

Project Update

Newsletter

Happenings of Father Simon Menya and the Northern Uganda Self-Sufficiency Project. This newsletter (Project Update) highlights Father Simon's return to Uganda, his ordination, project land acquisition and news, outreach, and the medical mission trip.

A Message from Father Simon

Greetings from Uganda. It is hard to believe that I have now been home for three (3) months. What a blessing it is to be home with family, friends, fellow clergy and the Uganda Orthodox Church. The previous four (4) years in the United States provided me a wonderful experience, education and making of many friends. The experience allowed me to see what is possible when you work hard, have support and the Grace of God.

So, what has occurred over the past three (3) months?

- Ordination
- Northern Uganda Self-Sufficiency Project (NUSSP) Land Acquisition and Project News
- Outreach Opportunities
- Medical Mission

Ordination

On July 31, 2019, His Grace Bishop Silvester (Diocese of Gulu and Eastern Uganda) and Metropolitan Innocentios Byakatonda of Rwanda and Burundi officiated at the St. Lavrentios Orthodox Cathedral service where Deacon Simon was elevated to the Priesthood as Father Simon. All of the Priests (9) from the Gulu Deanery participated in the service. Also, attending the service were Father Martin Ritsi, Executive Director of the [Orthodox Christian Mission Center \(OCMC\)](#) and Father Joseph, Priest of St. Philip the Apostle Orthodox Church in Florida (USA). Father Joseph has been a longtime supporter of mission work in Uganda, particularly the [St. Nektarios Health Center](#). This day was the culmination of a dream Father Simon had for years. This dream would not have been possible without the generous financial support from many throughout the United States and the tremendous education from St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary and Father Chad Hatfield, President of the Seminary.

The ordination was proceeded by a reception held at Bishop Silvester's home/office. This reception was attended by Metropolitan Innocentios Byakatonda, Fathers Martin, Joseph and George (of northern Uganda), Komakech Ronald (an engineer and Metropolitan Innocentios's driver). The reception was also attended by a medical mission team from St. Luke Orthodox Church in Erie, Colorado (USA). This team was led by Sue Nelson, President of [Lift Up Uganda](#).



←Father George and Father Joseph leading Deacon Simon from the Altar to Bishop Silvester.

↓Father Simon, Hierarchs and Clergy after the ordination.

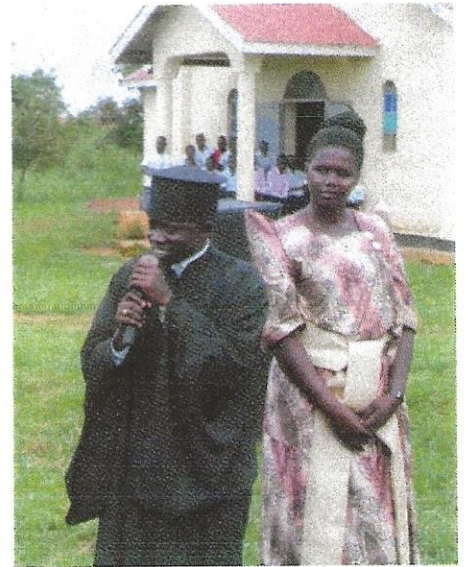


All in attendance greeted Father Simon after the ordination with:

*Pore! Pore! Pore!
Axios! Axios! Axios!
He is Worthy! He is Worthy! He is Worthy!*

Ordination Continued

After the service, a reception/program was held in Father Simon's honor. The program included speeches by the Hierarchs, many of the clergy, local government officials and others. The reception was attended by hundreds of well-wishers. A delicious meal was served, followed by local cultural entertainment.



*Many Years
Father Simon!*



Northern Uganda Self-Sufficiency Project (NUSSP) Land Acquisition and Project News

A 40.32 acre site was purchased through a generous anonymous donor. A first step for developing the site is a comprehensive topographic survey to identify the site contours, features of the site, and to mark the boundaries of the site. A contract is being negotiated for this work. It seems everything in Uganda moves much slower than in the United States. The survey will be followed by master planning (organizing) the site functions.

Organizing and implementing the Northern Uganda Self-Sufficiency Project is a tremendous undertaking. Father Simon realized he needed a base of operation to manage the project. He has established a home office for this task. While at Seminary, establishing a place to work and study was manageable. In Uganda, everything is much bigger, more difficult and complicated to undertake. For example:



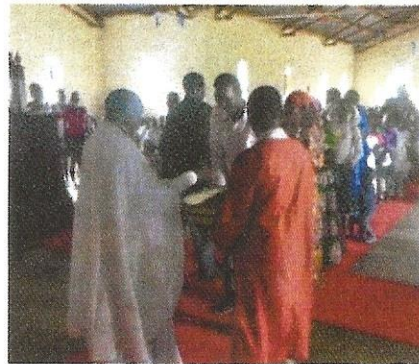
↑Father Simon's home office.

- There are few office furniture stores in Gulu and they do not make deliveries to your home. Getting a desk, chair and bookcase to Father Simon's house was not an easy task.
- Father Simon's house had no electricity, so there was no lights or power for work after dark, cell phones or laptops.
- Solar panels were installed on Father Simon's house to provide power, but in doing so, there was a need to install batteries to store the electricity.

With these upgrades Father Simon can now work at night, charge his cell phone and laptop at any time, receive emails without going miles away on his bike to use an internet café. All of this was extremely time consuming and challenging.

"I often think about you and know that my life and this self-sufficiency project is here because of your prayers and support."

Father Simon



←Father Simon distributing anridoron at the conclusion of his first Divine Liturgy as Father Simon.

Father Simon's Outreach

In July, Father Simon was able to visit Archangel Michael Orthodox High School, the first Orthodox High School constructed in northern Uganda. This high school was a project of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) in northern Uganda in July 2019. Father Simon was the guest of honor and officially welcomed new students to the school.

Since his return, Father Simon has served in a number of Parishes on Sundays and during the week. At these services, Father Simon preached both during sermons and after the services.





Medical Mission

In conjunction with Father Simon's ordination, a medical mission team from St. Luke Orthodox Church in Erie, Colorado (USA) came to northern Uganda. Three (3) clinics were held, each serving over 300 patients. The team members all attended Father Simon's ordination.

Father Simon's journey to seminary began during a medical mission 10 years ago when he served as an interpreter for Sue Nelson on her Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) mission trip. Since that time, Sue has supported Father Simon and opened this world of possibilities for Father Simon and a better Uganda.



↑ Medical Mission Team planting trees on the NUSSP Site.



↑ Medical Mission Team after Father Simon's first Divine Liturgy.

Please make **donations** to:



Lift Up Uganda, Inc.
950 10th Street,
Berthoud, CO USA 80513-1106

Your contribution may be tax deductible. Indicate "NUSSP" in the memo section.

For **more information** about the Northern Uganda Self-Sufficiency Project, contact Father Simon Menya at:

menyasimonn@gmail.com
+256773436469 (in Uganda)

Project Website
(Under Construction)
<https://nussp.org/>



↑ Packaging medications for the clinic.

→ A medical exam.



Summary

I am grateful to be home with my family. While there is still so much to be done and it's easy to feel overwhelmed with the many to-dos, I am thankful for the opportunities. I continue to be so grateful to God for you and yours. Please accept my kind request of continuous prayers and support for the Northern Uganda Self-Sufficiency Project and me. You will always be remembered in my prayers.

Through the love of God,

Father Simon