

Similar and different from the stone abbeys of Europe

Christina S.N. Lewis | Jan. 2, 2011

The convent of [the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary](#) [1] is both similar and very different from the stone abbeys of Europe. The sisters have a large compound in Ongata Rongai. It is, like the abbeys of old, an oasis of greenery and calm, that seems removed from its surroundings a bustling suburb, located just outside the Nairobi border.

But the compound is intimately connected with the local populace, not only that but its poorest and most vulnerable. There is a maternity hospital, a senior citizen's home, a nursery, elementary and secondary school, as well as classrooms for vocational and community outreach training, an acre of vegetable garden (mostly kale, including some plants over six-feet-high) and dozens of pigs, cows, sheep, rabbits and chickens, all cared for by the sisters, novitiates and some staff.

I don't know about you, but I don't associate Catholic sisters with pig farming, yet that's what I am seeing here in Kenya. While the order's mission appears to be proselytization I did not see much evidence of that, as of yet.



In this photo,

the beautiful grounds, stands in the sheep pen. I will meet

the compound's executive director Sister Mary, later during my trip. I plan to spend a few nights at this convent as well.

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Project Africa: Exploring the growing church

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[1] http://www.livingwatersinternational.org/livingh2o.php?&page=p2_17

[2] <http://ncronline.org/node/22073>

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