



It is a need which springs from "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6)...In our service of charity, we must be inspired and distinguished by a specific attitude: we must care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to become neighbors to everyone (cf. Lk 10:29-37), and to show special favor to those who are poorest, most alone and most in need.

John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, 1995



## Executive Director's letter



Frankie's Whatsapp photo

(Photo above: Karen and Juan Carlos, with her brother and uncle at the clinic in the basurero)

After a three year pause due to the pandemic, I was able to lead another medical service trip to Guatemala with volunteers and graduating students at Humber College. Medications and medical supplies are essential to the success of the trip so without the generous donations of SCM benefactors, it would not have been possible. Over ten days, we were able to provide primary health care to over 450 children and families in three under-resourced communities. Most important to me was the opportunity to witness partners from two countries, people of diverse cultural backgrounds, different medical professions, and various ages, coming together to create a committed, and caring team with one common goal - to help the children!

Prior to the team arriving, I had the opportunity to visit some families living in the basurero (dump) with Juan Carlos, a special person with great love for people especially those most forgotten and neglected by society. Walking through the narrow, dirty paths of the slums, I wondered how I would survive the living conditions. All the families we met were special, but there was one girl I will not forget because of the profound effect she had on so many people. Her name is Karen, and she is disabled and severely malnourished. She is 22 years old but childlike, non-verbal, and unable to



walk. Her aunt cares for her, another disabled sibling, and multiple family members while the adults work in the basurero scavenging for items to sell. During the pandemic, there were many times they could not work as the city was shut down resulting in Karen's severe state of malnutrition. I asked Karen's uncle Estuardo, how can we help, what do you need most? He said Karen lies in bed all day in a dark room, and rarely goes outside. He said a wheelchair would help so the family could take her outside for walks. This is where we were able to see God's hand at work! I made a phone call and within 30 minutes a new wheelchair was donated and ready for the clinic on Wednesday when we would see Karen again. Additionally, a donation of Incaparina, a fortified milk for malnourished children in Guatemala would be available as well. I recently received the following message from Juan Carlos:

*"My dear Frankie you wouldn't imagine! Estuardo says that Karen is incredibly happy with her Incaparina. She is drinking 7 bottles a day when before she drank two of whatever they had to give her. She loves it and asks for more food at night. It is a real blessing! She is happy and more active than 2 weeks ago, and she loves going outside and claps her hands constantly. The wheelchair and Incaparina have been a life changer for her!"*

The work of Silent Children's Mission is to give meaning to Karen's life and the lives of those who have no voice. Our job is to let each child know that God loves them through human connection and a compassionate encounter. This responsibility of our faith is clearly articulated in a pastoral letter by the US Bishops: "At the center of all Catholic social teaching are the transcendence of God and the dignity of the human person. The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God, but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry" (The Challenge of Peace, 1983).

In this newsletter, the stories of Karen in Guatemala, Benta in Kenya, and Christopher in Malawi affirm the fundamental importance of human connection in order to protect their dignity. John Paul II in an Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1979 said: "...although each person lives in a particular concrete social and historical context – every human being is endowed with a dignity that must never be lessened, impaired or destroyed but instead be respected and safeguarded..." How do we do this in the context of which we are living because we are all called to holiness? How can you demonstrate God's love to others? If this is something you would like to explore, consider joining us at our SCM annual retreat in June.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

Frankie

Left: 20 hockey bags line the floor in the SCM office filled with fifty pounds each of medications, vitamins, medical supplies and other donations. We are grateful for your generosity!  
Below: 2023 team with partners, and translators!





## Spiritual Director's Reflection

### Call to Holiness

Right from the very beginning, when Silent Children's Mission was first conceived by Dr Andrew Simone and his wife Joan, we have always envisioned our mission to go beyond merely providing material goods. Under the inspiration of Saint Mother Teresa, we have instead sought to provide something more, something greater. The purpose and priority for our charity has always been evangelical, that is, the ultimate goal of our non-profit organization is the same goal that every organization has within the Catholic Church; to make disciples. Above and beyond providing social welfare, our ultimate aim and motivation is to cultivate a

relationship with Christ. Our mission statement therefore states: "The goal is to let the poorest of the poor know someone cares – that God has not forgotten them but loves them...so they can live a life of dignity and have the opportunity to develop their soul." Our vision states explicitly that "The priority of SCM is to communicate the love of God to the poorest of the poor" and so "We strive to be Christ-like in affirming their human dignity by helping them develop their faith."

With this in mind, we are inviting you to our retreat this year in order to provide an opportunity to not only reflect on what it looks like to be Christ-like but help us prepare to en flesh this call, in concrete ways. If our priority and goal is genuinely the faith development of those we serve, then we need to educate ourselves in what holiness is all about. We ought to have a clear vision of exactly what we are hoping to achieve in developing holiness in others and have a solid plan of how to get there.

Holiness in the Catholic tradition has often been understood in a vague and abstract way. Scott Hahn's latest book *Holy is His name: The Transforming Power of God's Holiness in Scripture* is a good springboard for discussing the challenges of understanding and living out the call to universal holiness that Vatican II has promoted. In his book, Hahn identifies holiness as central to the whole of salvation history and the point of the Biblical narrative of our human story. While he points out that holiness has often been conflated to mean the same thing as goodness or courage, he states holiness was one of the central messages of Vatican II which called all believers "to strive for the holiness and perfection of their proper state." This vision is very significant because it challenges us to expand our often-limited conception of what comprises the church (the priests, bishops and Popes) to include all the faithful equally. Quoting the Catechism, Hahn cites article 2809:

***The holiness of God is the inaccessible center of his eternal mystery. What is revealed of it in creation and history, scripture calls, "glory", and "the radiance of his Majesty". In making man in his image and likeness, God "crowned him with glory and honor" but by sinning, man fell "short of the glory of God". From that time on, God was to manifest his holiness by revealing and giving his name, in order to restore man to the image of his Creator.***

In drawing upon the witness and example of St. Mother Teresa, especially in the newly released movie called *No Greater Love*, we hope to unpack how this great saint lived out the call to universal holiness in a heroic way. We are therefore inviting Jim Wahlberg, the director, producer and Executive Director of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation to a special virtual chat with us. We hope to hear first-hand how a meeting with St. Mother Teresa in prison changed his life and began his journey to holiness. Please join us this June for a special opportunity to learn about our charism and live out the truth of our universal call to holiness in a special way.

Peace, Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm





# Silent Children's Mission Retreat

*Come join us!*



Frankie Burg-Feret  
Executive Director



Fr. Michael Della Penna OFM  
Spiritual Director of SCM



Deacon Robert Kinghorn  
The Church on the Street



Jim Wahlberg  
Film Producer/Writer

## CALL TO HOLINESS

*with amazing speakers*

June 2 - 3, 2023

Option 1 - Friday, June 2, 6:00 pm (Dinner) to 5:00 pm Saturday, June 3 - \$100.00

Option 2 - Saturday, June 3 - 9:00 am to 5:00 pm - \$45.00

St. Francis Centre

#208501, Hwy 9, Caledon, ON

Limited Spaces Available

For more information or to register: [scmretreat2023@gmail.com](mailto:scmretreat2023@gmail.com)  
416-418-0314





**From Sr. Rita, Compassionate Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, Queen of Hope Child Care in KENYA:**

Benta is a 24-year-old, single mother. She lives near us in a small rented room in Chokaa Slums, Nairobi. She was sick for almost nine years and could not do any work. Eventually, she struggled and forced herself to improve her health and attempted small self-help jobs to feed her children Sarah, Ann, and Cyrus. She could never quite manage to fully cover the children's school fees and uniforms. Every day she walked around the neighbourhood or in the wet market in Chokaa to sell umina (small tiny salted dried fish). The little amount she earns from selling was not at all enough to put food on the table. Despite her illness, Benta still had to work hard to pay the rent for her small room as well as the electricity and water bill.

One day, when our Sisters were walking in Chokaa to visit an old woman, they saw Benta with her young son, her last born less than four years old. She was carrying him tied to her back with a bucket

of dried fish on her head and another bucket in her hand. Her other small children were in school so no one was able to be at home with the youngest. The Sisters were moved by the sight of Benta struggling along with her child and the load and we were inspired by her dedication to help her family. So we began to help from that day on and the CFSOP Sisters help Benta to carry the cross. We assisted her to freely leave her son every day in our little Queen of Hope Day Care Centre, so that she can rest her back from carrying her child on her back all day and enable her to walk freely through the ghetto community to deliver and sell her fish.

Through the kind help received from Silent Children's Mission, we were also able to pay her daughter's school fees, as well as school uniforms, books, and school supplies for her children. Benta and the children were so very happy and thankful to God and little Sarah and her mom always have a most beautiful smile and much hope even as they struggle on each day. She is truly grateful and always cheerfully thank our Sisters. Often times, Sarah says to us that one day she too would like to become a Sister and serve others. She has become very prayerful and thoughtful, and joyfully and freely helps the Sisters at our Feeding Centre with little tasks. Now, Benta is able to earn a little more income to feed and help her family.

**We thank God for the kind support of Silent Children's Mission** to our Chokaa Ghetto Community and to our poor children and families in empowering us to serve others. Through your gracious help we are able to expand our works of mercy to assist single mothers who are really struggling and in need of God's help.

*Human dignity originates from God and is of God because we are made in God's own image and likeness.*

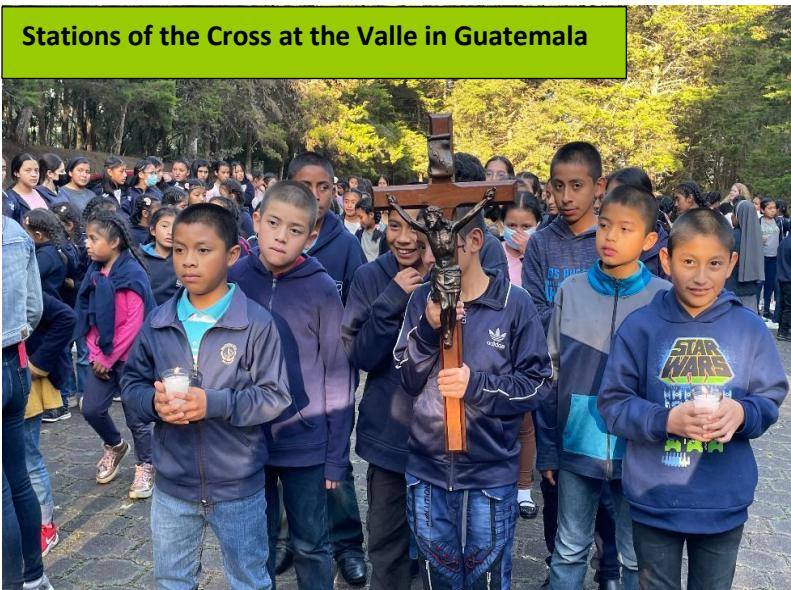
**(Genesis 1:26-27)**





While in rural Moyuta, **Guatemala**, the medical service team and I had the great privilege of visiting Gabriela and her family at their small family-run coffee plantation where they served us dinner. Gabriela is a former Valle de Los Angeles student where she graduated from high school and learned valuable skills through the baking program offered at the school. Many years ago, SCM benefactors provided a \$25,000.00 grant when the bakery was in the beginning stages of development. Fast-track to today and Gabriela has started her own baking business in Moyuta, and we had the opportunity to taste her delicious pineapple cake! What a joy to see the fruit of our benefactor's giving love so many years later - a true affirmation of how education helps people move from poverty to self-sufficiency. With joy, Frankie

#### Stations of the Cross at the Valle in Guatemala



Thanks to a special benefactor, Valle's children have a full-time nurse to care for the many medical and psychological needs of the children. Mirna is loved by all who meet her!





“Frankie, I am sorry to inform you that we have been hit by a cyclone again. Cyclone Freddy has wreaked havoc in the southern part of our country. Our archdiocese and its parishes are heavily affected. Our parish and the children that SCM cares for here in Malawi are again gravely affected. Houses have been destroyed by floods and terrible winds. Property has been lost and thousands of people displaced. Over three hundred people have been killed and the numbers are rising as the search continues. I am downcast at heart. I have visited some sites of the accident. The effects are horrifying. I will send you some pictures and video clips with respect to this. Please, when you send another donation, put this into consideration and assist us howsoever you can. There is immediate need for food, clothing, blankets, beddings, water, and medicines. I hope that you are well. May the Lord grant you abundant Lenten blessings and graces that you need in your life and family.”

Love, Fr. Peter, diocesan priest in **MALAWI**

“**Christopher Emmanuel** is 14 years old, and his mother died some five years ago. His father married another wife two years ago and sadly, Christopher was not accepted by the new mother. He decided to stay alone at his late mother’s house. I came to know him last year in January, 2022 as he was coming for Mass every day and he was hanging around the Church almost the whole day. I decided to ask why he does not go to school and he told me he stopped because he does not have money. I followed to his village where he was staying and the house alone could tell the story of a pathetic situation. He narrated the whole story of why he was staying alone because his father did not care at all about him, he was the only child because his two younger sisters died of malaria.

I told him to go back to school and he joined standard eight and he passed and is now in form one. He calls me his dad. I told him that the assistance I give him is from you. I used your WhatsApp profile picture. He has been asking that I make a copy of your picture so that he puts it in his room. I tried to tell him about SCM but he did not have a real grasp – what makes sense is the picture that I showed him.

When I look at him now in comparison to the way he looked when I first saw him, I see how much his life has changed.”

Fr. Sylvester, St. Anne’s Ganya Parish in **MALAWI**

# Rest in peace



From Fr. Sylvester in Malawi:

"Unfortunately, one of the girls from St. Anne's Ganya Parish, a beneficiary of Silent Children's Mission has died of cholera yesterday. Her name is **Chisomo**." Chisomo is a name from the Chewa tribe and means **Grace of God**. Please keep her in your prayers.

From Fr. Bonaventure in Ghana:

"I received the sad news this morning of the sudden passing of **Fr. Bernard Ackon** of St. John the Baptist Church, Saltpond, one of your SCM missionaries. May his gentle soul rest in peace."

We will include your intentions and prayers for the deceased at our Annual Silent Children's Mission Mass on June 3, 2023.

## 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) 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.silentchildrensmisson.com](http://www.silentchildrensmisson.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