

FEATURE

Bond grows between sister parishes

If every picture tells a story, then the painting of a crucified black Christ at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Brighton tells the tale of a friendship that's been growing for five years.

The painting helps to illustrate the link between the parish and St. Bridget's Church in Kowak, Tanzania, which sent the gift a year ago.

The friendship began after Father John O'Connor, pastor of Lourdes, was reading a *Maryknoll* magazine column, "Partners in Mission." It described the support an Indiana parish was providing a parish in Haiti.

Father O'Connor wondered if something similar could be arranged at his parish. The idea won parish council support and soon parishioner David Decker was coordinating the effort. By this year, in fact, Father O'Connor was reading about his own parish in the July/August *Maryknoll*.

It happened that, in 1991 when the twinning was begun, parishioner Mary Frances Carney had a daughter and son-in-law who were Maryknoll lay missionaries in Kowak.

Carney's daughter Marian Ryan taught in the Kowak parish's school, while her son-in-law, Dr. Greg Ryan, administered a health center that is part of the parish. (The couple has since moved back home and Dr. Ryan is practicing in Webster.)

The Kowak center provides medicines and supplies rarely available at government-run health facilities, and serves 40,000 people in an extremely poor area. The Brighton



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer
Our Lady of Lourdes in Brighton received this painting of "Black Christ" as a gift from its sister parish in Kowak, Tanzania.

church became its largest donor, according to Maryknoll missionaries who served the church after the Ryans left in 1993.

According to Father O'Connor, Lourdes, an 800-family parish, designates one collection each month for the Kowak

parish. Last year the monthly collection averaged \$2,500, he noted.

"We now give 10 to 12 times what we would give an annual missionary," he said, adding that the twinning has helped people bond. "Our people are very generous. They're generous most of all when you can put a face on the charity. They're real people, and we can see their pictures."

The parish mentions the Kowak people in Sunday prayers of the faithful, and sends them articles and pictures. Several of the children are pen pals. Both the Ryans and more recent missionaries have spoken to the parish about Kowak.

After Disco, an 8-year-old Kowak boy, was attacked by a baboon, second-graders at Lourdes' school of religion collected pennies to help pay his medical expenses.

"It's a spiritual thing, a prayer thing, a personal thing," Father O'Connor said of the twinning relationship. He noted that the parish's generosity has reached further.

It also has raised \$18,000 to send Father Nathaniel Kuguta on to graduate school. Father Kuguta, from Kenya, served Lourdes while attending St. John Fisher College, and graduated in May. The priest's plans to attend the University of Rochester, however, have been delayed.

"He's in Kenya now. He hadn't been home in three years," Father O'Connor noted. "But he was bit by a poisonous snake and was hospitalized. So he won't be starting till January."

-Kathleen Schwarz

David Haas to present concert and workshop

Liturgical musician and liturgist David Haas will be back in Rochester to present a concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 25, and a workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26.

Both will be at St. Helen's Church, 310 Hinchey Road, Gates.

"People are coming from as far away as Philadelphia and Ontario, Canada," said Tom Jewell of Jewell Ministries, which arranged the visit. Jewell is director of liturgy and music at St. Helen's.

Haas is known for composing such music as "We Are Called," "Song of the Body of Christ," "Blest Are They" and "Jesus Heal Us." He is director of The Emmaus Center for Music, Prayer and Ministry in St. Paul, Minn.

Haas has written two books of prayers and numerous articles, and is working on a book entitled *The Ministry of Sung Prayer*.

At his workshop, Haas is expected to address recognition of women in the church and society, and other diocesan Synod goals, and possibly the bishop's new pastoral letter on the Eucharist.

Concert tickets are \$10; Saturday's workshop costs \$35, with a discount available. Further information is available at the church, 716/235-1210, and at the concert.

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Rochester Area Right to Life Committee, Inc. Political Action Committee (PAC), working with the National and New York State Right to Life Committee PACs, was formed to endorse electable, credible, major party, pro-life candidates. Endorsement Criteria: *Positions in support of life rather than abortion, infanticide, euthanasia; *A pro-life voting record, if an incumbent or previous officeholder; Pro-life responses to the PAC Questionnaire; some candidates also interviewed by PAC members.

ELECTION DAY: Tuesday, Nov. 5th

Authorized and paid by the Rochester Area Right to Life Committee, Inc. PAC; 675 Ling Road; Rochester, New York 14612; not authorized by any candidate.

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