
Collect for today:
Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

In October, I led the St. David’s mission trip to Uganda, which was an amazing journey in unexpected and surprising ways. Our evening ritual was to gather at table for compline to journal and share experiences. Many stories centered on where we saw God that day; often, it was in the faces of the Ugandan people — people with little in terms of material things, expectations and assumptions.

Uganda remains a third-world country after fifty years of independence, with many obstacles ahead before it reaches its target of becoming a first-world country in fifty more years. We saw countless people, both old and young, carrying water containers on their heads; we saw kids walking miles to school, some making the journey without shoes.

We miss one of the points of today’s parable of the prodigal son if we think this is just a warning against wastefulness and poor choices, but the readings leave me contrasting the life of Ugandans with life here: they are far from comparable. In some ways, perhaps, it's not our fault that society has made it easy for us to be prodigal sons and daughters. As we fed hundreds of kids at St. Peter’s and Trinity Children’s Center their daily bowl of maize meal and beans (for some their only meal), not one child complained or left food un eaten. Our inordinate materialism, in contrast with their grace and abundant gratitude, leave me in awe and pondering.

We have much to learn from our Ugandan brothers and sisters in Christ.

Julia Urwin