

Praise Him, sun and moon,  
Praise Him, all stars of light!  
Psalm 148:3  
Haiti sky - 2017

# SILENT CHILDREN'S MISSION

## NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2019  
Issue No. 24

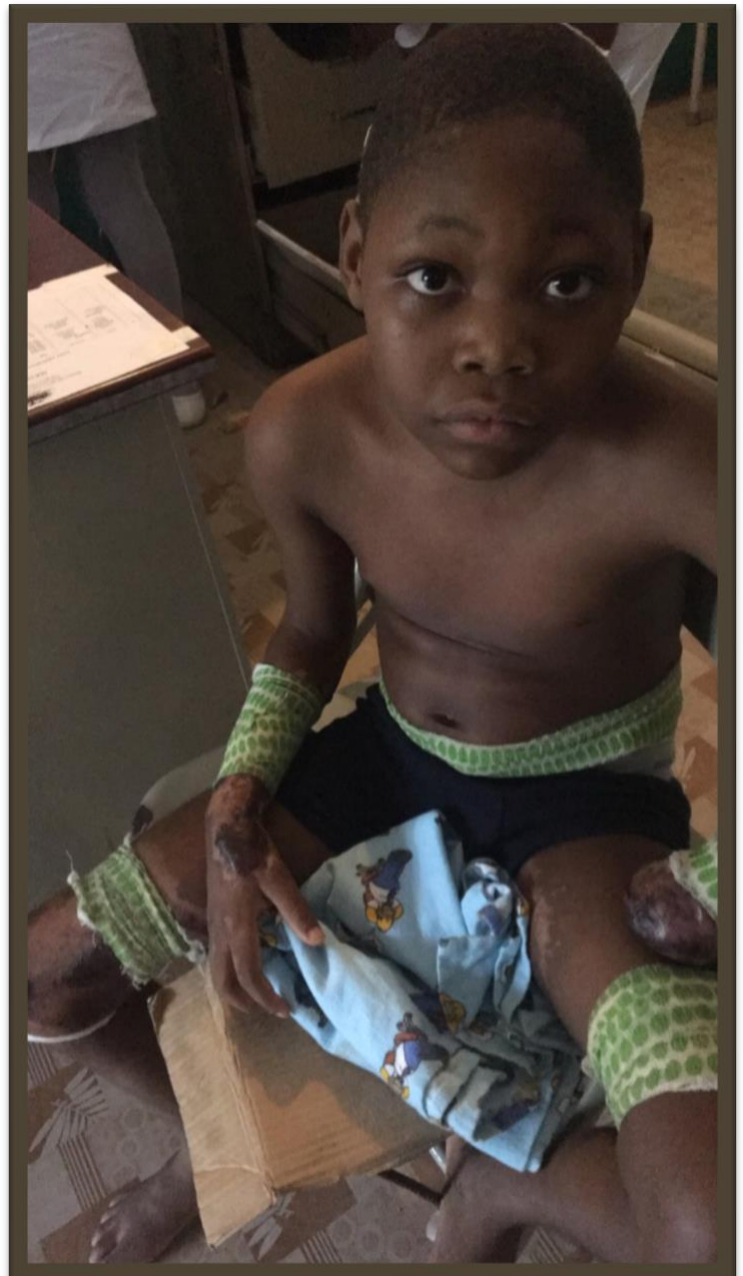
Dear SCM benefactors,

Last evening on the way home from work I decided to pull over to the side of the road so I could admire the full moon. It was a crisp, cold evening and the sky was clear and the sight was something to behold! It took me back to another spectacular sky I had admired at sunrise while in Haiti over a year ago and it reminded me that the beauty of our earth is a gift from God to all of humanity; rich, poor, white or coloured. We all live under the same sky!

So why do the poor have so many barriers to receiving God's love and compassion? Limited access to education, health care, food, clean water, housing, and corrupt governing powers and indifferent people all prevent so many children in developing countries from the opportunities we have. These barriers are the opposite of what God is – they exclude and keep others outside of the circle.

In the charism of Mother Teresa, the mandate of Silent Children's Mission is to help the poorest of the poor, the abandoned, and the forgotten. Joe Nike is one of those children and I feel compelled to share his story with you. Joe Nike lives in Hinche, Haiti, a small city of 50,000, but he doesn't live in a home. Prior to his "accident" he lived on the streets with a group of other children, moving around from place to place, staying in groups mostly for some kind of protection. We are not sure if Joe Nike is his real name – he most likely assumed that name on his own and he doesn't know how old he is – but the nurses guess about 11 or 12. He doesn't know where his parents are and no one has come to visit him since he was brought to the hospital by the other children in the group. Except for Gerry, our SCM board member and missionary in Haiti.

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Joe Nike at Hinche Regional Hospital

One of my all-time favorite stories told about Dr. Andrew Simone is the conversation he had with a man swimming in a pool. After sharing the mission of CFFC, the man, unimpressed, was instead visibly agitated and told him that he was wasting his time helping the poor; that his work was not only futile but was in fact harmful because it only served to perpetuate a passivity which fueled the problem since he concluded there are just too many poor children in the world. Dr. Andrew without missing a stroke responded by politely correcting the educated but unwise man by saying “No, the problem isn’t that there are too many poor children in the world, the problem is that there are too many selfish adults!”

Selfishness is at the heart of original sin and thus is not only the greatest destroyer of relationships and marriages but at the root of many of the worlds’ problems, especially poverty, as we possess ample resources but lack only the desire to distribute them. Our self-centered ego and pride continue to distort our view of reality and allow us to live an illusion that we are the center of the world. Christmas, however, is a time when we are once again reminded that God became human in order to reveal to all of humanity the true center of the universe and what should be at the heart of our lives. The birth of Jesus Christ, love itself, makes visible the truth, the way and the life and so gives us existential coordinates in which to order our lives properly.

Jesus Christ not only orients humanity but rather gives us a personal and concrete example of how to live. Born into poverty, Jesus demonstrates through the generous self-offering of his life, that the essence of love is self-sacrifice. He poured out his heart and gave himself up for us in order to show us that suffering and sacrifice reveal true love; and that true love alone triumphs over evil, death and sin.

When I look at all the poor children we visit in Africa and Haiti, and the other countries, rather than seeing the obvious material goods they lack, what I most often see in their eyes is the joy and love that they possess. Why? They have nothing to give but the love in their hearts and by giving it away so freely and generously, they are filled with true joy and happiness!

I recently came across an interesting insight in a book called the Master of the Heart that beautifully affirms in a scientific way what is at the heart of the good news that the birth of Christ ushers in. The author reveals new and surprising evidence about the nature of the relationship between our head and our heart.

While medical researchers had always assumed that all communication to the heart originated from the brain, they have now come to realize this is not so. According to these scientists, overwhelming evidence from neurological, bio chemical, biophysical and energetic studies prove that some communication originates from the heart. This discovery is surprising for many reasons. The heart has been documented to not only send more information than it receives but in some instances, the heart actually regulates the brain. The heart is also believed to speak to the rest of the body without the permission of the brain.

The take away for us spiritually is that the heart as described by these scientists conforms to the biblical doctrine of the heart as the real center of the human person. The Bible presents the heart as the integral self, the seat of emotions and control center of the interiority of the human person; our intelligence, morality, and choice. This time of Advent therefore, is a holy season to prepare and empower our hearts to live in the true Spirit of Christmas. It is a time to bypass the selfish reasons of our head and allow the love in our hearts to regain control of our decision-making. We need to be reminded of the shallowness of our self-centeredness and the lie of consumerism, with its tempting but empty promise of being able to buy our happiness. Instead we should keep in mind or better yet in our heart, the true reason for the season, and learn from the silent children we sponsor. It is in giving that we receive and therefore let us freely choose to generously give the love we have been freely given. Above all, we need to learn from our Lord, whose gentle and humble heart was pierced and ripped open for our sake and be inspired to make concrete sacrifices that demonstrate the truth of our love.

Peace,

Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm



Fr. Michael in Guatemala celebrating mass with Ninos Con Bendiciones.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

## LETTING THE POOREST OF THE POOR KNOW THAT SOMEONE CARES

*Continued from front page...*

Seven months ago, Joe claims he was pushed onto a high voltage electrical cable that was laying in the street. It is a miracle he is alive as the injuries he sustained were extensive and permanent. The electrical shock entered his feet and carved deep burns one inch wide up his legs destroying tendons and extending to his groin, down his arms and hands with the exit point at the back of his skull. The force of the electricity burned off the tips of his fingers on his left hand. As most children, he tries the best he can to recover but his mobility will always be limited and his prognosis is uncertain.

When Gerry first arrived at the hospital he was asked by the nurses: "Do you want to see an angel?" and Gerry replied "Of course!" Joe is almost always happy and cheerful. He believes his accident was a blessing because he feels his life in the hospital is better than living on the street. What he found in the hospital was someone to care for him. Mother Teresa says: "Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat."

The nurses at the Regional Hospital in Hinche work with very limited resources and often do not get paid. They care for Joe's wounds with strips of cloth they wash and reuse. Patients do not get fed in Haitian hospitals, as it is up to families to provide the food. Often times the nurses or other patients will share their food with Joe but there are many days when Gerry will come to visit and find that he had not eaten for 24 hours.

It is because of SCM benefactors that Gerry was able to provide Joe with clothing, medical supplies, medication and food. Naturally as Joe slowly recovers we are happy for him, but the nurses are already saying they must discharge Joe from the hospital – he is costing what precious little money they have. Because Haiti has no social services Joe will be discharged to the street and will most likely not survive due to his injuries. We are in the process of finding a home for Joe.

This Christmas please, please remember Joe and all the poor we serve – let us dismantle those barriers together and by our compassion and love let us invite all into the circle of God's love. Our beloved Saint Mother Teresa says: "Only in heaven will we see how much we owe to the poor for helping us to love God better because of them."

Wishing all our benefactors the peace and joy of this Christmas season.

With much love,  
Frankie



*"Hungry not only for bread – but hungry for love. Naked not only for clothing – but naked of human dignity and respect. Homeless not only for want of a home of bricks – but homeless because of rejection."*

*~ Mother Teresa*

# UPDATES FROM THE MISSIONS

## LETTERS FROM OUR MISSIONS IN ZAMBIA AND HONDURAS

Quinceanera is a special celebration in Latin America when girls turn 15. Here is Maria Jose feeling so happy at her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday - thanks to SCM benefactors. Maria Jose lives at Hogar de Ninos Santa Maria De Los Angeles in Honduras - an orphanage under the direction of one of our Franciscan missionary priests Padre Alberto Gauci ofm. SCM supports this special home for abandoned children and was able to pay for medical costs when Maria Jose was very ill this past year. Padre Alberto and the children are very grateful.

“...ONE OF OUR KIDS, MARÌA JOSÈ, 14 YEARS OLD, WAS VERY, VERY SICK... ACUTE PNEUMONIA. THANK GOD YOUR LAST DONATION WAS A GIGANTIC HELP FOR HER RECOVERY... MEDICINE, TRIP TO THE CAPITAL, DOCTORS, ETC. HERE IN OLANCHO... WE WOULD HAVE LOST HER! TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I ALWAYS KNEW I LOVED THE KIDS AT THE ORPHANAGE. BUT... WHEN I SAW HER ON THE BED AT THE HOSPITAL AND SHE COULD NOT EVEN BREATHE... IT WAS LIKE MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD, MY OWN KID WAS THERE.... MY THANKS TO YOU AND YOUR GROUP REALLY COMES FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AS, THIS TIME YOU HELPED BRING BACK TO OUR FAMILY MARÌA JOSÈ.”

LOVE... PADRE ALBERTO.



“Peace and Goodness!

Greetings from St. Theresa Mission Hospital! Thank you for accepting to come to visit us. It was a joyous occasion for us! The number of patients at the hospital is increasing but we are struggling to feed the admitted patients and to provide medicine and supplies to those admitted. We are so grateful for your sacrifice and contributions. Please continue to help us. May God richly bless you.”

Sr. Annie Chiluba  
Franciscan Sisters of Assisi  
Ibenga, Zambia

## 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](mailto:silentchildrenca@yahoo.com)
- **QUESTIONS?** Write to us at [silentchildrenca@yahoo.com](mailto:silentchildrenca@yahoo.com), or call us at 416-418-0314.
- **CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:** [www.silentchildrensmmission.com](http://www.silentchildrensmmission.com)