Episcopal priest ‘connecting with love’ to help children

The Rev. Maureen O’ Connor of Calvary Episcopal Church in Lombard helped launch the non-profit Connect with Love to combat the living conditions of many children in Guinea, West Africa, who are homeless, hungry and uneducated, often living on the streets. The plan is to raise money to buy a home in the Conakry area, near the school, where children will be able to attend school.

O’ Connor remembers thinking she had enrolled in a class focusing on women but instead, it was named “Callings.”

The first day of class, she told the professor, the Rev. Ronald Bearcamp—whom she had later formed a ministry in Lombard—that she was in the wrong class. To which he replied, “I think you’re in the right class.”

O’ Connor decided to intern at a church, which the congregation also told her the same thing.

She was also encouraged to enter a theology competition for a scholarship—and won.

O’ Connor remembers God asking her to put an answer about her ministry in her career—and actually putting herself on the lap. That gesture would later become key to forming a new ministry.

She next attended Beaver-Seabury College to study the Episcopal religion. O’ Connor had grown up in Chicago to study the Episcopal religion. O’ Connor had grown up in Chicago to study the Episcopal religion.

O’ Connor remembers asking God “Do you want to take it a step further?”

The first day of class, she told the Rev. Maureen “Mo” John’s, Glenbard East and Downers Grove North, was working toward a degree in clinical psychology at Elmhurst College where she was required to take a class on religion.

O’ Connor remembers thinking she had enrolled in a class focused on women but instead, it was named “Callings.”

The first day of class, she told the professor, the Rev. Ronald Bearcamp—whom she had later joined in a ministry in Lombard—that she was enrolled in the wrong class but was brave enough to take the class forward.

O’ Connor said that while Calvary Episcopal is not directly involved with Connect with Love, the congregation plans to raise funds through a church-wide Lenten project.

The bottom line for O’ Connor is that while feeding, clothing and educating Guinea’s indigent children is the most urgent focus, through Connect with Love, “I want them to feel loved.”

At the same time, “I want to go a step further, I want them to feel their worth,” she concluded.

For more information or to make a donation, contact O’ Connor at 630-623-8899 or 630-291-8691.