

Margaret and her children two weeks before her death by HIV AIDS.



# SILENT CHILDREN'S MISSION

## NEWSLETTER

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Chipiliro

Dear SCM benefactors,

It's been ten years since I had the privilege to meet this quiet, gentle boy whose name was Chipiliro (left) in Guilleme, Malawi. He was eight or nine years old but the size of a five year old due to severe malnutrition. He was an orphan and his grandmother, who was his only caregiver, was an alcoholic. Just before I arrived in 2007, Chipiliro became very ill and had no one to care for him. Demonstrating incredible resilience he managed to drag himself to St. Joseph's Rural Hospital run by the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa. It was here he found the love and care that he desperately needed. He had severe malaria and he suffered from HIV AIDS most likely through mother-to-child transmission. I remember I wanted to take him home but I knew it would be impossible to bring a very ill child with no birth certificate home to Canada. Two months after I returned home, he succumbed to his illness and when I learned of his death I cried.

It was that same visit ten years ago when I met Margaret, Jowana, and her other children (see photo above). Sr. Agnes brought me to a village not far from the convent to visit the sick. It was in this village that I met an agogo (Chichewa for grandmother). She was holding her granddaughter Jowana who is seen in Margaret's arms in the picture. I was told Jowana's mother was in the nearby hut and (cont. page 3)

## Spiritual Director's Letter



Fr. Michael in Haiti in December 2013

### Clothing the Naked

We are confronted with a surprising twist on the judgment scene in Matthew 25 that challenges us to re-evaluate how we live out our faith. We are told that we are not judged by what we do wrong but rather by what we do not do, namely our sins of omission: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup>I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

SCM not only seeks to facilitate all of the above but in the spirit of Pope Francis, this act of charity has a particularly personal benefit for each of us, which the Parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee make evident. In this parable, the humble tax collector is contrasted to the self-righteous Pharisee, who in coming before God, boasts of all of his good deeds. In truth however, he does not really encounter God but rather in his own self-sufficiency, merely tells God about himself, and in thinking he is praising God, really only praises himself.

Pope Benedict points out that the prayer of the tax collector and the Pharisee demonstrate the *"two ways of relating to God and to oneself. The Pharisee does not really look at God at all, but only at himself; he does not really need God, because he does*

*everything right by himself. He has no real relation to God, who is ultimately superfluous - what he does himself is enough. Man makes himself righteous. The tax collector, by contrast, sees himself in the light of God. He has looked toward God, and in the process his eyes have been opened to see himself. So he knows that he needs God and that he lives by God's goodness, which he cannot force God to give him and which he cannot procure for himself. He knows that he needs mercy and so he will learn from God's mercy to become merciful himself, and thereby to become like God. He draws life from being-in-relation, from receiving all as gift; he will always need the gift of goodness, of forgiveness, but in receiving it he will always learn to pass the gift on to others. The grace for which he prays does not dispense him from ethics. It is what makes him truly good in the first place. He needs God, and because he recognizes that, he begins through God's goodness to become good himself."*

Our prayer and actions therefore needs to imitate the tax collector who in coming naked before God, embraces his own poverty and acknowledges his dependence and need of God. We see in it a model of prayer as the journey of purification in which we are called to open our hearts to God and expose them as they are, in all their nakedness and poverty, making ourselves vulnerable and dependent in a dialogue of love with our creator, in order to be totally possessed and filled by divine love. This emptying of ourselves purifies and cleanses us so that God himself can clothe us, just as the Father clothes the nakedness of the prodigal son with the "best" robe.

Ironically, in our mission of encountering and clothing the poor and the naked, we ourselves can experience the depths of our own poverty, and be emptied in order to be filled with the deepest communion of love from the one true living God. In this way, Pope Francis teaches us that being a poor church for the poor, is ultimately our way not so much to evangelize the poor, but to be evangelized by them. In seeking to alleviate the poverty of women and children, SCM offers us the benefit of not only materially helping the poor and reminding them that God loves them but helps restore dignity to both the material and spiritual poverty we all suffer, helping us both to be clothed with the love of God.

Peace,  
Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm

## Executive Director's Update

that she was in the final days of her life, she was dying of AIDS. Her husband had long since abandoned her and her five children. I examined Jowana and found her very ill. She was maybe three years old but small for her age. I recognized protein deficiency and she was severely dehydrated. Her agogo was encouraging her to eat nsima, a thick cornmeal - the main staple in Malawi. Jowana was refusing this nutrient poor food and the look on her agogo's face was one of despair. I wanted to help them but knew I couldn't because my resources were limited, however, I asked Margaret if I could take a picture of her and her children. I told her that I would send the photograph to her children so they would always remember her. She was happy with this small gesture but I knew it was not enough.

I believe Chipiliro, Margaret and Jowana lived in Calvary with Jesus during their short lives, sharing in His suffering for a reason I cannot explain. However, Chipiliro's strength and resilience and Margaret's love for her children has inspired me not to give up on all the thousands of children SCM has helped.

After ten years, the reality is that children are still dying every day from malnutrition, malaria and HIV AIDS – Chipiliro, Jowana and Margaret put a face to this reality.

The projects SCM support such as feeding programs, school fees, health care, and self-sufficiency projects are making a difference and the priests and nuns who have dedicated their lives to helping the poor need our support to continue the work God has given them.

Recently, one of our benefactors who I have never met, sent us a large donation and an attached note expressing her desire to help in another way but couldn't. Instead, she shared her generous tax return! She was the same benefactor who previously sent me a note with wonderful words of encouragement. That note remains on my bulletin board right above my desk and many times it provides me with the inspiration I need when I am discouraged. I want her to know and all our benefactors that we are working together as a team! We are all called to take different roles – mine is to direct this charity, others to pray, others to encourage, and others to share in a monetary way. As St. Teresa of Calcutta says: "I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things."

Peace,  
Frankie



### LIBERIA UPDATE:

Report from Sr. Agnes Seckeh, Sisters of the Holy Family, Monrovia

Annie was born in Bong County, Central Liberia to very poor parents where she lived till 2012. We do not know the names of her parents nor her birthdate. Annie was brought to Matadi, Monrovia to live with a lady called Korpor, as an opportunity to attain a "quality education". Since Annie arrived she has never known the classroom. With this situation, one of the Salesian priests decided to help her about a year ago. While Annie was still in school, Korpor decided to send her back to the village where she came from. Because of the assistance we receive from Silent Children's Mission we were able to quickly intervene in order for Annie to continue her education. Now she is with the grandmother of God Knows who is also supported by SCM. Thank you for your support!

### TANZANIA UPDATE: Report from Fr. Sospeter Lyela

Praise be the Lord Jesus Christ! The following is the story of James that I wish you would share with your benefactors: James started pre form one at St. Joseph seminary, which belongs to Sumbawanga Diocese. His family is extremely poor to the extent that they cannot afford to run James' school life; this is due to the fact that James is an orphan. Because of fund support obtained from Silent Children's Mission, since 2010 James has succeeded to obtain ordinary level education that is from pre-form one up to form four. He passed the form four National examination with division one. In 2017 James is expected to complete form six/advanced level studies.

All these studies of James have been positively supported by SCM simply because the donation provided by them to James were and are used to pay for his education needs. James is a very bright person who is not only intelligent but also diligent. Had it been that up to this time is not supported by your charitable organization there would be no good future for him. May the Almighty God bless you.



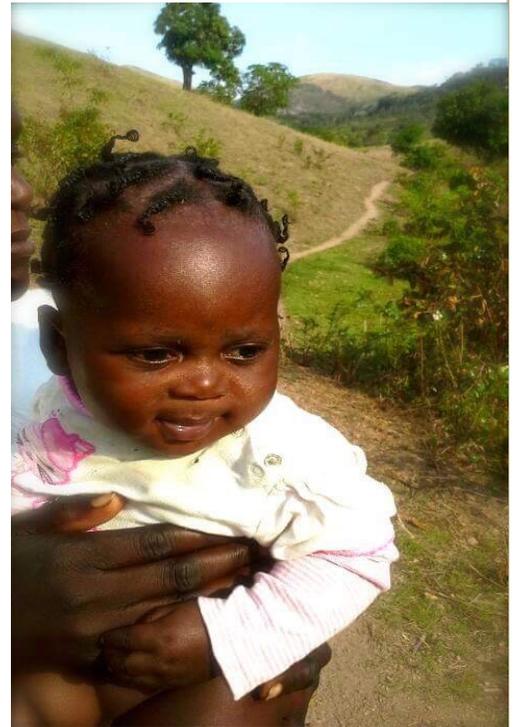
**ZAMBIA UPDATE:** from Sr. Josephine Mulenga in Chililabombwe  
The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi in Zambia have a longstanding history of successful intervention in the running of schools, institutions for disabled persons, health centres and other skills training institutions, including support for home based care providers looking after chronically ill persons affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. So we have a strong commitment to the causes of the poor and the marginalised. We are the only community of religious sisters operating in Chililabombwe and the two large parishes of Lubengele and Kamenza. Lubengele parish has a population of 7000 Catholics while Kamenza has 600. Lubengele is renowned for its 'PPZ' compound (Poor People of Zambia compound), whose inhabitants are extremely poor, live in uninhabitable homes and are supported by the parishioners through monthly contributions of mealie meal and other forms of support like SCM.

The major problems faced by the community of Chililabombwe which the sisters try to address are those confronted by destitute children, orphans, child trafficking, early marriages, single mothers and HIV/AIDS patients. Coping with such enormous challenges has been the main pre-occupation of the only community of religious sisters in the area. (photo left, the children saying grace before meals at the nursery school run by the sisters)

**HAITI UPDATE:** from Gerry Brinston in Cerca Carvajal

This is the child who was treated with the antifungal cream donated by Silent Children's Mission. As you can see the fungus infection is completely gone. Thank you so much for providing the ability to care for these children!

\*Please pray for us as SCM travels to Haiti in August. We will be visiting two missions in Cerca Carvajal as well as Mother Teresa's Home for Malnourished Children in Port-au-Prince.



**“Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat.” St. Teresa of Calcutta**

## 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](mailto:silentchildrenca@yahoo.com)
- Look for us online at [www.silentchildrensmmission.com](http://www.silentchildrensmmission.com)
- If you would like a speaker call Frankie Burg-Feret at: 416-418-0314