

The School Sisters of Notre Dame

# Good News From Africa



Summer 2009

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## *Twi Proverb From Ghana*

*Woamma wo yonko antwa akron a, won so wuntwa du.*

If you don't allow your friend to take the ninth step, you can never take the tenth step.

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## *When We Help Others, We Help Ourselves*

Whenever we are able to make this world a little bit better for others, we are also making it better for ourselves and our children. The evil of poverty, of hunger, of sickness in any part of our world affects all people of the world. Together we can help to make God's Reign more visible as we reach out to those in need. In this way, we multiply goodness in the world and it will certainly come back to grace us too!

Through education we help others to help themselves. In Kiptere, Kenya, St. Francis Girls Secondary School touches the lives of many girls in this very rural area. Imagine having four cows roaming your school yard so you could have milk in your tea each day! And in Ghana, Sister Irene has been giving some older boys extra help as they struggle to support themselves while they attend primary school. These boys are truly convinced that a good education will help them realize their dreams for a better life and so they work hard in school and out to reach their goal.

We have eight new School Sisters of Notre Dame in Africa. They made their first profession in July and are now ready to use their own gifts and talents to help others.

With you as our partners, we continue to grow as a community and to go out to all the world to bring God's loving care to many!

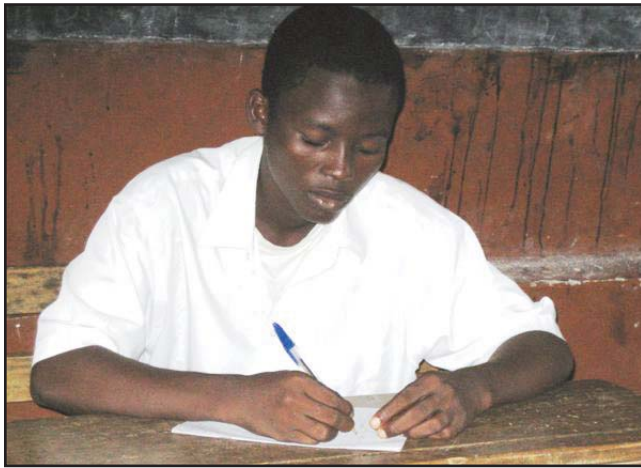
## *Good News From Nsawam, Ghana— Two Boys, Fierce Determination*

**By Sister Irene Brookman Arthur, SSND**

When I received my new class of boys at the beginning of the academic year, I was wondering why there were some older boys. Later on, I had the time to listen to some of their stories which were sometimes heartbreaking. I felt humbled and very appreciative of the opportunities I have had.

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## ***Good News From Ngawam, Ghana—Continued From Page 1***



### **Dominic Adjowonu**

Dominic is a hardworking, respectful, calm boy. His father, who is a carpenter, gets very little business and his unemployed mother doesn't have enough for the most basic necessities for the family of six. Education is not a priority for them. But Dominic sees things differently. He feels that education is a great need and so he does all kinds of small jobs to earn enough money to provide what he needs for school. I once questioned him about being absent and his response was, "I needed money to buy food and my books so I was weeding for someone." He tries to work over the weekends, but sometimes his needs are so urgent that he absents himself from class in order to work and get money. He has great potential, but his future seems bleak. In September he will be in junior high school and the workload there will not allow him to have time to do his jobs. At this point he is only hoping for a little help from someone for his educational needs. His future depends on loving people ready to reach out to others.

**A Reminder—You can now meet some of our sisters in Africa via your computer. Just go to [www.ssnd.org](http://www.ssnd.org), place your cursor over "Our Locations" and click on "District of Africa." From there you can go to the "Meet Our Sisters" section. New sisters will be added just about every month. Enjoy reading about the sisters and their ministries!**

### **Francis Raphael**

"Francis, I need to test you in English and mathematics in order to know into which class you will be accepted," I told him. Although Francis could recite the alphabet, he could not identify even a single written letter. It was touching to have a boy of seventeen who could not spell his own name. Further questioning revealed that he had started school in a distant village but had to stop. His father and mother who had a small farm could not support him. He raised cassava and plantain so that he could get enough money to attend school again.

Francis was accepted into grade three with extra tuition from me to help him in basic English. He is improving gradually, but life is not easy for him. He has to walk briskly for one-and-a-half hours to and from school each day, mostly on an empty stomach. His love of education is



Francis Raphael and Sister Irene

immeasurable. In the school, he has loving, energetic teachers to serve as role models for him, hopefully influencing his own future role in society.

This young man is struggling to realize his dream of an education. He depends solely on the income realized from the produce of his small farm during harvest time. He is hoping for help in buying a bicycle to get back and forth from school or any small help with the fees.

## ***Good News From Kiptere, Kenya— Boarding Schools Make It Possible***

**By Sister Vivian Zoller, SSND**



Sister Vivian and students

In many parts of rural Africa, boarding schools make it possible for students from distant villages to attend secondary school. St. Francis Girls Secondary School is home for 250 girls for the 39 weeks of the school year as all are boarders. Ninety-five percent of the students come from the rural areas where there are deplorable road conditions, little transportation other than by walking great distances, and no electricity. For these reasons, plus the fact that girls when at home are required to do much work leaving no time for studies, the boarding school atmosphere provides a good place for them to learn. St. Francis Girls, Kiptere, was thus founded in 1999 to bring affordable education to many young girls who would otherwise not be able to continue schooling beyond primary school. Still it costs about \$500 each year per student for boarding fees and tuition, a real sacrifice for most families.

The school compound is kept mowed by the four cows that use it as pasture! The cows are milked twice a day, the milk boiled

and then mostly used in the hot tea which is the standard drink for everyone. Grown on the school property are maize (corn), beans, and the green, leafy vegetable called sukumawiki which are all part of the daily diet: maize porridge in the morning, maize kernels cooked with beans for the noon meal, maize flour made into ugali (a stiff dough) served with the vegetable for the evening meal. The kitchen consists of three energy saving, wood burning stoves each holding a 150 litre pot in which these foods are cooked. Pineapple and bananas are served twice a week. The real treat is bread for Sunday tea break at 10 a.m. and rice on Sundays for lunch. It is heartening to see that students appreciate these “treats” so much!



Ugali and sukumawiki ready for the evening meal

Electricity is finally coming to our small town of Kiptere. Hopefully we will soon be connected and not have to use our generator in the evenings so that the girls can study. Our big hope is to soon finish the new classrooms in which we want to teach computer classes. Our next hope is to find the funds to purchase the computers. With the knowledge gained here, the girls will leave school with a very marketable skill.

## ***Good News From Sunyani, Ghana—***

### ***Impelled by God's Love, We Embrace God's Cause As Our Only Cause***

**By Sister Therese Marie Merth, SSND**

Sunyani, Ghana, was the happy scene on Saturday, July 11, for the first profession of eight SSND novices. They chose the theme, “Impelled By God’s Love, We Embrace God’s Cause As Our Only Cause.” Let us introduce our new School Sisters of Notre Dame to you.

**Sister Janet Ugbene Odey** comes from Nigeria, and speaks three languages. She loves teaching, and will be a teacher in a secondary school in Nigeria.

Also from Nigeria is **Sister Helen Galadima**, born in 1975. Her hobbies are gardening and listening to music. Her ministry will be teaching in a secondary school in Nigeria.

**Sister Pauline Muoti Mutuku** is the youngest of eight children and born in Kenya. She enjoys working with and among youth and the elderly and more especially those at the margin of society. She will be a teacher at a primary school in Kenya.

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### ***Good News From Connecticut—***

The winner of the gorgeous queen-size quilt “Memories of Japan” is Sister Barbara Valuckas, SSND of Wilton, Connecticut. Thank you to all who participated in this fundraiser with your donations. We now have a small fund to help with the addition needed on our house for postulants in Kisumu, Kenya!

### ***Good News From Sunyani, Ghana—Continued From Page 3***

Another newly professed sister from Kenya is **Sister Monica Adhiambo Juma**. While a novice, she did her ministry experience at an orphanage and by assisting in teaching kindergarten and primary school in Cape Coast. Sister Monica will be missioned to Nigeria to work in a juvenile center.

**Sister Mary Aloo Odhiambo** will return to her native Kenya for ministry. There she will be working in our newest community, ministering to orphans and neglected children in the Homa Bay Diocese.

From the southeastern part of Nigeria is **Sister Stella Nkechi Anyanwu**. Her degree is in Biology/Education. Her new ministry

takes her to Mkar, Nigeria, as a teacher at Notre Dame Secondary School there.

**Sister Comfort Nguvan Anum** from Nigeria is the sixth child in a family of eight children. She is a social worker and feels privileged to share with people their joys and sorrows. She will do social



Mary, Lilian, Comfort, Monica, Janet, Pauline, Helen, and Stella

ministry in Nigeria.

**Sister Lilian Awuonda Gor** loves singing, reading, and art. Her home is Kenya. Following her father’s occupation as a teacher, Sister Lilian will be teaching in Kiptere, Kenya.

We thank God for our newest School Sisters of Notre Dame of the District of Africa and support them with our love and prayers.