



St. Nicholas Children's Centre Kemono (NCKK)
Bukoba Catholic Diocese
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The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world

And that which contains all things

Understands what is said, Alleluia. (Wisdom 1:7)



Dear Friends and Supporters of St. Nicholas Children's Center Kemono!

Much has happened in the past 50 days between Easter and Pentecost. Innocent and Elliot came to us in April. We now have 17 children. Innocent is almost 3 years old. He has cerebral palsy and does not talk. Elliot is turning 6 years soon. She has a mental disability. The only sentence she says in the local language Kihaya translates to, "Mama, make me pancakes." Otherwise she loves to suck on her thumb. Both children cried a lot in the beginning. How

else would they express the shock about moving to a strange environment? But by now they feel at home in our noisy house. They are laughing a lot and it is easy to love them. Elliot only cries now when we bathe her, take her to the toilet or brush her teeth... Activities she obviously has not been used to.

We are in the midst of the rain season. The good news is that our well and the rain water tanks are full to the top. The down side is that in the past two weeks many of our children have been sick with Malaria and a cold. I should mention though that Malaria is as common in Africa as a cold is elsewhere. We take every child that has fever to the doctor and have the child tested and treated for Malaria. As soon as the fever is down, the kids run around again. Malaria is simply a part of life here in Africa.

Many supporters of St. Nicholas have shown special interest in Asimwe. Asimwe is 13 years old and has a very rare skin disease caused by a genetic defect. Her entire body is affected, her skin is very sensitive and she easily hurts. It is also very disfiguring. We had her skin biopsies tested now three times by dermatologists in Tanzania, in Germany and finally in the USA. The sad news is that some medicines might improve her situation slightly but ultimately there is no cure for her. This recent news has upset us.

In my Easter letter I mentioned that we had been warned against attacks on Christian Churches. We had plenty of rain on Easter but nationwide all remained calm and uneventful. Unfortunately, on May 5th a bomb exploded during Holy Mass in Arusha (near Mount Kilimanjaro) and killed three people. The Nuncio to Tanzania was present as well as bishops, some 40 priests and more than hundred religious sisters and a large group of lay Catholics had gathered for the opening of a newly built church. The similarities between the Boston bombing and the bombing in Arusha are striking. But the bombing in Tanzania did not make international headlines (see article <http://stealthconflicts.wordpress.com/2013/05/09/boston-yes-arusha-no-thank-you/>).

Since last year Tanzania has seen a rise in sectarian violence between Christians and Muslims. However, this is only true for a small minority of people in the country. In general, followers of different religions have lived peacefully together in Tanzania. We continue to pray for peace.

Right in time as we are celebrating the birthday of the church our new Bishop Desiderius Rwoma visited us Kemondo for the first time. He also came to see our children at St. Nicholas. I was rather surprised when he expressed his wish to ride in our “Bajaja!! A Bajaj is a motorcycle made in India. It has three wheels and a bench in the back. I use it for going back and forth within Kemondo since it is very economical (see pictures attached).

Since the arrival of the new bishop we have experienced many changes in the Diocese. Many priests have received new assignments. Likewise we had to say farewell to Father Vedastus who has lived with us and ministered to us in Kemondo for 17 years. He has been our friend and spiritual director. Fortunately for us he was transferred to our main parish in Kagondo, so he remains close in the area. His successor is Father Justus. He is a young priest and he is very motivated. He already visited us at St. Nicholas and promised to return with the seminarians and to work in our “shamba” (field)! We are delighted!

The picture at the beginning of this letter shows our children who are singing and dancing at the farewell celebration of Father Vedastus. Together with the caregivers they wrote a little song and made up a dance. I was very proud of them when they performed in front of the parish!

We wish you the Holy Spirit of Pentecost,

Stefanie Köster and the children and caregivers at St. Nicholas Children’s Center



May 17, 2013 Visit of Bishop Desiderius Rwoma (center) and Father Justus (right)