

Priest is back from Tanzanian camps

By Kathleen Schwar
Freelance writer

NEW YORK — Even when Rwandan refugees' most basic needs seem overwhelming, relief workers are looking beyond — particularly in Tanzania.

Radio, "the very instrument used to radicalize and inspire Rwandans with fear," must now be used to build confidence and inspire refugees to return. An audio-visual van could be driven through refugee camps to show movies along with messages of hope. These are suggestions of Father Thomas Fitzpatrick, SJ, 63, a Rochester native who led a Jesuit Refugee Service assessment team to Tanzania.

Executive director of the Xavier Society for the Blind, Father Fitzpatrick led a team of eight Jesuits and associates to six refugee camps, including one in Burundi, in July and August. Their mission was to suggest long-term JRS assistance to the local Roman Catholic church in helping refugees.

In addition to looking at needs from evangelization to reforestation, the priest suggested various educational efforts. He also recommended farm plots for refugees, stoves for safer cooking fires, road improvements, and an end to the sale of relief goods outside camps.

What impressed him most was the refugees' constant movement. First, they waited under trees, sometimes for days, to register for aid in the north, around Ngora. Then they walked to Benaco, a camp of about 300,000 people. From there, many were sent walking to yet another camp. "It took maybe 10 or 11 days for them to get to the first place," Father Fitzpatrick said. By car, it took him a day to travel between camps in Ngora and Karagwe, "and we passed people walking."

Women also walked 10 miles from camp to gather firewood, bananas, and



Father Tom Fitzpatrick
Each family hut in the Kagange camp has its own fire for cooking; the ditch is for a water pipe still to come.

potatoes. "Two months from now it will be 20 miles," he said. The Tanzanian camps were filling by the end of April, and Father Fitzpatrick arrived just as a wave of refugees flooded Zaire. Still, 5,000 new refugees a day entered Tanzania while he was there.

Over a half-million refugees from Rwanda — 65 percent of whom are Catholic — inundated the Rulenge diocese in Tanzania, which covers the country's six main refugee camps.

Father Fitzpatrick said he never quite got a handle on the politics. "The conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis verges on apartheid. The feelings are so deeply ingrained," he said. Yet people of one tribe sometimes hid people of the other from the killing, he added.

In the camps, food is distributed by family group in measures of five. In one, "despite the fact that families were already pressed, every single one of 500 orphaned children found a family among refugee families."

Realizing that many refugees carried on top of their heads everything they could, he was amazed to find that they carried books of celebration and hymns,

"because they need those."

Father Fitzpatrick encouraged relief workers to support any local initiative, including religious teaching. For instance, he said, "Schoolmasters gather children and try to teach, because there is nothing to do in the camps."

He also suggested a "closer presence of Christ." With 55 priests and 150,000 scattered people to serve before the Rwandan civil war, Father Fitzpatrick said, Mass was held once every two to three months in various outstations. He suggested the Rulenge diocese send out workers in ministries similar to existing basic Christian communities there. The refugees "will want to have somebody close, to whom they can tell their story and work out this trauma that they have suffered."

There is a need for new evangelization, he said, and "It has to touch the heart.

The primary evangelization was flawed. How can you say they were converted to Christ when they go out and kill? But then you could say the same about (Northern) Ireland.

In Tanzania, he said, "What we saw wasn't as desperate as in Zaire." The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees may have been more prepared in Tanzania, where officials had handled Burundian refugees several months earlier, he said. And perhaps the fighting in Zaire had something to do with the refugee population being more heavily soldiers and militia, he speculated.

Antoine Uwimana, a local Rwandan Schwar featured in the Aug. 18 *Catholic Courier*, recently learned that his wife and daughter who fled their home in Kigali, are living with his wife's father in a protected area in western Rwanda.

"It was the happiest day of my life," he said after hearing the news from a former neighbor Sept. 15. Uwimana spent about a month in Rochester with his uncle, Francois Utazirubanda, and is now working with the World Bank in Washington, D.C. He plans to leave for France within two weeks for further studies. He hopes his wife and daughter will join him there.

Uwimana, 30, director of economics for Rwanda's Ministry of Planning, was stranded at a Washington conference when fighting prevented his return.

Seven earn certificates from Hispanic Institute

ROCHESTER — Seven members of Rochester parishes recently received certificates for completing three years of study at the Hispanic *Instituto*. The certificates were distributed during the annual Hispanic *Mision*, held Aug. 22-26 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1095 Joseph Ave.

They are: Paula Crespo, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish; Jorge Malave, St. Michael's Parish; Felix Medero, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish; Salvador Otero, St. Michael's Parish; Juan Luis Pacheco, St. Michael's Parish; Mercedes Ramos, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish; Humberto Sandoval, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

Sodus parishes schedule open house for pastor

SODUS — Parishioners of Church of the Epiphany in Sodus and its mission parish, St. Rose of Lima, Sodus Point, have scheduled an open house to honor their new pastor, Father David J. Faraone, Sunday, Oct. 2, at 2 p.m. in Church of the Epiphany's rectory, 105 W. Main St.

A Gates native, Father Faraone graduated from St. Augustine's School, McQuaid Jesuit High School and St. John Fisher College. He attended St. Bernard's Seminary, then completed his studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Mahwah, N.J. He was ordained on April 19, 1985.

All are welcome to attend.

Italian artists' work sought for exhibition

PITTSFORD — Monroe County-area Italian-American artists are invited to submit their work to the Casa Italiana art exhibition, which will be on display at the Nazareth College Arts Center's Foyer Gallery, 4245 East Ave., throughout the month of October.

Artists must be at least 18 years of age and of Italian descent. Artwork will be received on Monday, Oct. 3, and judging will take place on Oct. 4. To obtain an entry form, call Roseanne Centanni at 716/586-2525, ext. 495.

Tier hospice training slated for next month

ELMIRA — Southern Tier Hospice is offering a training session for hospice volunteers to be held next month.

The dates are Oct. 4, 6, 11, 13, 18 and 20, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. each evening. Interested candidates must be at least 18 years of age, have access to transportation and not recently have suffered the loss of a loved one.

The registration deadline is Sept. 26. For details, call Linda Brabham at 607/734-1570.

Correction

Last week's Page One story on papal infallibility contained a typographical error.

Pope Pius XII was one of only two pontiffs to exercise the charism of papal infallibility when, in 1950, he defined the doctrine of Mary's Assumption.

We regret the error.

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