

On Wednesday Fr. Denis and I met together to talk about church business and so I could get caught up to speed on current developments and also pass along to him the various things that we had brought with us such as additional icons and vestments, etc. Fr. Denis proceeded to tell me about the developments in Gitarama and Burema, as well his own parish in Kigali. Gitarama is about an hour southwest of Kigali and has an EOC community of about 55 faithful. They are led by a very capable pastor, Gratien Sebakiga, and have taken the name St. Michael Evangelical Orthodox Church. Gratien was an official catechist in the Roman Catholic Church for many years, and when I met him and his wife later in the week I could see why Fr. Denis speaks so highly of him. He and his family are of great character, humility, and integrity, and I was very impressed with them. Gratien is well educated and obviously pastoral hearted. Fr. Denis had already taken them through the catechism and Gratien and a number of his people had come several times to Kigali and participated in the Liturgy, and they had been doing basically a Liturgy of the Word. Fr. Denis had already received them as an official EOC parish (a little pre-mature but innocent act) and was advocating that Gratien be made a deacon and allowed to celebrate the full EOC Common Liturgy. Although I think Gratien is gifted pastorally, I felt it best to have him only celebrate a Deacon's Liturgy of pre-consecrated gifts, however that could be done. One of his sons attends the seminary (one of the students I mentioned earlier that I was very impressed with), and it was decided that he could take pre-sanctified bread and wine from Kigali's morning service and get it to Gitarama for them to have a Deacon's Liturgy in the afternoon. They would function like this until Bp. Jerold goes again, at which time Gratien would likely be ordained a priest and able to celebrate the full Liturgy. As you can see, often times things here are a bit of a moving target. My anal retentiveness tends to fight against that, but how can I withhold formal recognition of things the Spirit has obviously already done? So, the plan was set into place that Gratien would be ordained a deacon during the Sunday Liturgy.



On Thursday we went to visit the sewing school in Burema. This was a very encouraging and blessed time. James, the man who runs the school and is a deacon-in-training, does a great job. He is kind of a fun-loving version of a Louis Gossett Jr. drill sergeant type. The students appear to have much respect for him, and a small

community in the village has developed around him that meets on Sunday mornings and does a simple "readers" service. The hope is that eventually James will be ordained a deacon and this little mission will become an official parish. I didn't discern that it was quite ready for that yet - maybe when Bp. Jerold goes. Nevertheless, it was a tremendously

