

SILENT CHILDREN'S MISSION

Celebrating 15 years: June 14, 2011-2026



God rarely arrives looking important.
St. Francis discovered that God often hides Himself inside the people the world avoids.
The poor.
The inconvenient.
The wounded.
The forgotten.
The person with nothing left to offer except their humanity.
And Heaven watches closely to see who still recognizes Him there.

Secular Franciscan Order South Australia

Dear friends of SCM,

On June 14, Silent Children's Mission (SCM) will mark fifteen years of service to the poor. It has been a privilege to serve alongside our board members, volunteers, missionaries, benefactors, and donors. Their compassion, generosity, and unwavering commitment are the driving force behind this charity. Together, we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of countless children and families.

Yet, as we celebrate this milestone, it is also sobering to recognize that, in many ways, the situation facing our brothers and sisters in developing countries has not improved. Many of our missionaries, particularly those serving in rural areas, have shared firsthand accounts of the challenges their communities face because of

growing global instability. Rising fuel costs have made transportation unaffordable and fertilizer inaccessible to farmers. Healthcare services have become increasingly difficult to access as clinics close their doors, and vital medications are no longer available in many regions. These hardships have been exacerbated by reductions in international aid budgets, even amid humanitarian crises such as the current Ebola outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda.

We know that global aid benefits developing nations, but it also benefits the countries that provide it. Aid programs contribute to global prosperity by helping poorer nations achieve economic growth and stability. Reducing poverty creates new markets, while



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Charity # 815949607RR0001

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

investments in education and healthcare improve quality of life and strengthen local workforces. When people have opportunities in their own countries, they are less likely to be forced to migrate elsewhere in search of survival. By addressing poverty and inequality, we help build a more peaceful, stable, and secure world.

I witnessed the impact of international aid firsthand during my first visit to Malawi in 2004. At that time, the HIV/AIDS crisis had reduced life expectancy to between 41 and 44 years. Today, life expectancy has risen dramatically to approximately 64.6 years for men and 71.1 years for women. This remarkable progress is the result of decades of global health interventions and partnerships. Yet today, many people in Malawi and Zambia, where SCM serves, are once again struggling to access antiretroviral medications (ARVs) for HIV/AIDS. What will happen to these individuals, their communities, their countries, and ultimately our world if access to these life-saving treatments continues to decline? As journalist Nicholas Kristof observed, *"There is nothing accidental about cutting off food and medicine to the poorest people on earth."*

At the heart of Catholic Social Teaching is the belief that every human person possesses inherent dignity and worth. As a Christian community, we strive to challenge unjust economic structures that keep people trapped in poverty. The Church teaches that creation is a gift meant to be shared by all humanity and that every person should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. This conviction is reflected in SCM's mission statement: *"Through various means, we provide*

basic needs ... so that individuals may live a life of dignity and have the opportunity to develop their soul."

Serving as the volunteer Executive Director of this charity for the past fifteen years has been both a blessing and a burden. Along the way, I have faced many challenges that tempted me to give up. One experience stands out vividly. A friend and I were delivering food to families living in a high-risk area of Guatemala when our vehicle came under gunfire. Multiple shots were fired at our car. By God's grace, we were able to reach safety unharmed.

In the aftermath, I experienced a range of emotions. I felt sadness for the young men who had chosen such a path. I felt a deep loneliness as I waited to return home to Canada, unable to share what had happened because I did not want my family to worry. But then came determination. I became convinced that fear would not prevent me from doing what I believed God was calling me to do.

In the larger story of poverty and service, I know I am only a small and insignificant player. Yet that experience marked a turning point in my life. It strengthened my conviction that SCM is God's work, not mine and it is a privilege and a joy to serve alongside so many inspiring people who generously give of themselves for others.

As we celebrate fifteen years of ministry, I am grateful for all who have walked this journey with us. May God continue to bless SCM, and may He grant me many more years in which to serve!

Peace and all good, Frankie



UPDATE FROM JANDIRA Guatemala

A generous benefactor was able to transform the lives of these two girls from very poor families in Guatemala. Today they have nursing degrees and are giving back to their communities. On the left Ana Lucia at her blessing Mass before her graduation. On the right, Zamanda speaking with the girls at Valle de Los Angeles hoping to inspire them to further their education after high school.

In Guatemala, less than 40% of girls complete high school and only 1% go to university. This is a dream come true for these two girls!



FROM OUR SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

The Franciscan roots of SCM

The genesis of Silent Children's Mission is directly connected with St. Mother Teresa's desire to help the poorest of the poor. It was through her inspiration that Dr Andrew and Joan Simone began shipping containers all over the world. St. Mother Teresa even wrote to them in a letter dated Feb 1988: *"The poor are very beautiful and have much to give us. Let us thank God for the opportunity to share with them and ask Him to make us worthy to serve our fellowman throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger, that by our understanding love we may bring peace and joy."*

At the same time, the Franciscan spirituality of Dr. Andrew Simone, and Frankie Burg-Feret who are both Secular Franciscans, have deeply influenced and shaped the fundamental nature of the mission over the last 15 years. This article reflects on how the essence of St. Francis' spirituality, as seen in the latest document from the International Minister General, expresses the roots of SCM to help those without a voice.

The latest document from the Franciscan Order issued on May 13th, 2026, commemorates the 8th centenary of St. Francis and encourages us to live a "vivid life" guided by the Holy Spirit amidst global challenges. It emphasizes renewal, mission, and the Franciscan commitment to peace. Addressing the whole Franciscan family, the Minister General invites friars, sisters, and lay companions to move beyond anniversary celebrations and recover the

living core of St. Francis' vocation: a Spirit-led way of life that continually renews how we live the Gospel today. Rather than freezing Francis into monuments or nostalgic memories, the letter calls us to let his charism remain a burning spark that catches fire afresh in every age. The letter frames Francis's life not as isolated events but as a single, Spirit-guided pilgrimage. From the Rule and the nativity at Greccio, to the Stigmata at La Verna, the Canticle of the Creatures, and his peaceful death at the Portiuncula, each moment is the Spirit showing the Gospel as a form of life— itinerant, poor, free for proclamation, fraternal, and in solidarity with the poor. He urges the Franciscan family to invoke the Holy Spirit now, asking for renewed evangelical vitality so the centenary does not end as merely another festival but as a true spiritual renewal.

What the Franciscan sites can teach us

Fonte Colombo, the beautiful sanctuary in the Umbrian Valley, is the holy place where St. Francis wrote his rule of life for the friars. His rule invites his brothers to an evangelical life of obedience, poverty, chastity, and fraternity. His personification of poverty in his writings allows us to catch a glimpse into his soul because it speaks of espousing ourselves to Lady poverty, that is, becoming one with her. This embrace is fruitful because it strips us of ourselves and opens us to being filled with God's grace. Poverty unites us because it engenders a greater need for dependence on the other. SCM relies on strong, relational bonds of fraternity to establish a network around the world



The essence of St. Francis' spirituality... expresses the roots of SCM to help those without a voice.

THE FRANCISCAN ROOTS OF SCM ...

that can function like a family. It is only by working predominantly through the local Catholic dioceses in conjunction with Catholic priests, religious and laity that we can assist neglected and abused children and their families (especially mothers).

Greccio is the holy sanctuary where Francis first celebrated the living nativity scene. Because St. Francis was so enamored with the humility of the incarnation and God's presence in bodily and material life, he was inspired to re-create this event and so invited all those around him to actively participate in it. In this way, he not only reminds us of the poverty into which the Son of God was born into but gives us a beautiful model of the Church, a church of participation and of becoming the living body of Christ, and allows us to incarnate Jesus in this world. In addition, creation, (God's first Bible) and the Eucharist teach us that the divine hides in

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plain sight in the humble, ordinary world we share.

La Verna is the beautiful sanctuary where St. Francis received the Stigmata. Entering into the suffering of the other, and especially of the crucified Christ reveals how new life often comes in through self-sacrificial giving and offering our pain to God. Francis' desire to share the pain and misery of others, and the very passion of Christ, express his deep intuition that sacrifice is at the heart of love. St. Francis' desire to have mercy on the lepers and live among them is a demonstration of true mercy in action; mercy as defined as being willing to enter into the chaos of another.

San Damiano is the sanctuary that was special to both St. Francis and St. Clare. It is where he heard Jesus speak from the cross, to go and repair His church, but also the place where St. Clare and her

sisters lived out their vocation. More poignantly however, it is the place where it is believed he wrote the Canticle of Creatures, which is considered one of the first pieces of Italian literature. What is so significant about this is it happened at a time of his life when he was suffering greatly and going blind. It affirms what we experience in many of these countries in the children we meet; that praise can be borne precisely in darkness. It also expresses the universal brotherhood which unites all of humanity. Our mission is to relieve the suffering and neglect of those who do not have a voice – especially women, children and their families.

The Portiuncula holds pride of place because it is considered the Mater and Caput of the order, a symbol of Mary, simple, poor and humble. These are the deepest values that Francis lived by. It is also the womb of the order because it is there that St. Francis first heard the call to live a gospel life, and prayed within its walls but it is also the place where he desired to die. Francis greets death as a sister, modelling trustful passage rather than fear. Oh what the humility of the poor can teach us!

Closeness to the poor is at the very heart of the vocational criterion for everyone who wishes to follow St. Francis. The poor are not objects of charity but rather teachers and companions; living among and with the marginalized is the truest expression of the Franciscan charism. To be a "friar minor" means to choose a position beneath others, resisting social climbing, prestige, and institutional self-interest. It means embracing an honest relation to money. Money can become a wall between us and the poor; it must be treated as a gift on loan, shared with the most vulnerable and used simply. Working with one's hands keeps us grounded in reality and prevents entitlement. So many of the people that we help have such an organic and close relationship with the earth. Because they have so little and are so poor materially, they are often very rich in faith and have a deep dependence on God.

What we are asked to do

The letter translates into concrete challenges and invitations: it invites us to examine how resources are used in fraternity life; asking ourselves how we can foster direct, daily contact with those on the margins; ensuring contemplative practices remain integrated with active service; cultivating simple living

that resists the seductions of status; encouraging manual work and shared labor; and inviting lay voices into reflection and decision-making. The Minister General highlights how the Spirit who inspired Francis continues to blow: our task is to breathe with that Spirit and to give flesh to the Gospel in ways appropriate to our time and place. The Church and the world need the unique expression of the Spirit that the Franciscan family carries—humble, creative, and close to all creation. The letter closes with a simple Pentecost prayer: that the Holy Spirit rekindle faith, hope, and charity in the Franciscan family; that gifts received be freely offered; and that Mary and St. Francis accompany us as we seek to live the Gospel more fully. This letter is an invitation to conversion of heart and a renewal of practice: let us ask ourselves how we can better witness the Franciscan synthesis of prayer, poverty, service, and joyful praise.

Fr. Michael Della Penna OFM continues to faithfully serve as our spiritual director, offering wisdom, guidance, and prayerful accompaniment to all who are part of this mission. Fifteen years ago, when Dr. Simone first approached him with the invitation to become involved, Fr. Michael responded with the generosity and spirit of service that continue to define his ministry today. A Franciscan priest with a PhD in Franciscan spirituality, he brings us insight into living the Gospel in our lives. Fr. Michael's presence has been a blessing to SCM from its inception, helping shape not only what we do, but who we are.

UPDATE FROM FR. SYLVESTER

Ganya, Malawi

"This week at our Ganya government hospital many sick people were told there is no medication and to come and check next week. One was our gardener who was in a bad state; we took him to our Mission Hospital because the government hospital had literally no medication apart from Panadol (Tylenol).

The withdrawal of USaid affected many livelihoods in many parts of the country and not only the government hospitals but also the mission hospitals. Through CHAM (Christian Hospital Association of Malawi), mission hospitals receive free medication for malaria, mosquito nets, ARV's for HIV plus other medications. The supply of all these have dwindled now. In our area, Sister was telling me that Ganya is not exempted. In addition, the poverty levels in our area is increasing and there is more suffering and deaths. Our Mission Hospital tries its' best, but people can't afford anything else as they have no money.

Sadly, we lost two kids at the Ganya Primary School; a girl Anna (14 years), and a boy Pemphero (13 years) to malaria. A 23-year-old girl died yesterday two hours after arriving at the Mission Hospital. The nurses diagnosed her with high malaria, but she could not be cured - it was too late. She was buried today. Chigwa Stannislaus (photo below) was in Minor Seminary Form 3, he also died of malaria; he was one of the boys playing soccer with the SCM Young Stars. I have not come to terms with his death. Last week alone we had 10 funerals.

The situation is very sad... the Iran war has impacted the poorest people. They are not able to buy fertilizer and with the gas prices up, every commodity has gone up too... however ourselves, we have enough food, we have harvested a lot. In the field we purchased with funds from SCM we are going to have over 50 bags of maize and beans. We have lots of bananas and papayas... we thank the Lord - He has blessed us with enough food, and we will be able to help more children. The two new classrooms are making slow progress, but we will be there.

Greetings from Ganya!"



Chigwa Stannislaus



Two new classrooms sponsored by SCM in progress for Ganya Primary School.



UPDATE FROM SR. RITA BANDOLA

Chokaa, East Nairobi, Kenya

*Whoever is kind to the
poor lends to the
Lord, and He will
reward them for what
they have done.*

Proverbs 19:17

We, the Compassionate Franciscan Sisters of the Poor (CFSOP), freely, humbly and wholeheartedly provide our daily works of mercy services to the least of our poorest brothers and sisters living in the ghetto communities of Chokaa, East Nairobi.

At the Queen of Hope daycare centre, we continue to witness beautiful stories of hope, courage, and God's Providence through the lives of the families we serve. One of these inspiring mothers is Janet, a 40-year-old mother of four children who has been courageously raising her children alone with the support of a father.

Life has not been easy for Janet. Without permanent work or a stable income, she goes around the neighborhood washing clothes just to provide food and meet the daily needs of her children. Many times, she brings her two younger children while searching for work because she has no one to care for them. Despite the struggles she faces each day, Janet remains strong, determined, and hopeful for a better future for her children.

Through the loving mission of the Sisters at the Queen of Hope Day Care Center, Janet received support, care, and encouragement. The Sisters lovingly help care for her younger children while she works outside, giving her peace of mind and the opportunity to earn for her family. They also support the education of her two sons by providing school supplies and educational assistance so they can continue their studies with hope and dignity.

Janet is deeply grateful for the kindness and compassion shown to her family. She shares that she feels truly blessed and strengthened knowing that she is not alone in her struggles. Through the care and generosity of the Sisters and the support of Silent Children Mission, her children are receiving love, hope, and the opportunity for a brighter future.

We continue to pray that the Lord may abundantly bless everyone behind Silent Children Mission with good health, peace, and more opportunities to touch lives. May He reward your compassionate hearts and continue to guide your mission in becoming a source of hope to many more children around the world.





“Our only desire should be to do the will of God in all things.”

Sr. Marguerite d’Youville, founder of the original congregation from where the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa emerged and a favourite saint of Sr. Bernadette. Sister stands in the location where the chapel is to be built on the Simone Farm.

UPDATE FROM SR. BERNADETTE

Simone Farm, Mkanda, Malawi

Another dream soon to be realized! The Simone Farm is growing and flourishing under the care of Sr. Bernadette Densani of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Mkanda, Malawi. As more people come to the farm to learn, work, and participate in this beautiful community there is now a need for a place of worship. With the help of four generous benefactors, SCM will be helping the community to build a chapel. This chapel will be a place of prayer and a space for young and old to come and learn about the love of Jesus Christ. The chapel is expected to be complete this coming October 2026!

Mr. and Mrs. Mbewe (photo top right) have been a part of the SCM family since we first became a charity. Despite living in extreme poverty, they raised seven children in the faith. When Sr. Bernadette needed a temporary home for an orphan, she would ask the Mbewes and they never said no to helping. It was not a burden in their eyes but a privilege to serve. SCM and the SCO Sisters helped the Mbewe children to have an education and provided support to grow their own food. On May 9 2026, their daughter Saraphina Mbewe (photo right) celebrated her First Profession to the consecrated life to the great joy of her parents. Congratulations Sr. Saraphina!



From Dream to Reality: Continued Progress

Bo, Sierra Leone

Sr. Veronica of the Sisters of the Visitation in Bo, Sierra Leone, is a social worker and has been working with abandoned and trafficked

children living on the streets. In response to the needs of these children, Silent Children's Mission is partnering with her and the sisters, whose compassionate presence in the community has already become a refuge for vulnerable children. Together, we are building a home that will offer not only shelter, but dignity,

healing, and the chance for a new beginning. Once completed, this home will provide children with safety, nourishment, education, psychological care, and most importantly, a stable and loving environment where they can begin to heal and flourish. Please help these children by donating to this most worthy project.



How you can help:

- We accept e-transfers, cheques, and online donations via Canada Helps. To donate please see our website at: www.silentchildrensmision.com
- If you have questions about tax receipts write to us at: scmtaxreceipts@gmail.com or call us at: 416-418-0314
- To save on postage costs, tax receipts are sent quarterly with the newsletters.

Request a speaker:

 silentchildrencia@yahoo.com

Address:

 16060 8th Concession, Schomberg, Ontario, Canada L0G 1T0



Update from Digna Mwacha

Shinyanga, Tanzania

Despite protective strategies implemented by the Tanzanian government, children born with albinism continue to face serious threats to their lives through ritual violence, stigma, and discrimination. Digna Mwacha, a layperson with albinism at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Shinyanga runs the Buhangija Centre providing these children with education, nutrition, health,

and spiritual support. "On behalf of the children I would like to sincerely thank you for the continued support you generously provide to us. We pray that our good Lord grants you good health, both physically and spiritually, so that you may continue touching and supporting the lives of those who are in need. May God bless you abundantly for your kindness and compassion."



- 30 children received school uniforms
- 70 children received school bags
- 50 children received bedsheets
- 140 children received nutrition support at the Buhangija Albinism Centre

For over a decade, SCM has supported this project.