

## The Starfish Story by Loren Eiseley

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking up and gently throwing things into the ocean.

Approaching the boy he asked “Young man, What are you doing?” The boy replied, “Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don’t throw them back, they’ll die.”

The man laughed to himself and said, “Do you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can’t make any difference.”

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the surf, then smiling at the man he said, “I made a difference to that one.”

# SILENT CHILDREN’S MISSION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019  
Issue No. 25

Dear SCM Benefactors,

When you receive this newsletter, we will be part way through Lent and in the midst of preparing our hearts to receive Jesus at Easter. Lent is a time of reflection – a time to think about how we have helped God in His vineyard and to discern ways to do better. I heard a talk by Fr. Richard Rohr where he said: “How you use your money and how you use your time. That is your real belief system – that is what you have given your life to”. When I first heard these words, it brought home just how important our life decisions are, especially if our ultimate goal is heaven.

February was a particularly difficult month for me as I lead the annual medical mission trip to Guatemala and it seemed as though this year had more challenges than usual. Allowing myself to entertain feelings of discouragement was not helpful and certainly not what Christ wants of me. Someone reminded me of the familiar story of the starfish on the beach and how its’ simple message can help us to discern how and where God is leading us. When we allow ourselves to be so self-absorbed and discouraged, we miss the miracles that are right before us and the message that God wants us to hear through those miracles!

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Remberth in Moyuta, Guatemala (2019)

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

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

As I reflect on my recent experiences I am grateful for what I call the “God” moments. Just as I was feeling most discouraged, a young girl at Valle de Los Angeles wrote me a letter with words so encouraging it was as though God was speaking to me directly. Sometimes the person you plan to help is the one who provides us with the love we need! Mother Teresa knew what she spoke about when she said: “Only in heaven will we see how much we owe to the poor for helping us to love God better because of them”.

Working with our new partners in Moyuta brought me great joy because of their enthusiasm for helping the poor and their warm welcome to their community. It was in Moyuta that we met Remberth, a very ill toddler whose mother was looking for answers. Without hospital resources, it was beyond our scope to provide her with what she was looking for, but we were able to provide her with the means for follow-up and some much-needed answers. After our clinic, he was hospitalized and has had a biopsy and we wait for news of his prognosis. Remberth's mother is so grateful to SCM and has given us her blessing to share his photo and to ask our benefactors for prayers on her behalf. I was also moved by another child whose single mother had been struggling with her child's behaviour for five years. Lacking access to basic health care, she came to our clinic hoping for some answers. I can't express the peace and joy I felt as I watched one of our volunteers (an expert with personal experience of children with autism) share his knowledge with this mother. She came away from our clinic with answers, strategies and much encouragement and love from this special volunteer. What I witnessed unfolding was a reciprocal blessing resulting in so much more love in this world. Just as in the starfish story – he made a big difference for that young family.

Despite the logistical setbacks and personal struggles, the medical mission trip was a tremendous success and that is thanks to the many SCM benefactors who assisted us! For example: Our Lady of Good Counsel woman's group collected medications and vitamins; Health Partners International of Canada provided medication via a grant, a pharmacist and doctor allowed us to purchase much needed medication at cost and Apotex donated so much free of charge. Scotiabank donated new hockey bags to carry these precious gifts and a benefactor showed up at the door with 2000 US dollars which was used to help children like Remberth and others to follow-up and see a dentist or receive important lab tests or procedures after we were gone. Nineteen faculty, nurses, paramedics and doctors donated their time to provide excellent health care to 421 people in under-resourced communities. We are so grateful for this collaborative effort from so many people! Thank you to all our SCM benefactors who support us financially and spiritually with all our projects in developing countries.

The SCM board of directors wish you and your family a blessed Easter! During this time of renewal, may you be filled with the peace and joy that comes from His resurrection!

Peace,  
frankie



**Leadership Team in Moyuta, Guatemala 2019**



# SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S LETTER

## THE EXODUS OUT OF OUR SELFISH HEARTS

Every year, in first two weeks of Lent, the Church's liturgy offers the accounts of Jesus' three temptations in the desert and his transfiguration. Both of these events teach us a fundamental truth in our journey to God, namely, that the greatest obstacle to loving God and others is our self, that is our own pride, selfishness and ego.

When Jesus is in the desert, he is confronted with the first temptation to use his abilities to feed himself by turning stone to bread, instead of feeding others with himself in the Eucharist. We all have to overcome the temptation of using our resources and caring only for ourselves. This temptation is basic but is reinforced by the selfish logic of the world that warns us that we must take care of ourselves first and foremost and provide for our own families. This conclusion masks a lack of trust in God and is in reality based in fear and insecurity. Many continue on this path their whole lives, never questioning this greed and continue to amass great wealth and resources under the false pretense that they "have to" provide for their own children first; all the while, feeling justified in omitting helping others. Furthermore, the obsession to appease our physical hunger through the accumulation of material goods effectively distracts us from satiating the deepest desire of our soul, which as Jesus states, can only come through every word from the mouth of God.

The second temptation is to "have it all", to be obeyed, honored and respected according to the world, and thus serve the machinations of the Prince of the world. This is about playing the game of the world to one's own advantage. In using all the systemic evils for our own gain, we are in effect, worshipping not only the evil institutions that exploit the poor and perpetuate injustice but ultimately adoring the evil one himself. The sad and tragic truth however confronts us when in finally achieving to "have it all" we realize that is all we have. The vapid and transitory nature of all material goods and their inability to satisfy our hearts is best summed up with C. S. Lewis' insight: "That which is not eternal is eternally useless"

The third temptation is about making a great spectacle of ourselves in our religious and charitable actions in order to glorify ourselves. It is easy to see how those who shout their good deeds to others and publicize their so-called charity in feeding the poor are really only feeding their own egos. They have already received their reward. This temptation contains a presumption that is similar to what psychologists describe as the "Halo effect" whereby our real good actions lead us to believe we are so special that we can take liberties without consequences; that God will protect and "guard us" and so spare us from any suffering. This is the lie behind the prosperity gospel, which promotes public tithing as a guarantee and means to God's favour. God in fact does not promise to spare us from suffering, nor did he send his Son to destroy it but rather He came to transform it.

This is highlighted in Luke's account of the transfiguration, which gives us a unique detail about the presence of Moses and Elijah. In their conversation, Luke alone relates what they were speaking about during their meeting, namely, the exodus that Jesus was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. This is at the very heart of Jesus' mission and the antidote to all temptations toward selfishness. In fact, every single moment is a new choice, to either follow God or to follow ourselves. It is C. S. Lewis again who rightly states there are only two kinds of people in the end, those who say to God, "Thy will be done" and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done". The difficulty is that in choosing to follow God and do his will, we must like Christ, choose to embrace the cross.

Just as Jesus had to rebuke St Peter for advising him to avoid the cross of cavalry, we too must reflect on the meaning of the cross and its power to reveal true love. Benedict XVI helps us to understand that the cross itself reveals the essence of love when he writes that love is "an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward looking self toward its liberation through self-giving". This speaks of our selfishness as the greatest obstacle to loving authentically, which is fundamentally an exodus out of our concupiscence, or self-referential way of being. Sin as it has been said is spelled s-i-n because it always has an "I" at the center.

This Lent is an opportunity for us to shed our ego, pride and selfishness. How? By coming out of our closed inward looking selves and thus overcoming the temptation to live only for ourselves and instead, choosing to make a conscious effort to seek the good of the other. This parallels the exodus journey that Moses led the Hebrews in, from slavery to freedom. It would foreshadow the greater freedom that Jesus leads us toward, namely, freedom from the slavery of sin. This is the good news that Jesus came to announce, that it is in losing ourselves that we find ourselves, it is in dying that we live. This is the way for each of us to discover a new life, a true life, an eternal life, not only in heaven but here on earth. In this way we are invited into enjoying a fruitfulness that we never thought possible.

~Peace,

Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm



Fr. Michael at Valle de Los Angeles

## UPDATES FROM THE MISSIONS

## LETTERS FROM OUR MISSIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, ZAMBIA, GUATEMALA, HAITI AND LIBERIA

“We are very grateful for the help extended to us by Silent Children’s Mission! We were able to give joy for the children as well as to their families by sharing the blessings through your generosity.

“Let the little children come to me and do not prevent them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to these little ones.” Mt. 19:14. We have another activity that your help also was extended to. That was the preparation of the children for their first communion. Our sister was the one who gave catechesis for the children in preparation for them to receive Jesus.

Truly indeed the graces and blessings of our Lord was shared through the generosity of people like you. Sharing your resources help many children and families here. Thank you very much and rest assured of our prayers for you and for the mission.”

In Jesus and Mary,  
Sr. Ma. Ella L. Escultura, DM



**~PHILIPPINES**

### IN MEMORY

Please pray for Sr. Albertina, one of our missionaries in Zambia who died tragically in a car accident on January 15, 2019. May she rest in peace.

**~ZAMBIA**



### UPDATE ON TERESITA

Last year we introduced you to Teresita and her daughter Nina who were living in poverty in the slums of Guatemala. SCM hoped to help build them a new home in a safer area, unfortunately before it was started Nina was murdered in their home. This devastating news is a reminder that life is precious and every moment counts. We pray for Teresita during this hard time, and pray that Nina is at peace.

**~GUATEMALA**



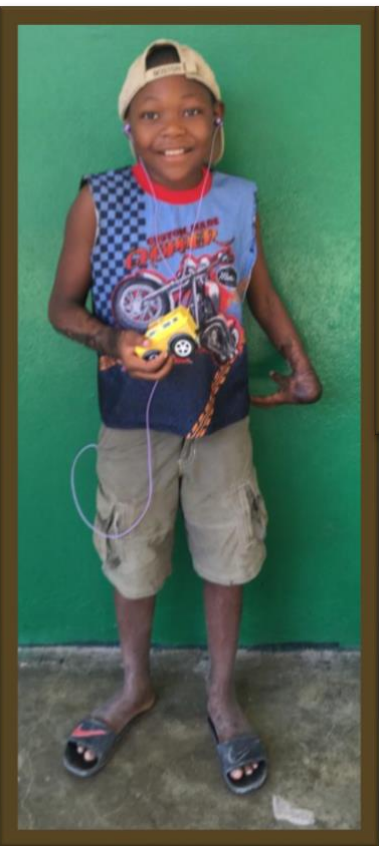




### PHOTOS FROM GUATEMALA MEDICAL MISSION 2019

With your ongoing support and a skilled team of health care professionals, we were able to assess and care for 421 patients who may otherwise not receive healthcare. These are some of the children who have been helped by your donations of money and medical supplies.

“Loving life into the world one heart at a time might seem an inefficient means of spreading an urgent message, but only when we forget that each human heart has an infinite horizon, expanding all the way to God. When hearts are freed in love, the power and mercy of the Lord are unleashed upon the world in a new way and the reach of that grace is immeasurable.” Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, Superior General of the Sisters of Life



### PHOTOS FROM GERRY IN HAITI

Please pray that the unrest in Haiti will settle and for the safe return of Gerry to Canada.

~Frankie



### UPDATE ON JOE NIKE

“SCM has built a new home for Joe on the farm in Cerca Carvajal, Haiti. A widow from the town will move into the home and will care for Joe.”

Gerry Brinston, SCM Director  
~HAITI



Joe Nike 2019

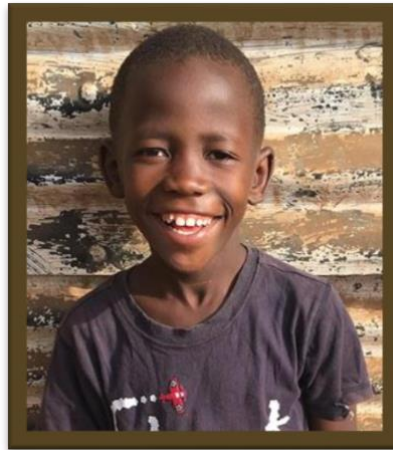
## UPDATES FROM LIBERIA

**Sr. Agnes Seckeh** is our missionary in Monrovia, Liberia who with the help of SCM provides food, clothing and shelter for the poorest of the poor. Sr. Agnes makes weekly and monthly visits to the parents and guardians of these children. Some of the persistent issues include: lack of substantial support for healthcare or medical supplies, poor housing conditions and very poor nutrition. Not all needs can be met but she also offers emotional and spiritual support on a regular basis which is so important for their development. Achievements for 2018 include: full tuition payments for 11 underprivileged children, support for 17 families, support to some of the children at a home for the disabled and abandoned and “smiles on the faces of beneficiaries!” The assistance of SCM in Liberia has a growing impact on the lives of these poor people.



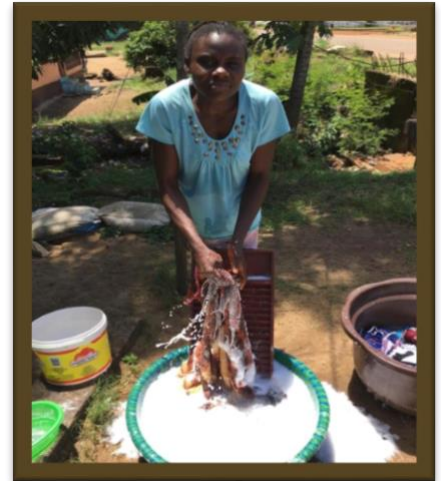
### HAWA

“Hawa is an orphan from Grand Cape Mount County, Northwest Liberia. Her father died when she was a month old. Her **mother** also died when she was nine months old. Hawa now lives with her great aunt whose name is Ma. Fatu in Matadi, Monrovia. The challenges of life have weighed Ma. Fatu down so much that she could barely afford to take care of Hawa and SCM has been so helpful!”



### SAMUEL

“Samuel is an orphan from Bog County, Central Liberia. He was neglected by his father when he was still in his mother’s womb. Sad to say, Samuel was less than a year old when he lost his mother. Ma Fatu who watched Samuel’s mother die has now become his guardian as well.”



### GARMAI

“Garmai is from Bong County, Central Liberia. She is handicapped and finds it difficult to provide for herself and her two children, James and Divine. The father neglected her when she gave birth to Divine her second child. She does laundry for other people to sustain her family. SCM has come to her rescue and James is now benefitting with an opportunity to attend school.”

## 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)