

Prayer Vigil for Pope Francis' Apostolic Visit to DRC and South Sudan



On the evening of January 30, several sisters from the Motherhouse gathered with other sisters, priests, brothers, and lay people for a prayer vigil to invoke God's blessings on Pope Francis' apostolic visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and to the Republic of South Sudan. The vigil was held at San Bartolomeo (St. Bartholomew Church in Rome). The service was sponsored by Solidarity for South Sudan, a combined effort of the UISG (International Union of Superiors General - women) and the USG (Union of Superiors General – men). It began in 2008 with a request from the Sudanese Bishops' Conference. In the first ten years alone, between 2008 and 2018, Solidarity with South Sudan succeeded in training 475 primary school teachers, 190 nurses and midwives, over 1000 farmers, and more than 1500 pastoral agents. Currently, a total of 260 congregations (including the Sisters of Notre Dame), private donors, and international agencies, support the project with funding, personnel, and expertise.

The prayer vigil included songs and prayers in both English and French, the national languages of South Sudan and the DRC respectively. During the prayer service, Sr. Jacqueline Mwaksau Kona, a sister of the Divine Savior, offered reflections on the DRC, and Fr. Joseph Long, an Archdiocesan priest from Juba, South Sudan offered reflections on South Sudan. Fr. Long likened the journey of the people of South Sudan to that of the Israelites seeking the promised land. The vigil participants were deeply moved as he shared that the families of all of the Sudanese religious men and women present had been victims of the violence, war, and poverty inflicted on the Sudanese people. Both countries see the Pope's visit as a sign of hope and pray that his presence in their countries will continue to bear fruit and inspire the leaders and people to renewed peace and prosperity. Let us join our Congolese and Sudanese brothers and sisters in this prayer!