



**Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe C
November 24, 2019**

- ◆ **Alpha—a new Spiritual Program coming to Ascension**
- ◆ **Update on Ascension School in Uganda**

Alpha is an evangelization program used by Catholics and non-Catholics in thousands of parishes in 70 countries as a way to lead people into a living relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Alpha program was founded in England in the 1970's within the Anglican Church. It is especially geared to drawing the unchurched into a relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit. In many places, it has had tremendous success in reaching young adults and other unchurched people. It has also touched the lives of many church-going people.

The Alpha program consists of 11 weekly session with a threefold format:

- ◆ A meal with a small group
- ◆ Viewing a video together
- ◆ A small group discussion on the video

The video topics

1. Is There More To Life Than This?
2. Who Is Jesus?
3. Why Did Jesus Die?
4. How Can We Have Faith?
5. Why And How Do I Pray?
6. Why And How Do I Read The Bible?
7. How Does God Guide Us?

A **Retreat Day** focused on the Holy Spirit and Prayer for a new infilling of the Holy Spirit.

8. How Can I Resist Evil?
9. Why and How Should I Tell Others?
10. Does God Heal Today?
11. What About the Church?

This past Spring, our staff, after a small breakfast (the meal aspect), looked at the videos and then discussed in small groups our thoughts on what we had seen and heard. Our staff liked Alpha so much that we decided to share it with a group of parishioners who we thought would be interested in it. From this group, twenty-two

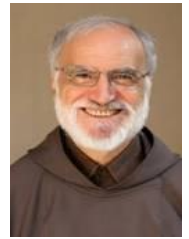
have answered the call to be a part of the Core Team which will present Alpha to interested parishioners and non-churchgoers in January. The kick-off date is Wednesday, January 15, 2020. Monica Sutton, the coordinator of newcomers and volunteers, is heading up the program.

Her email is msutton@ascensioncatholic.net.

While many churchgoing people have been blessed by Alpha, the program has been very effective in reaching people who have become disconnected from the Church and maybe even the Lord.

Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM

Fr. Cantalamessa, OFM, is the priest featured in the video on Alpha that you saw in church this weekend. He has been serving as the Preacher to the Papal Household since 1980, under Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.



Update on Outreach to the Church in Uganda

Since some of you have recently returned from up north to spend the winter with us, you may not be aware that this past summer I traveled to a parish in Uganda with eight other Ascension parishioners. We joined the pastor of Blessed Trinity, Ocala, and some of his parishioners. They have been going to Uganda for 13 years and have done wonderful work there. They are partnering with a sister parish in Uganda. The sister parish has 30 sub-parishes. We have adopted one of them. It is called Ascension Parish and School.

Currently, we are looking to build a school in our adopted sub-parish and are seeking sponsors for the children who will attend the school this coming school year which begins in January 2020.

I have been inviting parishioners to **sponsor a child** for a school year, which is **\$210**. To date we have received 166 sponsorship gifts. Thank you, sponsors. We have also received **9 sponsorship** gifts of **\$250** for **High School** students. There is only one High School which is at the main campus. We plan to oversee the elementary school sponsorships, but will forward the

money for High School sponsorship to Blessed Trinity Parish in Ocala.

Classrooms - \$5,000. We are in the process of building additional space for our Ascension School. In conjunction with the labor of the local parents and parishioners, they are able to build 9 classrooms for \$5,000 each. Thus far, we have received eleven \$5,000 gifts. Thank you, donors. See photo of the locals helping out with the foundation work on next page.



Helping Fr. Henry at his Parish

Last summer, Fr. Henry, a 32-year-old Associate Pastor at Blessed Trinity, Uganda, was my driver when I visited Uganda and said Masses at some of the 30 sub-parishes. On our last day together, Fr. Henry informed me that the Bishop had appointed him Pastor of what was formerly a sub-parish, located about one hour from Blessed Trinity. On my way to the airport, I visited Fr. Henry's new parish (he was also seeing it for the first time). He asked if I could help him fix up his rectory, a building that had not been lived in for several years.

When I told this story in our bulletin last September, a parishioner was moved to help this young priest and gave us a \$30,000 Life Insurance gift. This gift has enabled Fr. Henry to:

- ◆ Fix up his rectory (where I hope to stay for a few days next summer)
- ◆ Construct water wells
- ◆ Get some pews for his church

A School for Fr. Henry's Parish

Like so many parishes and sub-parishes we visited, each has some form of a church and school—often the school is a **“Stick Mud Block”** building. See picture below.

I have already obtained four gifts of \$5,000 to help Fr. Henry with his school. As you can imagine, the needs are endless. But we help bit by bit, and please, God, in a few years, we will together make a *very significant difference* in a very faraway part of our universal Church. Pope Francis calls us to go to the

‘peripheries.’ Our mission in Uganda is certainly one of the many peripheries in our worldwide Church.



Five people have told me they want to join me next summer in Uganda

Next summer, God willing, I will return to Uganda with Fr. Pat Sheedy (Pastor of Blessed Trinity in Ocala) and some of his people. Last year, 30 of us went.

Thus far, five people have told me that they would like to travel. They include a doctor, a videographer, two former Ascension parishioners now living in Merritt Island, and one other Ascension parishioner. If interested in joining us, let me know. Our departure date is June 21, 2020.



Fr. Henry and I in a school room in Uganda

If you can sponsor a child (\$210), please consider doing so. If you can donate \$5,000 for a classroom, please consider doing so. If you can gift \$60,000 that would build a school or church, please consider doing so. Some at Blessed Trinity in Ocala have done that. Some do it over a three-year period. Supporting a foreign mission is a long and wonderful tradition in our church.

Finally, as we support the church and poor in Uganda, we have not taken our eyes off those in need in our own backyard. Last weekend, as I announced at the Masses I presided at, this calendar year our Social Concerns office alone will give out over \$400,000 in aid—nearly all of it to non-parishioners.

Have a blessed week and a wonderful Thanksgiving,

Fr. Sarah