

My Trip to Kenya

Blog of Matushka Marina Holland

Part 7

Sunday, January 27, 2019

Today was the first Liturgy since our arrival, and I'd been very much looking forward to it. But alas, I didn't make it. I slept poorly last night again, and just did not have the energy. We are realizing that this is likely because of high altitude sickness. Anyway, I finally woke up around 1015 and felt well enough to go to Liturgy. But it'd just about be over by the time I got there...perhaps I should stay behind and work in the kitchen, and get lunch started? But the main house was locked, so that settled it. I headed down the road to the church. Broadcasted across the hillside was a church service from some other local church, with loud, energetic singing! As I got out of earshot of that church, I began to hear broadcasted services from another church!



I had imagined, for some reason, that the people would be wearing traditional African dress to their church services. So when I saw such a dress in a store at home, I bought it! And that is what I wore today when I went to the church. But I was the only one who was wearing such a dress! That really made me laugh.



Liturgy indeed was over when I arrived. They were just beginning to take group pictures, and they kindly invited me to join them, even though I hadn't been there for the service. I did get to hear some of their enthusiastic singing, though, some in English, some in either Kikuyu or Swahili – I can't tell the difference. I loved it!

Since I didn't attend the service, FS shared some highlights with me, knowing I'd include them in this blog. He was the chief celebrant. The service was in a combination of the three languages, Swahili, Kikuyu and English. The English part was translated in real time, while FS spoke, by Moses. He is my new godson! This was his first time to receive communion! FS said he did a superb job with the translating, although FM kept reminding FS, "Slowly, slowly!" Paul, about whom I wrote in the previous blog, was the main chanter, and he also did beautiful job.



There are prayers in a service that the priest usually reads inaudibly, while the choir is singing something or the chanter is chanting something. But in this church FM reads them aloud, for the purpose of teaching his parishioners. Many of them are new to the faith and have much to learn, and he uses this opportunity.

Another difference is that when in other Orthodox churches various hymns are sung before the Epistle and Gospel readings (troparia and kontakia), at this church they sing other songs, apparently extemporaneously. FM said the troparia and kontakia will come in time, but now they sing beautiful songs from their previous churches. I expect this helps newcomers with the transition. The 8 tones in which the troparia and kontakia are traditionally sung are pretty complicated, so they will require some training.

My other new godson also received communion for the first time today. His name is Stephen. He was abandoned by his mother, and was living in the streets. The neighbors complained about him stealing, and at 7 years old he was thrown into prison. A man told FM about this boy, so he went to the prison to inquire after him. Since there was no known family to whom to release him, the officials agreed to release him into the care of FM. Stephen is now 12 years old, and has been living at the school since he was released from prison.

We went home, and Papathia and I prepared lunch. We discussed many things over lunch, and then FS and Moses, their visiting cousin (different from Moses my godson) washed the dishes so Papathiya could rest. And I could write some more in this blog! Papathiya was very impressed at *men* washing dishes!

I have been having trouble putting pictures into my blog. In the first four blogs I put pictures, and then changes were made so that each picture was not just a picture, but a link to the Orthodox Africa website, of FM's or FS's Facebook pages. And a header and a footer were put in, which changed things somehow, and pictures didn't match up with the correct text any more, especially in # 4, from Thursday. And now for some reason, since then I cannot put pictures into my blog anymore. So I re-did #4 without pictures, and did #5&6 without pictures. I hope in time to be able to go back and add in the pictures,

because I think they tell the story much better than my words. This is a story that deserves being told well! (note: obviously this problem has been solved!)

Blessings has been hoping and hinting about going “on an adventure” for several days, and finally today we will be doing just that: FS and I will take the family out to dinner at a restaurant. This apparently is a huge treat, and qualifies as an adventure! The children have great plans about the pizza and hamburgers they hope to eat!

We went out to dinner, and what an experience that was! As large and as populated as South Kinangop is, there is no place for pizza here. We drove 45 minutes down their pot-holed highways, passing any number of small towns, to get to the closest pizza joint! People were EVERYWHERE, along both sides of the street. Motorcycles zipping around. Cars and “lorries”(trucks) barely dodging each other. Speeds much faster than I would be driving in such conditions! I think their vision is much better than ours, somehow. They don’t seem to be blinded by the sunlight or by headlights up ahead. They slow down for potholes before I see there is a pothole. There are periodic speed *bumps*, which I think are unnecessary because they have so many speed “holes”!

We finally got to the restaurant, and Blessings and Christine were terribly excited! Moses and a relative of theirs, Fr Constantine, came along as well. We ordered two extra large pizzas, one with pepperoni and chipped beef, one with chicken, and a medium veggie, as well as fried chicken and fries. This would be Moses’ first time to have pizza, and so we all watched him take his first bite. He delivered a wonderful reaction, as pure bliss spread across his face! “Yes, I *like* it!” he said! He brought leftovers home for breakfast. Blessings said he thinks he himself ate 12 pieces! The kids were hinting broadly about getting some ice cream, too, but we said no; maybe we will let that be an adventure for another day.



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