



SILENT CHILDREN'S MISSION

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2018
Issue No. 22

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**Enclosed in this newsletter:
A bookmark!**

**Handmade by the
children at Orfanato Valle
de Los Angeles in
Guatemala; in
thanksgiving for your
generosity!**



Joan and Andrew Simone

Founders of Silent Children's Mission

Dear Benefactors,

On May 11th, the board of directors for Silent Children's Mission met for our annual meeting to review our financial statements, mission and vision and plans for the future. Thank you for your continuing support for this work! Joan and Andrew Simone founded SCM and they continue to be an important part of this mission through their beautiful example of fidelity to the gospel of Jesus Christ and their supportive prayers and encouraging words. Dr. Simone recently turned 80 years old and he continues to work in his dermatology clinic and to guide the work for the poor with regular visits to the CFFC office and warehouse. Joan continues to be the glue that holds everything together; quietly and humbly working in God's vineyard, inspiring everyone she meets. In his most recent exhortation, *Gaudete et exsultate*, Pope Francis says:

"If I encounter a person sleeping outdoors on a cold night, I can view him or her as an annoyance, an idler, an obstacle in my path, a troubling sight, a problem for politicians to sort out, or even a piece of refuse cluttering a public space. Or I can respond with faith and charity, and see in this person a human being with a dignity identical to my own, a creature infinitely loved by the Father."

One of the most important lessons I have learned from the Simones, comes from their ability to see the dignity of every human person and to love them as the Father does. Fr. Michael provides a synopsis of the Pope's exhortation on the universal call to holiness in this newsletter and the Simones provide us with a living example of this holiness!

~ Frankie

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S LETTER

REEVALUATING HOLINESS: THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES, THE SAINTS AND THE POOR

Pope Francis's new exhortation called *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad) challenges Catholics to take a fresh look at our model of holiness and our call to be saints. For too many Catholics, the saints are often unreachable. They are seen as being unattainable superhuman examples, so far removed from our everyday lived experience that instead of inspiring us, they only serve to discourage us. We have placed the saints so high on a pedestal that they are not only out of reach for us but even seem out of touch with reality; as if they had lived in another world instead of here on earth and now are too far above us to relate to.

Pope Francis therefore seeks to "repose" a more accessible paradigm of holiness by first redirecting our attention to the overlooked and often hidden "middle class saints"; "our own mothers, grandmothers or other loved ones" whose lives "may not always have been perfect, yet even amid their faults and failings (have) kept moving forward and proved pleasing to the Lord."

Pope Francis takes the saints down a notch by reminding us that "Not everything a saint says is completely faithful to the Gospel; not everything he or she does is authentic or perfect." This critique is not meant to diminish the saints but rather is an attempt to restore the full picture of their integral humanity.

In doing so, the Pope hopes to fortify us in our own personal weakness, mistakes and missteps, so that we may lift up our eyes to Christ crucified, and say "Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better". Rather than being discouraged by our own imperfections, we must always look to Christ, "who loves in us."

While most of us concentrate on building our virtues and strengths, Pope Francis emphasizes that the essence of holiness is not about "swooning in mystic rapture" but rather "is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God's grace." We can encounter the grace of God powerfully in the most painful moments of despair, or when we "find ourselves completely alone and abandoned", or through the humiliation of "hitting bottom"; when we meet the real and definitive limitations of our own power and existence.

The Pope thus states that while "the primacy belongs to our relationship with God", "we cannot forget that the ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is what we have done for others." He then points to Saint Thomas Aquinas, who when asked which actions of ours are noblest and best show our love for God, unhesitatingly responded that "they are the works of mercy towards our neighbour, even more than our acts of worship."

This, in the end, is the path of spiritual wisdom proposed by the prophet Isaiah to show what is pleasing to God: "to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own kin." Pope Francis concludes by recalling St John Paul II's teaching on the importance of learning to see Jesus "especially in the faces of those with whom He himself wished to be identified" so that we may come to see "the face of God reflected in so many other faces. For in every one of our brothers and sisters, especially the least, the most vulnerable, the defenseless and those in need, God's very image is found."

Peace,
Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

LETTING THE POOREST OF THE POOR KNOW THAT SOMEONE CARES

In 2017, Silent Children's Mission provided assistance in 15 developing countries working with 38 different missionaries (31.6% are Catholic priests, 52.6% are Catholic nuns and 15.8% are laypeople dedicated to working with the poor including Secular Franciscans). SCM has been able to help hundreds of children and families this past year because of your continued prayers and financial support!

Last week I was in Guatemala for a few days and visited a family we have been assisting for a number of years and more than ever I felt challenged. It appeared that despite our efforts very little improvement was seen and I was forced to reflect on my own biases and preconceived ideas and I found myself questioning my efforts. It is not easy to help the poor. We cannot feed all the hungry, and we cannot send all the children to school, but SCM will never give up trying! I have to remind myself that it is also by our presence that we demonstrate our love.

"God has so made the world that everything we do or don't do has cosmic significance. With each new moment, we are presented with a fundamental option – to direct our acts and intentions either toward God or away from Him. To love or not to love. And our little decisions in these matters have spiritual consequence we can scarcely imagine. When we are mean, we increase the sum total of meanness in the world. When we are indifferent, the world's indifference to love spreads. But when we love, even in the littlest things, we fill the world that much more with the radiant fragrance of God." Paraphrased Karl Stern – Catholic psychoanalyst.

***"But when we love, even
in the littlest things, we
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fragrance of God."***
~Karl Stern



In this newsletter, you will find enclosed a handmade bookmark made by the children at the Orfanato Valle de Los Angeles in Guatemala! I was so happy to bring them home in my suitcase as I was eager to share them with you! Each bookmark represents the joy and gratitude that each child feels for the generous assistance you provide. Without your help – many children in the missions we serve would not have the opportunity to go to school or have a meal or see a health care provider. Thank you so much!

Also, one of our most important works at SCM is fasting and praying for the poorest of the poor. For those of you who pray with us, we have changed our day of fasting and praying to the first Friday of the month. Joining us are the Poor Clares in Lusaka, Zambia, SCO sisters in Malawi, friends in Guatemala and supporters in Canada. Please join us and if you would like a monthly reminder email – send me a message and I will add you to our list. Wishing you and your families warm, blessed, summer days!

Peace and love,
frankie

UPDATES FROM THE MISSIONS

LETTERS FROM OUR MISSIONS IN HAITI, GUATEMALA, GHANA, AND TANZANIA



SCM will be helping Teresita and her daughter Nina to have safer housing. She is presently living in the site where the 2015 mudslide killed hundreds of people.

**EL CAMPRAY,
GUATEMALA**



“This boy was struck down by a car while walking home... he was brought to me so that he could go to school since he can no longer work.”

Sr. Mary Frieda Agble
**ASHANTI REGION,
GHANA**



“We are struggling emotionally with the children in the hospital, it is overwhelming. This child is in the ward where he is left alone, no doctors will visit; he is denied medication, food, or water. To be totally alone when death comes must be one of life’s most cruel tragedies. I visit this room often to sit and pray with them, but most days it is a new face I greet.”

Gerald Brinston, SCM Board Member

CERCA CARVAJAL, HAITI

“The Buhangija Orphanage for Children with Albinism thanks SCM for the new shamba dress. God bless your family always.”

Ms. Digna Thomas
**SHINYANGA,
TANZANIA**



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **MAKE A DONATION:** By sending a *cheque* written to: **Silent Children’s Mission** and mail it to: RR#1 16060 Concession 8, Schomberg, Ontario, L0G 1T0, Canada (Make sure to include your mailing address for a tax receipt)
- **DONATE ONLINE:** via *Canada Helps* (SCM Registration #815949607RR0001) or send an *email money transfer* to silentchildrenca@yahoo.com
- **QUESTIONS?** Write to us at silentchildrenca@yahoo.com, or call us at 416-418-0314.
- **CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:** www.silentchildrensmmission.com