



Tuwan Bowden in Fr. Scott Garrett's plane, Levelock, Alaska

Priest Soars Above Adversity with Extension's Help

Eight-year-old Tuwan had just been adopted by the Bowden family, and I was flying to the town of Levelock, Alaska, a community of 42 households that's part of the St. Paul Mission, to meet him.

I made it to the landing strip, and I could see Tuwan and his dad waiting for me in the cold as I flew overhead. But the winds were blowing at 30 m.p.h., and it would not have been safe to try to land the plane on the small dirt strip. I had to leave them there.

I continued on to King Salmon, a town about 30 miles away. Like Levelock, it sits just upwater from Kvichak Bay.

The next morning, I got ready to leave King Salmon. But as I was taking off, the plane's engine failed about three-quarters of the way down the runway. Had I been taking off from the shorter runway in Levelock, I would have crashed into a bank of trees.

The wind that would not let me land saved me. It was God's hand at work.

A generous grant from Catholic Church Extension Society helped fix my plane, and I was able to continue my ministry — and finally meet Tuwan. ■

Fr. Scott Garrett is a missionary priest in the Archdiocese of Anchorage in Alaska.

Do you have a story or experience with Catholic Extension that you would like to share?

We'd love to hear from you.

Contact us at magazine@catholicextension.org.