

## Journey to Tanzania and INUKA – My Trip and Reflection

It is difficult to describe all the experiences, emotions and blessings that I felt during my recent journey to Tanzania. Here is my account of the trip that was mostly documented in text messages sent to my family along the way. I have added a brief personal reflection on each day.

**Day 1 & 2: Sunday, July 6 and Monday, July 7 [The Journey Begins]** – My first travel leg was a 13.75-hour journey from Chicago ORD [10:15am] to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [8:00am] on Ethiopian Airlines. We arrived a little late into Addis Ababa, but I still had a six-hour layover before my 2.75-hour flight to DAR es Salaam, Tanzania. I flew business class because I am tall, and I needed to try to sleep. The airline reminds you that they have been voted the best airline in Africa for seven years in a row. It is probably not a high bar, but they are a member of United's Star Alliance and they met my expectations on this trip. While it was not my best business class experience, the food was good, and I did get a little sleep. I believe that it was my first time exiting a Boeing 787 down the stairs to the tarmac outside. I packed using carry-ons only, so I had to haul them down the stairs. At least it was not raining.

The Ethiopian Airline lounge was well done as I got some rest and some good food before my next travel leg. I departed at 3:05pm and we arrived just a few minutes late into DAR es Salaam, Tanzania [around 6:00pm]. The flight was uneventful. I met the hotel driver at the airport and was also greeted by Sister Beatrice (Fr Nestor's sister). Fr. Nestor wanted to make sure that everything was fine. The short drive to the hotel was interesting. Reminds me a little of India with motorcycles and auto rickshaws (Tuk-Tuks) everywhere. The main airport road has been under construction which apparently impacted the frontage road that my hotel was on. The frontage road was like a motocross track with mounds and potholes that were tough to navigate. I am glad that Sister Beatrice did not drive to the hotel. I am up early tomorrow to go back to the airport to begin my safari.

**Reflection:** My journey began with both excitement and apprehension. Traveling alone is not as enjoyable as sharing a new experience with someone else and there are many travel segments and challenges to this trip. It was a relief that my flights went well.

**Day 3: Tuesday, July 8 [Safari Begins]** – I was up earlier than needed today to get to my flight. Probably jet lag and concerns over the trip logistics. My packing strategy worked as I segregated clothes for the safari segment of my trip. I took only a duffle bag and a string bag on safari and left my roller bag and backpack at the hotel. Terminal 1 in DAR has only two check-in windows and one departure gate so that made things easy. We departed at 7:15am in a large prop plane for Zanzibar which is an island off the coast of Tanzania. The plane dropped some people off and picked up new passengers to then fly to Arusha, which is near Mt. Kilimanjaro. This time everyone got off the plane to catch various flights and it was overcast so there was no view of the mountain. As I boarded my new smaller prop plane, I realized that I am the only passenger! We stopped in Lake Manyara (dirt runway) to pick up a few additional passengers and then flew to Kogatende airport (dirt runway) in the Serengeti National Park. The total trip took about four hours. The airport is a busy place as it handles 50 flights a day on one small dirt runway. Apparently, they sometimes must work to keep the animals away from the runway.



When I arrived at Kogatende, my driver was waiting for me. Since I was his only pick up, he was happy to give me my first safari experience. Our 40-minute trip to the Olakira Migration camp turned into 90 minutes. There was no problem spotting wildlife here as I saw Elephants, Giraffes, Hippos, Zebras and Crocodiles in the first 15 minutes.

Olakira is near the Mara River which is a key part of the ecosystem. The migration is currently taking place to cross the river toward Kenya, so life and death battles are playing out each day among the animals. I may see that spectacle soon. I also remembered to text Daniel for today is his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.



On my arrival, I was serenaded by the staff and assigned tent 10 which is farthest from the common areas. After lunch, I got some rest and then it was safari time. In the late afternoon, three of us went out with our guide Adam. The couple I was with needed to complete the Big 5 African animals (Elephant, Rhino, Lion, Leopard and African Buffalo) so the goal was the leopard. After checking out some baboons, we had a Yellowstone moment with about 15 safari trucks circling a hill of stones containing a female leopard and her cub. We got some good photos. We returned to camp and a nice campfire, and we ate a wonderful dinner. So far, the food has been great and the service top notch. Both meals were served outdoors. After dinner, it was time to head to my tent. Many of the staff members are from the famous Maasai tribe of lion killers. That is handy as an escort to the tent is required during the dark hours. I noticed that it is a little cool at night (maybe upper 50s), but the blankets are heavy, and they put two hot water bottles in my bed to help keep it warm at night. This is clearly “glamping,” but it will be interesting sleeping with all the wilderness noises.

**Reflection:** It took quite a trip to get here but my first safari experience is off to a great start. I decided to leave the screened-in front porch of my tent open for my first night. It has been a while since I slept in a tent but I will see how it goes.







**Day 4: Wednesday, July 9 [Safaripalooza]** - The first night I was not quite sure what to expect given my limited camping experience. It was great to have my own bathroom as I made a couple trips during the night. The food is so good that I ate too much. My tent got chilly during the night, but the warm blankets and hot water bottles compensated for the cold. The sounds of unpredictable wildlife was another matter as mostly silence is periodically interrupted by howls, bleats and shrieks. Mostly far away, but some close by. I am told that the zebras and hyenas tussled nearby last night. Overall, my sleep was sporadic, but an afternoon nap should help offset. We will see how night two goes.

**Wildlife Migration** - The Serengeti has 5 million animals including 1.5 million wildebeest and 800,000 zebras. The northern Serengeti has resident animals such as elephants, giraffes, lions, impalas, rhinos, hippos, certain antelope etc. The wildebeest, zebras, gazelles and other certain antelope types migrate around the national park throughout the year. They do so for food supply and to give birth. We are at the point of the year where most animals are migrating through the area that I am in and are moving into Kenya. The herds are astounding to see and interesting to watch.

After breakfast, I left with my guide Adam at 7:00am for a six-hour tour. The couple I was with took an early morning balloon ride, so I had my guide solo. We headed for the migration herds and had some good finds for the day. Highlights are noted in the pictures. 1. A pack of hyenas near their lair. 2. A cheetah on the hunt - a rare find. 3. Vultures and herons feasting on a wildebeest carcass. 4. A pack of elephants crossing the road. 5. Wildebeest finally getting up the courage to cross the river into Kenya. No wonder as the prior day lions attacked a group at the same crossing. Tell the grandkids that I have seen Pumba (warthogs) several times, but they are always moving so no pictures. I also forgot to mention that these safari excursions test one's bladder. Today, I had to take a pee among the wildebeest. They didn't mind as I was not a lion!



I was solo for my Wednesday afternoon safari as the couple I was paired with were not feeling well. We headed for the Mara River. Highlights are noted in the pictures: 1. I finally got a distant picture of warthogs. 2. Two elephant encounters. 3. A male leopard in a tree lounging after a good meal. 4. Giraffes. 5. Hippos and crocodiles. You will notice that the drivers are not shy about getting up close with the animals. The migration crossing we saw today was of the Sand River. Tomorrow, we hope to see one at the Mara River which is bigger. About a dozen crocodiles are waiting at one crossing point.

**Reflection:** There are so many wildebeest, and they are strange looking creatures. My guide said that God made them from all of the left-over parts of many other animals!



**Day 5: Thursday, July 10 [Safaripalooza 2]** - I was better prepared for night two of camping as I secured the tent more completely against the cold and noises. I only made one trip to the bathroom, and I slept most of the night. No shrieks this time but the wildebeest are nearby, and they sound like bullfrogs. It was raining as I went to sleep, and it gets quite cool at night. I am thankful for hot water in the shower but getting out is cold. Although I am escorted to my tent as protection in the dark, I am confident that the wildebeest taste better than me anyway. Spoiler alert - that was proved in the morning when we found three kingly brothers out on the hunt!

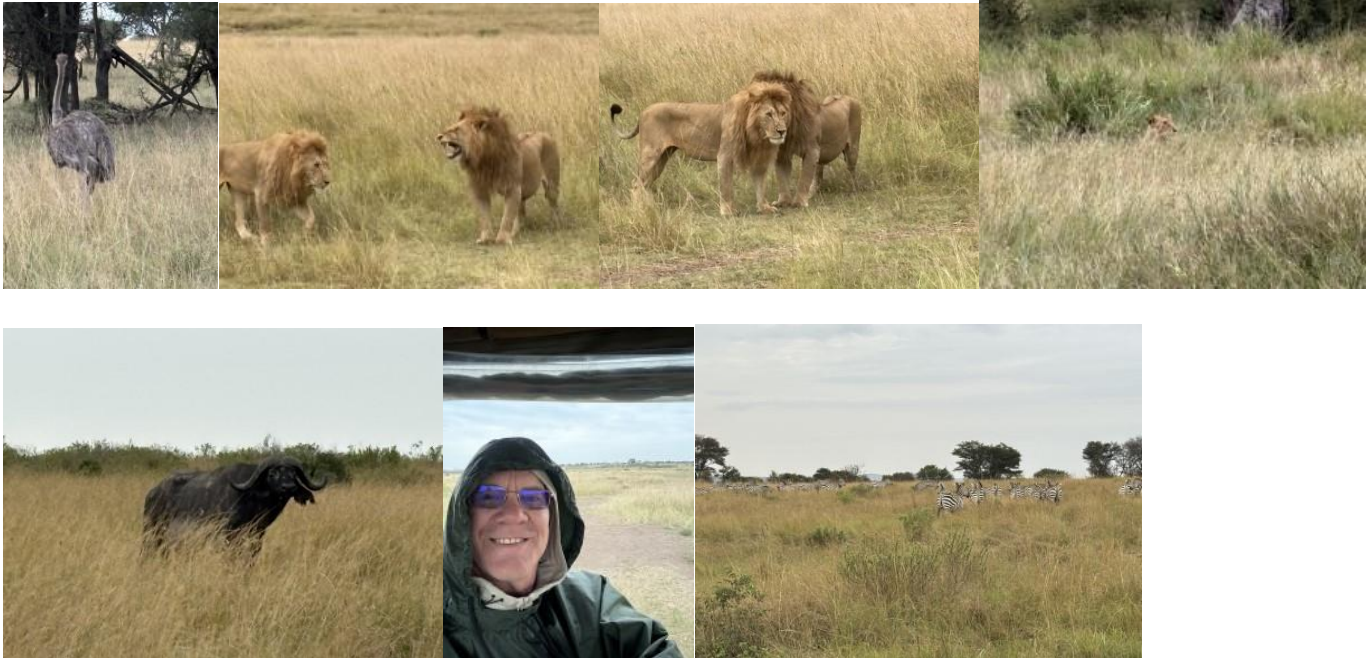
**Toyota Land Cruiser's** - The resort uses these beasts to get around the uneven roads in the NP. Sometimes we make our own road. Imagine riding a more severe version of the Disney World Dinosaur ride for five hours straight. It can take a toll on the body. It comes equipped with a cooler (beer, water, sodas) and some cookies. I avoid the beer as I have already had to pee in the NP. They also have toilet paper, but I am not sure how well that would work. Btw, I am just south of the equator so our daylight is about twelve hours from 7:00am to 7:00pm.

**Wildlife Migration #2** - By accident, I am told that I perfectly hit the migration window for this area. A week or two ago the wildebeest were not around. Now they number in the thousands and my photos do not do it justice. The videos are better so hopefully I can show a few in the future. The permanent resident animals of this area are like those people in Florida muttering about the influx of annual snowbirds. The animals get annoyed by the bullfrog like din and some go into hiding.





After breakfast, I left with my guide Adam at 7:00am for our next adventure. I was solo again and everyone thinks I am a VIP as I have been mostly alone with my “private” guide. We headed for the migration herds and had some good finds in the morning. Highlights are noted in the pictures. 1. The ostrich near our camp. 2. Three male lions (brothers) and one female lion. 3. The African Buffalo. 4. Yours truly in my stylish rain coat as it was cool and rainy early in the day. I was able to get pictures of four out of five animals that make up the African Big 5. I missed the Rhino that was seen on Tuesday before I arrived. The final picture is of zebras taken from my front door. The migration has come to our camp! For the lions, this time of year is easy hunting as wildebeest is on the menu! Of course, the males were lounging in the grass while the female was out hunting.



After a successful early morning safari things turned for me. We were hoping to see a Mara River migration crossing, but the animals did not cooperate. Unlike Disney, they cannot control things here. It took patience to see the Sand River crossing yesterday which was uneventful as no predators were around. This time the herd was massed by the Mara River like a civil war army. The zebras are the generals because of their eyesight and navigation skills. The enemy is lurking in the water and elsewhere. Safari trucks maneuvered along the 10 crossing points awaiting the “generals” go decision. We switched positions often and waited several hours, and Adam suggested that we have lunch delivered. About the time lunch arrived, I suddenly felt nauseous and clammy. Because of the length of the wait and the lack of bathrooms I had dehydrated myself. I was revived by some water and the air on the trip back. I regained fluids and was able to eat lunch after getting back. I felt sorry for our “Uber Eats” guy who drove 30 minutes to deliver a lunch that I did not eat. Adam ate some though. It was 3:15pm when we returned and I cancelled my late afternoon safari. Did they ever cross the river?

I had dinner with my guide Adam tonight. He said the river crossing attempt was quickly aborted by the crocodiles today. It may have been fun to see but the wait was well past my limit already. I got to learn a little about Adam’s family as he has five kids from 3 to 16. He travels to see his family occasionally, but it must be a tough life. He will be driving me to the airport in the morning so maybe I will have more pictures to share. There is currently a steady drone from the wildebeest and zebra outside my tent. The Zebras were standing on the path as I walked back to my tent, and I just heard one run past my tent. It could be a noisy night as I know why the Rhinos leave the area!

**Reflection:** It was an amazing experience, but I have had my fill of animals particularly wildebeest and zebra. I am getting picky about taking pictures unless it is something new. Sadly, the novelty is starting to wear off, kind of like architectural ruins in Greece. It has been great, but it is now on to DAR and then the INUKA Rehabilitation Hospital.

**Day 6: Friday, July 11 [Safari Finale]** - The migration hit the camp in full force last night, as wildebeest and zebra were all around us. Except for some trips to the bathroom, I slept well as the snoring wildebeest did not bother me much. I snapped a few more photos of my tent and started back on the path to breakfast and my ride out. After I met a camp escort on the way, he suddenly jumped as a snake quickly slithered off our path and into the brush. After breakfast, I got some farewell photos, and Adam drove me to the airstrip. We saw some baboons along the way along with an eagle soaring in the sky with a snake in his mouth! One of man's best friends. We also came across a safari truck accident. One of the tour vehicles tipped over in a ditch while trying to pass another truck. No one was hurt and a group of fellow tour guides were able to get the truck upright within 15 minutes. We continued to the airport and Adam stayed around until my plane was ready.



It took me over 4 hours and a series of flights to get back to Dar es Salaam. This time I had to call the hotel to arrange my pickup as messaging through the app did not work. I made it back for my second stay in the Hotel Blue Sapphire and my bags were waiting for me. I am looking forward to seeing Fr Nestor tomorrow and beginning my time at INUKA. I have a one-hour flight and a drive to get there.

**Reflection:** My tour guide Adam called the Serengeti migration one of the wonders of the world. It certainly lived up to expectations as it is an incredible sight. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to see it.

**Day 7: Saturday, July 12 [INUKA Bound]** - The good news is that I did not get up once last night to go to the bathroom. Different than sleeping in a tent with animals around! My day today was mostly spent waiting around for a 4:00pm flight to Iringa. To get to INUKA, you can take a very long drive from Dar es Salaam (maybe 13 hours) or a short flight and a reasonable drive. It is not a popular spot to get to so flights to Iringa or Mbeya (the other option) are not very frequent. Fr. Nestor suggested that I fly to Iringa as his brother lives there and the road to INUKA is better.

The flight went well, and Fr. Nestor met me at the airport. Baggage claim in Iringa was a pickup truck backed up to the back door with bags offloaded to passengers. We started our 200 km (120 mile) drive to INUKA that would take us 3.5 hours. A similar drive in the U.S. would take around 2 hours but driving is quite an adventure here. I saw very few traffic signals, but we encountered at least 50 speed bumps and many trucks. There is a pecking order in this "road warrior" environment. Large buses are the king followed by slow-moving heavy-duty trucks. Smaller cars and trucks come next followed by motorcycles and tuk tuks. The motorcycles ignore all traffic rules, and the tuk tuks try to keep from getting run over by staying on the shoulder. There are also people walking or biking plus vendors selling food and other items along the road. Passing trucks is a challenge given the speed bumps and other vehicles and as dusk sets in headlights and taillights seem to be optional. They also drive on the wrong side of the road. What were the British thinking!



We made the trip safely and only got stopped by police once at their normal traffic checkpoint. They wanted some “coffee money”, but Fr. Nestor said No. After dinner at INUKA, I settled into my room in the apartment that Hope for Tanzania built. The mattress is a little hard so we will see how this goes. The American style toilet and functional shower seem to work fine. I will attend two Masses tomorrow in Swahili.

**Reflection:** I think that the national symbol of Tanzania must be the speed bump as I have travelled to many countries, but I never seen them used this much. In this chaotic road environment, drivers seem to use a system of flashing headlights, turn signals, and horns to communicate their intentions with each other. Sometimes the message is “get out of my way, I am coming through on your lane!”

**Day 8: Sunday, July 13 [Celebration]** - Blessings to all of you on this Sunday. I started my day with Mass at St. Augustine parish in Wanging’ombe. It is located near INUKA and is the parish that Fr Nestor and Fr Brad stayed at several years ago. A truly different Mass experience with a lot of singing and dancing. Parishioners include many INUKA staff members. Fr. Nestor will soon be taking over as pastor of this parish in addition to his INUKA duties. He introduced me at the end of Mass, and I spoke briefly about Hope for Tanzania (HFT) with Fr. Nestor translating. I thanked them for a wonderful Mass and their support of INUKA.



After breakfast, we drove a short distance to the Kijombe outstation church that is part of St. Augustine. It is the same remote church that Fr Brad visited in 2022. They have been trying to build a larger church since 2019 but raising the funds has been difficult. After Fr Brad’s visit, HFT used some extra funds to donate \$10,000 to put a roof and doors on the building. As noted in my pictures, they still have a lot of work to do to finish the building. Saturday night Fr Nestor let them know that HFT was coming so there was much excitement for my visit. After Mass, I was showered with a parade of gifts, and I think I physically handled at least six live chickens. (Note: I should have gotten some pointers from Daniel before I left). Apparently, the gift giving does not count unless I touch everything. I thanked them for the special Mass experience and the joyful music they provided.





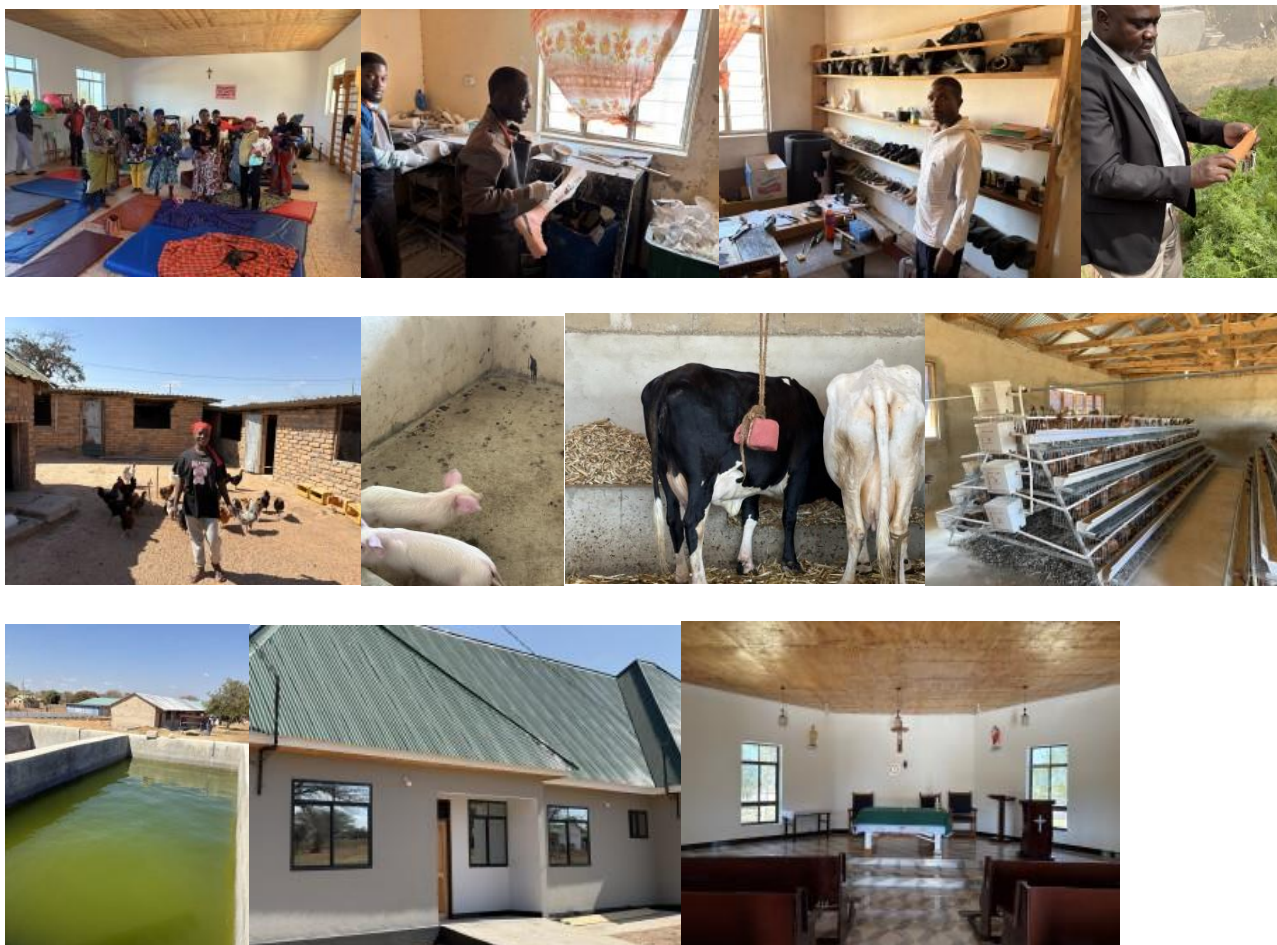
We drove back with all the chickens, eggs and other produce and dropped them off at the INUKA kitchen. The afternoon was restful and quiet as I said a rosary and got a nap in along with some reading and email work. For dinner we had (of course) one of the chickens I was given that morning. From farm to stomach in one day. What a deal!

**Reflection:** The visit to Kjombe was truly humbling and heartwarming as I thought about the story of the widow's mite. After they provided me with the gifts, I was able to speak to them and thank them for their faith and generosity. I talked about today's gospel of the Good Samaritan. I said that we are a universal Church and even though they are a long distance away they were our neighbors who needed help. It was a powerful morning, and I did my best to hold back tears of joy.

**Day 9: Monday, July 14 [Touring INUKA]** – I am getting a sense for the weather here and understand why they do not need any heat or AC. The weather is the same each day; sunny and windy with a high of 77 and a low of 55. INUKA is in the valley and this time of year the wind blows 15 to 20 mph every day. It was a beautiful day to tour INUKA's operations with Fr Nestor's admin team. Given the projects that have been completed the last four years, there is a lot to see. I started by giving some simple gifts to Fr Nestor's admin team and they were very appreciative. It was a busy patient Monday in both the outpatient clinic and the rehab center. My pictures include: 1. Fr. Nestor's office with his team. 2. Outpatient Clinic queue. 3. Musa (the hospital administrator) getting treatment for an illness in the clinic. He is Fr Nestor's #2. 4. Rehab doctor displaying an automatic lift table. 5. Mothers and children in the rehab training area. 6. Orthopedic workshop prosthetic area. 7. The master of making orthopedic shoes. 8. Fr. Nestor holding a carrot from the new greenhouse gardens. 9. The chicken lady who manages the local chicken stock. 10. The piggery area (100 pigs and growing). 11. The cows in the cow shed. 12. The chicken coop for purchased nonlocal birds. 13. The fish ponds. 14. The new staff apartments. 15. The chapel at INUKA.







After the tour and lunch, I spent some time in my apartment reviewing the material for tomorrow's INUKA board meeting. We also had a beautiful daily Mass in the chapel built with funds from HFT which had about 15 people attending. Tomorrow will be a busy day with the board meeting and a Zoom call with the U.S.

**Reflection:** I am thankful for the Hope for Tanzania donors and what has been accomplished the past four years. The INUKA team and patients are very grateful for the oasis of hope and healing that has been created here. It was helpful to walk the grounds and visit with staff on my tour.

**Day 10: Tuesday, July 15 [INUKA Board Meeting]** – Today was board meeting day at INUKA and the semi-annual meeting kicked off at 10:00am and wrapped up with a tour and late lunch around 3:30pm. It was good to meet the other board members in person. In addition to Fr. Nestor and me, the board has representatives from the Diocese of Njombe, the medical community, academia, and the Tanzanian government. Other attendees included many INUKA staff members, Dr. Ken Sanders (via Zoom) and Stephano Cataldo, a former INUKA managing director who now resides in Italy.

We had good discussions on a variety of important topics. INUKA recently went through a process to update its strategic plan for the next five years. We reviewed and approved the strategic plan along with an updated budget for the remainder of 2025. Manpower planning, acquisition and training was a key topic. We also discussed what each stakeholder was bringing to INUKA to make the facility operationally sustainable.

After the board meeting, I was able to get to daily Mass at 5:00pm at the chapel. Fr Nestor and I then had a Zoom call with Dr. Ken Sanders and Amie Garcia who represents the Catholic Medical Association's medical mission office.

We are planning to have her visit INUKA in January 2026 with the hopes of getting some medical professionals from the USA to work at INUKA on a short-term basis. That has been one of Hope for Tanzania's goals and maybe it will come to fruition in 2026.



**Reflection:** INUKA means “rise up” in Swahili. It is named after the passage in John 5:8 where Jesus tells the crippled man to rise, pick up your mat and walk. Over the past 15 years, there have been many individuals who have contributed their time and talent to facilitate INUKA's rise to become a well-known hospital. Several of these supporters and contributors were present at the board meeting on Tuesday. They have truly given hope to the disabled men, women, and children of the southern highlands.

**Day 11: Wednesday, July 16 [Meeting the Bishop]** – Today, we met with Bishop Eusebio Kyando in Njombe to discuss INUKA and meet the young priest he is sending to Benedictine University in Lisle. The drive was 1.5 hours and Fr. Nestor got waved over for speeding shortly after we pulled onto the main highway. He was soon laughing with the cops at the end of the encounter, and he did not end up paying for a ticket. Fr. Nestor did not seem concerned when we left INUKA a little late and then dealt with the traffic stop. Our appointment was at 10:00am; we arrived at 10:30am; and we got in to visit the bishop at 11:00am. Apparently, the African Way!

While waiting, we toured the cathedral, a Marian shrine next door, and stopped at the tomb of Bishop Maluma. Our meeting with Bishop Kyando went well as we discussed the good work at INUKA, Fr. Eddie's assignment in the USA, and Bishop Kyando's university work as an accounting professor. In fact, he is a CPA, so he speaks the language of finance. He invited us to stay for lunch, and we got some pictures afterward. In the picture, the young man on my right is Fr. Edtraud Haule (Fr. Eddie) who will be traveling back with me to the university. He has only been to Kenya and Malawi so this will be his first long distance flight and Bishop Kyando thought he should travel with me.



After lunch, we toured the local markets near the cathedral (see various pictures) while waiting for Fr Nestor's car. Some guys picked up the SUV and took it for an oil change while we were meeting. Fr. Nestor is always multi-tasking! We got back around 3:30pm and then I had a nap plus Mass. Tomorrow, I will have meetings with Fr Nestor's team on a variety of topics.





**Reflection:** Bishop Maluma and the Diocese of Njombe founded the INUKA Rehabilitation Hospital in 2010. He had great love for children and adults with disabilities, and he wanted a place where they could receive treatment. Bishop Maluma was the bishop who ordained Fr. Nestor and appointed him to INUKA. In March 2021, he died in a car crash soon after Fr. Nestor started at INUKA.

**Day 12: Thursday, July 17 [INUKA Farewell]** - My final day at INUKA was filled with staff meetings and a farewell. We first met with Andrew Niki to discuss community outreach efforts to educate the villages on INUKA's services. At the invitation of a parish priest, an INUKA team will attend Mass at an outstation church and then visit with disabled individuals in the village. They are encouraged to come to INUKA for treatment. In addition, the INUKA team will attend special conferences during the year to promote INUKA's services to a broader audience. Andrew helps to document these trips for INUKA and Hope for Tanzania.

I also discussed INUKA's operations with Musa Christian Mgaya who is Fr. Nestor's key lieutenant. We spoke primarily about people issues and the challenge of getting and retaining talent. I then met with Musa and the accounting team (Lina and Nora) to discuss the financial results. We talked about the need to track financial performance for each main operating segment.

At the end of my meetings, I was brought into a larger room with many of the staff present where they gave me two shirts as a farewell gift. They are so thankful for HFT and its efforts to help them achieve INUKA's mission. Soon after, I had my final Mass in the chapel with more wonderful singing at the end of Mass. They moved our flight up one hour to 10:00am, so we now will depart at 5:30am tomorrow morning for Iringa. Flight schedules seem like suggestions in Tanzania.



**Reflection:** We all seek to do God's will each day. At INUKA, you sense that the staff are given the opportunity to be God's healing hands each day. Down the hall from my meeting room, I saw a queueing area for a large group of mothers with their young children. Periodically, INUKA staff conduct Club Feet evaluations and assessments of the children. Loving your neighbor is giving a mother hope that her child will be able to walk properly again.

**Day 13 & 14: Friday, July 18 & Saturday, July 19 [Beginning the Journey Home / Dar es Salaam]** - Friday, I started my journey home. We drove 3.5 hours to Iringa for our flight. First, Fr. Nestor stopped for gas around 6:00am. You cannot pump your own fuel in Tanzania and the one attendant was busy. We left after a few minutes and went across the street to another station. There was no attendant in sight, so it was back to the first spot where we finally got the diesel fuel for his SUV.

There is so much truck traffic that driving is an adventure on the two-lane roads. They also have police checkpoints. On our travels we have now been stopped 3 times (including the speeding incident) and they are always looking for “coffee” money. The truckers seem to get written up for various violations. There is no tracking for driver’s license purposes, so it is all about money. We met Fr Nestor’s brother in Iringa (Averest) who will take his car to park it at the nearby college. They said that airport parking was at your own risk, so Fr. Nestor opted for the safer choice.



The flight was fine, and I enjoyed a relaxing day at the same hotel near the Dar es Salaam airport watching the British Open. There were two short power outages in my room which is probably not unusual for Tanzania. We also experienced one outage while I was at INUKA. Fr. Nestor headed into the city to pick up Sister Beatrice and Lori Spesia coming back by boat from Zanzibar. I will be joining them tomorrow to see Dar es Salaam before my flight home.

My final day in Tanzania was spent touring Dar es Salaam with Fr Nestor, Sister Beatrice and Lori Spesia. They picked me up at the hotel and we headed downtown. Of course, we again had a brief police checkpoint stop (#4 of the trip) but no “coffee money” was exchanged. After seeing the port and the grand offices of the port authority, we stopped at St Joseph Cathedral. It was during Mass, so our tour of the inside was limited but they also had some shrines outside. We then drove by Sr. Beatrice’s office at the National Hospital. She did not dare go inside as she would have been mobbed by patients.



We next went across the bridge to the posh Oyster Bay Area where countries have their embassies. After going to a modern supermarket, we had lunch at the Sea Cliffs hotel on the Indian Ocean. We then had time to visit a traditional craft market before heading to the airport. Traffic on the roads leading to the airport was so bad that street vendors would walk on the highway selling goods. Once Fr. Eddie arrived at the airport, goodbyes were said



and then I helped Fr. Eddie with his check in and introduced him to the airline lounge where he blessed some sacramentals for a worker there. The journey home was about to begin.



**Reflection:** The stories of generosity are all around us, but we seldom hear them. Lori Spesia was the person who originally connected Fr. Brad with Fr. Nestor in 2017 or 2018 when he was a lonely priest studying at Benedictine University. She is a widow who resides in Joliet and was visiting Sr. Beatrice after spending time at the school that her family built in Malawi. I believe that the school was started over 15 years ago and she has taken many friends and family, including all of her children and grandchildren, to Malawi to work on the school and to see the country. She still makes annual trips at 81 years of age!

**Day 14 & 15: Saturday, July 19 and Sunday, July 20 [The Journey Home]** – Our first flight departed Dar es Salaam at 6:45pm with the goal of getting to ORD after about 22 hours of travel. Our first flight (2.5 hours) was slightly delayed in landing which tightened up an already tight transfer window in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The plane parked on the tarmac, and I got on the first bus with the intent of getting to the terminal to wait for Fr. Eddie. Unfortunately, the first bus would not move, and the second bus was quickly filling up. Just as I started to get off and head for the second bus, Fr. Eddie was standing in front of me. We had found each other before squeezing on to bus #2.

Our transfer adventure was just beginning as we had to go through multiple security checks of both our luggage and passports. We just made the flight with 5 to 10 minutes to spare and Fr. Eddie's luggage made it to Chicago as well. Our flight stopped in Rome to get fuel and change the crew and then continued to Chicago. We arrived at ORD on time (around 8:00am) and the lines to get through passport control were short. Unfortunately, Fr. Eddie's documentation had an issue so he was held in a special immigration room until a supervisor determined that he could leave. That issue was resolved around 10:30am and we finally made it home around 11:30am. Later that Sunday, we had guests at our house and Fr. Eddie realized that he had entered the land of the giants! Welcome home (Karibu nyumbani)!



**Final Word:** From the safari to the oasis that is INUKA, it was a journey that I will always remember. Encountering people along the way gave me peace and comfort that Christ's love is alive and well in our universal Church and the world. The gratitude, love and warmth shown by everyone made me feel at home and I was impressed by the INUKA team and everything that they do each day. Goodbye (Kwaheri) Tanzania, until we meet again!