

Update from Juba and last call for Rumbek!

6 August 2018

The adventures by air continue in South Sudan. Having been accompanied on the flight back from Yambio to Juba by honey bees anxious not to abandon the pots of honey loaded for sale in the capital, this morning the flight to Rumbek was cancelled last minute on account of heavy rain there. This is not unusual in the rainy season. We will try again tomorrow morning!

I hope in the next days to visit the Mazzolari Teachers College in Cuibet which the Province runs in collaboration with the Diocese of Rumbek. Also St Peter Claver Ecological and Computer Centre and the Multi Educational and Agricultural Jesuit Institute (MAJIS), as well as learning about Jesuit work in the parish and local development and peace initiatives....

Yesterday, I went with Fr Pau of JRS Country Office to experience Mass in the IDP camp, currently home to approx. 30,000 people on the outskirts of Juba. Mass in a number of the makeshift Churches in this camp is celebrated each Sunday by Fr Pau, the Franciscans and other Jesuits that happen to be passing through the Country Office! This is the only support for Sunday Mass services that is provided by anyone into this IDP settlement. The Churches were as usual packed, the services vibrant and the welcome very warm! Fr Pau spoke of the importance of community and reaching out to the other to help individual coping and resilience in such a difficult, arid and crowded environment. On the day when the most recent peace initiative for South Sudan was signed, he also spoke to the congregation about the difficult challenge of 'loving our enemies'.

This service to the IDP settlement in Juba is not part of any official programme of work by the Jesuits, but a testament to the commitment to go to the margins and express solidarity in simple ways with people who suffer.

Noelle Fitzpatrick

Liaison Officer South Sudan