



SILENT CHILDREN'S MISSION

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2016

ISSUE NO. 15

Shree

Calcutta, 9/4/81.

Dear Co-Workers - Joan + Andrew
 Thank you for your beautiful letter - God love you for what you for Jesus in the distressing disguise of the Poor -
 Our people in Tanzania & Ethiopia are hungry. So please get together with Fr. West and see how fast you can get the food to our Sisters for our Poor. To send money is not good as there is no food to buy - But in your country there is plenty - please look very close with Fr. West and see how soon the food could come to the Sisters -
 Wheat, Maize, Milk, biscuits or any other food that we can get in big quantities. Help Father. as this is a beautiful work for all the Co-workers.
 I am praying for you all

God bless you
 M Teresa

Dear SCM benefactors,

On the left is the first letter that Mother Teresa wrote to Joan and Andrew Simone in 1981 asking them to send food for the poor who were experiencing drought and famine. As co-workers for the Missionaries of Charity they felt called to dedicate their lives to helping the poorest of the poor. They began CFFC with the personal blessing of Mother Teresa and their correspondence continued for many years. The mission has grown; and it now includes Silent Children's Mission; both charities guided by the charism of Mother Teresa. It is fitting that we celebrate the canonization of St. Teresa of Kolkata and we dedicate this issue of the newsletter to the woman who inspired so many of us!



Malawi 2016 - 70 acres of maize, bananas, vegetables, pigs, chickens - employing those with no work and helping poor children go to school! This mission is sharing the love the Simones began!

Spiritual Director's Letter



Fr. Michael blessing the children who live in poverty close to the Poor Clare convent – SCM helps with school fees and food – Zambia Aug 2016

Joyful Suffering

While in Africa this summer I once again found myself asking how it is that the poor are so joyful when they suffer so much and have so little? How were these children able to laugh and smile and be filled with such joy when they are living in such utter destitution? While the term “joyful suffering” may seem to be an oxymoron, the great saints like St. Francis, St. Ignatius and Mother Teresa, understood that these two seemingly opposite realities are really more like two sides of the same coin.

There is a famous story told of St. Francis of Assisi when he was traveling with Br. Leo one very cold winter. Francis, perhaps knowing what Leo was feeling as they walked shivering and trudging through the blistering cold, decided to explain to him what perfect joy consisted of, or more accurately what perfect joy was not. He said that perfect joy did not consist in all the brothers giving a great display of holiness and edification; nor was perfect joy to be found in performing miraculous deeds like curing the lame so that they could walk, or giving sight to the blind, or making the deaf hear, or returning speech to the dumb, or even chasing away demons. He went on to say it was not even in raising the dead after four days. After many more such examples, Br. Leo finally asked St. Francis, in what did perfect joy reside?

We remember Francis describing a miserable scene of them knocking on the door of a fire and not only being rejected, called a liar and left out in the rain while being hungry, muddy and cold, but even being driven out with “oaths and blows”, as “vile impostors” and “robbers”. He concluded saying **“If we accept all this with patience, with joy, and charity, O Brother Leo, write that this indeed is perfect joy.”**

This puzzling Franciscan parable about finding joy in suffering is meant to disturb us and even turn our idea of suffering inside out. It challenges our very understanding

of happiness, which is often defined in materialistic or hedonistic terms, and so measured by the yardstick of consumerism where “more is better.” The saints however reveal the good news that our happiness does not depend on any exterior circumstance but rather is an “inside job”, rooted in our relationship with God.

St. Ignatius of Loyola reasoned that since we are ultimately created for God alone, in whom all our happiness and salvation lie, we should have a holy indifference to all other created things which are only meant to be used to help us reach our ultimate end. We should therefore, not desire health over sickness, riches over poverty, honour over dishonour, long life over a short life, but instead desire and choose only what is most conducive for us to the ultimate end for which we were created. In this way, holy indifference or detachment is a total openness to the will of God in one’s life that leads to joy and a peace of mind despite our circumstance.

Mother Teresa experienced her own sufferings, physical and spiritual, to be moments of grace and a means to understanding how much the Lord truly loved her. She often referred to these times in her life as moments of the light of love, purifying her of her doubts and her little lessons of trust in God and not herself.

As Mother Teresa once said, “Suffering will never be completely absent from our lives. So don’t be afraid of suffering. Your suffering is a great means of love, if you make use of it, especially if you offer it for peace in the world. Suffering in and of itself is useless, but suffering that is shared with the passion of Christ is a wonderful gift and a sign of love.”

These saints invite us to see suffering as coming from an incredibly generous God who shares His suffering and pain as a means of greater union with Him. Mother Teresa believed that while God is a God of love and does not want His children to suffer, our acceptance of pain can be redemptive for us and for others. “If we pray, it will be easy to accept suffering. Suffering is sharing in the passion of Christ. Suffering is the kiss of Jesus, a sign that you have come so close to Jesus on the cross that He can kiss you.”

This image drew me back to the perfectly joyful children in Africa who I could imagine were being consoled with a shower of heavenly and holy kisses from Jesus.

Peace,

Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm



Executive Director's Update



Bertha in 2014 outside of her home – Ludzi Malawi



Bertha and Frankie August 2016 – visit to Mkanda Malawi

MALAWI UPDATE: In 2014, I first met Bertha and was shocked to see this friendly, smiling young child in such a desperate situation. She was suffering from advanced protein deficiency - also called kwashiorkor – manifested by growth stunting, wasting, edema and discoloured hair and skin. This severe form of malnutrition is unheard of in Canada but in Malawi it is not uncommon to see children suffering in the rural villages. Prevention would require a global effort because collectively we need to address poverty and the insecure supply of food and nutrition in developing countries. Through their different ministries and commitment to the poor, the Sisters of Charity were able to identify this high-risk child and thanks to our SCM benefactors we can help support the Sisters to do their work. Bertha is now a healthy and happy young girl who attends school.



Many of you will remember Estere – a child Dr. Simone found hungry, ill, orphaned and severely malnourished many years ago. He asked me to visit her on my first trip to Malawi (left, in the yellow dress, 2004) and I have been in contact with her ever since with the help of Sr. Bernadette Densani. Stricken with HIV AIDS, Estere has not had an easy life. She is severely growth stunted from previous chronic malnutrition and she finds it difficult to keep up in school. However, today (right, with Sr. Bernadette, Aug 2016) she is in her early 20s, and is hopeful for her future as SCM continues to support her as she begins to learn to sew. She shared that she would like to be able to support herself and her older sister by learning a skill that could find her a job. Please keep Estere in your prayers for her success.



LIBERIA UPDATE:

Fr. Samuel continues to send us updates and photos of the school construction in Monrovia. This school is called Catholic Queen of Peace School and will assist up to 300 children in his poor parish, especially orphans of the ebola virus, refugees and the physically challenged. Thank you to all the benefactors who responded to our plea for assistance in the summer newsletter. If you would like to make a special contribution to this project please indicate that to us in your correspondence. Fr. Samuel sends greetings and grateful thanks for the contributions!



Children saying grace before their meal



Feeding program for children run by Sr. Josephine Mulenga and the Franciscan Sisters of Assisi in Chililimbwe, Zambia. SCM supports these projects for the poor.

ZAMBIA UPDATE: I cannot express the joy I felt when we visited the many children SCM assists on our recent trip to Malawi and Zambia! Tears came to my eyes when I was able to meet Carol, a girl of 15, who after losing her parents, was being forced to marry a 60-year-old man whose wife had died of AIDS. She went to the Poor Clare sisters for help and because SCM supports them with financial aid, they could help her. They quickly found that she had never had the opportunity to attend school and she was embarrassed that she could not read like the children younger than her. In less than two years she is learning at a grade six level and safe from being married at an early age. The Poor Clare sisters in Lusaka, Zambia have embraced our mission and pray and fast on the eighth of each month with us. Please join us with your prayers!

With the same spirit that inspired Mother Teresa, SCM is able to bring hope to the poorest of the poor. Please help us to continue to assist Bertha, Estere, Carol and many other children like her.

Peace,

Frankie Burg-Feret

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 via **Canada Helps** or we gladly accept post-dated cheques or e-transfers.
- Question? Write to us at silentchildrenca@yahoo.com
- Look for us online at www.silentchildrensmisson.com
- If you would like a speaker at your school/function or have a question, call: 416-418-0314