

Commemorate the Feast of St. Bakhita

The Coalition of Catholic Organizations against Human Trafficking, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, and The John J. Brunetti Human Trafficking Academy at St. Thomas University College of Law are sponsoring a prayer service, survivors panel, and Mass.

[Register for free online events on February 8](#)

February 11 is World Day of the Sick

According to Vatican News, "The Catholic Church marks the annual day on 11 February, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Instituted by Pope Saint John Paul II on 13 May 1992, the first World Day of the Sick was marked the following year. The theme of this year's observance is, 'You have but one teacher and you are all brothers' (Mt 23:8), which calls for 'a trust-based relationship to guide care for the sick'. Pope Francis says that the annual day 'is an opportunity to devote special attention to the sick and to those who provide them with assistance and care both in healthcare institutions and within families and communities.' He expresses his spiritual closeness and the Church's loving concern for those suffering the coronavirus pandemic, especially the poor and the marginalized."

[Read Pope Francis' 29th World Day of the Sick Message](#)

Lent begins on February 17 with Ash Wednesday

SALT offers three devotionals for Lent that make beloved poets your guide to the season: one based on Wendell Berry's Sabbath poems, a second based on Mary Oliver's poems celebrating the natural world, and a third based on Emily Dickinson's work. To learn more visit the [SALT website](#).



February 8

Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita

International Day of Prayer and Awareness
Against Human Trafficking

Prayer to St. Josephine

St. Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured untold hardship and suffering. Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church.

O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. Those whom man enslaves, let God set free.

Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you as an example of hope and faith.

Capturing the

Crossroads

Help all survivors find healing from their wounds.

We ask for your prayers and intercessions for those enslaved among us.

Amen.



Spotlight On...

Sr. Anita Marie Stacy, SND (Covington)

Sr. Anita Marie served at St. Julie Mission in Buseesa, Uganda at Notre Dame Academy. She served for almost 18 years as a teacher and then later when the founding head teacher, Sr. Rita Geoppinger left, as head teacher, too. Here she shares about her experiences and offers her insights.

It was a very enriching experience to go over to Uganda in Oct of 2002 and start the secondary school by February 2003 (the beginning of their school year). We had to get together supplies, interview students to enroll and we started with no buildings finished. We had to use a dormitory and classroom at St. Julie Primary School.

But all of that was totally secondary to the real obstacle: learning the culture of the students we would be teaching in just 4 months. So, of course, we would make many mistakes and most challenging we would be stretched beyond our comfort zone. To underestimate the importance of culture in the reality of who a person is, is bound to lead to some surprises and again CHALLENGES! I truly believe that this is where some of the racial problems stem today. We expect everyone to behave from our perception of "how people should act, feel, and think." We all come from different experiences, and we really cannot understand another until we "get into that person's skin" or "walk a mile in their shoes."

We learned the hard way that first year. The important thing is that we were pliable and able to learn. We decided we would conference with the students, maybe about a month after their coming to NDA. The students would not respond to our questions as we talked to them one on one. We learned that we had to have established a rapport with them before we could attempt such a personal approach. Not apparent to a "wear my feelings on my sleeve" Westerner. During our first week of opening the school we worried when only about 7 students showed up on the first day. We wondered what happened to the other 15 or so we had recruited. People told us that is the way it is here. So (and every other beginning of term verified this) the students took one to two weeks before ALMOST all of them had arrived. Some were still looking for school fees (meager as they were) and others...well, they were in no hurry to leave home and come to a boarding school and sleep in dorms with 20 other students, eat posho every day, and be in the discipline of a rigorous "timetable."

There were SO many other cultural traditions to learn as well but those which related to the African personality were the hardest to pick up on. But we really have these same things happening in the USA. Different cultures having even different moral priorities and yet we think all should march to the same drummer – ours... NOT THEIRS. We don't mean to be that way, we are often not aware of such different norms. Oh, Uganda taught me so much that I cherish. Precious lessons that could not have easily been learned without this immersion experience.

I never felt as a minority because of my skin color. I felt a minority because of what I had: a pretty elite life as a middle class American, good educational background, etc. The students and faculty and parents would sometimes voice their disbelief that we could leave all the comforts of rich America: piped in water, clean water, HOT water, lights in the evening, private cars, washing machines, and so many others things we did not have there. They really could not understand that our love for them was so much greater than these "niceties" we had left behind.

I seldom talk about my experience in Uganda because most people do not seem interested. They can't imagine the people, the life and culture that I experienced there. I don't feel a need to talk about it, although on occasion I would like to, but after 17 years there, the experience is deeper and so much a part of who I am. I am content to let it be who I have become.



Sr. Anita Marie Stacy, SND

Adjusting to life at home has not been too difficult. Family and friends, food I am familiar with, a culture I grew up with, a language I know and understand! I am happy to be part of this. But what has shocked me most is the prejudice that I found that I did not realize still existed so strongly in America. In the time I was in Uganda, America had a black president. I thought black people in America were treated and respected just like white people. How my eyes were opened. It has been a sad realization for me. Part of the culture here seems to idolize individualism and freedom for self but what happens when that infringes on others' rights? The value of the person so present in the African culture did not seem to be the same here. When a person comes to the door to visit, a Ugandan will invite them in and talk to them before they ever say, "What or Who do you want?" That sort of dignity for the individual was so important and so much a part of life in Uganda. But you see it is hard to share much of this without sounding as if I feel one is better than the other. That's the problem. They are different and not better or worse. When we learn to be open to all cultures and integrate what is best from all of them, ah, it is then the Kingdom of God will blossom in our world.

SND Associates share their thoughts...

We invited the SND Associates to reflect on this opening quote from *Gaudium et Spes*: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ" (1). We received so many responses we did not have room for all of them, so here are a few more from associates in Toledo.

I personally have been trying to be a little light at the end of the tunnel for people around me that are struggling with isolation and depression. Just reminding them that Jesus is walking with us all. Saying goodbye to 2020 and looking for ways to help those around me adjust to these difficult and lonely times. Perhaps a phone call checking in or a surprise drop off of a plate of cookies. Social distancing of course. ~Barb Reineck

My thoughts on this quote is one of gratitude for all God has given me to strive to live more simply and as Mother Teresa said "Live simply so others might live." ~Sue Martin

To me it means if we want to follow Jesus Christ, we must accept the crosses in our life. There is no Easter joy, without the crosses first being carried. Our hope is in the Lord, and he showed us the way and how to carry our cross.

In a communal way, it means when we see others in difficult times and in need, it is really Jesus that we are ministering too. We must remember to seek and see the face of Christ in our neighbor in need. ~Patricia Kessler

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