



Guatemalans call the villages in rural Solola “abandoned communities”. Many people have never been seen by a doctor before.

Photo credit: Ryan Patterson

SILENT CHILDREN’S MISSION

NEWSLETTER

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Dr. Simone’s Letter



Dr. Simone visited some of the children supported by Silent Children’s Mission in Liberia, Africa this past December

Dear SCM benefactors,
As we journey through lent let us remember the poorest of the poor!

Liberia Update:

It was a blessing to visit “God Knows” and the other children cared for by Sr. Agnes Seckeh of the Sisters of the Holy Family Congregation in Liberia. SCM has initiated a project with Sr. Agnes in order to support disadvantaged children from slum communities in Monrovia – most of whom live in deplorable conditions. SCM helps by providing school fees, school supplies and uniforms to families who have a difficult time providing daily meals for their children and where most of the population struggles with unemployment and hunger. Nine year old Henry has never sat in a classroom before but thanks to SCM he now has an opportunity for an education!

Please continue to support Silent Children in Liberia and in other countries where we serve.

God bless you and thank you!
Joan and Andrew Simone

Spiritual Director's Letter



Fr. Michael at Cadaninos home for disabled children

The heart of the Christian mystery of Easter is a message of new life coming forth out of a surprising means: the cross. It is a story of unexpected and even paradoxical transformation. It is the story of how love transformed an instrument of torture into an instrument of salvation.

God has surprised me this lent as He has shown me His love in unexpected ways. On Ash Wednesday we visited Cadaninos, a wonderful facility for the mentally handicapped in Guatemala City, where we celebrated the Eucharist and distribution of ashes with the beneficiaries of SCM and CFFC. At communion time I went around and offered the Eucharist to the children as I usually do. This is sometimes challenging because some of the children forget and are not really sure how to receive. As I offered the Eucharist to a young girl, she unexpectedly reached out her hand and took the communion from me. She kissed the Eucharist reverently, smiled and then consumed it. Her gentle and loving gesture moved us and reminded us of how we are all beloved in God's eyes.

The poor possess a joy that is pure and highly contagious, for it doesn't come from material comfort and prosperity but from the very gift of being alive each day.

Fr. Richard Ho Lung MOP

The following day SCM went with Maria, a beautiful Secular Franciscan woman, to visit a mother and daughter who are both afflicted with the same severe mental illness. This mother and young daughter had been living in squalid conditions, their illness untreated and rejected by their neighbours for many reasons including the smell coming from their home – until Maria decided to help them. During our visit the young girl announced that she would like to receive her first Holy Communion. What surprised us the most was her suggestion that it be on October 4th and when questioned she did not know why this was the date she wanted. As a first order Franciscan standing beside two other secular order Franciscans; we were all surprised because this is the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi!

These little glimpses of God's surprising presence delighted us and serve as a nice preparation to experience the unexpected life that Easter brings to each of us!

All life has inestimable value even the weakest and the most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect.

Pope Francis

Wishing you a blessed and holy Easter,
Fr. Michael Della Penna



Blessing a child at Guatemala Extraordinary Daycare for mothers who work in the Guatemala City dump

Executive Director's Letter



It is with great joy that I share some of the most memorable moments from my recent visit to Guatemala. SCM has been assisting Milca and her children for several years through the great work of Fr. Michael and especially Alejandra from Si a la Vida. Milca and her children are doing well but she still struggles to make enough money to support her family as a hairdresser – however she is making progress. On Feb 11th the whole family was baptized and received first Holy Communion and it was a joyful day for all of us!



The bakery project at Valle de Los Angeles in Guatemala is producing some very fine bakers! SCM has been supporting this project at the school in order to help children from very poor families to develop skills in order to be self-sufficient. The girls are very proud of their accomplishments which is evident by their smiles and giggles as we “taste tested” their delicious breads and cookies! The Valle de Los Angeles hopes to sell these products in order to support the school’s programs.



Women and children waiting for medical care in Solola, Guatemala

My recent medical mission trip to Guatemala with my Humber students from the nursing and paramedic programs was both helpful for the people we were serving but also a humbling learning experience for my students. Sometimes learning there is nothing anyone can do to help is heartbreaking but it motivates us to do something and changes how we see the world. The following are quotes from my student’s reflections that they have agreed to share:

“Nothing could truly prepare me for the reality of seeing the children covered in dirt, complaining of headaches (dehydration), stomach pains (hunger) and itching eyes (smoke and dryness). Children of all ages were playing on the streets without any adults around and/or were working to help out their family. It was such a contrast to the children in my neighbourhood who are constantly supervised and enrolled in extra-curricular activities or sports.” *Marni Priffer, Bachelor of Nursing*

“I learned that healthcare is not as universal as it should be. I am coming to understand that poverty, unequal distribution of resources, and the lack of accessibility is not only the responsibility of the country experiencing it... I recognize that Canada’s healthcare system still needs further improvement and development in order to provide the best care, but the magnitude of injustice and disservice that people in Guatemala experience is incomparable to the progressive needs of the Canadian health care system. Poverty, as it affects accessibility to basic human rights such as food, shelter, healthcare, is a worldwide issue that requires a global effort. I, personally, am beginning to re-evaluate my needs and necessities, as well as my privileges, so that I may help the movement towards a just distribution of resources. As Gandhi has shared, “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed.”

Priscilla Jaro, Practical Nursing

May God bless you all for your love for the poor and your support for SCM. Have a blessed Easter.

Peace,
Frankie Burg-Feret

“Children embody all that is good and pure in the world, they love unconditionally, and they are tomorrow’s hope for the world.”

Ioana Golubovici, Bachelor of Nursing



ZAMBIA UPDATE:

A recent email from Sr. Josephine, a Franciscan Sister of Assisi from Chililimbombwe in the copperbelt of Zambia:

“Thank you so much Frankie. We pray the rosary everyday for our donors. Zambia has been hit in a very bad way. There is nothing the government can do when it comes to copper prices. Imagine 5000 miners have already lost jobs. When they close some mines those who are contracted with the mines have been stopped to supply anything. So many companies have lost jobs. Some three miners committed suicide. We need your prayers as we go into farming. The maize seeds are too expensive to look at. You don’t know what you have done.”



HAITI UPDATE:

Silent Children’s Mission supports children in Haiti to receive an education. We are also supporting a hygiene centre and an agricultural project in order to help the people to be more self-sufficient in the rural area of Cerca Carvajal. You may remember Tanya – the girl Gerry Brinston (SCM board member) found chained to a bed. She is doing better now – her mother has found work as a house cleaner and the two are very grateful for all the assistance they have received from SCM through Gerry and his team in Haiti.

“Poverty that is learned with the humble, the poor, the sick and all those who are on the existential peripheries of life. Theoretical poverty is of no use to us. Poverty is learned by touching the flesh of the poor Christ, in the humble, the poor, the sick, in children.” *Pope Francis*

How You Can Help

- You can make a donation by sending a cheque written to: **Silent Children’s Mission** and mail it to: RR#1 16060 Concession 8, Schomberg, ON L0G 1T0 Canada (Make sure to include your mailing address for a tax receipt.)
- You can also donate online through **Canada Helps** or we gladly accept post-dated cheques.
- Question? Write to us at silentchildrenca@yahoo.com
- Look for us online at www.silentchildrensmmission.com
- If you would like a speaker at your school/function about the work of SCM call: 416-418-0314