



A warm welcome from the children at the Simone Farm in Malawi awaiting our arrival in November!

"It is not enough to love the young; they must know that they are loved."

St. John Bosco (patron of youth)

Letter from the Executive Director

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"We
always
find that
those who
walked
closest to
Christ
were
those who
had to
bear
the
greatest
trials."

St. Teresa
of Jesus

Dear friends,

Each day, our mission reminds us that the life of the children and missionaries we serve are marked by both *sorrow* and *hope*. We see the harsh realities of poverty and violence that steal away young lives, and yet we also witness the light of transformation when a child is given a chance to grow in safety, love, and dignity. Today, I want to update you on two of our children - one story is a heartbreaking reality, and the other is of resilient hope.

It was last July on our SCM mission trip (issue 47) where we last met with Cesar – a young boy Juan Carlos had been following and supporting for many years. This past quarter, our hearts were saddened by the tragic murder of Cesar. He was found in a sack. I share this because that is the brutal reality of his death. The loss of such a young life is a painful reminder of the suffering many children in this community face every day. Children living in and around the Guatemala City dump (known as La Zona 3 or the Basurero) witness and experience violence and tragedy that we can never imagine. The Guatemalan national homicide rate is 16.1/100,000, however, in the basurero it is 148/100,00; for perspective, in Canada it is 1.9/100,00 (Human Rights Watch - World Report 2025: Guatemala, Stats Canada, 2023). When a child dies there, the child and family do not have access to formal justice. Guatemala has laws that require that every violent death be investigated by the National Civil Police but in reality, murders in the dump area go uninvestigated due to poverty, stigma, police corruption, limited resources, and gang control leaving residents afraid to cooperate. Often the children are undocumented and may not have a registered birth



Photo left:
Juan Carlos
and Cesar at
the basurero
during the
2024 SCM
mission trip.

certificate leaving them without official recognition of their existence. The chances of a conviction or justice for Cesar is extremely low because poverty has left him without a place in society – in life and in death. In the eyes of the world, he is invisible and less valuable. However, we know as a faith community that every person has intrinsic value and dignity. This belief is what Mother Teresa’s mission was about, what Joan and Andrew Simone inspired, and why Silent Children’s Mission exists. His story compels us to continue fighting for a world where children are safe, cared for, and able to flourish. We carry César in our prayers, and we carry his memory as a call to action.

But alongside sorrow, there is hope. Hope shines through in the life of another child in our care – Maria Julia. Many of you will remember Maria Julia who lives in the basurero with her siblings and ill grandmother after her mother died. Today, thanks to your generosity, she is receiving an education and dreaming of a better future. Maria Julia has discovered a love for cooking and is training to become a chef. She is in close communication with Juan Carlos, sending him photos of the delicious food and baking she makes with so much pride in her accomplishments! She frequently sends words of gratefulness to SCM benefactors via Juan Carlos.



Maria Julia at school joyfully grateful to be learning to be a chef. Below one of her many creations she is so proud to share with Juan Carlos and benefactors.

These two stories—César’s tragedy and Maria Julia’s transformation—remind us of both the urgency of our mission and the incredible impact of your support. While we cannot undo every injustice, together we are making a difference in the lives of many children. We are bringing education where there was none, food where there was hunger, healing where there was trauma, and faith where there was despair – you will see many positive stories in this newsletter of the successes made this past quarter.



At SCM, we believe that every child is a beloved child of God, created in His image and worthy of dignity. This is what fuels our work, and this is why we continue. Please pray with us for César and his family and please also *rejoice* with us in the hope and progress of children like Maria Julia. Together, we honor the memory of those we have lost by ensuring that many more will live, learn, and thrive. We ask you to join us in prayer *and action* - for peace in our world, and for renewed strength to keep assisting our dedicated priests, sisters, and laypeople who strive every day to make a difference.

Peace and all good,
Frankie

“I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I’m supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I’m praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us, and we change things. – St. Mother Teresa

Living the Peace Prayer Giving Voice to the Voiceless

The impact of Silent Children's Mission on poverty in Africa and Central America



One of the most famous verses of the St. Francis Peace Prayer states, "It is in giving that we receive" and I could not agree more. My amazing 14-year journey with SCM, and 11 years in Guatemala confirm the truth that you always get back much more than you give. My heart is filled with profound gratitude as I reflect on these last years and the many extraordinary men, women and children we have been blessed to meet. Being part of Silent Children's Mission has given me the opportunity to not only be in direct contact with the poverty and destitution that so many poor suffer, but also the joy and deep faith they carry in their hearts.

Poverty in Africa and Central America remain one of the most devastating issues of our time, affecting millions of children. According to recent statistics, over 250 million children in Africa live in extreme poverty, facing challenges such as hunger, lack of education, and inadequate healthcare. Sub-Saharan Africa holds the largest share of the world's poor children. The trend is worrying, as the number of extremely poor children in the region has significantly increased from under 210 million in 2013 (United Nations). At the same time, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reported in January 2023 that almost 45% of Latin American children under 18 live in monetary poverty. In specific Central American countries, rates of child poverty are much higher: El Salvador (44%), Guatemala (68%), and Honduras (74%) respectively. More broadly, UNICEF states that two out of five children, or 72 million children in Latin America and the Caribbean, live in poverty, with the highest concentrations in rural and peri-urban areas.

Because of your generosity, however, these cold statistics have been transformed into names, smiles and warm beating hearts. I have had the blessing to not only visit these countries and see first-hand the effects

of poverty on children but have prayed with them and felt their deep heroic faith and sang and danced with them and felt their joy and hope. While these children suffer physically with the many consequences of malnutrition and the dangers of insecure residences, the greater tragedy is that many of these children often feel invisible and unloved; their struggles go unheard and their potential unrealized. As St. Mother Teresa, one of the main inspirations of SCM said, "The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved."

Organizations like ours work to alleviate this suffering and seek to change that narrative, providing not only financial material support but also school fees, supporting self-sufficiency projects, drilling wells, and constructing farms but more importantly, SCM offers them spiritual upliftment with the goal of making the poorest of the poor, feel their own dignity and letting them know they are loved. A key role, of course, is played by YOU and the many sisters, brothers, religious, and priests, who not only identify and find these children, but are committed to keeping in touch with us and writing narratives and updates on their lives. This chain of compassionate helping hands create a network of love and grace that helps protect and nurture the children.

At the heart of Silent Children's Mission therefore lies the belief that every child is made in the image and the likeness of God and that every child deserves to feel loved and be valued. Every child is a precious gift from heaven. Each child has an immeasurable dignity and are in truth, priceless. By donating money, and supporting us with prayer, you are divine instruments that are helping fund essential programs that provide food, education, and medical assistance to those in need as well as knocking on heaven's door for grace. For over 14 years, the resources you have shared have literally changed thousands of lives, enabling so many the chance to not only thrive rather than merely survive, but also to feel genuinely loved and cared for. Providing a meal, a school uniform, or basic medical care has made a profound difference in so many children's lives, allowing them to dream of a brighter future. I think of Paul Phiri in Malawi who became a tailor, Dustin in Haiti who was rescued from being a "child labourer", Sister Bernadette in Malawi whose sweet compassion and dedication helps thousands, the unconditional love of Francisco and Delfina for their child Oscar, and the special bond of love between Maritza and Olympia in Guatemala. The faith of Maritza as well as a young man who taught me "no te rindas" - never to give up - continue to inspire me deeply.

Fr. Michael's reflection continued..

Faith plays a critical role in their daily life. By joining in prayer for these children, we have not only joined them in solidarity but also created a family network and international community. Prayers are a powerful source of hope and strength, reminding children that they are not alone in their struggles. SCM encourages individuals to connect with these children spiritually, fostering a palpable sense of God's love that transcends geographical boundaries. Through the combined efforts of financial contributions and prayer, we are bringing hope to those who feel voiceless. We are blessed to help make connections and extend this network of compassion. Every dollar donated and every prayer offered is a step toward empowering women and children and helping them to break free from the cycle of poverty and embrace a future filled with possibilities. The journey to alleviate poverty is a collective one, and SCM serves as a beacon of hope. By supporting this mission, we not only provide tangible assistance but more importantly remind children that they are cherished and loved, allowing them to feel God's presence in their lives. Together, we can give voice to the voiceless and transform despair into hope.

Peace, Fr. Michael



*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Pray for Silent Children's Mission

Please pray for SCM and our upcoming mission trip to Malawi and Zambia

We pray and fast for the children and families we serve, our missionaries, and our living and deceased benefactors every First Friday of each month. Contact us if you would like to join in prayer and receive an email reminder.

We value your support for our mission – we will never share your personal information with any person or group. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us via email (silentchildrenca@yahoo.com) or phone (416-418-0314).

From our benefactors – how love continues even after many years.

“Dear SCM, First of all, thank you for all you do. Many years ago, our parish, through the encouragement of our priest, sponsored a Vietnamese family (about 35 years ago). Last week some of the family members came back to visit us and to thank us and let us know they will never forget what we did for them. They want to pass on that generosity to others and left a \$500 donation to help some people, so I am sending off a cheque to you in their stead.”

“Gift in thanksgiving for not having cancer. You can use this money to develop the land that you purchased or feed the hungry children. I thank people like you as I cannot do the work that you do.”

If you would like SCM to speak to your group (Knights of Columbus, CWL, church/community group, school etc) you can contact us to book a date at: silentchildrenca@yahoo.com or call 416-418-0314

Update from Bo, Sierra Leone - Sr. Veronica



We at SCM are proud to be assisting Sr. Veronica and the Sisters of the Visitation to build a home for the children living on the streets of Bo. Unfortunately, there has been a delay in obtaining promised funds and we appeal to you for help so there are no delays. Please pray that God will provide – the children need to know that they are loved.

From Sr. Veronica:

“We thank you for your level of sacrifice only God can reward. On behalf of the street children, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your donations just to see the work continue. Your selfless generosity uplifts our confidence in our work and helps us to create a meaningful difference in the building project for the street kids in Bo City who suffer from brutal rape, beatings, and left for dead in the street.

Because of your support, we are able to continue to stage two of the building. Your belief in our mission to provide a safe place for the children means the world to us. Without the commitment of supporters like you, we would not be able to achieve this much in the construction process.

We would love to keep updating on the progress of the work and we kindly appeal to you to keep our workers engaged because stopping can lead to delay. We plead to you to continue. Thank you again for your extra-ordinary kindness and for being a vital part of our community.”



Photos above:

Sr. Veronica with the children, blessing of the land, new boots for the workers.

Photo on left:

A young boy proudly displays the SCM sign

Photos below:

The Sisters of the Visitation have completed the second stage – laying the foundation.



SCM Update for Valle de Los Angeles - Guatemala



Padre Joaquin Mejia, director of Valle de Los Angeles at the beginning of the 2025 school year with returning students and his dogs!

SCM has been supporting the boarding school at Valle de Los Angeles since Fr. Michael was the director from 2009 – 2020. Valle is a mission of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province. The school is a safe haven for children who come from vulnerable backgrounds: extreme poverty, broken families, and unsafe environments. This special school is often the first place where children feel secure, cared for, and part of a loving community.

Since 2015, SCM has played a vital role in improving the Valle children's health by supporting medical service trips in collaboration with a college in Toronto. We are pleased to share that SCM will return in February 2026 with many committed and enthusiastic health care professionals! We are excited to continue this beautiful collaboration and pray our desire to serve will be a blessing to all.

Update from Mtepuwa, Malawi – Fr. Peter



(cont.) those that SCM has always been helping from other areas within the diocese. I hope that you and your family are well. I pray for you that you be blessed in abundance as you serve people.”
Receive my love, Fr. Peter

Photo left: Fr. Peter giving out maize

Photo below: Fr. Peter with one of the children assisted by SCM

From Fr. Peter:

“I am glad that you have decided to send another donation this year to assist the children in need. I appreciate your generosity. May God always bless you for your kindness and hard work.

I would like to inform you that I was made parish priest of Mtepuwa Parish in the Archdiocese of Blantyre. It is a big parish in a rural area with 11 outstation churches.

My work is very difficult due to mobility issues. I have to travel as far as 45 kilometres away from the parish house to serve people, generally on a bike as there is no car here. The parish is in a very poor area with lots of children in need. I am very sure that the donation will assist many children herein my parish. Obviously, the donation cannot cater for everything. It will though show the children that SCM loves them. There is a lot to be done in my parish to inspire the children to feel strong and loved apart from (cont.)



Update from Ganya, Malawi – Fr. Sylvester



This November we will be travelling to Malawi to visit our missionaries, children, and families including Fr. Sylvester in Ganya parish and Sr. Bernadette in Mkanda and Ludzi. We look forward to a Malawian welcome in the *warm heart of Africa!*

From Fr. Sylvester:

"I have bought two pieces of land (with the money you sent). The first one is nearly 2 ½ acres for SCM projects – mainly farming. The second one is aimed at building a house where vulnerable children can stay during holidays. There are a number of activities lined up for you when you come to Ganya – the official inauguration of St. Joseph's well for the primary school, a new fence for the school - you will have to inspect the work done! There are also some 10 elderly people who are benefiting with food and medications. Christopher and friends have formed a soccer team named "SCM Young Stars". Please, we are requesting that you spend some minutes watching their game."

Update from Ndirande, Malawi - Fr. Lucius



"I am a missionary Catholic Priest of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritan). I am Malawian and working in Malawi currently at Holy Ghost Parish, Ndirande found in Blantyre Archdiocese. As a priest, many people come asking for help especially school fees. I do help depending on the available resources at that particular time. Malawi is currently economically poor. Many people live below the poverty line. The illiteracy rate in Malawi is very high because not many parents and guardians are able to pay school fees for their children. By the year 2015, the literacy rate for Malawi was 62%. The country late last year saw its currency being devalued. We need this funding for these reasons: to educate the students so that in turn, they can as well help others, to help the students be empowered, and to help the students become good role models for their fellow young people in their societies."

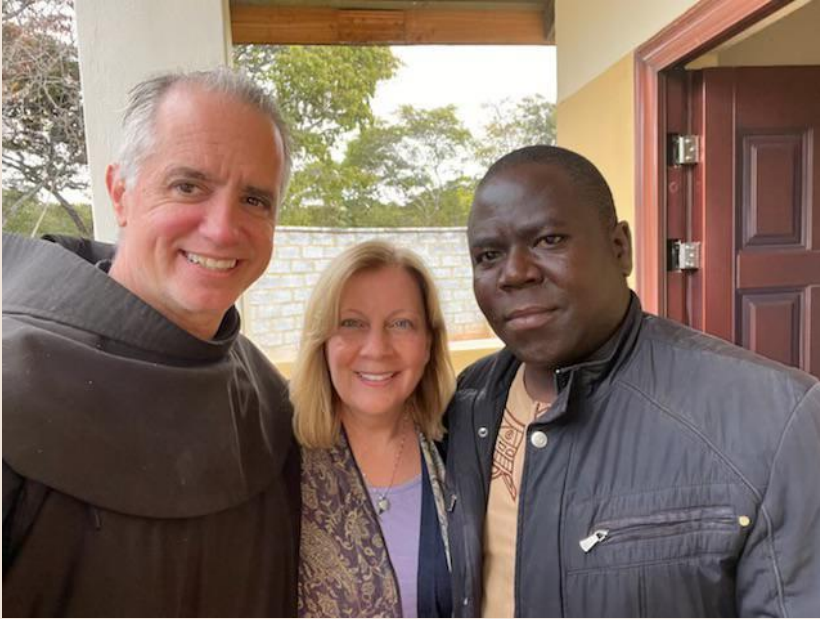
The story I would like to share is about Mwaiwawo Wesley. The name Mwaiwao literally means 'there lucky'. Mwaiwawo is a girl who is doing her secondary school at Chingale secondary school. She comes from a family of six children. Five of

them are married off except her. She is a second born in the family which means her young sisters are married. Her sisters and many other people do mock her saying she is wasting her time. No woman is successful in her village so she cannot be the first one to be successful. She is a laughing stalk. Some say if she continues with her studies, she will be too old for marriage by the time she decides to be married. Despite all that mockery, Mwaiwawo is continuing with her studies.

Mine are words of gratitude for the support you are rendering to needy children who come knocking at our doors looking for money. Thank you very much for the timely and much appreciated help."

Is not Jesus pointing to children even as models for grownups? Pope John Paul II

In Memory of Fr. Benjamin Soko



We met Fr. Benjamin in 2022 in Lusaka, Zambia when he travelled 10 hours from Chipata to see us. Our partnership started earlier in 2020 when Pope Francis declared the Year of St. Joseph and Sr. Lubingu, our Poor Clare Sister, introduced us and shared how Fr. Benjamin and a small group of brothers were starting a new province, the Franciscan Brothers of St. Joseph the Worker. Their focus would be on evangelization and serving the poor, so we knew this mission was a good one to support! SCM was consecrated to St. Joseph in 2021 and through financial support, St. Joseph medals and prayer cards, and many email messages a true collaboration was born. Our collective intercessory prayers to St. Joseph have resulted in many fruits – thanks be to God! We will miss Fr. Benjamin, but his mission will continue. May he rest in peace.

“Dear Frankie,

I am writing to you with a heavy heart to inform you of the sad news that Father Benjamin Soko passed away. Father Soko was a beloved member of our community, and his loss has left a deep void in our hearts. Father Soko was a kind and compassionate soul who touched the lives of all who knew him. He was a dedicated priest who served his parishioners and the Brothers with love and devotion, and his presence will be greatly missed.

I know how much Father Soko meant to you, and I share in your sorrow at his passing. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. We as the Franciscan Brothers of St. Joseph the Worker have lost a Father and it will take time to recover from this shock.

I will be able to give the report of the projects we are doing and did with him in November as usual. Kindly feel free to get hold of me anytime.

With heartfelt condolences, Br. Tererai Madzivanyika”

“St. Joseph teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties, and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course.” – Pope Francis

How you can help:

CHEQUE DONATIONS: Send a cheque payable to: *Silent Children's Mission* and mail to: 16060 Concession 8, Schomberg, Ontario, L0G 1T0, Canada (Make sure to include your mailing address for a tax receipt)

ONLINE DONATIONS: Send us an email money transfer to silentchildrenca@yahoo.com or donate using a credit card through Canada Helps (SCM Charity# 815949607RR0001) Please remember us in your will.

US DONATIONS (for a tax receipt): Send a cheque written to: St. Leonard's Parish and mail to: St. Leonard's Church 320 Hanover St., Boston, Ma 02113 – Please indicate on your cheque “donation for SCM”. Or donate online via their website: <https://saintleonardchurchboston.org/donate>

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