



Silent Children's Mission

ISSUE

40

WINTER
2023

*"It is not enough
to love the children;
it is necessary that
they are aware they
are loved."*

St. John Bosco



Executive Director's Letter



Frankie & Joan

Dear SCM benefactors,

Today is the first day of Advent, the beginning of our liturgical year, and the season of preparation for the Nativity of Christ. This morning at Mass the processional hymn was O Come, Divine Messiah and as we sang, these words spoke to my heart:

***You come in peace and meekness, and lowly will your cradle be:
All clothed in human weakness, shall we your Godhead see.***

It is easy to despair when we see the darkness in this world of war, poverty, injustice and especially indifference. The hymn we sang describes the world's desire for love, peace, and joy. We are waiting for our Messiah to come again but at the same time we must prepare by opening our hearts to see Him and to respond to those He sends our way with love and mercy.

How will we know he is here? God is present to us now in the humble, the weak, the poor, and the forgotten. James 2:5 says: "Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?" We don't have to

look far to find God waiting for us to satiate His thirst for our love. I am not saying it is easy; this work we are called to requires patience and determination, because there will always be something that tries to hinder our progress.

I wonder what the world would look like if everyone followed the Gospel of Jesus? Perhaps our lives would be more like the life of Joan Simone, our beloved co-founder who died this past September. Joan lived a life of poverty, humility, and deep trust in God and she demonstrated through her actions, a trusting simplicity, and profound obedience to the gospel way of life - exactly what the world needs more of. We cannot be like her of course, but each one of us is called in a different way – in a way that celebrates our unique gifts. This Advent let us open our hearts to see Christ in our midst and to respond according to God's will for us.

You will see in this newsletter the progress your support has made in the lives of those most vulnerable served by our missionaries. It is a great privilege for us to accompany these priests, nuns, and laypeople as they do God's work for His people. Juan Carlos is a layperson working with children in zone three, the community near the basurero (dump) in Guatemala, and his updates will inspire you. His corporal works of mercy include visiting the imprisoned as

he continues to visit Jonathan whom he has known since he was a child living on the streets. The Guatemalan prison system is harsh and politicians do not consider prisoners a priority for a country that has so much poverty. Jonathan has no family to visit him and relies on people like Juan Carlos to help him with food and necessities. Jonathan is very grateful and knows the love of Christ because of your support.

Thank you for being here with us. Each of you read these messages and updates because you care about children who are most vulnerable – thank you for your prayers and support. There are about 600 people who receive this newsletter quarterly and it is our desire to distribute more widely. Please consider sharing your newsletter with someone who may be interested in our community of love.

May the hope, peace, love, and joy of Christ be with you and your families this advent season as you prepare for His coming.
O Come Divine Messiah!

Peace,
Frankie Burg-Feret
(Executive Director)



ZAMBIA



“I personally would like to thank Frankie and the team for being supportive in the work of making Jesus known and loved by the little ones through the donations you make. I am using your donation to help procure essential medicines for children and pregnant mothers. Most of the time the medicines are not available at the hospital and we have to buy them. Most of the children here have scabies, body rashes, and sores on their head and we need a lot of help to treat them. However, with your help, I am happy to say it goes a long way. Please continue to serve the children and to show them that Jesus loves and cares for them. Thank you very much and may God bless you abundantly.”

Sr. Anastazia

Daughters of the Redeemer, Chibombo, Zambia

Spiritual Director Reflection

Fr. Michael Della Penna, Ofm



There is a Great Feast of the Holy Ghost held in Fall River where I live which began in 1986 and takes place where hundreds of Portuguese converge every year to share a free meal of Holy Ghost soup and sweet bread. This sacred tradition is enthusiastically observed by immigrants from the Azores who serve a bowl of hot, hearty soup and some bread as a sign of sharing something with the poor. The Great Feast begins with a public recitation of the rosary in front of the “Imperio” or small chapel. The chapel is special because it hosts the crown of the Holy Ghost, which memorializes Queen

Isabel of Portugal, a Catholic saint renowned for feeding the poor in the 14th century. There is a miracle associated with the feast. The story goes that Saint Elizabeth (Queen Isabel) would take bread from the palace to the poor by concealing it in the folds of her dress. One day when she was confronted, she was made to open her dress only to be astounded to find flowers. It is such a nice story that affirms the holiness of the saint and the love she had for the poor.

One of the highlights of the feast, however, is a special ritual that I found fascinating. The priest is instructed to crown each of the parishioners who come forward with the crown and pray for them individually. This beautiful gesture affirms the dignity of the human person and gives such affirmation to the poor. It reminded me of the famous story of Saint Lawrence who was asked by the emperor to bring out all the treasures of the church. When the emperor arrived, he found that Saint Lawrence had gathered all the poor, the lame, the crippled, blind, and deaf and said: “Here is the treasure of the Church!” They are true treasures to us because as Pope Francis says: “We do not go to evangelize them, but rather, they evangelize us.” They teach us what is important: faith, being present, and relationship. This is what animates them and gives them security. Since they cannot depend on anything else, they are very attentive to each other and depend on the bonds that bind them - it is here they find Life and Joy.

Jesus, when he fed the 5000 in the miracle of the loaves and fish was not simply satisfying the material hunger of the crowd. Instead, the miracle had profound Eucharistic implications. Perhaps the most important was how this feeding affirmed the dignity of the human person and showed how God desires to nourish the deepest hungers of our heart. In fact, it reveals the very identity that is expressed through the covenant relationship we have with God. This is the entire mission of Silent Children: To help the poor feel the love of God by affirming their human dignity as made in the image and likeness of God. It is to remind them of their own goodness and their filial identity as children of God. This is explicitly stated in our mission statement: To let the poorest of the poor know someone cares - that God has not forgotten them but loves them.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

Fr. Michael

SIERRA LEONE

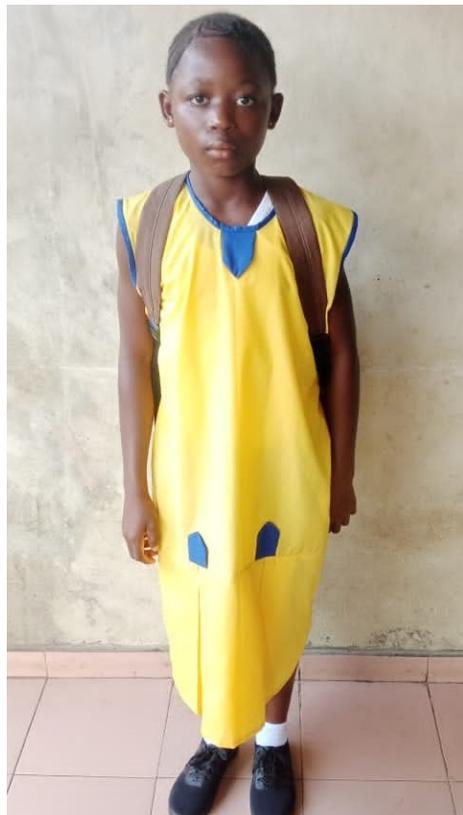
“Alie (Aloysius) (photo right) is a seven-year-old boy who lost his family during the Ebola outbreak. Since then, Alie had been living on the streets, begging for his living with no family to care for him. We have enrolled him in school, and he now stays with a couple who have been so helpful in accommodating him with support for the costs of his food and education coming from Silent Children’s Mission. When we do this work of charity, we strengthen the entire community because the powerlessness of any member can become a wound on the rest of society.”

Sr. Veronica

Sisters of our Lady of the Visitation



“**Lucy** (right) is an eleven-year-old girl, an orphan who is a survivor of Ebola and sexual abuse. When I first met her, you could see the pain of living without hope. This small girl has undergone a lot of losses, she was physically battered and she fears to stay around any man. We are with her in her emotional journey of recovery and she requires a lot of counselling and medical care. After working with her for six months she is beginning to trust and interact with other people so I have enrolled her in school. Lucy is presently living with a foster parent and is supported with food and education costs by SCM. Please continue to support her as her zeal for education is unimaginable.”



“These **children** (below) break stone and sell it for food because their community is so poor. They have no shelter or basic necessities and no opportunity for education. Many are survivors of Ebola and are orphans, often living on the street and committing crimes in order to eat. We have had meetings with the community leaders and have approached many organizations for a solution for these children but to no avail. Sierra Leone is a country that lacks the capacity to handle poverty, food insecurity, violence against women and children, and has a weak health care system. Presently, I offer the children free counselling and have enrolled them in primary school and have found foster homes for them – there are 28 children. The impact of your donation has helped them to realize their human dignity and reach their potential. You have given these children, the poorest and most vulnerable, a brighter future with a quality education, food and a medical care.

Sr. Veronica

Sisters of our Lady of the Visitation



HAITI

An Answer to Prayer...

Shootings, gang violence, fuel shortages, food insecurity, and a growing cholera epidemic are all plaguing Haiti. However, this update is not a story of adversity, but a testimony to the Grace of God because through the power of prayer, God is helping our little community in the mountains of Haiti overcome afflictions.

This past visit to Haiti I saw that we were struggling with a growing number of children seeking food from our feeding program. On one particular day, with regret, we had to close the gates to stop the flow of additional children to the farm leaving a great number of hungry children on the other side of the gate. Sadly, they sat in silence and watched as the other children waited anxiously to receive their plate of food. At that time, we could do nothing but pray and it was after our prayer that we saw the children run over to the cactus fence and watched as they passed their plates to the desperate children on the other side. They were sharing what little they had with others who had nothing. The children taught us to keep the gates open and receive those in need because whatever we have will be shared.

In many ways, by your generous support, benefactors of Silent Children's Mission also passed the plate over the cactus fence to us on that little farm in the middle of nowhere. By helping us to build a bakery, we are able to feed those same children and employ several women who are able to provide income for their families. Thank you SCM for listening to the Word of God and answering our humble prayer.

Gerry Brinston, retired Toronto firefighter captain, lay missionary, and board member of SCM



Children (below) in the village wearing their new clothing from Canada



"Every day they increase the amount of bread they produce." Gerry

RWANDA

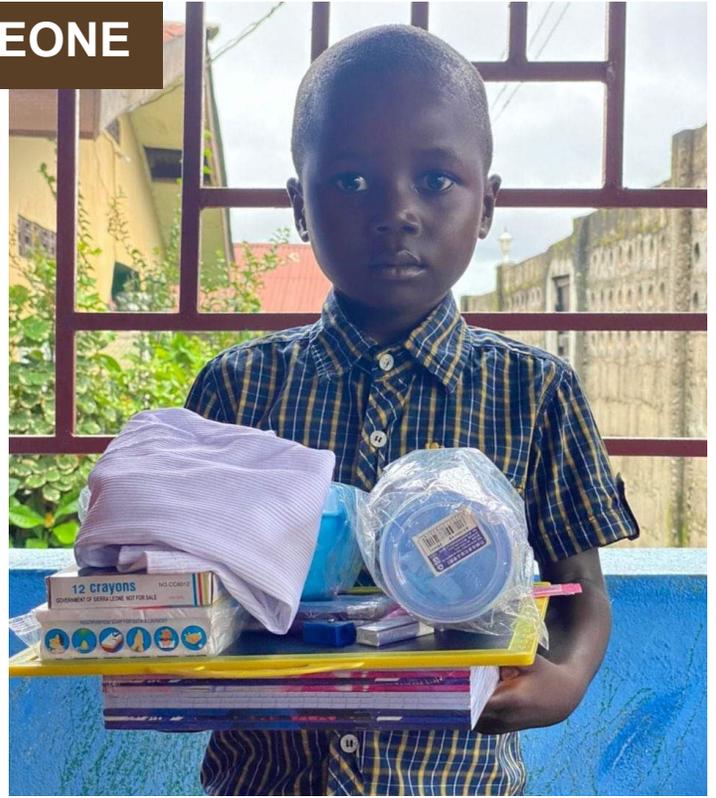
Josue is the first born in his family. The family has only two children. Josue and his little brother. His mother because of Josue's disability, abandoned her husband with the two children and remarried another man. The children's father immediately took on the responsibility of looking after the children himself. He had to quit work to find the time to take care of his children. This dad has become very poor. He has no house or land to cultivate. When he came to ask for help with the care of his child Josué in our center for the disabled of Saint Francis of Assisi, he also asked for a home. Since then, he has lived in the center with his son. Thanks to God and your support, the child begins to walk. Josué apart from his physical handicap, also has language problem. We planned to send him to school but he has a limitation as his legs cannot let him stand and walk, so when the child is able to walk, he will start school or learn a job.

Receive a thousand thanks for your love, charity, generosity. May God bless you, keep you and grant you peace now and always.

Sr. Cecile, Penitent Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Rusizi, Rwanda



SIERRA LEONE



“The most deprived group in our country are women and children who have suffered a lot with hunger, sickness, inequality, and other deprivations. Our dreams are to better their lives by empowering them through education and providing life skills to help them be self-reliant. Our dream is to build a home for them where they can live with love and care.

According to the social teachings of the Catholic Church, in every economic, political and social decision, a weighted concern must be given to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. Alie, Lucy and many other children have suffered a lot because of the loss of their parents and family and society has failed them as well. Please continue to help the children with the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter.”

Sr. Veronica



GUATEMALA

Update from **Juan Carlos**, lay missionary

Mercedes and her vision

“Mercedes was born in zone 3 and worked for 15 years as a “guajera” in the dump. She gave her life to Christ when she was a teenager and has been serving Him faithfully since. In the settlement which is in front of the main entrance of the city dump, there are a lot of children whose families don’t have enough income to feed them adequately.

Mercedes’ vision is to give lunch, at least two times a week, for 100 children. She wants to reach more children. SCM gave her food for over one month - that means that 10 times, 100 children will receive their warm lunch.”



Viki cares for her grandmother and six siblings and they live in zone 3 in the basurero Guatemala City dump. This beautiful family has been helped by SCM in several different ways.

“After Daniela was attacked near their home, the kids showed sadness in their eyes. To lift their spirits up, we brought them for lunch at McDonald’s and we went to buy each one a garment and pair of shoes and they were extremely happy and grateful. The kids were told that these special gifts were a gift of God. Viki wanted to have a business so they can provide for their daily meals. She was given money from SCM to lift her business and put it outside her home. Now, Antoni, Fatima and Viki take turns to attend their business. They could not afford to pay for Daniela’s studies. SCM was able to pay for Daniela’s FULL year scholarship. They could not believe that news! Daniela was really thankful for the opportunity to continue studying. We also purchase groceries for the children to better their nutrition. Again, this family is extremely grateful for all of the support given to the children. They always ask: “Cuando va a venir Frankie a visitarnos!?”

Vitalina’s Fruit and Vegetable Store - (Update since SCM visit in May 2022)

“This family had a big tragedy after your visit. Due to strong storms their house collapsed. SCM helped them with the poles that hold the ceiling and some ceiling sheets.

Vitalina’s dream was to have her own fruit and vegetable store so she can buy food for her children and now her business is improving - we went to CENMA where you can find the best fruit and vegetables in the city. We bought all Vitalina, César and Angel needed for their new business. From that day on, with the profits, Vitalina has purchased every single day fruits and vegetables for their business. They open every day of the week and the business is going incredibly well. César’s birthday was celebrated with pizza and a cake! He, his mother and brothers were extremely happy to have pizza at the celebration.”



New family receives assistance from SCM

“Tere, Eucebio and their 4 children were thrown to the streets and had no place to sleep. A good Samaritan woman gave half of her home for them (one room). They don’t have money to pay her for rent. Some of the poles by which the shack holds the roof were broken. The ceiling sheets (above the beds) had a great number of holes, so when they slept at night and it rained, they got very wet. We paid for the poles that needed to be replaced and the new ceiling sheets which were installed by a professional. Today they sleep in peace at night and do not worry of the strong storms we have had. They were so motivated by their new ceiling that they painted their front door a new color!”

Joan Clare Simone



September 22, 1940 – September 26, 2022

It is with great sadness that we share of the passing of our beloved Joan. Joan was co-founder with her husband Dr. Andrew Simone of Canadian Food for Children, and Silent Children's Mission as well as supporting the new charity Amazing Grace. These charities serve the poorest of the poor in developing countries in the charism of Mother Teresa. When she and her husband were first called by God to serve the poor, they were raising thirteen children and fostering many children in their home. Joan's faith in Divine Providence was inspired by their close association as co-workers with Saint Teresa of Calcutta and with the Saint's blessing they started CFFC in 1985. They felt called to start a sister charity, Silent Children's Mission in 2005. Joan was devoted to her Catholic faith and as a Secular Franciscan, she found inspiration from the saints – especially St. Francis of Assisi. Joan was a member of the Order of Canada, received an Honorary Doctorate of Sacred Letters Honoris Causa degree from St. Michael's College, and the Papal Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice as well as many other awards in recognition for her devotion to family, faith, and service to the poor. She was a devoted wife to Andrew and was most proud of her children and many grandchildren.

Joan's life of humility and holiness will always inspire the volunteers of SCM and we are forever grateful for her encouragement, prayers, and love.

May Andrew and his family find peace knowing she is resting in the tender embrace of our Saviour Jesus Christ with Mary and all the saints.

How you can help

MAKE A DONATION: By sending a cheque written to: **Silent Children's Mission** and mail 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) 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](#)