

Twins

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had expanded their vision of Catholicism.

"The American church has a tendency to look at the (Catholic) Church only through its own eyes," Msgr. Krieg said. "We've become more international in our approach to the world."

Brighton to Tanzania

Dr. Gregory Ryan has a family physician practice in Webster. He said he likes his work there, but it's far less dramatic than that he faced a years ago. Few of his current patients ever come to him with the kind of situations he saw as a lay Maryknoll missionary in Tanzania from 1991 to 1994.

"There it was basically life and death everyday," he said of the hospital he oversaw in Kowak, a village that is home to St. Bridgita's Catholic Church.

Ryan and his wife, Marian Carney Ryan, who served as a teacher in Kowak's school, lived in the village and attended the church. Almost one-third of the village's infants died at birth, while almost another third died before age 1, he said. Disease in general was exacerbated by malnutrition because Tanzanians were dealing with crop blight, he added.

Desperate for funds to buy medicines for his hospital, the doctor turned to his wife's home parish, Our Lady of Lourdes, Brighton, and challenged the parish to give \$2,000 a month to support the hospital. Money was also needed for St. Bridgita's Parish as well as the village school, he said. Our Lady of Lourdes not only responded, but, to this day, gives an average of \$2,700 a month to its sister church in Tanzania, according to Father John L. O'Connor, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Among the many things the money allowed Dr. Ryan and his Maryknoll successors to do was set up a blood transfusion program that helped save dozens of people from the effects of malaria, Ryan said.

"Literally, the money was — and is — saving lives," he said.

Johan Engstrom, Our Lady of Lourdes' coordinator of youth ministry, pointed out that the parish has received a number of gifts from St. Bridgita's, including a colorful tapestry commemorating the pope's visit to Tanzania in the early 1990s, as well as a wooden carving of the Madonna and Christ child.

Sister Sheila Geraghty, the parish's social ministry coordinator, added that Our Lady of Lourdes parishioners have benefited from their contact with a Catholic church on another continent.

"I think it's broadened our horizons," she said. "We know there are people across the ocean who don't have what we have, and we're willing to share what we have."

Haiti and Mexico

Corpus Christi Church, Rochester, long known for its outreach to its inner-city neighborhood, has also extended a hand to sister parishes in Borgne, Haiti, and in Tuxtla, Mexico.

For example, Rose Marie Chierici coordinates Corpus Haiti, the parish's partnership with St. Charles Borromeo, a rural church in Borgne, Haiti. Corpus sends a delegation once a year to Borgne, she said. Also, she oversees a summer program that brings students from various area colleges to Haiti to work in Borgne.

Corpus Haiti emphasizes an equal partnership with its Haitian counterparts, she said, noting St. Charles essentially administers funds raised through Corpus parishioners and other benefactors. Funds raised in Rochester have gone to establish a health clinic in Borgne as well as several education programs.

Most recently, Chierici added, Corpus Haiti is working with St. Charles by giving it loans and grants to help its home village set up a corn and rice mill. Money made from the mill will be paid back into a fund that will be used to start up other businesses in the community, she said.

Meanwhile, Pamela Edd, a graduate student at St. Bernard's Institute, Rochester, oversees Corpus' sister relationship with Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Tuxtla, located in Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas. That relationship has been documented in a video put together by several parishioners and Father Enrique Cadena, the parish's priest-in-residence who is currently on leave. Father Cadena said the video should be available this week for sale to benefit Corpus' Mexican outreach.

Edd said that twice a year since 1996, Corpus parishioners have made 10-day retreats in the neighboring areas of Guadalupe. They've stayed with host families in what experts say is one of the poorest areas in the world. She said that after gathering the input of Our Lady of Guadalupe parishioners and their neigh-



Photo submitted by St. Stephen's, Geneva

A Ugandan nun enjoys a soft drink.

bors, Corpus parishioners are funding a lending program in Chiapas as well as a sewing cooperative. She added that she hopes to market in this country products made by women in Chiapas.

"That's our long-range goal," she said of the economic development initiatives. "These projects will be able to run themselves eventually."

Here at home

Parish partnerships have also been taking place here in the Diocese of Rochester. For example, St. Michael's, Rochester, has twinning relationships with several parishes — Mother of Sorrows in Greece, Holy Name of Jesus in Penfield and Good Shepherd in Henrietta, according to Sister Kay Schwenzer, RSM, pastoral associate at St. Michael's. She added that St. Michael's is also exploring a twinning relationship with St. John the Evangelist in Spencerport.

St. Michael's twin parishes have aided the church in many ways, she said. For example, Mother of Sorrows has both provided financial support to St. Michael's for several years, she said. And Father Thomas R. Statt, pastor of Mother of Sorrows, pointed out that St. Michael's parishioners have attended Mother of Sorrows functions and

St. Michael's children have performed Christmas pageants at the Greece church.

Meanwhile, Holy Name, Good Shepherd and St. John's parishioners recently worked with St. Michael's parishioners to paint the parish hall, she said. Sister Kay said the parishes all emphasize the need to promote social contact as well, and have shared such events as dinners and liturgies.

The relationships have benefited both St. Michael's, a primarily Hispanic inner-city parish, and its suburban parish partners with their primarily white congregations, she noted. All the parishes involved have learned just how multi-ethnic Catholicism is as a faith, and friendly acquaintances have been formed among parishioners from all the churches, she noted.

"I think you've got to go beyond charity, beyond just giving something in your pocket," she said. "We're all human together, and I think it's essential that we give of ourselves and not just what's in our pocket."

That's been the heart of the twinning relationship between St. Bridget's Church, a primarily African-American church in Rochester and St. Louis Church, a primarily white parish in Pittsford, according to representatives of both parishes.

St. Louis has given several thousand dollars to St. Bridget's, according to Father Tony Mugavero, St. Bridget's pastor. St. Bridget's has returned the favor by regularly sending its gospel choir to perform at St. Louis, as well as co-hosting social functions with its suburban twin. The parishes have even cooperated on raising funds for Haitian children, he added.

"The mix gives a lot of vitality to both parishes," Father Mugavero said, adding that his parish is also building similar relationships with Church of the Transfiguration in Pittsford, St. Charles Borromeo in Greece and Holy Trinity in Webster.

Colleen Konoff, a St. Louis parishioner, has served as a liaison between St. Louis and St. Bridget's. She noted that she has attended parish council meetings at St. Bridget's and participated in several other activities there.

Although St. Bridget's has often faced huge financial challenges, she said, the parishioners there have strengthened her own faith immeasurably and made her want to attend their services.

"You walk into that church, and they hug you," she said of St. Bridget's parishioners. "They're not there out of obligation. They want to be there."

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