

**St. Nektarios Medical Center**  
**Akonyibedo, Uganda**  
October, 2021

We continue to operate around the clock. By building staff quarters for the two clinicians (the Ugandan solution to almost no M.D.s) and for the two nurse/midwives and all of their families we have full medical and obstetrical services on call at all times. Each family has an “apartment” of 250 square feet, divided into two rooms. The staff is delighted with these accommodations. The lab technician and the LPN live in rented native huts in the neighboring village.

The Corona virus has increased the Center’s workload. Less dire cases are initially treated at the Center and if there is improvement, they are given medicines and instructions and sent home to convalesce. Patients that are in dire condition are removed by the government and taken to regional Covid “hospitals.” On July 19<sup>th</sup> because of a surge in Covid-19 cases the government reimposed a complete lockdown for 42 days. Inter-district travel was banned. This caused serious economic hardship for the people who could not travel as they eked out a living.

Nurse Practitioner Sue Nelson, our medical advisor from Colorado, arrived in Uganda two days before the Covid restrictions were put in place. A number of health education activities had to be rescheduled but fortunately the government gave her a special travel permit and by traveling twice as much as planned these critical outreach programs were accomplished. While she was there, Fr. George, a Ugandan Orthodox priest, who serves as our Center administrator and who pastors two parishes, contracted Covid-19. Sue took over his medical care and he made a complete recovery.

Uganda was in absolute lockdown for almost a year. The borders were sealed and the only airport shutdown. All medicines and medical supplies and equipment in Uganda are imported. While the Catholic Medical Service allows us to purchase medicines and supplies from them, these items were less readily available and because of increased costs to the CMS our costs went up likewise.

On September 5<sup>th</sup> Archbishop Jonah Lwanga, Metropolitan of All Uganda fell asleep in the Lord. He was given a combined Hierarchical and State funeral lasting over nine hours. He was an outspoken defender of human rights and was not afraid to confront civil leaders when such correction was needed. The Center is under the omophorion of His Grace Sylvestros, bishop of Gulu and the north. All are waiting to see if he will succeed Metropolitan Jonah. I have met the bishop, concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with him and was a guest for dinner in his home. He is a good friend of the Medical Center. Though only in his late thirties he is very pastoral and caring of the Ugandan people. Unlike other countries in Africa, Uganda has always had a Ugandan as its Orthodox Metropolitan. I pray that such continues.

Our Medical Center continues to function and to serve these needy of God’s children only through the generosity of individuals and Orthodox parishes. We receive no financial support from any government agency or from other NGOs such as IOCC or OCMC. We commemorate our benefactors at all services celebrated by Fr. George or by me. Thank you to all who have and to those who continue to support us.