



Silent Children's Mission

10th Anniversary 2011-2021

ISSUE

35

FALL
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*Lord,
Father of our human family,
You created all human beings
equal in dignity;
pour forth into our hearts a
fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream
of renewed encounter, dialogue,
justice and peace.
Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty,
violence and war.*

Pope Francis



Executive Director's Update



Frankie Burg-Feret
Executive Director

Dear friends of SCM,

"For you always have the poor with you..." Matthew 26:11

Jesus told his disciples that the poor, the vulnerable and the rejected would always be here in this world and at the same time God promised an abundance for all. The United Nations states that there is enough food produced in the world to feed everyone on the planet. Why then are people suffering from hunger and extreme poverty today?

The cause of unnecessary human suffering throughout history has been and is unjust social systems created by greed. (Borg, 2003, *The Heart of Christianity*) We need to be conscious of the way our economic systems affect the lives of people. Those with power and wealth have structured our economic system through taxation and regulation policies to suit their self-interest. The total amount of wealth owned by the richest one percent of the population is increasing dramatically and the working class are struggling to make ends meet

- and the poor are getting poorer. The reason why this happens is not because the wealthiest one percent worked harder than anyone else. What the world needs is a politics of compassion.

These past few months we have received numerous messages from our missionaries, mostly from African countries, requesting prayers for those who have died of Covid. We have also lost some of our SCM missionaries and in this newsletter, we have included the photos of two who have died, and we ask you to keep them, their families, and the children they have served in your prayers. Recently, I received a message from Fr. Sylvester in Malawi: "Frankie, greetings! Hope you are well? Here we are dealing with funerals. People are dying.... I got my first job in May and was supposed to get the second one beginning of August. It's not available...." This priest's short message clearly illustrates for us the injustice in this world. How is it that in our increasingly polarized countries (US and Canada) we are throwing away unused, expired vaccines and people in developing countries do not have access to them?

So, what can we do? Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a theologian, and anti-Nazi dissident who died in a concentration camp in 1945, states:

"We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself."

To be compassionate encompasses both charity and justice. As we know charity is always good and never offends, but justice can make people (especially in the north) uncomfortable. Catholic bishop Dom Helder Camara from Brazil (Servant of God, 2015) said: "When

I gave food to the poor, they called me a saint; when I asked why there were so many poor, they called me a communist."

SCM is not a charity involved in formal political action - our mission is to serve the poor, and we support self-sustaining projects that we pray will have fruitful outcomes.

It has been over ten years now and it is always a blessing to hear about the fruits of this labour from the missionaries we work with. Many of the children we have supported with food, necessities, health care, and school fees are graduating now. They have become teachers, nurses, au pairs, tailors, farmers, and carpenters; they are giving back to their communities and supporting and encouraging siblings and other family members to do the same. We at SCM support social transformation with Gospel teaching at the heart of what we do. Our job is to raise awareness of the plight of the poor, so that we, who God has blessed with abundance, may not forget that the poor are always with us.

We are so grateful for your donations, prayers, and the many positive messages you send us (keep them coming!) Together we are transforming lives - one child at a time.

Peace,

Frankie

"The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



"I am privileged to be a part of SCM which has for ten years had exemplary integrity and steadfast love and compassion for the poor."

Dasha Hrkal

Newly elected Silent Children's Mission Board Member

Spiritual Director's Reflection



Fruit plays a crucial role in the Bible, beginning in the very first pages of Genesis where in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve are tempted by the fruit of the Tree of Life. The word for fruit however, while sometimes used literally, is most often used figuratively and thus refers to the lifegiving dimension of moral and good action. While we all strive for lifegiving spiritual fruit, we like Adam and Eve discover this cannot be appropriated from without but is rather an expression of what is happening within a person's heart and how it manifests into external actions, words, and attitudes, that is, how we concretely love and serve others.

This is precisely what Silent Children facilitates and aspires to do. Most interestingly, in John 4:36, Jesus says, "Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together." In sowing the seeds of God's love into every heart we encounter; our organization hopes to rejoice together with our children and families who reap the fruit.

The objective of Silent Children's Mission is Gospel evangelization, and I would like to share some of the lifegiving fruit I experienced this summer.

When I began my mission in Guatemala in 2008, one of my first tasks was to teach our children English. With the help of SCM who supported us from the very beginning, I was able to teach our children English (with a Bostonian accent). I never would have imagined that 13 years later, I would have in my living room one of our first graders who eventually graduated from our School Valley of the Angels and entered the Au Pair program. Brendita Lopez, in fact, is one of dozens of women who are now part of the Au Pair program and have been placed throughout the United States. What made Brendita's stories so satisfying and personally fulfilling to me, was that she is stationed in Maryland and subsequently was taken by the family on vacation to New Hampshire (about one hour away from my home in Boston). In May, I received a phone call from Brendita who asked if she could drive down to Boston and visit me at the church. Being reunited with her was truly a joy and affirmation of all that my call as a missionary was about and a testament to the mission and vision of SCM. Through your generosity, Brendita is now in the position of not only becoming economically stable, and thus able to substantially contribute to her family's financial situation at home in Guatemala, but she has been exposed to opportunities she would never have dreamed about.

This however was not my first experience with meeting up with a Valley of the Angel graduate. A few years earlier, I had the blessing of inviting one of our students named Michelle over to my house. She providentially had been stationed in Arlington which amazingly, is no

more than 30 minutes away from my sister's house in Revere. I had also taught her English with a Bostonian accent and never in my wildest dreams could have imagined that her accent would have been an asset. We were able to share a beautiful Christmas dinner and give thanks to God!

What made both experiences so satisfying, was to see the little seeds of love, planted in the social projects that SCM supports, blossom into mature life-giving relationships of mutual admiration and respect. This affirms how it is not enough to just provide the material needs for the body but rather be inspired to continue seeking our transcendent goal, which has always been and remains to foster conversion of heart. While battling poverty, hunger and social injustice is critical and important, our primary focus is to evangelize and enable the spirit of the people we help and our benefactors to bear fruit. This is the best way to affirm their human dignity and help them understand who they are as children of God, made in His image and likeness.

This primacy of evangelization echoes Pope Francis' vision which always emphasizes that we don't evangelize the poor but are evangelized by them. It is not about us feeling good about ourselves, but rather an opportunity to help cultivate their souls, helping people enter into new life and relationship with Christ.

Peace,
Fr. Michael Della Penna

"Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally....a dignity based not on circumstances but on the intrinsic worth of their being. Unless this basic principle is upheld, there will be no future either for fraternity or for the survival of humanity." Pope Francis

Updates from our Missionaries



HAITI

Prior to the earthquake we received the following report from Sr. Rita which provides information about the poverty that exists in Les Cayes and the people served by this mission:

“John and Jollyn are parents of four young children and they are very poor (photo in front of their home). They have a very small farm where John tries to sell wood charcoal to obtain some earnings. Jollyn struggles to find work as a house keeper as well as taking care of the children but it is not enough to sustain the family. There are times when there is no food and the family have gone without for as long as six days. The children have also been sick and the family cannot afford medicine. Life is so hard for God’s poor people here in Haiti and seeing these children suffer is like a sword piercing our heart. What a joy it is to be able to give a little hope through the help made possible by SCM. With the feeding program and medical assistance of the Sisters, we are able to reach out to Jollyn and John and to bring a little help for the family. The children are part of our feeding program and they are filled with hope now. The parents and children are very grateful and appreciate the help. They realize God has never abandoned them in their suffering and have heard their cry through the love and care of the Sisters and the compassion of SCM.”

Sr. Rita Bandola, Compassionate Franciscan Sisters of the Poor

Photos above: The Queen of Mercy clinic, feeding centre and children’s home prior to the earthquake.



Left:

A map of Haiti indicating where the two SCM supported missions are located – Les Cayes was heavily hit by the earthquake. Gerry and the people of Cerca Carvajal are safe and the self-sustaining farm has had no damage.

Updates from our Missionaries



HAITI cont.

The photos above show the extensive damage caused by the earthquake on August 14, 2021. We received the following message several days after the earthquake from Sr. Rita: "Please keep our Sr. Merly in your kind prayers, she is struggling greatly with the earthquake crisis in our mission in Haiti which has destroyed our two-storey clinic, the children centre and volunteer centre and canteen for the poor children. We are devastated but turning to God in earnest prayer. Our sister is sleeping in the van that was not crushed thank God and the children are in a 40 ft. shipping container. A couple of the children were buried and crushed and one (Anna) died in the rubble. Please pray for us especially Sr. Merly who is without food or shelter and the children in her care. God bless you all in His merciful love!" **Despite the devastation, the sisters will rebuild the centre. They need help more than ever.**

ZAMBIA

Loveness is one of our children who is so grateful for your help (photo right proudly wearing her school uniform).

"Dear SCM, I hope and trust everything is okay. I am giving thanks to you for the help you are giving me. I am in form four Buyantanshi Primary School. No more words I can say to you than to thank you and to ask God to keep you and your family safe."

Yours faithfully, Loveness

Please pray for our missionaries!

Message from Sr. Laetitia Longolongo, Franciscan Sisters of Assisi, who serves the poor in Kitwe Zambia:

"Dear Frankie,

Greetings to all your families. The past 18 days I was in the hospital with Covid. The virus is killing many people, please pray for us. Many children remain with no parents, if not for your help for school fees and food it would have been difficult. God bless your good work for our poor children."



Updates from our Missionaries



LIBERIA

Fr. Samuel has completed the second well in Liberia in honour of St. Joseph! The official opening was celebrated with a meal for the children who will benefit from clean drinking water provided from the drilled well. Photo: Fr. Samuel sits in front of their school in the slums of Monrovia. We are so grateful to Fr. Samuel for overseeing these SCM projects in addition to his busy schedule as a parish priest serving God's people in a poor community.

These two wells inspired another anonymous donor to provide the funds for a third well for a poor community – the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of the people in our community of love!



ZAMBIA

“Dearest Frankie,
Thank you for the money from Silent Children that you sent. We have been teaching the boys at Fisenge community near Luanshya Zambia to build crates to carry the produce from the farm. They are very happy to learn a new skill and make a bit of money to share with their grandfather. We strengthen the community by empowering the youth with education and new skills.
I thank God for the great friends you are to us.”

Sr. Josephine Mulenga
Franciscan Sisters of Assisi



Updates from our Missionaries



Tanzania

"I would like to say on behalf of the children at Buhangija Albinism Centre thank you so much for the support that you continue to give us and we all continue to pray to our Almighty God to give you health both physically and spiritually. A total of 200 children obtained assistance from the SCM donation that we received in 2020. We were able to purchase soap, clothing, shoes, school supplies, uniforms. The donation has improved the livelihood of the children. We are still in need of many items such as beds, mattresses, sheets, blankets and books in order to improve the conditions and capacity of the Buhangija Centre for children with albinism."

Digna Mwacha, Catholic diocese of Shinyanga

MEMORIAL



Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. . . . Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.

Revelation 2:10

Please pray for **Sr. Victoria Mwaba** who died of Covid on August 30, 2021. She was a Franciscan Sister of Assisi and was in charge of the primary school in Chililibombwe, Zambia. She was 54 years old.



SCM met **Fr Kennedy Seketa** in 2014 in Lusaka Zambia; he was the Rector at St. Dominic's Major Seminary. Since then SCM has supported many children with education through Fr Kennedy. Fr. Kennedy was diagnosed with Covid 19 on 21st June but was advised to stay home as the condition was not serious. On 24th June, Fr Kennedy started having difficulties in breathing and was eventually taken to an isolation centre where he later died at 22:05hrs at the age of 51. He died of severe pneumonia. Fr Kennedy died just a few days before taking up his new appointment on 1st July as Secretary-General of the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops. Find attached a photo taken on 19th June on his last day of assignment as Rector at St. Dominic's Major Seminary at the ordination of deacons.

SCM FOUNDERS: Dr. Andrew and Joan Simone

Our Sincere Gratitude



Dear Joan and Andrew,

It has been many years since God inspired you to begin Silent Children - time passes quickly and here we are celebrating 10 years as an official charity! Thank you for your continuing inspiration through your actions of agapic love for the poor. Your vision and mission drives this charity and we are privileged to serve with you. We thank God for Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who even in death, brought us together. We pray that God will give all of us strength to continue this mission of helping the poorest of the poor to live a life of dignity and to have the opportunity to develop their souls. *May the Lord bless and keep you; may He make His Face shine upon you and be merciful to you; may He turn His Countenance toward you and give you His Peace!*

Num. 6:22-27 The blessing of St. Francis

Photo left: Joan and Andrew Simone

In their early 80s, they continue to work together in Dr. Simone's clinic in Toronto serving people with dermatological issues on a walk-in basis and assisting the poor in developing countries at Canadian Food for Children in Mississauga.

How you can help:

MAKE A DONATION: By sending a cheque written to: **Silent Children's Mission** and mail it to: 16060 Concession 8, Schomberg, Ontario, L0G 1T0, Canada

Make sure to include your mailing address for a tax receipt!

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.silentchildrensmisson.com

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

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

Please note: tax receipts are sent quarterly with the newsletters

PRAY FOR THIS CHARITY and 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