Dear St. Luke's Parishioners,

6 months ago to the day of my writing this, I was in Zuarungu, Ghana (Far Northeast part of the country) visiting the parishioners of our Sister Parish, St. Martin De Porres and the 7 Outstation (or "Satellite") parishes along with other parishioners from St. Luke's. It was an incredible, beautiful, educational, and thoroughly Catholic experience all-around.

People have asked me many times, "what was the best part of the trip" and my answer is the same, "the people." While there were many highlights of the trip to Ghana to visit the people of our Sister Parish, such as visiting the school and having a band of school children welcome us with drums and marching, learning how to cook and partaking of the local food, concelebrating Mass with a former Seminarian classmate and native Ghanian priest, playing volleyball with some college-age young men (they were really, really good!), or having the first experience of "petting" a Crocodile at a "Crocodile Pond", the experience of simply being with the people, worshipping with them, and being welcomed lovingly and with such authentic hospitality and generosity will be forever etched in my mind and heart.

From the beginning of the Sister-Parish relationship, both Fr. Moses, myself, and Fr. Ken wanted to emphasize the truly "relational" and "Catholic" reality of our mutual friendship. Celebrating Mass at St. Martin De Porres Catholic Church in Zuarungu was indeed both very familiar (the same readings, the same prayers, the same Faith) and very new (different musical instruments, different way of offering gifts)! This was a theme throughout our time with our friends in Zuarungu, Ghana. United in the same Catholic faith, we experienced first-hand the beauty of the Catholic Church, precisely in its Catholic dimension!

To quote one of the members of St. Luke's who went on the trip to visit our Sister-Parish in Ghana, "I always knew that the Catholic Church was Catholic, but I never really experienced this truth as fully as I have after celebrating Mass with the people here."

St. Luke's is going back to Ghana in July to visit our Sister Parish, St. Martin De Porres. We will be flying out of Des Moines on July 9th and returning July 21st or, for those who desire to see the Southern part of Ghana for a few days, returning July 25th.

I invite you to pray and consider if the Holy Spirit may be prompting you to visit our friends at our Sister Parish in Ghana in July and experience, first-hand, the beauty, community, and Catholicity of our Catholic Church.

More details of the trip will be forthcoming in the very near future.

Come Lord Jesus!,
Fr. Ryan