



*The fruit of
love
is service,
the fruit of
service
is peace.*

Mother Teresa



Executive Director's Letter



Frankie Burg-Feret
Executive Director

Dear friends of SCM,

Sometimes to our amazement, the people we are entrusted to help are the people who minister to us. I teach nursing and I have several international students from Ukraine in my classes. The other day, I asked one of my students how she was doing, and with great passion, she explained how her family has refused to leave Ukraine and that her 72-year-old grandfather wants to join the Ukrainian army to fight the Russians. I felt a profound sadness and unexpectedly found myself starting to cry; the tables were turned as my student began to console me! I had the opportunity to listen as she described her volunteer projects here in Canada to help her fellow Ukrainians. She not only inspired me, but she gave me hope knowing there are many good people in this world with a great heart for those in need and of course, she reminded me of you – our SCM benefactors who have been so generous. Without your support, we could not help the hundreds of children who now have better nutrition, health, education, and spiritual guidance in thirteen countries throughout the world.

To serve the poor, we need a great love for them. Yes, we need your money,

but for justice to prevail, we need your love and prayers which transforms hearts. Humanity is indebted to those most in need because they provide us with the opportunity to redeem ourselves and to love the crucified Christ in our midst. Many years before she started her work and began the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa heard the call of Jesus to help the poorest of the poor. Jesus' *sitio* (I thirst) and service to the poor are considered the two pillars of Mother Teresa's work. She said, "The work for the poor; no matter how small or humble – make our life something beautiful for God" and "Our charism is to satiate the thirst of Jesus for love and souls". These two pillars cannot be separated.

Jesus is the Hungry – to be fed.
Jesus is the Thirsty – to be satiated.
Jesus is the Naked – to be clothed.
Jesus is the Homeless – to be taken in.
Jesus is the Sick – to be healed.
Jesus is the Lonely – to be loved.

Let us listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit just as Mother Teresa did because we are all called to be saints and we must discern what it is that God wants us to do. Raniero Cantalamessa OFM, cap says, "Every saint is an unprecedented invention of the Holy Spirit. God can ask one saint for the opposite of what he asks another". As we prepare this lent for the risen Christ at Easter – let us reflect on what God is asking of each of us. What actions will we take to satiate Jesus in the poor?

"Lord may everything we do begin with your inspiration and continue with your saving help. Let our work always find its origin in you and through you reach completion." Liturgical prayer

Saint Teresa of Calcutta - intercede for us.

Peace,
Frankie

Updates from our Missionaries



MALAWI

"Mrs. Grace Mlongoti is a widow. She and her children have benefited from the Joan and Andrew Simone Farm sponsored by SCM since 2016 when she came to ask for assistance for food or finances to help her raise her orphans. She has six children, two went into early marriages, while she still looks after her four younger children and grandchild. SCM also sponsors Dorne Mlongoti with school fees (girl in uniform). There are a number of single mothers who also work on the farm and are able to support their children (group photo is of the mothers and children on the farm). Thank you so much my sister for everything you are doing to us!" Sr. Bernadette, Sisters of Charity of Ottawa, Mkanda, Malawi

Spiritual Director's Reflection



“Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you.” *Didache*

In this critical time of war, the charitable good works of SCM stand out as all the more necessary in order to help those who are downtrodden, poor, and have no voice – especially in the Ukraine. Although SCM does not have missionaries active in this country, we know that our vision is neither limited by geographical boundaries nor reduced to material help but rather encompasses the powerful weapons of prayer and fasting in order to fulfill our objective “to communicate the love of God to these poorest of the poor, to let them know someone cares – that God has not forgotten them but love them.” The Church in fact has always taught that prayer combined with fasting is the highest external penance that anyone can perform, and thus should be preferred above all others; even going so far as to indicate that those who do not fast--whose appetites are continually satiated--are *incapable* of prayer! It is for this reason that we as a SCM staff have from the very beginning committed to a practice of uniting to fast on the first Friday of every month.

Our Lenten observance therefore, is a perfect time to return to the true and tried Biblical prescriptions of how to

face adversity and learn how to lift up the prayer of our hearts and fast for those who are most in need. According to the Council of Trent, there is nothing “more effectual in uprooting all sin from the soul than fasting”, the most frequently mentioned form of penance in scripture, along with prayer and almsgiving. The Old Testament is filled with examples like 1 Samuel 7:6, which shows how through prayer and fasting the Lord is able to deliver Israel from the threat of the Philistines, who had oppressed them for so many years. In Judges 20:26 and in 2 Chronicles 20:3 we learn that it was only when “all the sons of Israel and all the people went up and remained there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening” that their defeat changed into victory. Judith 4:11 also promises: “Know that the Lord will hear your prayers, if you continue with perseverance in fastings and prayers in the sight of the Lord.”

Unfortunately however, in recent times, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has lamented the fact that “in our own day, fasting seems to have lost something of its spiritual meaning”. He therefore promoted the need to restore the power of prayer and fasting back to its proper place, “so that the authentic and perennial significance of this long held practice may be rediscovered.” The Holy Father said fasting is “a spiritual arm to do battle” not only against wars but our own inner conflicts, that is “against every possible disordered attachment to ourselves”. He further commented that fasting is a “therapy to heal all that prevents [us] from conformity to the will of God”, and “assists us to mortify our egoism and open our heart to love of God and neighbor”. He derives this directly from the rich Biblical teaching which confirms the efficacy of prayer and fasting in no less than twenty – five of its books.

The power of fasting is not limited to personal benefits, however, as Isaiah reveals another dimension of fasting when he asks: “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” Throughout our tradition, the early Church Fathers like St Basil the Great have always reiterated this same dimension of truth: “Do you fast? Then feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick, do not forget the imprisoned, have pity on the tortured, comfort those who grieve and who weep, be merciful, humble, kind, calm, patient, sympathetic, forgiving, reverent, truthful and pious, so that God might accept your fasting and might plentifully grant you the fruits of repentance. Fasting of the body is food for the soul.” Fasting, as St Peter Chrysologous envisioned it then is not only “the soul of prayer,” but demonstrates “mercy is the lifeblood of fasting.” He therefore concludes: “So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, you open God’s ear to yourself.”

Combining prayer, fasting and almsgiving not only produces personal spiritual benefits but has explicit social impact. This truth is grounded in the fact that sacrifice and denial challenge us to rise above the selfish interests of our egos and open ourselves to others, giving us some objectivity from our sometimes blind, self-centeredness. This invites us to give up or share our possessions, time, and food.

It is an exercise in loosening the chains that can enslave us to being dragged along by our own incessant desire to immediately gratify ourselves. In this way, we curb the craving to satisfy our worldly desires of the "flesh" and allow them to die interiorly and thus "pass over" into new life; we make ourselves a tomb in order to become a temple in which the spirit may dwell. Fasting and almsgiving can be a powerful antidote to our unbridled gluttony and addictions and so help us encounter God.

We at Silent Children's Mission therefore pray that you join us in fasting, prayer and almsgiving, so that we may not only be in solidarity with the poorest of the poor, but also die a little to ourselves, and so be purified and renewed in order to love God and our neighbor in a greater way. I would like to end with Pope Francis' words on fasting. "Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance. I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt. Fasting makes sense if it questions our security, and

if it also leads to some benefit for others, if it helps us to cultivate the style of the Good Samaritan, who bends down to his brother in need and takes care of him. Fasting helps us to attune our hearts to the essential and to sharing. It is a sign of awareness and responsibility in the face of injustice, abuse, especially to the poor and the little ones, and it is a sign of the trust we place in God and in his providence."

Peace,

Fr. Michael Della Penna OFM

Updates from our Missionaries



RWANDA

This young boy was neglected and left to die when a neighbour took pity and brought him to the St. Francis Handicapped Centre in Rwanda run by the Penitent Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in Rwanda. This was a mission Fr. Michael and Frankie visited in August 2019. Photo (left) when he arrived at the centre, photo (middle) how he is doing now, photo (right) Sr. Cecile Uwizeyemariya visiting with the children at the centre.

"Never war!

Think first about the children, about those who are deprived of the hope for a dignified life: dead or wounded children, orphans, children who play with the remnants of war. . . . In the name of God, stop!" Pope Francis

Updates from our Missionaries



ZAMBIA

“We have employed local people from the surrounding community to work on the farm and that is how they are able to raise money for their children’s school fees, books and food. We now have maize, soya, ground nuts, 4000 tomatoes, oranges and lemons! We are having heavy rains now but will sink the borehole in April or May when it is dry. We desperately need water during dry season for the farm thanks a million!”
Sr. Josephine, Franciscan Sisters of Assisi, Luanshya, Zambia

Your donations make a difference



HAITI

“Mikabens is 14 months old and was suffering from malnutrition and a skin infection. Her mother arrived at the farm in Cerca Carvajal asking for assistance. She has improved tremendously – thanks to SCM benefactors.” Gerry Brinston, SCM board member and lay missionary

Updates from our Missionaries



"It has been very challenging to obtain health care for the children in the villages near Cerca because often the hospitals do not have any medical personnel. Normally the doctors only come one or two days per week as they visit different rural hospitals on a circuit. However, the gangs have been kidnapping health care workers and so even the most dedicated nurses are sometimes afraid to go to work at the hospitals. SCM has helped care for many children improving their health in these difficult circumstances.

Lelance was badly burned but turned away at the hospital because her mother had no money. She resorted to a local cure by applying mud to the burn. Because of your donations, Lelance's burns are healing well."



HAITI

"After many delays due to the pandemic and political unrest, the bakery in Cerca Carvajal in Haiti is ready to go! We are waiting for the baker to arrive. He will teach women from the villages surrounding the farm how to bake, providing them with a skill and a means to feed their children." Photo (bottom right) preparing food for the children in the new kitchen.

Gerry Brinston, SCM board member and lay missionary



Updates from our Missionaries



LIBERIA

“Rainy season has ended and we have almost completed the well in Liberia. The well was needed as the children were fetching water from a dirty stream (photo right). There was a big, white, water bucket in front of the school where 300 pupils all drink from the same cup. The photo (top right) shows the dilapidated makeshift classrooms which are so hot for the students. The toilet facilities (photos above) are unhygienic, and unfit for a population of 300 plus. There is a great need for new facilities.”

Fr. Samuel, Spiritan priest, Liberia



SIERRA LEONE

“On our Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Catholic Diocese of Bo, Bishop Charles Campbell has blessed the site for the digging of the St. Joseph's Water well.”

Fr. Samuel, Spiritan priest (overseeing the project in Sierra Leone)



HONDURAS

Children from the orphanage Hogar de Ninos, Santa Maria de Los Angeles, in Honduras receive their First Holy Communion. Padre Alberto, Franciscan priest

Updates from our Missionaries



MALAWI

“This little girl is HIV and AIDS positive. She has been a beneficiary of SCM and receives food, medication and clothing. She is deaf and was not accepted at school as she needs extra care. She was in a pathetic situation but now has improved tremendously. There is a Catholic nun, Sr. Rose who monitors her on a weekly basis and makes sure she is eating and taking her medication.

“I want to express on behalf of the community and parish, our gratitude for the donation; we do not take this for granted. There are so many needs in the world and you could choose others to help but you chose to assist our community. I have recovered from Covid where I was nearer to another life than the earthly one. Each time I have helped the needy children using the SCM donation, I am reminded of how much I suffered and have been given an opportunity to be the hand of extension to the mission of SCM.”

Fraternally yours, Fr. Sylvester, Spiritan priest, Ganya parish, Malawi

How you can help

MAKE A DONATION: By sending a cheque payable 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.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

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