mass. After liturgy, we conducted a water meeting with the villagers. Mary Lieta translated while explained how we launch water projects. I invited Elijah Molo from "Give Us Wings" to talk about Nyaoga's history of trying to obtain pipe extensions from the main line to the village. I also invited Fr. Aloys to describe his idea of using the 45 churches in the parish to catch rain water for the community. I then introduced Evarist Odiro Ochola who is the coordinator of the water committee and our liaison with Abundu. Evarist was endorsed by acclamation. We all went to Fr. Greg's uncle's home for lunch.

When we finished lunch, we went off via the Kandiege Road. We dropped Mary off at her Kanam home then proceeded to Homa Bay. We first stopped at Shivling's so Father Aloys could pick up some sugar and bread for his family then went off to Migoya to visit with his family. When we got there, his mother had just left to visit with a neighbor so spent some time with his father, brother and nieces and nephews. We then went off to look for his mother along the main road. We found her and Fr. Aloys' brother who had gone to look for her. We then rushed to Sr. Carolyn's orphanage to have dinner with her before going off to the Homa Bay Rotary meeting.

I called Judy Oyugi to tell her we would be at the meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Hippo Buck Hotel. We ended up meeting with just the executive committee who were just ending their meeting with representative from another international project. We joined the executive committee and Fr. Aloys left to seek overnight hospitality from a brother priest. After laying out the quandary of the Adiedo Borehole project being delayed because the Homa Bay Rotary had not signed off the last papers with the International Rotary, Kinye Munyirwa, the past president, explained that the club was in the process of reassessing the projects they had and doing a strategic plan so did not sign off the last papers on the Adiedo project.

I asked them how long that would take then suggested that they do the following things to transition the Adiedo Project to another Rotary Club in Kenya: 1) E-mail Robert Morse and Rob Weber of White Bear Lake Rotary and Fred Treiber from their district about the reasons for the delay and the decision to transfer the Adiedo Project to another Kenya Rotary Club; 2) Copy the e-mail to me; 3) jFacilitate the identification of another Kenyan Rotary Club which can sponsor the project.

We went on to talk about our methods of organizing villages and the futility of doing boreholes in the region east of Lake Victoria. Consultation with the people and some water experts all led to the conclusion that borehole water in the region is very alkaline (10+) and not drinkable. Almost all of the villages want rain catchment systems for drinking water. Some of them want improvement of water ponds or pans near them. Soko Village is fortunate to have a natural spring which needs retaining walls and steps.

We crashed at Sr. Carolyn's orphanage after the meeting. Fr. Aloys was generous about picking us up at the hotel and taking us back to the orphanage.

September 19, 2007: We spent the morning at the internet café then returned to the orphanage to have lunch with Sr. Carolyn. She told us her saga of being put out by her former superior along with 17 other professed sisters. It unfolded like a mystery novel with intrigue, movements to isolate and condemn her, and mysterious deaths among some of the sisters. Her work with 50+ orphans and with Church leadership led to her being ostracized.

The present leadership of her congregation is in process of reinstating those who have been ostracized. Sr. Carolyn is thinking of transferring to another religious congregation. She went on to describing her years at St. Lucy's Girls Secondary School. At that time, it was the best girls secondary school in the diocese. Unfortunately, it was grossly mismanaged for over a decade until the enrollment dropped to less than 30 girls. Mary Lieta has just spent 4 years rebuilding the school. The enrollment is now about 75 girls.

Sister Carolyn then went on to describe how she got her present five infants and toddlers. They had all been abandoned by their mothers in latrines, holes and even thrown into a bushy tree shortly after birth. The male toddler was named "Philip Anyolo" after the present bishop who has reconciled with Sr. Carolyn. The girls were named after different people who either volunteered, donated to or took interest in the orphanage. It appears that prostitutes in town who become pregnant practice infanticide or abandon their babies because they cannot care for them or the babies interfere with their business. The seamy slum below the bus station is where the prostitutes live and work.

After lunch, we all took a taxi to Mary's son's bookshop to do some shopping then walked to Shivling and the open market to buy food. We met Fr. Aloys who had the truck hood up. Someone was repairing his headlights in front of Shivling. By the time all passengers had assembled, we had seven people in the cabin and 3 in the truck bed full of groceries and goods. We dropped off Fr. George and his companion at Olare where he had to refuel his truck to get back home. We picked up 3 more people at Kandiege before reaching Raruowa. Such is life in the country.

September 20, 2007: George Yamo Apuko came for us at 9:30 A.M. to lead the way to Kobudi Village for a water meeting. We got to the prosperous home of James Amaki and his wife Naomi. We were given refreshments while we waited for the subchief and water engineer to arrive. While waiting, Mary Lieta was able to get information on the Kobudi Clan who occupy the village and are members of Apamo B Womens Group. The head of the clan, "Obudi" had four sons who now are clan elders: Apuko, Amadi, Okelo and Ogembo. There are 134 members in the village but 75 certified members of Apamo B. The clan has built the Apamo Seventh Day Adventist Church and the primary school. They plan to build a nursery school soon.

Shortly after subchief John Orige and the Water Engineer, Ezeckial Kasaku, arrived we convened for the village meeting. Each person was introduced and their village identified. There were clan representatives from Kalonga, Kobudi, Kayoo and Kabonga villages and none from Ngere. The subchief asked for a wider inclusion of other villages and will convene another meeting.

The water engineer said there was 90 km of pipelines in West Karachuonyo of which half have been repaired. The other half is expected to be repaired next year. A hydro electric pump has been operative since March, 2007. Water service is still intermittent, but is expected to be improved in the near future. Extension pipes to villages on either side of the main lines will be installed when repairs are completed on the main lines. He then went on to say that there just three options for increasing water in the division: piped water, rain catchment/harvesting, and improvement of water ponds and pans. Boreholes are not feasible because of the high alkalinity of the water. Dams for this sublocation can only be built along a flowing stream or river such as the Awach Tende. The Siburi Pond is actually a pan since it is less in acreage/.dimensions. The engineer went off to inspect it before we ended our meeting.

We ended the meeting with lunch and a short good by prayer and song. I was presented with gifts of ground nuts and 1 ½ dozen eggs, a real boon. George accompanied us to the end of his shamba and Mary led us home to Raruowa.

September 21, 2007: We all were invited to mass in Kudhoch and lunch at Catherina and Cyprinas' compound after that. Kudhoch is south of Kadel and Oluoch on the east side of the Homa Bay Road. Catherina and Cyprina are two of six wives of an elderly gentleman. Both women are members of the Monica Womens Group. Catherina is the head wife so was ordering all the women about preparations for the meal. We had excellent ground nut soup and pumpkin leaves in which I put some rice. I skipped the traditional boiled chicken and ugale. The clan presented us with large pumpkins, pumpkin leaves and maize as gifts. We left with a truck load of women to anoint Magdalena who lives in Oluoch village next door then headed home. In Kandiege, Fr. Aloys had Angie drive us the rest of the way home. She managed the most difficult stretch in Kobudi so passed the rough road test. Now I know we can go places if we had another 4 wheel drive vehicle.