

Our Missions Overseas

Kenya – An insight from Fr. Brendan Carr C.S.Sp

It is distressing to watch a country come to a standstill. The threat that COVID-19 would overrun a national health system has faced many countries. Kenya took early precautions, choosing the safety of its citizens above economic stability – a hard choice for any developing country.

Kenyans were unprepared for the measures that – almost overnight – closed down most commerce and travel. A night curfew was introduced, and authorities were often heavy-handed in their application of the law.

Spiritans in Kenya are enormously proud of their long missionary links to the Irish Province. Over a century, Irish confrères – some still serving there – laid the foundations of education and much socio-political development while establishing a vibrant national church and a vigorous Spiritan Province. These links were underlined by three visits earlier this year.

Blackrock College Immersion trip to Kenya

In February a group of Transition Year students from Blackrock College visited, in the care of Ann Cleary of [Aidlink](#)* accompanied by two teachers from the school. As with previous immersion trips, the principal objective was to spend time in the classroom and on the playing fields with their counterparts in Holy Ghost School, Machakos. Pictured right we can see villagers welcoming the Blackrock students



*Please click on the [link](#) above to read Charlie O'Brien is a Transition Year Student at Blackrock College, Dublin. He travelled to Machakos County, Kenya in February 2020 with other Transition Year boys from Blackrock College as part of the Aidlink Immersion Programme

PERSEVERANCE IN ADVERSITY

Willow Wheelers' continued support

In early March, a visiting group of 43 – members of Willow Wheelers (*pictured right*); Blackrock students/parents – travelled to Pokot region. Following this they then separating into smaller groups to see Barpello, Marigat and Tangelbei missions, and Rotu.

In Rotu, where Fr. Seán McGovern – after many years of solid development work in establishing a primary school, putting in a series of bore-holes to supply water for nomadic clans, providing a life-saving health clinic for children aged under 5 - is building the first church in that very secluded land of nomadic peoples.

Willow Wheelers has long supported many of these projects, which you can read about [here](#).



Promotions Office witness fruits of their labour

Later in March, having eagerly planned to see the work of mission with which they had so long engaged from a distance, three of the Irish Province's staff – Deirdre Carpenter, Marie Finnerty and Garry Lyons (*pictured right with others in Tangelbei*) -made a first visit to Kenya and to the very successful schools of St Mary's, Nairobi and Holy Ghost Machakos.



They also visited Mukuru where Fr. Pat O'Toole began the Spiritan presence in that vast population of hidden Nairobi many years ago. Spiritans today are part of a big church network here, initiated by Irish missionaries (Christian Brothers, Daughters of Charity, Jesuits, Mercy and SMA) who embody mission as presence, accompaniment, witness and service.



Kenya waits, as all of Africa waits, to see how the virus will spread. Until now the statistics are surprisingly low in East Africa. It is, of course, too early to say why but let us hope that Africa, which has borne the burden of so many catastrophes, might be spared the worst outcome of this pandemic.