

Serving Berlin's English-speaking Catholic Community since 1957



Catholic Community

Member of the English-Speaking Mission

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Our Mission Statement: The All Saints Catholic Community is a fully integrated, multicultural community with English as its unifying language. It is an open, warm, welcoming, inclusive community that prays together and celebrates its unity in diversity.

July 27, 2014 Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**1 Kings 3:5, 7-12 • Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-130 • Romans 8:28-30 •
Matthew 13:44-52**

Celebrant: Fr. Wolfgang Felber SJ

Jubilee Reflections 3

In 1990 the leadership of the Missionaries of Africa, popularly known as “White Fathers”, decided to open up a new parish in Southern Sudan and sent me there to explore the needs and possibilities. It was to be the most adventurous journey of my missionary life. What remains unforgettable was the encounter with Matthias, an old catechist we greeted on the road as I traveled with one of my confreres to an abandoned parish to celebrate Christmas. The story of Matthias is extraordinary. In 1972 the government of Sudan chased away all foreign missionaries; only a handful of local priests remained in the country. Most parishes were without a priest. Matthias, then a young man, said to himself: our priest has gone; someone must carry on his work. And so for some 20 years he walked across the mountain range from village to village, baptizing children, praying with the Christian communities and encouraging them to live a Christian life – without receiving any salary. And what is most extraordinary: Matthias is completely blind. After Christmas Mass I asked Matthias: How do you manage to move around these rocks? “With the power of God!”, was his only answer.

We are approaching a similar situation in our own archdiocese of Berlin: most parishes will no longer have the permanent presence of a priest. Whether our church will stay alive and able to continue her mission will depend on us: whether people like Matthias will pick up the challenge and be ready to offer their gifts and service to their communities. Christianity in Africa spreads mainly through the witness of lay Christians and the devoted voluntary work of catechists. Here, too, only committed lay Christians can pass on the faith to the next generation and be witnesses of the Gospel in our secular society.

Fr Wolfgang Schonecke

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Boy Scout Troop 46: All Saints is the proud Chartered Organization for Boy Scout Troop 46 “Freedom Outpost.” *True to Scouting Values for Over 55 years* (www.troop46berlin.ScoutLander.com)