



WELCOME “HOME” FATHER DAN!

When he left Tanzania to come to America, Father Daniel Malingumu’s father advised him to create a family where he was going and told him that this way he would always have a home. He listened to his father’s words and developed a family among the African refugees and parishioners at St. Leo’s. He came “home” last month to share faith with them and to have a belated celebration of his 25th anniversary as a priest.

His coming to Cincinnati at a time when Burundian refugees were arriving here was one of the “God surprises” that St. Leo’s often experiences. He had worked with Burundians in refugee camps in his home diocese of Tabora shortly after ordination. He had visited Cincinnati several years to report on the Millennium Village program in Tabora that was being supported by St. John’s parish West Chester and Good Shepherd parish Cincinnati. During his month-long stay here he became familiar with the city and with the counseling program at Xavier University. After his time as vicar general of his diocese, he came here for a sabbatical to study counseling.

He learned about the refugee ministry at St. Leo’s from one of his professors at Xavier University where he was studying counseling and thus began a “family” that continues today. Though he cannot speak Kirundi (the language of our Burundian parishioners) he understands it. Though they do not speak Swahili (Father Dan’s native tongue) they understand it, and so with God’s grace at work, they communicate using two different languages. While he was here, Father Dan concelebrated and preached at Sunday Mass and helped with the religious education and spiritual needs of the Burundians. Because he understood their culture and traditions, he was a great asset in our refugee ministry.

Though he now pastors a church in Virginia and no longer lives nearby, he continues to pray for and care about his “family” here. When asked if he would do a Lenten program for parishioners here, his response was a quick “Yes.” “It’s my home,” he said.

What resulted was great prayer, faith sharing, encouragement, food, joy, and celebration—quite the “family” reunion!

