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A Friendship up-country Safari

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Our four-day trip up-country was to the heart of the Aberdare Ranges in Murang'a County, Central Kenya, at a

family home surrounded by acres of lush green tea, one of Kenya's finest exports. The rainy weather provided a perfect setting for fire talks and adventurous excursions for this group of young professional ladies coming from Roshani Centre in Nairobi.

Themed *Friendship*, the safari was crafted to blend in friendship in a family atmosphere, friendship amongst ourselves and friendship with the lonely and aged people in the community. Following Pope Francis' encouragement to spread Jesus' friendship throughout the world wherever we are, we set out first and foremost to actively participate in daily Mass at the local parish. At home we cheerfully served one another, participating in preparing the meals, cleaning the house, setting the fire place, brewing cups of tea to keep the cold away, and praying the Holy Rosary together. We

even had a hilarious competition making perfectly shaped *chapatis* (unleavened flat bread)!

The climax of our trip was visits to the neighborhood homes of elderly women who had lost many friends and family over the years and hardly got any visitors. Armed with smiles, *mandazi* (fried pastry cakes) that we had prepared for them that morning and umbrellas for support, we withstood the heavy rains and steep slopes to achieve the goal we had set. Though we were a sight to behold (muddy and wet), our guide told all who stopped to stare at us that we were ‘soldiers of Christ’! The warm handshakes and embraces we received from the grannies undoubtedly made the visits the highlight of our up-countrysafari!

Back in Nairobi we are looking forward to our next visit to see how our new friends are doing; actually

very soon, when the Mass of St. Josemaria will be celebrated a second time in Murang'a this June.

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