



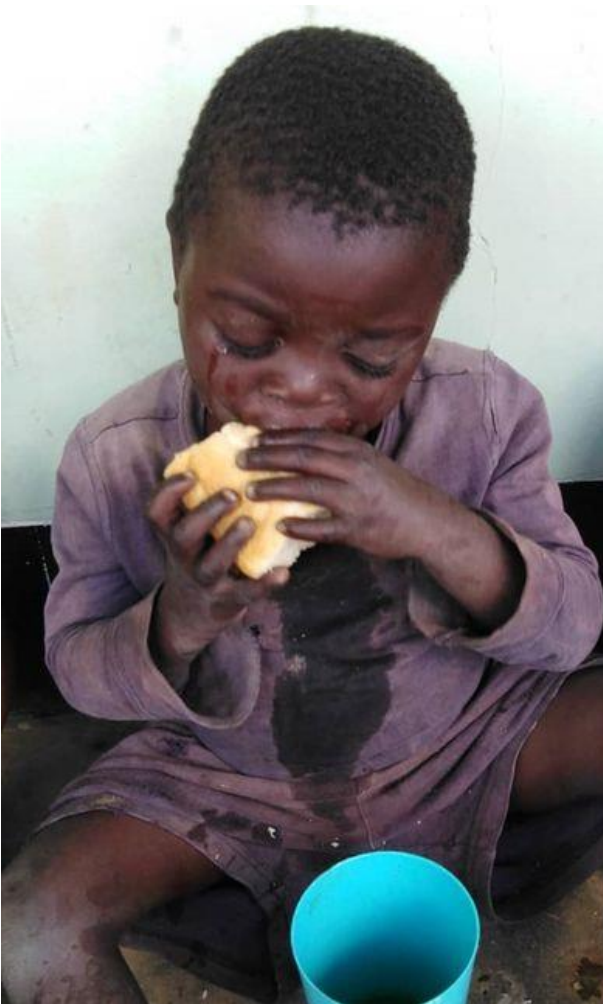
Silent Children's Mission

10th Anniversary 2011-2021

ISSUE

34

Summer
2021



"Poverty calls us to sow hope. . . . Poverty is the flesh of the poor Jesus, in that child who is hungry, in the one who is sick, in those unjust social structures. . . ." Pope Francis

**Thank you for your gifts of love! For 10 years,
your support has made a difference!**

Executive Director's Letter

Dear friends of SCM,

The pandemic has affected the poor disproportionately, and it has also highlighted the growing division between the rich and the poor. I recently read that Rolls Royce has set an all-time sales record in the first quarter of 2021; in all of their 116-year history, they have sold more \$400,000 cars than ever before. Saint John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, says, "*Development must not aim at the amassing of wealth by a few, but must ensure human rights...the right of some to free enterprise or market freedom cannot supersede the rights of peoples and the dignity of the poor*".

At the beginning of May, I had the good fortune to meet Peter (not his real name), who was living on the street. When we met, he was sitting on the cold sidewalk wearing shorts; with his legs spread out in front of him I could see one leg was red and swollen twice the size. On his feet were thin hospital shoe covers but no shoes; the thin, disposable fabric was shredded and his toes were exposed. He asked me for a sandwich and when I returned with his food, I crouched down and chatted with him. He explained that the hospital had thrown him out of the emergency room because he was "loud". A few minutes



Frankie Burg-Feret
Executive Director

later, his friend joined us and they shared with me how the housing situation during this time of pandemic was challenging because beds at the shelters in Toronto were limited. The comradery between the two men and how willing they were to help each other, reminded me of the community support found in villages in the developing countries we have visited. Because of the lockdown, all the stores were closed so I did not have the option to purchase shoes for him. The next day, a woman reported to the local news that she had found unsold shoes slashed in bags outside a Toronto shoe store, located just up the road from where I met Peter. The retailer chose to destroy the shoes rather than donate them to people in need. When I heard this, all I could envision was Peter walking the streets of Toronto in thin hospital shoe covers, very ill and with no place to sleep.

It is difficult to imagine this happening in North America but it reminded me that poverty is everywhere. The differences between the north and the south are the socio-political contexts that drive and exacerbate the issues, but the reasons for injustice in the world remain the same. Pope Francis, in his encyclical letter Fratelli Tutti (2020) states:

"In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference".

If we are so involved in our own lives and problems, how can we see what is happening around us? In the same

encyclical, Pope Francis provides us with some guidance: *"Solidarity means much more than engaging in sporadic acts of generosity. It means thinking and acting in terms of community. As a community, we have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development."*

This June 14, 2021, we celebrate our tenth anniversary as a registered charity. Silent Children's Mission continues to work with communities around the world by supporting projects that help children and families to be self-sufficient. For ten years, we have provided school fees for children to obtain an education, supported self-sustaining farm projects, provided clean water to communities, health care for those in need, and feeding programs for malnourished children. Working closely with our missionaries, and in a manner that respects their culture and values, we continue to support their identified programs that address the needs of their individual communities. Our administration costs remain low (2.2% in 2020) and we can assure you that your donations are sent directly to the missionaries we trust. In our quarterly newsletters, we share their letters, stories, and photos that demonstrate how your donations are put to use.

We are so grateful for your assistance and we ask you to consider sending us a donation once again. There are so many children in need and it breaks my heart every time I have to say no to a request for help.

Thanks to a generous benefactor, we are able to include a prayer card with this newsletter to commemorate the ten years we have all worked together to answer Christ's call to *"Love one another, as I have loved you"* (John 13:34). Please join us in prayer as we ask God to give us eyes to see the needs of those around us and the strength and courage to respond to them.

May you have a safe and peaceful summer,
Frankie

With YOUR help, we have sent over \$2.3 million dollars to the missions since we became a registered charity! We do not use your donations for fund-raising and our administration costs are low. All trips to the missions are self-funded.

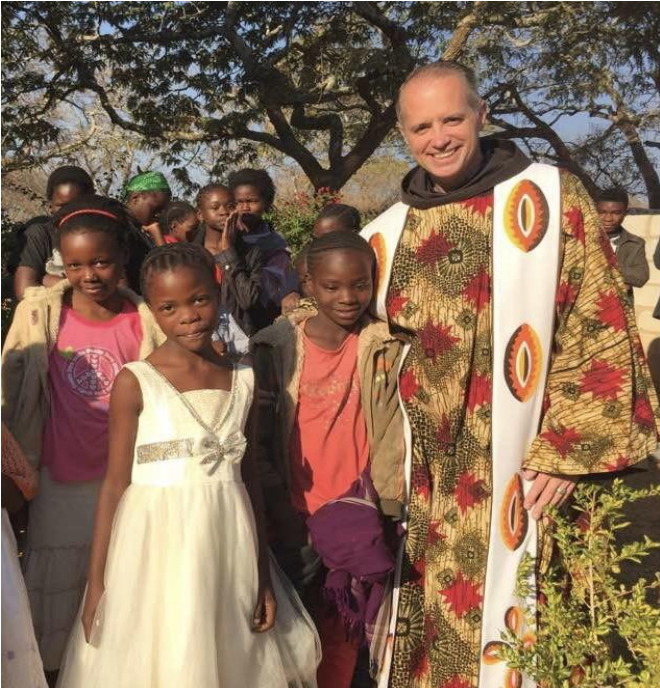
MISSION UPDATE FROM HONDURAS

"In December 2020, Fanny Alejandra, one of the kids from our Hogar De Niños "Santa Maria De Los Angeles", after more than 20 years living at our orphanage, graduated as licenciada en psicología from the Universidad Católica de Olancho. Silent Children helped us a lot during her 5 years at the university. Here in Honduras, university level education is very, very expensive and again... Without the help of Silent Children, we would never have done it on our own. Her graduation marked a milestone in the history of our orphanage to the point that even the local media covered her graduation ceremony, especially when one of the nuns of the orphanage and I accompanied her, taking the place of her father and mother which she does not have."

Padre Alberto Gauci, Franciscan friar, Olancho, Honduras

Spiritual Director's Letter

A Personal Reflection



On our 10th anniversary celebration of Silent Children's Mission, and on the day that I celebrated my first Mass twenty-two years ago, I am pausing to reflect on how our charity has shaped my Franciscan priesthood. Through Silent Children's Mission, I've been able to meet people from all over the world: Malawi, Rwanda, Liberia, Haiti, Guatemala, and Zambia. It's been an extraordinary gift to meet so many children, as well as the heroes on the ground - the priests, religious, and laypeople who help bring your generosity to the children. For example, I will never forget one beautiful Sister, her name was Sr. Agnes, who like an angel, guided us through the slums, bringing God's love to others.

When Frankie first invited me to accompany her to Africa, I did not know what to expect. My first mission trip to Malawi began an extraordinary journey or opening myself to experience so many new things. I have learned so much during these years, but it is difficult to reflect on my missionary experience without thinking about the influence and inspiration of Pope Francis and his Franciscan vision and love for the poor.

Pope Francis taught me that mission is a free gift of the Spirit, in which one receives in exchange, the grace of joy. He outlines some distinctive elements of mission in

his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), in which he first spoke of attractiveness, stating *"the Church grows in the world through attraction and not proselytism. If one follows Jesus, happy to be attracted by him, others will take notice. They may even be astonished."* In the document, Pope Francis describes essential features of being an effective missionary which include gratitude and gratuitousness, because *"missionary fervor can never be obtained as a result of reasoning or calculation"* - there should not be a sense of obligation. Mission is rather *"a reflection of gratitude."*

Then there is humility. Since happiness and salvation are not what we possess, nor a goal achieved by our merits, the Gospel of Christ can be proclaimed only with humility and without arrogance. Another feature of authentic mission is to facilitate, not to complicate. Mission does not add burdens that are unnecessary on people who are already worn out. We need to reach people right where they are and just how they are. *"God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself "became poor" (2 Cor 8:9). The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. Salvation came to us from the "yes" uttered by a lowly maiden from a small town..."* He states: *"Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society's most neglected members."*

Missionaries need to remain rooted in prayer and focused on the gathering of resources for the mission. As they seek new missionary paths, they should not complicate what is simple in reality. My missionary experiences have helped me encounter my own poverty and powerlessness in trying to help others and to be able to minister effectively. I have been touched by meeting so many beautiful hearts that were filled with joy, faith and love. The simplicity of their lives serves to frame and magnify their deep faith. What strikes me consistently is how people in need are attentive and present. They are mindful of each moment and acutely aware of God's living presence. Often, they are infused with a palpable joy that allows them to truly celebrate life. Numerous times on our mission trips, I was moved to see the devotion of the choir as I listened to their song, always sung from their hearts with immense faith. Pope Francis taught me that we do not go out to evangelize the poor, but instead are to be evangelized by them.

Peace,
Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm

Silent Children's Mission is to let the poorest of the poor know someone cares – that God has not forgotten them. (SCM Mission statement #2) We affirm the human dignity of every individual made in the image and likeness of God – therefore we will support programs that promote Catholic social teaching. (SCM vision #6) Please visit www.silentchildrensmision.com to see our mission and vision statements.

Updates from our Missionaries



MALAWI The Andrew and Joan Simone Centre – a self sustaining farm project. The chickens are thriving and producing many eggs and the farm is yielding fruit and vegetables; jobs and food to sustain the people in need. The building of the education centre/housing for learners was stalled due to covid but is now on the way to completion.



SALIENT CHILDRENS FUND

CANADA.

Dear sir/madam

Greetings to you all hope and trust that you are doing fine, us for me am fine the almighty god is keeping me safely.

The reason am writing this latter to you want to say thankyou for everything that you have done in my life, you have contributed a lot to my education without you I would not have attained my senior education but through you have attained. You started rendering support to me when I just passed my junior secondary education that was in 2014, you have been offering support to me since till I completed my senior education in 2016, you made me to attend one of the best schools in our country Zambia ST. FRANCIS is the school I attended my senior secondary education to and I managed to work hard and obtained good results.

After I completed my senior education and obtained good results, you did not end there you continued offering support even at college level. You took me to ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION to be trained as a science teacher, I did not relax to work hard just because am in a college I continued to work extra hard now have completed my college studies just waiting for the results to be out.

I want to thankyou once more for the support that you rendered to me financially without you I would not have achieved all these successes, it is through you that I would even be called a teacher, if it was not you I don't even know today how I would be. Thankyou may the almighty god who dwells in the most high continue blessing you, only the one above will award you for the great things that you have done to me and the rest out there whom you are helping. thankyou

Yours faithfully

MUBANGA CELESTINO

ZAMBIA

Celestino and his parents live in a poor home with a thatched roof and earn their living by selling vegetables; they were unable to pay for his school fees. With the help of his grandmother and SCM, he was able to attend school. He has successfully graduated from Teacher's College and is now a contributing member of his community.

“Dear Frankie, Kindly receive the attached letter. Celestino is very happy to have completed his studies. Without your hand, nothing could have happened. You and SCM ARE AN ANGEL AND saviour for him. Hopefully when you come to Zambia and when he starts working, I will ask him to buy a loaf of bread for your breakfast.”

Fr. Kennedy Seketa

Updates from our Missionaries

ZAMBIA

Community of Fisenge in Zambia's Copperbelt small urban location near Luanshya

Project's focus: addressing food insecurity

"400 people benefited from the 2020 donation. We employed the local people from the community which helped the families to raise money for their children's school fees, books, pencils and food for the home.

The engaged a local farmer to teach the families about preparing compost manure and how to plant fruit trees – 30 banana tree, 35 pawpaw, 101 orange, 11 mandarins, 20 mango, 172 lemon also they planted 4200 tomato plants on one hectare field using drip irrigation.

They were also able to drill a borehole and install a well which provides clean and safe water to the community near the farm.

They continue to provide a feeding program to children who have only one meal for the day."

Photo (right) "A grandmother and three of her five grandchildren she cares for in a borrowed home but she will have to find another place to live when the owner returns."

Sr. Josephine Mulenga, Franciscan Sisters of Assisi



GHANA

Welcome to our new mission in Cape Coast, Ghana!

Fr. Bonaventure and Sr. Monica are missionaries who support the Padre Pio Centre, a rehabilitation center for children with special needs and leprosy.

"At the Padre Pio Centre, 84 children with special needs and others from disadvantaged families received assistance with diapers, medications and food parcels. Each food parcel contained rice, oil, beans, sugar, biscuits and milk. Some children from poor families also benefited from the donation especially during the lockdown.

We remain grateful to SCM; your help meant that 84 children received a food parcel and a visit to their home during these difficult times."

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Bonaventure Annan

Updates from our Missionaries



When we provide the needy with their basic needs, we are giving them what belongs to them, not to us.

St. Gregory

HAITI Gerry Brinston, SCM Board Member

The Silent Child I have met many hardworking, loyal Haitians from community leaders to devoted parents since I arrived in Haiti after the devastating earthquake in 2010. After this tragedy, the people worked diligently to preserve the lives of hundreds of thousands of wounded, and to bury over 200,000 of their fellow Haitians. During this time of misery, I saw in their eyes a conviction and desire to survive, and a hope for better times ahead for themselves and their families.

I have witnessed political strife, gang violence, food insecurity, high inflation, increasing covid count, and one of the highest unemployment rates in Latin America. Each tragedy has taken its toll and crushed their loving spirits; revealing the darker side of what can happen when hope for a better future is lost.

There is a Haitian proverb that says: "Whatever evil you commit to survive, is not a sin". Declining morality and hopelessness leave the youngest and weakest of society to bear the pain of this brokenness.

Recently, while doing some home visits to provide food for the elderly, I was approached by a young girl no more than 15 years old, who was cradling a newborn in her arms. With no motherly attachment, she asked me to please take her child and remove this burden forever from her life. My understanding of the complexities of caring for an infant and the possible repercussions, led me to refuse her request.

After a sleepless night, I returned to the young girl's home, which was a mud structure with a crooked tin roof, expecting to hear the soft cries of the unloved child, but there was a noticeable silence. She approached me with her head low, and her eyes staring out into the distance. When I asked where the child was, she bent down and slowly picking up a stone, she cast it into the barren field behind the mud huts in the direction of an unmarked grave. Without a hint of emotion, she said: "I buried him there after he fell and died".

Who is responsible for this tragic event? Was it me, for disregarding this young girl's plight? Was it the young girl, who saw no way out but to take the life of her child? Was it society, for ignoring the pain of the helpless? I am not sure where the responsibility lies, but it's been months since this heartbreaking experience, and it still weighs heavily on my heart.

Something inside us all died that day along with this silent child. The baby's death along with so many others should not be in vain. My only hope lies in the death, resurrection and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and that one day all things will be made new. Peace for me is found believing this silent child is with Jesus right now and that one day this young girl will be with Him as well.

Updates from our Missionaries



GUATEMALA

Maintaining public security continues to be a serious issue in Guatemala; the Indigenous poor remain at highest risk. Valle de Los Angeles has not escaped this sad reality. Padre Joaquin shared with us that Willy, a past student, and still a child, was murdered by gunmen while working at a store this past April. Due to health disparities experienced by those in under-resourced communities, we see this vulnerable group susceptible to avoidable early death. Ana Lucia and Ana Gabriela, students at Valle de Los Angeles lost their mother in March to a heart attack. Please keep these children and their families in your prayers. (right) One of the Indigenous families in need supported by SCM received assistance of school supplies and food in Solola, Guatemala.



ZAMBIA

“The donation from Silent Children’s Mission helped Sara, Magret, Mapalo, and Taonga by paying their school fees and buying them clothes in order for them to look like any other child at school or in the neighbourhood. It has helped them a lot because I see them smile and they are joyful because this donation has helped them to feel loved and cared for.”

Sr. Anastasia Manda, Chipata

Send a Card



Thanks to a SCM benefactor, we have new “In Memory” and In Honour” cards. If you would like to give a gift in honour of someone’s birthday - anniversary or in memory of a loved one who has died, helping others in need is a beautiful way to do that. We would be happy to mail a card to the person directly or to you.

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) ***Please note: tax receipts are sent quarterly with the newsletters***

DONATE ONLINE: By sending us an email money transfer to silentchildrenca@yahoo.com or through Canada Helps (SCM Registration #815949607RR0001) We also have an iTrade account for those wishing to donate shares. Please remember us in your will.

QUESTIONS? Write to us at silentchildrenca@yahoo.com or call us at 416-418-0314

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: www.silentchildrensmission.com ,

INVITE FRANKIE TO SPEAK at your school, church, group, club or fundraiser.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR TAX RECEIPT? Write to us at scmtaxreceipts@gmail.com

PRAY FOR OUR CHARITY and its benefactors. We pray and fast for you every First Friday of each month. Unite your intentions to ours!

Please consider sharing this newsletter with your family and friends