



Christmas in Butiama and Buhemba VI

I ended the last blog with: “After the solemn Christmas blessing, we were off to two more outstations. With the baptism, we were late, and now we were in a real hurry!” Well, that was my first mistake of the day. Sometimes I get mixed up between “regular” time and “Swahili” time. In “Swahili” time 7:00 a.m. is 1:00...that is, it is one hour after the sun rises. Somehow, I thought we were running late, and I was really hurrying to the next outstation, only to find a few people there. My first thought was that I went to the wrong outstation, but then Valentino and Leonsi patiently told me that we were not late, but 1 ½ hours early to the Kizaro-Matongo outstation!



People slowly gathered for the Christmas Mass that was at 11:00 a.m. (5:00 Swahili time)! These children are three of the twelve that I baptized that day.







It was a beautiful morning. I felt more comfortable doing the baptisms at this Mass after baptized the little baby earlier in the morning. I also used some of the “extra” time I had between Masses to practice a bit more. One thing that helped is that I know the baptism rite. I have found that the more I understand what I am saying, the better my Swahili is. This is true also for reading the gospel and the prayers at Mass, as the better I recognize what it means in English, the better I can read it in Swahili. So, all those baptisms over the years at St. Bernadette Parish paid off on Christmas morning in Tanzania years later!

In North America, we often omit the catechumenal anointing, but they include this in Tanzania. So, one the first parts of the baptism rite is to anoint the area around the collar bone with the oil of catechumens. The twelve children and babies to be baptized lined up before the altar with parents and godparents surrounding them.

There were many smiles on the faces of people. Perhaps it was my Swahili, but I prefer to think that they were just happy about the baptisms!



I brought my finest container that held the water to be blessed for the baptisms! Actually, the outstations—especially small ones like this one—struggle to have the “nice” things that we are used to seeing in church.















After communion, we were on to the next outstation at Kyamuko. It is a small outstation with very active participation. They do not always have Mass on Christmas Day, so this will be a wonderful experience. Just so you know, we had lots of time to get there for the Mass at 1:00 p.m.

More to come on www.resurrectionists.ca.