

DIOCESAN NEWS

Shortsville parish gives aid to African orphans

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

SHORTSVILLE — As people finished eating their dinners in the parish center at St. Dominic's Church, Dr. Kevin Denny stood up to talk. He gave them a quick lesson in how the AIDS pandemic has devastated the African nation of Malawi.

First noting that 38 percent of Malawi's citizens between ages 15 and 45 are HIV-positive, Denny, a Canandaigua resident, then compared his audience proportionally to the citizenry of Malawi. The 95 people were sitting at about a dozen tables.

"Tables one, two, three, you're all gone," he said, noting that many HIV-positive Malawians die from AIDS because they cannot afford the drugs needed to treat their condition. And when they die, the future of their children is uncertain, he said, noting that he's met grandparents raising as many as 14 grandchildren who have been orphaned.

The March 25 dinner was held to raise funds for the Malawi Children's Village. Denny, 57, conceived the project with Malawians in 1995 as more and more children were losing their parents to AIDS. The program provides food, education, clothing, health care and school supplies and scholarship funds to 3,000 orphaned children and their caretakers. The dinner raised \$1,495 for the village, according to St. Dominic's pastoral minister, Maura Sweeney. She added that the fundraiser may become an annual event.

The village is actually scattered throughout 36 villages, Denny said. It is supported primarily by ex-Peace Corps volunteers



Photo courtesy of Dr. Kevin Denny

A Malawi woman carries home firewood she collected for cooking, and her hoe.

and staffed by almost four dozen native volunteers. It's estimated that 1 million children will be orphaned by the pandemic by 2005 in Malawi alone, he said.

Denny first went to Malawi as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1964 when Malawi was still British-ruled Nyasaland. It became independent that year, and is now the seventh poorest country in the world, he said. Malawi is a small, landlocked nation in southeast Africa with a population of 12 million people. The country is bordered by Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia, and most of its citizenry relies on subsis-

tence farming to live, he said.

To illustrate the poverty of the people with whom he works, Denny recalled asking the grandmother of one orphan why her grandchild didn't go to school. The grandmother answered, almost in embarrassment, "He doesn't have a shirt for it." He added that many of the orphans don't even have blankets to wrap themselves in during the cold Malawi nights.

Part of Malawi Children Village's success is that it has enabled poor people to share the burdens of raising orphans to whom they are unrelated, he said. As the

residents of villages see that by raising orphans, the project will give them such benefits as seeds for food crops, they begin to take some of the children off the hands of relatives raising them.

Since his first stint there as a Peace Corps volunteer, Denny has returned several times to Malawi, most recently for a two-week stint earlier this month. In the United States, Denny works as a child psychiatrist in several area schools as an employee of the Elmira Psychiatric Center's day treatment program. At Red Jacket High School in Shortsville, one of his work locations, students raised funds last year for school supplies for children in the program, he said.

One such student was Allison Walker, 17, a senior at Red Jacket and a CYO coach at St. Dominic's for seventh- and eighth-grade girls' basketball. Allison said her parish was looking for charities to support, and she suggested the parish put on a fundraiser for Malawi Children's Village. She's worked on a project to educate her peers about HIV and AIDS, and is a firm believer in education. She liked the fact that Denny's program did more than merely use stop-gap measures like food aid to stem the impact of AIDS on Malawi's children, she said. She especially liked the program's educational component.

"This project ... is trying to help build up society and make it more stable," she said. "I think that's more helpful in the long run."

To learn more about Malawi's Children Village, write: Malawi Children's Project, 75 Gorham St., Canandaigua, NY 14424.

Sudanese refugees escape civil-war misery for western N.Y.

By Catholic News Service

The South Sudanese Community, begun in 1994 to assist Sudanese refugees arriving in the Rochester/Bufalo area, will hold a party Saturday, March 31, to welcome new arrivals.

The public is invited to join the party between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. for music, indigenous food, dancing and fellowship. It will be held at Bethany Presbyterian Church, 3000 Dewey Ave., Rochester.

A number of Sudanese are Presbyterian, according to the Rev. Don Winborne, associate pastor for mission and education at Bethany. He noted that his church is working with the Catholic Family Center Refugee Resettlement Program as well as the South Sudanese Community, which is headed by Paul Both, a Sudanese refugee who belongs to Bethany.

CFC's resettlement program began welcoming the first of an estimated 40 Sudanese young men expected in Rochester. The men have been detained in refugee camps since 1992. Now ranging in age from 18 to 24, they have been victims of cruelty and incredible suffering since childhood, according to the South Sudanese Community. As adolescents or youth in their early teens, in 1987 they left their slain parents and fled from war-torn Sudan into Ethiopia. Forced back to Sudan in 1991, they fled to Kenya, where they remained in refugee camps since 1992.

Rev. Winborne said that non-Muslim Sudanese have suffered greatly at the hands of their Muslim-dominated government.

"Right now, genocide is happening in south Sudan," he said.

The South Sudanese Community has been run by volunteers who are refugees, with assistance from local Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal and Presbyterian churches. It is working to obtain funds to establish an office in Rochester, a "Welcome House" for temporary shelter and two part-time staff persons.

The plight of the Sudanese has also occupied the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. The commission

called for the appointment of a special envoy to work to bring about a "peaceful and just settlement" to Sudan's 18-year civil war.

The commission was mandated under the International Religious Freedom Act, which President Clinton signed into law in October 1998. Members of the commission include Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of Washington and Nina Shea, a Catholic who is director of the Center for Religious Freedom at Freedom House, which advocates for democracy and human rights worldwide. In a report issued March 21, the commission called on the government to "launch a major diplomatic initiative aimed at enlisting international pressure to stop the Sudanese government's bombing of civilian and humanitarian targets."

The commission urged President Bush not to appoint an ambassador to Sudan yet "because the situation in Sudan continues to deteriorate and its government has not taken effective steps to address any of the serious concerns of the U.S. over religious freedom and other human rights."

Obituaries

Sister Madeleine Louise Healy, SSJ; taught music

Sister Madeleine Louise Healy, SSJ, a former music and schoolteacher, died March 12, 2001, at Strong Memorial Hospital, Rochester.

A Rochester native, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Peter and Paul Parish in 1926. A graduate of Nazareth College, Rochester, she also studied music at several schools, including the Eastman School of Music in Rochester and Manhattan College in New York City. Sister Madeleine Louise was a vocal music instructor and elementary schoolteacher at the following schools: St. Patrick's Cathedral, Blessed Sacrament, Immaculate Conception and St. Ambrose, all of Rochester; St. Mary's, Auburn; St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls; St. Stephen's, Geneva; St. Mary's, Canandaigua; and St. Jerome's, East Rochester.

It said the U.S. government should increase assistance to the Sudanese government's political opposition and opposition-controlled areas of Sudan.

The commission also called for an increase in humanitarian assistance "with or without the approval of the Sudanese government" in the Nuba Mountains. Home to approximately a million people belonging to more than 50 ethnic groups, the Nuba Mountains consist of 12,000 square miles of agriculturally and mineral rich land in the southern Kordofan region. The government has barred the region from receiving international relief assistance.

For the past 18 years, Sudan has been engaged in a civil war pitting the Muslim-dominated government of the North against southern rebels, who are mainly Christians or followers of traditional African religions.

The report said the U.S. government should intensify economic sanctions against Sudan and called on other countries to adopt "similar policies." The

strengthening of sanctions should be done by "prohibiting access to U.S. capital markets for those non-U.S. companies engaged in the development of the Sudanese oil and gas fields" and "not issuing further licenses for the import of gum arabic to the United States." The report said the government should "diplomatically and financially" support placement of human rights monitors in southern Sudan and in nearby countries that have refugee populations.

The 2001 report noted that the commission's first annual report, issued in May 2000, found that the Sudanese government "was the world's most violent abuser of the right to freedom of religion and belief" and that religion was a "major factor" in the war. The earlier report also found that religion and religious freedom violations were entangled with other violations of human rights in the country.

Contains reporting by Courier staff.
For information on the South Sudanese Community's March 31 dinner, call 716/663-3000.

For several years, she was also music director at her order's motherhouse in Pittsford.

Sister Madeleine Louise is survived by one sister, Eileen Healy of Rochester, many cousins and her sisters in the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Sister Mary Seraphia Dorn, SSND; taught school 1934-88

Sister Mary Seraphia Dorn, SSND, a former teacher in Rochester, died at the Baltimore motherhouse March 5, 2001, after a long illness.

Born in Baltimore in 1914, she professed her first vows in 1934 and her perpetual vows in 1940.

Sister Seraphia taught in the primary grades at St. Peter and Paul School, Rochester, from 1934 through 1940. She

A funeral Mass was celebrated for Sister Madeleine Louise March 15 in the motherhouse.

Contributions in her memory may be made to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, 4095 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14618-3798.

also taught junior high school in Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Newark, Delaware. She taught on the senior high school level from 1966 to 1988 in Baltimore.

She is survived by her brother, Father George Dorn, CSSR, of Florida, and many nieces and nephews.

Internment was in the sisters' cemetery at Noch Cliff, Glen Arms, Md.