



SILENT CHILDREN'S MISSION

NEWSLETTER

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Dr. Simone's (Chair) Letter

Dear SCM benefactors,

At the end of his catechesis (June 2013), the Holy Father launched an appeal for the protection of children, focusing attention on the exploitation of children in domestic work, "a deplorable situation that is constantly increasing, especially in many of the poorest countries." The Pope called all people to take more effective measures against what he called "*this real plague*".

"There are millions of children," Francis said, **"mostly girls, who are victims of this hidden form of exploitation that often involves abuse, mistreatment, and discrimination. It is real slavery. ... All children should be able to play, study, pray, and grow, in their own families and in an atmosphere of harmony, love, and serenity. It is their right and our duty. A serene childhood allows children to look with confidence towards life and the future. Woe to whomever stifles within them their joyful enthusiasm of hope!"**



Joan, Trinity & Andrew in Zambia

This past June 2013, Joan and I visited Zambia in Central Africa and we were able to meet with many of the missionaries whom we work with. Some receive containers from Canadian Food for Children as well as assistance from Silent Children's Mission. Many of you remember the tragic story of Trinity's abuse but today she is doing well in school because of your help! Thank you for helping to make God's work possible!

May God bless you.
Andrew Simone MD

Spiritual Director's Letter

Dear benefactors,

"See to it that you're not suddenly saddened by the adversities of this world, for you don't know the good they bring, being ordained in the judgments of God for the everlasting joy of the elect."

St. John of the Cross on *'Afflictions'*

After a long and cold dark night, hidden deep within the interior of the small village of Panzos, a very poor rural area of Guatemala, a painful cry of an abandoned baby could be heard. The baby had been left all alone to die by his mother who ran away – we know nothing of the father.

"Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more"
Rom 5:20

The helpless cry of the four month old baby was heard as a call by another who himself had been orphaned fifty years before. The man followed the cry and found baby Oscar lying on a sack in his own feces, surrounded by flies; he was hungry, unloved and dying. In that moment Francisco made a decision that would change their lives. "It was nine at night when I found him and I picked him up and brought him into my home. My wife began to look for something for him to eat." Francisco had always longed to have a child and prayed that someday he could be a father. "Because I never had a father, I always wanted to be one." In rescuing baby Oscar, he had fulfilled his dream of fatherhood. It was not until the morning, however, that the new parents discovered that their baby was severely handicapped.

"Around 600 million people or 10% of the world's population are estimated to be disabled, and 70%-80% of these are said to reside in the world's developing countries, largely concentrated in rural areas, and often residing in poverty. Disability impacts and shifts poverty in multidimensional ways, and as a consequence, disabled people and their families are among the poorest in their communities." (UN)



Francisco and Delfinia live in a shack in extreme poverty but have in abundance the one thing baby Oscar needed most of all to survive - unconditional love. Suffering from cerebral palsy, Oscar requires constant care – he cannot perform most activities of daily living. When asked by Frankie if Oscar was a burden to him over the last nine years, Francisco's eyes sparkled as he related that Oscar is his joy and has brought "alegre" and meaning into his life. In relating how he takes Oscar to therapy three times a week, he invited us outside his hut to show us his home remedy where he proudly showed us an ingenious little seat he constructed. It is a simple sliding seat on tracks that he built for Oscar to help him develop strength in his limbs. Francisco and Delfinia's heroic dedication and love for their son can be seen in the way they hold him and care for him. It is a beautiful sign of God's love – He will never abandon us.

Peace,
Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm



Typically – they are abandoned or killed – most do not attend school and many live on the street. Unicef estimates that there are over 370,000 orphans in Guatemala – most abandoned by mothers who are too poor to keep them. Yet Guatemala is one of the most inequitable societies in Central America. When stopping at a beautiful shopping mall in Guatemala

City we found a “pet café” where you could purchase gourmet hand decorated dog cookies! Beside the Guatemala City dump where over 3000 people work scavenging for items to sell, is the city cemetery. The picture below represents the inequity which is so prevalent – the large building on the left is the tomb of a rich person and the structure on the right holds many bodies of those whose families can afford the \$20 a year to keep it there.

Executive Director’s Letter

Dear SCM benefactors,

On our visit to Panzos this past July – we were able to see families experiencing poverty and suffering that we can only imagine in North America. Oscar’s story is unique - it is uncommon to find a couple so poor and yet so willing to welcome an abandoned child into their home and dedicate so much of their time and love to him. I imagine they were like the Holy family – wasn’t Jesus born a vulnerable baby – thirsting for our love?

Unfortunately, not all children – especially those with developmental delays - are as fortunate as Oscar.



Amidst all this poverty and suffering is a bright light of hope. I was most impressed with the dedication and love demonstrated at the Valley of the Angels where our Father Michael is director. The children there have been deeply affected by the many tragedies they have had to endure in their lives. Some are orphans but most are from homes shattered by violence, neglect and abuse. The Valley of the Angels is a refuge – where their needs are met in a loving and holistic manner using the love of Jesus as their guide. The Franciscan sisters are an integral part of their lives overseeing their education; and volunteers run retreats, craft classes and plan and meet their nutritional needs as well as their physical and emotional health. Fr. Michael, like the other missionaries we work with, ensures that your donations are utilized for the poorest of the poor.

Thank you so much for your support and love.
Peace,
Frankie Burg-Feret



Let us join Pope Francis in his prayer intention:

“For those around the world who still suffer slavery and who are victims of war, human trafficking, drug running and slave labour. For the children and women who are suffering from every type of violence. May their silent scream for help be heard by a vigilant Church so that, gazing upon the crucified Christ, she may not forget the many brothers and sisters who are left at the mercy of violence. Also, for all those who find themselves in economically precarious situations, above all for the unemployed, the elderly, migrants, the homeless, prisoners, and those who experience marginalization. That the Church’s prayer and its active nearness give them comfort and assistance in hope and strength and courage in defending human dignity.”

How You Can Help

You can make a donation by sending a cheque written to “Silent Children’s Mission” and mailed to RR#1 16060 Concession 8, Schomberg, ON L0G 1T0. Make sure to include your mailing address for a tax receipt.

You can also donate online through Canada Helps.

Question? Write to us at silentchildrenca@yahoo.com

Look for us online after October 2013 at www.silentchildrenmission.com

If you would like Frankie to speak at your school/function about the poor and the work of SCM, call 416-418-0314.