



Students at Valley of the Angels, Guatemala

SILENT CHILDREN'S MISSION

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

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Dr. Simone's Letter

Dear SCM benefactors,
Pope Francis warns against the 'globalization of indifference' in his Lenten Message:

"Usually, when we are healthy and comfortable, we forget about others (something God the Father never does): we are unconcerned with their problems, their sufferings and the injustices they endure... Our heart grows cold," he said. "As long as I am relatively healthy and comfortable, I don't think about those less well off. Today, this selfish attitude of indifference has taken on global proportions, to the extent that we can speak of a globalization of indifference. It is a problem which we, as Christians, need to confront."

Thank you to all of our benefactors who have not turned an indifferent ear to the silent cry of our brothers and sisters in the world.

God bless,
Andrew Simone MD



Shoes of a child visiting the clinic in Solola Guatemala

Spiritual Director's Letter

ANGELS, SAINTS AND NURSES

"Further, I will comport myself and use my knowledge in a godly manner." - **Hippocratic Oath**

From February 14th to the 22th, Frankie Burg-Feret, executive director of Silent Children Mission led a team of nursing students and doctors throughout Guatemala in order to further our mission to "relieve the suffering and neglect of those who do not have a voice - especially women, children and their families." Frankie, a registered nurse and professor at Humber College, spent 8 days at Valley of the Angels Orphanage helping our 200 children and reaching out to several other communities with the help of her 10 dedicated students and two other doctors. For all her efforts in "using her knowledge in a godly manner" over the last six years, Valley of the Angels Orphanage dedicated a famous miraculous tree blessed by St. Hermano Pedro de San José Betancur in her honor. St. Hermano Pedro, the first Guatemalan saint, was beatified on June 22, 1980, and canonized on July 30, 2002 by Pope John Paul II.

Hermano Pedro, a Third Order Franciscan, had dedicated himself to helping the sick who were too poor to pay for care. He founded the first hospital for the poor black slaves and Indians in Antigua which now houses around 300 patients. He had found his first patient, a negro slave, who had been mistreated and abandoned to death, and carried her back on



Girls at the Valley

his shoulders. In order to raise funds for the hospital he was known to pace the silent streets, ringing a little bell, and singing in a deep voice: "One soul have we, remember, my brother, and if we should lose it, we'll not get another."

He later planted a tree in front of the El Calvario church in La Antigua Guatemala called Bourreria Huanita, or (esquisúchil tree) which is better known locally as the "Tree of Santo Hermano Pedro." The flowers are known for their unique beauty and medicinal properties: mainly as a tranquilizer, analgesic and to control high blood pressure, cure headaches and heart disease. Besides these natural benefits, the flowers are said to have miraculous properties, in which thousands have claimed healing miracles. As the English-translated sign says, "the active ingredient is faith."

In a ceremony on February 15, 2015, Fr Edwin Alvarado, the Provincial of the Guadalupe Province, celebrated a mass for us and then blessed the tree and a statue of St. Hermano Pedro dedicated to Frankie Burg-Feret.

The dedication plaque reads:

IN APPRECIATION TO FRANKIE BURG-FERET
FOR ALL THE LOVE YOU PLANTED,
THE HEALING YOU PROVIDE,
AND THE GENEROSITY YOU INSPIRE
AT VALLEY OF THE ANGELS.
MAY THEY EVER BLOSSOM AND BEAR ETERNAL FRUIT.
FEBRUARY 15, 2015

The dedication ceremony ended with an invitation to bring into our hearts all those who were sick, asking Saint Hermano Pedro's intercession to heal them and those parts of our hearts in need of healing.

Peace, Fr. Michael Della Penna, ofm



Assisting at the health clinic
Home for abandoned children



Woman scavenging for items to sell
at the dump in Guatemala City

Executive Director's Letter

Dear SCM benefactors,

Just before leaving for our trip to Guatemala I was informed that one of the young mothers whom SCM has been helping was murdered. We started paying for Jenni's school fees 18 months before after she expressed a desire to make something of herself and to provide for her young son. Despite living in desperate poverty and with very little financial, physical, and emotional support, she demonstrated a spark of resilience that made me believe in her. She was doing well in school and would provide Fr. Michael the school reports required before the next school fees were paid, but in January she did not show up as her usual and the Valley staff went out to look for her. At first, her mother did not want to disclose the news – that she had been dead for several months. No one thought she was important enough to inform her benefactors.

Her son Jeremy is now left with no mother, an unknown father and raised by his grandmother in a tiny dilapidated, two-room home with eight other people. SCM is committed to helping Jeremy so he will not be just another silent, unimportant child.

The medical mission trip to Guatemala was successful in many ways – one of our primary goals was to provide a health assessment of each child in order to determine the needs of the children at the Valley. All the children come



**Jenni and her son Jeremy
July 2011**

from homes where the social determinants of health are lacking. Unfortunately, we uncovered numerous cases of sexual and physical abuse, as well as severe dental caries and poor visual acuity – health issues that could prevent these children from receiving the good education and the healing of their mind and soul so lovingly offered at the Valley. Since these children have been identified, we now require the monetary means to assist them; SCM is committed to this project and your help is needed.

One of the questions I asked my students during this trip was to share one of their most moving experiences and so I will use this opportunity to share mine. The Valley is a Catholic mission and I realized early on that most of the students on the trip were not Catholic nor had they ever been exposed to the Catholic faith. I wondered how that would influence the mission trip. On the last day, one of our students became ill just before our flight. I was standing with her and another male student just outside the entry of the airport waiting for Fr. Michael and she started to cry. As he approached, I turned to her and said, “I know you are Muslim but can Fr. Michael bless you?” she replied, “Please, bless away!!” There we were, a Catholic priest in a Franciscan habit, a Muslim woman wearing a hijab and two others all united in prayer while the bustling crowds pushed past us. It was a profound moment where God was silently present, filling our open hearts with His peace and love.

Henri Nouwen describes it well: “Prayer is the beginning and the end, the source and the fruit, the core and the content, the basis and the goal of all peacemaking.”

Please continue to keep the work of Silent Children’s Mission in your prayers.

Peace,

Frankie Burg-Feret

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 at www.silentchildrensmmission.com
- Please assist us in reaching the poorest of the poor in collaboration with the missionaries who lovingly dedicate their lives to this work. Each trip we make on behalf of SCM is self-funded.



Milca and her children are doing well - thanks to SCM.