

Gabe Hurrish — Mission to South Sudan

Gabe Hurrish, long time religious education coordinator for St. Stephen Parish, felt a calling to move on to something different last year. And move he did, to the other side of the world. Gabe is teaching at the Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio, South Sudan.

Solidarity Teacher Training College is run by a group of international religious from various congregations and institutes. The college has 15 tutors from 9 different countries. There are 125 students from all over the nation, and a few from Sudan in the north. The compound has classrooms, a library, a computer room, dorms for women and men, a cafeteria, and several warehouses.

Government troops and rebels have been fighting in South Sudan for many years. Gabe says, “Life in South Sudan continues with the many ups and downs of an unstable country. The political situation is still horrendous.”

As with most places, most people are good at heart, but the need in this area is great. Gabe writes, “That night as I lay in my little bed I thought of what Jesus said to his disciples, “...look for a worthy person in every town ...and stay ...until you leave.” I thought of all the ‘nice welcomes’ I had received and I felt truly blessed. These suffering people are so generous and grateful because I would come from so far to be with them. Yes, I think I will stay in this place for a while sharing the Good News.”

When asked about how he chose Solidarity, and why he decided to go, Gabe shared the following.

“I actually worked for Solidarity in 2008 when I lived in Rome. I was the office Secretariat. They were in the beginning stages back then and needed someone to monitor the office, administration, track the funding coming in, etc. I kept in touch with them all these years and finally decided to visit the summer of 2016.

“I was so impressed by what I saw and experienced that I decided to return on a long term basis. Lots of prayer and meditation go into these decisions. I spoke with my family to get their views. They were all very supportive.

“The thing about the call of the Holy Spirit is that I rarely get a super clear picture. It is a gut feeling that I have to do this and trust the Lord on the details. The Spirit is asking me to GO and not worry about the



Gabe Hurrish with 4-month-old South Sudanese child.

path, the direction, the preparation, or any of that. Just GO. I will be with you to the ends of the earth. You have nothing to worry about. And so I came to South Sudan.

“I can say that deep down I feel this is where I should be. Amidst all the confusion and turmoil, I know this is right. I am deeply content to be in this place at this time. Day to day, it is a struggle. I am challenged at every turn. I wonder if I can handle all this. Then I turn to the Lord and all I feel is peace. This tells me it is right. It may not be what I want in life but it is what God wills for me. That is hard to explain but it makes me relax and trust.

“So I joined Maryknoll Lay Missioners and here I am, in one of the neediest and most desperate situations in the world. I feel I am doing God’s will. I feel the Passion of Jesus as I listen to the terrible stories of the South Sudanese. I thank God I can be of service to a people who have suffered so much.”

Please keep Gabe and his fellow staff and students in your prayers.