

JOURNAL FOR SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 6, 2007

Sister Rosita Aranita, CSJ

September 30, 2007: Anika, Angie, Sr. Conrad, Paul the Choirmaster and I accompanied Fr. Aloys to the Homa Lime Church for mass at 11:00 A.M.. The mass was packed with people and a lively choir and dance group. The dancers included several young boys who imitated the roosters shoulder shakes in their choreography. The people were quite generous in their offertory gifts. Fr. Aloys collected enough maize to fill two or three bags and a live chicken who unfortunately spent the night in the truck in a downpour. It was not discovered until late the next day.

In the evening after we got home, we met to set up our agenda for our visit with the Bishop the next day.

October 1, 2007:

We set out in good time to get to the Bishop's office in Homa Bay, but got waylaid by a failing clutch when we stopped in Olare to let 4 women off who were to attend a funeral. Those left in the truck, 2 men and four women had to jump out the truck to push it at least three times before the truck was coaxed to go all the way to Homa Bay directly to the garage. In the process of jumping in and out of the truck, my cell phone fell out of my pocket and got lost. We had to catch a taxi to the Bishop's office from the garage. We were an hour and a half late. Fortunately, we got into his office quickly.

The meeting went well. The main purpose was to update the Bishop about the various water projects we have initiated in the diocese and to ask for his advice on how best to call a meeting of the various institutions in the diocesan complex to rethink the water proposal. This included the chancery, St. Paul Primary School, St. Martha Girls Secondary School, St. Bernard Technical School, St. Paul Health Clinic/Hospital, the Cathedral and rectory, and the Convent. He encouraged us to set an appointment with his development director, Richard O. Apamo, who was out of the country until Friday.

The Bishop was appreciative of our efforts to bring water to the villages in his diocese and wanted to partner with us in the effort. I mentioned that Fr. Aloys Mwai wanted to have each of the churches in the various villages in Raruowa Parish to be places where rain catchment systems could be erected to serve the communities. The bishop and Fr. Aloys suggested signs to indicate the partners who collaborated in each completed project. We thought a few signs in strategic places would be better than many scattered signs that would cost more. After our meeting, we traipsed over to meet Clarice A. Onyango, the power behind the development director.

After unsuccessful attempts to e-mail from Cyberlink Café, we took another taxi to meet with Rosemary Ogola from CARE. The CARE office was located in a poor neighborhood whose roads were worse than Raruowa's. When we trooped into the office, Tabitha, Rosemary's assistant whom we met at the Homa Bay Rotary executive board meeting was present. Rosemary delineated each of their programs and gave us valuable contacts. Their water technician, Alan Odela, wanted to meet with us but was called away

to Rodi. CARE consults with other government agencies and NGOs before selecting an area to service. They have programs in Water & Sanitation, HIV/AIDS in the Rachuonyo and Homa Bay Districts, Community Service Mobilization, and Food for Work. They collaborate with other water organizations like the African Medical Research Foundation (AMRF), Plan Kenya, SANA ?, and the Institute for Agriculture & Development (IFAD).

Plan Kenya is buying water tanks for primary schools. AMRF does water projects and sponsors orphans. SANA based in Kisumu, deals with sanitation projects particularly in Gwassi. In 1999, CARE did the first survey of water needs in Western Kenya. They learned from their mistakes and now have developed expertise in building affordable rain catchment systems. They discovered that boreholes in the region were mostly fruitless because the water is highly alkaline and wells sometimes dry after expending much money drilling.

October 2, 2007:

The day began with two visits from a young man and a young woman, both seeking scholarships to return for college studies. Vicky's sister is sponsoring her studies by covering half of her fees to complete her BA in Education. Silas wants to complete his agriculture/economic development degree. I laid out the status of the Marit Womens Scholarship Fund. No money has been wired so far and the group just recently set up criteria for selection. I told Vicky that Kay Insley will be retiring soon. She will be the one to set up a continuing education program for teachers wanting to complete their bachelor's degrees or do advance studies.

I spent most of my morning paying off debts: school fees for the 3rd term for 3 girls at St. Lucy's, fees for language classes, the remainder of our curtain cost, and reimbursements. Yesterday, we hauled a truck load of materials to renovate the round room for my bedroom. The cement bags were to be delivered by the hardware store. They had no timber so work cannot proceed until the cement and timber can be bought. I have been using the home craft room since returning.

I got my September, 2007 financial report together and organized other expenditures related to the Home Craft Center and the renovation of my round room which used to be a water tank. Lucy and Fr. Aloys joined us for dinner in the evening. Anika and Angie were the cooks.

October 3, 2007: I was involved with instructing our cook and yard man on the duties for the day. Maurice's big task was to clean out the hen house next to Mary's house and to disinfect it; we moved our three hens into their new home. Our oldest hen, Margaret Thatcher, is an intelligent animal who loves to wander in the yard, but always finds her way back into her temporary home in our round house and court yard. She flies through the window in the office next to Anika's room and works her way through the bedroom and out to the court yard.

I usually lay out what Judith needs to prepare for lunch. It was my day to prepare dinner so I had an early start. Our house keeper and yard man sit at our table with us to have lunch. African sisters don't encourage such equality and usually have the help eating separately.

In the evening, we were invited to a second dinner with the parish council. We ate by kerosene lamp light. I had only a chapatti and the ever present coca cola. No matter what the gathering is, African custom demands a short introduction and greeting from the guests. The people are always grateful for our presence at their events.

October 4, 2007: Mary and I spent the day in Kisumu purchasing a set of solar equipment, a new cell phone, and an internet cable system. We had hamburgers at Kems Internet Café, the best in Kenya that I've had. Mary's son joined us for our late snack. We ended with shopping at Nakumatt then took a tukutuku to the bus station where we boarded a bus to Kadel. It was an extra bumpy ride between Kendu Bay and Kadel. The bus' shocks were gone and you could feel every irregularity.

We loaded our goods on a bicycle then each of us took a separate motorcycle to Raruowa.

October 5, 2007: I reloaded my directory in my new cell phone which can also be used as a modem for internet services. Kennedy and Maurice finished stringing our barbed wire fence. All we need is a back gate to our office. Asequis, the carpenter, promised to make us a gate. Sr/Caroline won't be able to spend the week end with us because toddler Philip Anyolo is sick.

October 6, 2007: Today is visiting day for the girls at St. Lucy's. Milicent, Cindy and Monica visited with me in the morning. Anika and Angie visited with Leah and Winnie, Mary Lieta's girls that she sponsors. Mary had to attend to her Norwegian guests who arrive this morning in Kanam. Saturdays are our free days to do whatever we want or rest. I read a Kenyan story called "The Concubine". It's one of the recommended books for the secondary level literature class.