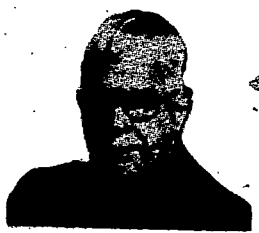




Mercy Craft Show

Dr. and Mrs. Paul Gerace discuss plans for Our Lady of Mercy High School's Arts and Crafts Sale with Miss Kathleen Wisner (in middle), assistant principal. The sale, sponsored by the Parents Association, will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 21-22 in the school gym, 1437 Blossom Road.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

Bishop Raphael Ndingi

When a Kenya tour was proposed, after demurring I said, "If we can visit some missions I will go." Father Joseph Reinhardt, director of the Propagation, sent a notice to every Kenyan bishop and priest who ever sniffed a breath of Rochester air, that Rochester was coming to see the mission work. Some of the priests had been students at St. John Fisher College. Some had come to take up collections. Some were friends of Rochesterians, e.g. Bishop Hogan and the Fathers Reddington.

The name "Archbishop Sheen" is a magic name in African missions. He was our bishop in 1965 when Archbishop John McCarthy, a Holy Ghost father and bishop of Nairobi, came to see him. He arranged with Father Lavery, president of Fisher, to give scholarships to a series of Kenyan priests. They would lodge and board with the Basilians or at Becket Hall. This gave the important element of living with a religious community. It was also arranged for these Kenyan priests to help out at local parishes, both for parochial experience and for needed cash stipends. For example, Father Ndingi came in 1967. He was ordained in 1965 and seasoned in the priestly wood. He studied at Fisher, lived with the seminarians at Becket Hall, and helped out at Good Counsel under the gentle tutelage of Father Wohlrab. At the time of his graduation in 1969, Father Ndingi got word from the Apostolate Delegate that Rome had appointed him to be a bishop. He had to hurry back to Africa to be consecrated by Pope Paul VI along with 11 other African bishops.

On our third safari day we were scheduled to meet Bishop Ndingi at his see at Nakuru, about 90 miles northwest of Nairobi. An Anglican black priest met us in town and escorted us to the Bishop's complex. He introduced us to an efficient black nun, beautiful in white habit and veil. She was the bishop's secretary. The bishop came and welcomed us, inquired about Bishops Hogan and Clark, and Fathers Lavery, Reinhardt, Wohlrab, Hohman and others.

I said, "Bishop, we should

like to visit your schools." We visited two. The first was a state school, but with Church affiliation. God knows, compared to our schools in the states, the equipment and all were less than minimal. And classes ran from 35 to 50 children. Sixty percent of Kenyans are illiterate. But now over 50 percent of the children go to primary schools, where subjects are taught in English and Swahili. There are no compulsory education laws. They can't afford it. So those who do go to school go with ambition to get ahead. The headmaster had the teachers bring some 400 beaming children into a courtyard. The bishop introduced us as "Americans who came to visit you." I asked, "Would you sing us a song?" They poised attentively. Then with one voice, out came "We Shall Overcome." I wondered if they thought this was America's national anthem. Then they sang the Kenyan national anthem in Swahili: short, stirring and melodic.

The high school has some Mexican Sisters and Kenyan staff. One Sister told us of a new project. A bishop has asked for Sisters to work in his diocese among the poorest who are just a grade above animals: wild, naked, active, neglected children. She showed us pictures of a smiling Sister with some 70 naked waifs. Sister's first inclination was to clothe at least the private parts. The bishop said, "No, Sister. Make changes slowly. And make the children earn rewards." So a program began with the promise of a reward of little panties to those who made sufficient progress. Now four are wearing panties to the envy of the others. None are Christians, but all are taught about God, the Father of all. One of our group was so moved she gave me \$100 to give Sister for the work. I suppose they do need more than little panties.

That night we invited Bishop Ndingi and his housemates, two fine priests of the Society of St. Patrick, to have dinner with us. When I stopped to make arrangements with the manager, he said, "Oh, we are good friends. You will not have to pay for them." So our 17 dinner with Bishop Raphael Ndingi who was greatly praised everywhere we went, and with his Irish associates. I went to bed that night praising God for the Rochester-Kenya connection.

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