

The Mother-Child Health Clinic Project ... a follow-up

By John-Paul Vidal



Just recently, we have been learning about the people who live in Ngurdoto (pronounced En - gur - doe - toe) and their urgent need for a Mother-Child Health Clinic. The town is served by the Archdiocese of Arusha which is located in the Northeast part of Africa in the country of Tanzania.

At the present time, a dispensary built in 1981 by the Catholic missionaries (virtually a first-aid station) is the only form of health care in the area. The

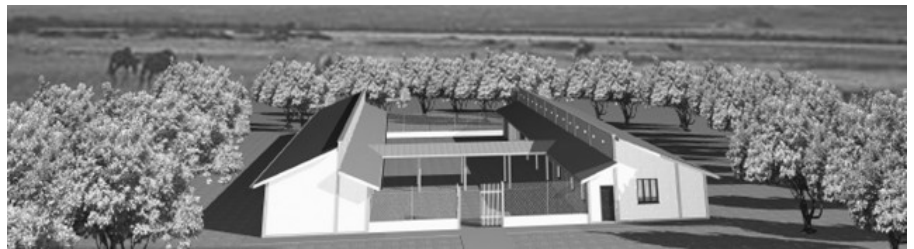
population of 7,000 people is mostly women and children. The number of women who are mothers is about 1,895 and the number of children under 5 is 1,987. Because of their remote location, people of Ngurdoto must walk 18 miles to receive pre and post natal care or pediatric care. Consequently, women and children rarely receive the care they need and the death rate among these age groups is very high.

Most of the people lack the knowledge and skills to improve their activities. Also, the existence of some strong cultural practices, such as the local means of delivering children (i.e., by assistance of unqualified traditional midwives, etc.) have negatively effected women's participation in productive rolls. Because of these negative traditional beliefs and practices, many people including men, youth, women and children have died of

AIDS. Poverty which is pervasive, has also contributed to the high rate of mortality.

The construction of a Mother-Child Health Clinic is most urgent and important. Until now, many women had not been enlightened enough to know the importance of having such a clinic. However, it is impossible for the people of Ngurdoto to raise the money needed for this project. If we compare what we have and what we need, we realize we live a very privileged life style. Is it possible that we could give up some excess in our lives to help our brothers and sisters in Africa?

Currently, St. Cecilia Parish Council is looking into ways to help finance this \$70,000 project. If you can help in raising some of the needed funds please call the parish office at 467-4286.

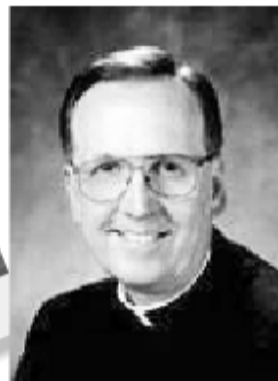


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MOTHER-CHILD CLINIC
In Ngurdoto

Pastor of St. Cecilia Church, canonist, historian and author of several books