

Introduction

My name is John Mungai Njoroge. I am from Kenya. I have my dear wife Sophy in Kenya whom we have been married for 10 years (after having dated for 7 years – I am to blame for this!). God has blessed us with a daughter Blessed Wanjiku (she is 9yrs of age) and a son Justice Njoroge (he is 5yrs of age).

Career

I am a high school teacher (mathematics & Chemistry) in Kenya also working as a Professional Development Tutor to mathematics and science teachers at the national level.

My mission in the USA

I came to the USA in Fall 2013 to pursue a Ph.D. in Teaching and Curriculum at Syracuse University, for which I graduated in May 14, 2017.

My connection with All Saints Church

How I found out about ASC?

I got lost during orientation in Fall 2013 – as I strolled one early morning searching for accommodation (I did not make use of online searches – I did the search the old fashioned).

Talk of coincidence – 2 years later I am living in the rectory. It might have probably been a bit “scaring for my lovely wife”, but may have made my dad and mom happy - they both wanted to be a priest and nun respectively, I think they probably thought their dream was getting closer!

My service to All Saints?

I am what you would describe as a “Jack-of-all-trades!” – Thanks to Fr. Fred and Mr. John Stopher who are among my great mentors at All Saints Church. Among other duties, I mainly performed translations duties at All Saints Church aimed at enhancing communication among diverse parishioners during meetings and Mass. This included interpreting Swahili – English conversations between Congolese communities and other parishioners at All Saints Church.

I succeeded in some duties but could have done better in others. The greatest room on earth is that of improving; Saints are sinners who fall down and get up! – Bob Carlisle

Going back home, but hopeful than ever before

I am going back to Kenya, but more hopeful about my country – Kenya, and myself;

The 2nd Reading today ([1 Pt 3:15-18](#)) urges us to “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence...

I am hopeful for my country Kenya – I hope to make an impact through implementing what I have learned here.

I am hopeful about myself since I have had a spiritual transition at ASC – I have learned more about inclusion by experiencing it here at All Saints Church.

Hope for America

I am going back to Kenya, but more hopeful about America than before I first arrived here (in Fall 2013)

- Why am I hopeful about America? Many reasons for being hopeful in America, but for me All Saints Parish tops the list

What is it about All Saints Church?

Deliberate efforts to live the Gospel!

Best practices of living the gospel manifest through various aspects: e.g., upgrading of infrastructure, tasks force, and ministries (international and local)

- Joke – I was hungry and you fed me; my friends would tell you Mungai love’s his food!

Important lesson for me?

Inclusion! Inclusion! Inclusion!

For me, Inclusion = recognition that we are all human beings created in likeness and image of God

Inclusion means that, While others see America first, Kenya first, Refugee or immigrant first, disability or able body first –

I see differently – I chose to see human first!

I have had moments and experiences of “I see human first” at ASC:

- All Saints Church is all welcoming – Refugees, Immigrants, Students (and the list continues)
- International and local ministries
- Outstanding team of volunteers
- Powerful inclusive liturgies

Such moments give me hope about America:

How can we sustain hope? By raising the next inclusive generation!

Important for “hope” is raising the next generation of inclusive minds

– I think that is what our faith formation and related liturgies at ASC aspire:

Inclusive faith formation provides seeds of hope, and I have taken note of some outcomes that need nurturing and replication – Nationally and world over,

Consider the following examples with me:

1. What did we learn from the Confirmation class 2016
 - We need to deliberately buy products that promote fair trade: e.g., fair trade coffee
2. I have witnessed children’s’ love for other children:
 - Consider the Molly who wants to open a foster home in future – to provide shelter to homeless children
 - Consider a teenager who made and send gifts to children in Nicaragua
3. Consider various talents our children have shared during Children’s and family liturgical celebrations
4. Heylee’s passion for language (an USA citizen in 5th grade) – her amazing growing competency in Swahili language that enables her to communicate with immigrants and refugee children from Congo during faith formation classes. Her interest in learning about immigration issues – I sat there during dinner and she taught me about immigration issues: “Pull & Push factors”. After the lesson, she served me with a cookie

The challenge?

Sowing these seeds of faith through faith formation is to say the least easy, but nurturing them is a challenge – one that is achievable!

Concluion

What is happening here at ASC is not accidental – it has its divine place amid current crisis world over; consider the divisive outcome of recent election in the USA and similar scenarios at the moment world over (e.g., current divisive political temperatures in Kenya - Kenya is preparing for its own general election – so, pray for us)

As I pack my bags this week, it is both exciting and depressing:

- Exciting that I am doing so willingly and with much love to re-unite with my family, who've given so much to have me here
- Depressing that I am leaving my family back here – ASC parishioners, whose support complemented that of my family.

I am taking the lessons of inclusion and love with me to Kenya.

Who knows, I might be back to re-unite the two families (All Saints Church parishoners and my family in Kenya)

Or better still (and should you note my loud absence);

- Consider Kenya as one of your next vacation/holiday destination – why not? Fr. Fred, Sr. Kathy, and other parishioners have visited Kenya at different times
- Welcome to Kenya – Jambo, karibu Kenya Hakuna Matata!
- Come visit me in Kenya, come visit my family

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Asante! Thank you!

Mungu Atubariki sote! God bless us all!