

Parishioners' Corner

The Power of Three

On a recent trip to Rwanda, Africa (as we know, the homeland of Father Deo) I and my travelling companions made a pilgrimage visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Kibeho. This was unusual for me for two reasons. The first is that I normally travel alone. The second is that I typically spend two days at our Station School followed by a brief visit with our High School and university scholarship winners. Then, on my third night there, I promptly return home. On this trip, however, I traveled with friends and our time at the Shrine allowed for reflection and suspended presence.

Our Lady of Kibeho is the only Vatican-approved Marian apparition on the African continent, which occurred in Rwanda between 1981 and 1989. The Virgin Mary appeared to three local girls, identifying herself as "Nyina wa Jambo" (Mother of the Word) and delivered urgent messages. Individually, these girls were not believed to be credible. Collectively, however, there could be no earthly explanation for all that unfolded and was witnessed by countless individuals. The meaningful point is that it took three girls to validate Mary's appearance.

This incredible story and holy place naturally had me deep in prayer to Mother Mary and in awe of her unconditional faith. Mother Mary's message to the three girls at Kibeho called for three actions: (1) repentance and conversion; (2) frequent prayer, especially the rosary, and (3) offering suffering to God.

The number three is personally relevant to me. First, through my personal visits to Rwanda, I have seen the fruits of the merger of our three parishes into St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, namely, that our Station School project continues to thrive. This is confirmed by the 1,623 current students (plus hundreds of postgraduates) who believe there are "angels" (that's their name for those who support the School) living here in Chicago.

Secondly, we are celebrating the arrival of our St. Elizabeth of the Trinity image. And, finally, the Trinity, as we Catholics believe, is the most holy and powerful expression of "three." Because of all of this, I feel privileged to be a part of our beautiful parish community. The powerful connection in all these instances is the three.

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