



# Silent Children's Mission

10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2011-2021

ISSUE

36

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2022

*"Stop and look  
in the face,  
look in the eyes,  
of the person  
who is asking  
for your help."*

Pope Francis



## Executive Director's Update



Frankie Burg-Feret  
Executive Director

Dear friends of SCM,

We are living in a time of division where no group of people are unaffected. As we ponder possible solutions to the problems of this aching world, Mother Teresa, our inspiration for this charity, provides us with the answer: "We do not need guns and bombs to bring peace, we need love and compassion." By her example, she gently guides us back to Christ, to refocus on the true meaning of life, for "works of love are works of peace". That is what we strive to do at Silent Children's Mission.

Through my correspondence with our missionaries, I have learned about the inequalities the poor and forgotten must endure every day. As a social worker, Sr. Veronica works with Ebola survivors in Sierra Leone and her stories about the stigma these people face confused me. I had no idea this stigma existed until I learned that it is based on the fear that Ebola survivors are still contagious. Survivors are mocked by their communities, evicted from their homes, and divorced from their spouses. Often, they are prevented from going into public spaces and this is more common for females. According to a study by James et. al. (2020), the Ebola outbreak of 2014-16 in West Africa left most

survivors including orphaned children to suffer these internalized and enacted psychosocial consequences. As a result, many are unable to access social amenities and health care services. The resulting feelings of shame, guilt and worthlessness are some of the issues Sr. Veronica addresses in her work as a Sister of our Lady of the Visitation. She is so grateful to SCM for our assistance in helping orphaned children of Ebola victims to receive an education, and to access the services they need. This is just one of many stories you will find in this newsletter that describes how your gifts of love are helping those most in need.

As we near the end of the Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis, in his general audience at the Vatican, spoke about the saint's great trust in God and that he reminds us "to keep our eyes on what the world deliberately ignores". Pope Francis noted that Jesus' Incarnation was lived in an outlying village and that God's preference for the periphery and marginality should be taken seriously as the Gospel "continues to manifest Himself in the geographical and existential peripheries". In 2021, the SCM board of directors consecrated our charity to St. Joseph because of his example of trust and hope in God. The generous gifts of our benefactors who donated in honour of St. Joseph were used to build four wells which have provided clean water for very poor communities in Liberia and Sierra Leone. I'm sure the inspiration of St. Joseph has provided much more than we are aware of and will continue to do so.

**Please know how grateful** we are for your love and support for the work of Silent Children's Mission. May God bless you and your families this Christmas. Peace,  
Frankie



St. Joseph's 4<sup>th</sup> water well for Liberia for the children of LUCRI school from the Christopolis community

From Fr. Samuel, Spiritan priest:

The **third well** in honour of St. Joseph is being built in Bo, Sierra Leone for the poor parish of Our Lady of Lourdes. This Parish hosts a nursery, primary and secondary schools with 860 children and they have an urgent need for clean water.

The **fourth well** will be built in honour of St. Joseph in Monrovia, Liberia for the school children and needy families in Christopolis. (Above) "This is a photo of how children risk themselves to fetch water from the nearby stream around the school."

## BENEFACTOR CORRESPONDENCE:

Dear Frankie,

Thank you for all your hard work towards the poorest of the poor; Silent Children's Mission gives us an opportunity to extend our love for the poor and the fruits are quite evident in the beautiful newsletters you send out. My family and I are so happy to support a charitable organization that fully adheres to the Catholic moral teaching and tangibly and credibly ensures our donations actually reach those who are most in need.

As you know, our prized material possessions will all come to pass and when we appear before Our Lord he will ask us what we did for the poor during our short lifetime. As a result, members of my family decided to cash in most of their gold pieces of jewellery and, moved with sincere sentiments of true love of the poor, donate the proceeds to SCM.

In honour of St. Joseph, it is our wish that the \$5000 be sent to Fr. Samuel in Liberia to provide another well for the village.

May God continue to shower his blessings upon you, SCM, all your benefactors, all the missionaries, and all those who have nothing compared to us. Anonymous.

# Spiritual Director Report



## *Transforming Despair into Hope*

During this time of year, it is not uncommon that the season of Advent which is meant to prepare us for Christmas, doesn't deliver what we had hoped for. For all the anticipation and good intentioned expectation, we can often feel let-down. Advent, which is meant to get us ready for joy, instead can leave us feeling empty and hollow, filled only with profound sadness, depression, and even despair. A visual metaphor that comes to mind is tinsel. While a child may at first be attracted from afar by the glitter and sparkle of tinsel, they quickly learn, upon closer examination, how unmagical and flimsy it really is, failing to hold their attention for long because it is in fact nothing more than mere chintzy decoration, a trivial garnish if you will, which disappoints.

The disappointment and emptiness that is rampant at this time of year I think is due partly because as someone once taught me, that everything is doubled during this time of year. Our highs are even higher and our lows are often even lower.

While the fondness of dear friends can truly bring greater joy at this time, many others experience the darkness more sharply; not only their own sinfulness and brokenness but their own limitedness and finitude.

They can encounter a void that leaves them with a gnawing feeling of loneliness and nothingness. Many of us experience Advent as a time that exposes our own emptiness and poverty, in which we confront the un-mourned sadness of our conspicuously absent loved ones who have died, and a dimming of unfulfilled hopes we had longed for.

St Jose Maria Escriva articulates the perfect remedy to combat this spiritual ailment:

**“The great Christian revolution has been to convert pain into fruitful suffering and to turn a bad thing into something good. We have deprived the devil of this weapon; and with it we conquer eternity.”**

This is the reason we celebrate Christmas. This is the eternal truth and the indestructible joy of the Good News! This is the reason Silent Children exists: “to convert pain” and “to turn a bad thing into something good.” This is what you do through your generosity and prayer. This engenders true hope, the greatest sign of which is the cross, which reveals the power of God's love, a divine love that was able to transform a symbol of torture, into a symbol of salvation. Our response then is to trust and hope in Christ, to believe in the Good News. A definition of the Biblical word for trust (Peithó) is having “a complete confidence or assured reliance on the character, ability, reliability, strength, or truth of someone or something.” Trust then is a personal choice. We either choose to trust God, Satan, ourselves or others. Proverbs 3:5 says, *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

We need to keep trusting God regardless of what is happening around us, even if things seem hopeless. We, like St. Peter, need to keep our eyes on Him rather than

on our problem. *He will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Him: because he trusts in Him (Isaiah 26:3).* God is very aware of each thing that is happening to you. We need to turn control completely over to our heavenly Father and stop trying to figure out a solution for ourselves. We need to learn to *Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7).*

Hope (elpis) is similarly having trust, confidence, and intense expectation for something. In the Bible it speaks of the absolute assurance that God will do well for me in the future. Unfortunately, many think of hope as meaning just a wishing and a hoping. Paul says in Romans 15:13: *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.* Hope then looks forward with desire, confidence, and expectation. There is no power for the present without hope for the future. While despair looks at present realities; hope sees ultimate realities.

**We thank each and every one of you who have helped extend trust and hope to so many children in African countries, the Caribbean, and Central America. We pray that the seeds you have planted will continue to grow and that the silent voices throughout the world will be heard – and that these children will experience the love of God.**

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you and give you peace,  
Fr. Michael Della Penna

*“It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you.” Mother Teresa*

# Updates from our Missionaries



## SIERRE LEONE

**Sr. Veronica** (bottom left), is a Sister of Our Lady of the Visitation who works with Ebola survivors in Bo City, Sierra Leone. “The poverty rate in our country is high and the most deprived group are children and women who suffer from hunger, sickness and inequity. We are all part of one human family, despite our cultural, religious or ideological differences. Loving our neighbour has a global dimension. This donation has given these orphans (photos of children), who are the poorest and most vulnerable, a brighter future. A quality education supported by SCM will strengthen the entire community.”

**Nenney** (right) is a student who lost her parents and siblings to the Ebola virus. As one of the children who experiences stigma, she chooses to help Sr. Veronica in the community to assist the widows and elderly women to pack charcoal which is their means of income.



# Updates from our Missionaries



## ZAMBIA

“With support received from Silent Children’s Mission, the hospital has been able to provide help to pregnant mothers and children who are most affected. In the picture on the left, the child was tested positive to Covid-19 and is admitted to the children ward. She is been given medicine and food by her mother. There is a constant need for PPE due to the ever increasing demand.

The availability of medicines has restored hope of healing to this child and she is feeling loved. The mother is grateful for the generous support rendered. We greatly value your loving response towards the care of the patients in this community. Only God can reward you.” Sr. Annie Chiluba

St. Theresa’s Mission Hospital, Ibenga Zambia, has been declared the Covid-19 Treatment centre for the Mpongwe district due to increasing Covid cases recorded daily. It is run by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi.

## MALAWI

“Mzambazi Community Hospital is a Catholic institution owned by the Mzuzu Diocese and is run by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. It was founded by Canadian Fr. Marcel St. Denis in 1949 and run by Canadian sisters until 1994. We are grandchildren of Canada and we love Canada!

We care for the Ngoni tribe – the Indigenous people who are farmers. One quarter of the population in this area are women of child bearing age and one fifth are children under five. We provide holistic care according to Catholic ethics and our vision is to provide excellent health, spiritual and social services to all people. Most of the people have a very low income and live far from the hospital; their mode of transport is bicycle or ox-cart. Your donation has helped to reduce hunger through food supplements and the purchase of fertilizer for the land.

Thanks to SCM for the love and care. What return can we make? We offer you all to God for the good work you do for our community! Thank you! Thank you!

Sr. Florence Msowoya, Hospital Director



This is Grace. She is 4 yrs old, her mother died at delivery at Mzambazi Hospital. Her grandmother cares for her but she lacks basic needs.

*“God who for our sake chose to become a child. In every child we see something of the Child of Bethlehem. Every child asks for our love. This night, then, let us think especially of those children who are denied the love of their parents. Let us think of those street children who do not have the blessing of a family home, of those children who are brutally exploited as soldiers and made instruments of violence, instead of messengers of reconciliation and peace. Let us think of those children who are victims of the industry of pornography and every other appalling form of abuse, and thus are traumatized in the depths of their soul. The Child of Bethlehem summons us once again to do everything in our power to put an end to the suffering of these children; to do everything possible to make the light of Bethlehem touch the heart of every man and woman. Only through the conversion of hearts, only through a change in the depths of our hearts can the cause of all this evil be overcome, only thus can the power of the evil one be defeated. Only if people change will the world change; and in order to change, people need the light that comes from God, the light which so unexpectedly entered into our night.” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI*

# Updates from our Missionaries



Juan Carlos continues to share God's love with the poor in Guatemala serving the children and families who live and work near the basurero (dump). These photos show the good work he is doing with SCM's financial assistance to help families in desperate need. Veronica, with her three young children lost their home when the wall of the neighbour's house fell on her roof during a flood. Juan Carlos used some of the donation to purchase the necessary materials and to coordinate the people to reconstruct a new home for Veronica.

"Frankie, thank God for this special opportunity. This is God's money. There is so much need here and we thank you sincerely. Muchas gracias!"

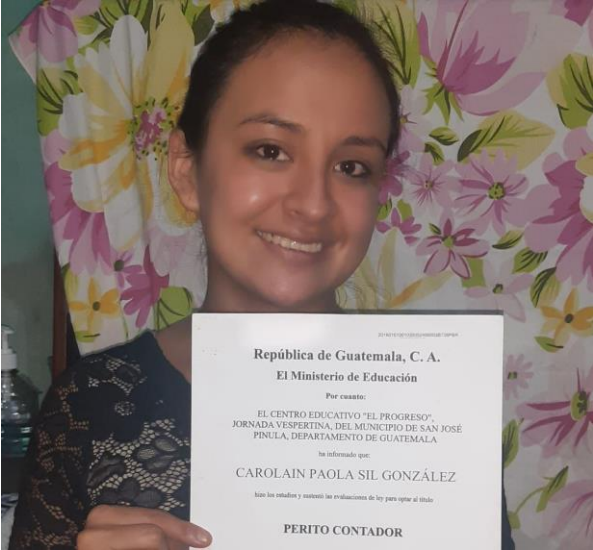


Juan Carlos with Cesar (above), who is 13 but growth stunted due to poor nutrition. Photo (right) Vicky who lost her parents and is now the main caregiver of her grandmother and siblings receiving help from SCM.



*Prayer to St. Joseph - "St. Joseph, you who have always trusted God, and have made your choices guided by His providence, teach us not to count so much on our own plans but on His plan of love. You who come from the peripheries, help us to convert our gaze and to prefer what the world discards and marginalizes. Comfort those who feel alone and support those who work silently to defend life and human dignity." Pope Francis*

# Updates from our Missionaries



## GUATEMALA

Through the financial assistance of SCM and the loving care of Jandira Decaret, Paola (left) was able to complete her Accounting diploma! An education will enable her to find a better job in order to help her family, especially her nephew Jeremy, who requires medical assistance for Muscular Dystrophy. We are so proud of Paola's accomplishment!

Photo bottom left: "Frankie, these are the Hermanas de la Eucaristía, they need a lot of help. They are sheltering abused girls...because of Covid they are home with their abusers....it's terrible, these girls comes to the sisters for help. They already have a piece of land and they are planning to build a home for them." Jandira

Photo bottom right: Jandira providing assistance to Ana Lucia, a young woman SCM is helping to attend nursing school.



## HONDURAS

"I wish to thank Frankie and all the people who work at Silent Children. I'm sure you all will understand that these last months have been very difficult for us. In truth, we were unprepared to face such an unexpected situation because of this virus. Thank God we are now moving forward in a smooth way but this would never have been possible without your economic help. Educating our kids is one of our biggest priorities. Thank you for giving us such a huge helping hand through your last donation.

Rest assured of our prayers for all of you at Silent Children. Blessings and un abrazo all the way from Olancho, Honduras!" Padre Alberto Gauci, Franciscan priest of the Immaculate Conception Province

## HAITI

Thank you so much for the generosity in which you responded to our request to assist Sr. Merly and the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Poor to help the people of Haiti who were so tragically affected by the recent earthquake in August. We were able to send them \$30,000! "Our Feeding Program and Free Medical Assistance continue through the kind help of SCM. We and the poor whom we served are ever grateful for the love and support of the SCM Family especially in the midst of all the turmoil and struggles. Thank you for the hope, light and joy you brought to our suffering poor." Sr. Rita Bandola



# In Memory of our Missionaries



*"It is not Death that will come to fetch me, it is the good God. Death is no phantom, no horrible specter, as presented in pictures. In the catechism it is stated that death is the separation of soul and body, that is all! Well, I am not afraid of a separation which will unite me to the good God forever."  
St. Therese of Lisieux*

Please pray for the repose of the soul of another one of our missionaries who passed due to covid - **Sr. Charity Chishimba**. Sr. Charity was a Sister of the Child Jesus, an Indigenous Diocesan Congregation involved in teaching, nursing, social work and farming. St. Fidelis Hospital, the mission hospital where she worked as a medical doctor, is located in Chilubula, 37km from Kasama. The hospital caters to over 1000 people, mostly very poor in the surrounding area. She was also involved in caring for special needs children at the St. Teresa School also run by the Sisters, and she had a special love for helping young girls who had been sexually abused. Fr. Michael and I met her in 2014 and through previous correspondence she expressed her gratitude for the ongoing spiritual and material assistance SCM has provided over the years.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:silentchildrenca@yahoo.com) or call us at 416-418-0314

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:** [www.silentchildrenmission.com](http://www.silentchildrenmission.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](mailto: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**