



"We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them."

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

Photo: Celebrating the opening of Joan's M'mera mpoyamba in Mkanda, Malawi

## Executive Director's Letter



Please join our SCM board members each 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month to prayer for our missionaries and the children we serve.

Dear SCM benefactors,

I met Harry as he was leaving the Holy Family Convent in Ludzi, Malawi, where Fr. Michael and I were staying this past July on our SCM mission trip. Sr. Bernadette and I met him at the back entrance just as we were returning from a day's outing. Harry (15 years old) was developmentally delayed, and Sr. Bernadette later told me that he also suffered from uncontrolled and untreated epilepsy and that no one cared for him, not even his mother. He was left to wander the streets and countryside. When we met him, he looked unkempt and very dirty; his feet were cracked and caked with mud from walking on the dirt roads. I learned that every day when the sun goes down Harry and others like him arrive at the convent for food and he is graciously fed by the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa, fulfilling their promise to serve the poor as outlined in their charism. When we met him, he was clutching a banana and it was clear that he had just finished eating his nsima as the remainders were on his face. We stopped to chat with him, and I gave him a prayer card of our Blessed Mother, a rosary, and a Miraculous Medal (all donations from SCM benefactors) and he departed a very happy young man. I asked Sr. Bernadette if we could follow up with him and find a way to provide him with some health care, foot care, and

purchase him a new pair of shoes - it was on my list of things to do the next day.

However, the next morning at breakfast, one of the sisters announced that Harry had died in the night, most likely of an epileptic seizure. I was saddened by this news because I felt I had not helped him enough and I wanted him to know that he was loved by God and that he mattered to SCM. As I further reflected on this encounter, I reminded myself that our visits to our missionaries are God's work and that we can't help everyone. We are called to be present, attentive, and loving; and to be open to the Holy Spirit and to God's will in our lives – the rest is up to Him. St. Jeanne de Chantal says: "Hold your eyes on God and leave the doing to Him. That is all the doing you have to worry about". May Harry rest in peace and may our sisters in Ludzi be blessed for their gracious response to God's children.

Our visit to Malawi was a great success! I am excited to share photos of the continuing progress at the Simone Centre Farm (70 acres) in Mkanda. Fr. Michael blessed the Munda House, our new building on the land and what a joyous occasion it was! The chiefs of the nearby villages and many families came out to share a meal and hear the speeches, skits, dancing, and other entertainment.



The Munda House is large, and the building will be multipurpose. During the school year, children four and under will attend nursery school five days a week and receive two meals a day with food grown/raised on the farm. Joan's M'mera mpoyamba is named after our beloved founder Joan Simone who loved the children so much. We are grateful to God for her inspiration. The catchment area are the nine villages surrounding the Simone Centre (Jimu, Paulos, Kang'ome, Wintala, Genesis, Ofesi, Mkandwire, Lameck, and Chakwanira villages) serving about 2000 people. The area is extremely poor and food insecure. The people are subsistent farmers and live to provide food for the day. Most do not eat more than two meals a day. The area has never had a nursery school program for young preschoolers. Early education and healthy meals will make a positive impact on their health and readiness to learn, and evidence supports many long-term benefits.



During school vacation (July, August, and other holidays), students from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources will do their practical placements on the farm. We met several young people while we were there who were excited to learn about raising chickens, goats, cows, and pigs, as well as

growing corn, sugar, rice, bananas, mangoes and other vegetables and fruit trees. The Munda House also has room for the Sisters and visitors to stay while sharing a common kitchen but separate dining and meeting rooms. The Simone Centre is a self-sustainable project with all employees coming from the local area. The Centre has provided opportunities for families in need to have a new start in life.

*This is where we  
need your help!*



The Simone Centre needs a solar energy system, furniture, flooring, fencing, kitchen cupboards, appliances etc. All will be sourced by local tradespeople providing more jobs to Malawians, but we need your money to do so. The total cost for the solar energy system for the Simone Centre is quoted at \$35,000 CA dollars (\$26,000 US), this includes heating the water and power for all buildings and appliances including the chicken house where over 2000 chickens reside. If you would like to help by fund-raising for a kitchen stove (\$1500 CA) or purchasing one bunkbed of the 16 needed for the children (\$250 CA), or maybe leading a church fundraiser to provide the solar energy system - please contact either Fr. Michael or myself. Our administration costs are low and almost all your donation will go directly to the project.

***Please consider helping us! Many children in need are already benefiting from this amazing project led by Sr. Bernadette and the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa. With your assistance, we can help more children to thrive and to know that God loves them.***

Peace,  
Frankie Burg-Feret

# Spiritual Director's Reflection



Fr. Michael with Tiyamike Kamange as she prays:  
“May he always belong to God forever and ever”.

In our last mission trip to Malawi, I experienced a new blessing through the children we were sponsoring that helped me see a new wave of God's grace that is coming as the fruit of all those who are supporting SCM. I got to hear the voice of the silent children and in particular the voices of some of the young girls who are thinking about becoming Religious Sisters when they grow up. In particular, one little girl, whose name is Tiyamike Kamange hopes to become a Sister because of the beautiful example that the Sisters in Malawi have given. I asked her if she would bless me, and in the photo, you can see her placing her hand on my head and praying for me. She prayed in Chichewa, the local dialect. She prayed sincerely from her heart. I had one of the Sisters translate, and she concluded her devout prayer by saying, “May he always belong to God forever and ever”. I was immediately struck by her depth of insight, because, as we know, a priest belongs to the order Melchizedek forever and ever.

It is so fulfilling to be able to experience the fruit of the seeds of love that we have been planting in Malawi and throughout the 14 countries that we minister to. Many of these girls were abandoned or thrown away, and one was even found in a latrine. This is exactly the purpose of Silent Children's mission, to be able to communicate God's unconditional love to the poorest of the poor. I have continually found that these souls who have been redeemed from their poverty, and their abject situations, are often the most grateful, and willing to give of themselves to others, precisely, because they themselves have experienced the hardships and difficulties of poverty, and now want to prevent others from doing so, and so, have a heart so disposed to seeking the good of the other.



Photo far left: Boy at Simone Centre receives gift of a St. Anthony prayer card from St. Leonard's Church parishioner



Photo left: Boy at Simone Centre receives gift of Our Lady prayer card from St. Leonard's Church parishioner

Having been transferred to a new parish here in Boston, we have been working on ways in which our parish can get more actively involved in SCM. When we blessed the new building, Munda House, dedicated at the farm of Joan and Andrew Simone, we recognized the need to furnish it. I am now going to invite our parish here at St. Leonard's to assist in collaborating with us, so that they can also experience the joy of giving to others. That is perhaps one of the greatest roles we have; facilitating those in Canada and America and elsewhere, who want to extend their charity to the poorest of the poor, but sometimes don't have an outlet and a safe means of doing so. SCM is the mechanism which allows the love of our benefactors to make concrete contributions to those who most need it. The hope is that

by giving that material help, they feel the hand of God, and know that they are loved, as we affirm their human dignity, and let them encounter God's providential love. As we have seen with this beautiful young girl, Tiyamike, she has certainly interiorized that love and now wants to pass it forward. This would not be possible without your generosity, support, prayer, and love. So, on behalf of all of us at SCM, I want you to know that you are making a difference and transforming the lives of so many children and in doing so, allowing the multiplication of these graces in turn to bear fruit in Malawi and other countries that we minister to. Let us just pause and thank God for the opportunity to tangibly participate in God's kingdom being manifested here on earth. Let's keep up the great work and thank God for this choice blessing.

Peace, Fr. Michael Della Penna OFM

**Attention US benefactors:**

If you would like to receive a USA tax receipt for your donation, you can send it through Fr. Michael at his parish.

Please write your cheque payable to "St. Leonard's Parish" and make sure to indicate "donation for SCM" on the cheque.



**US cheques** can be sent to:

St. Leonard's Church  
320 Hanover St.  
Boston, MA 02113

Our admin fees are always low. In 2022, they were 2.7% so 97.3% of your donation went directly to the children and families in need.



**ZAMBIA UPDATE**

"On behalf of the girls I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you at Silent Children Mission. Thank you for the financial assistance that you send for the girls and thank you for your unconditional love and care you have shown. Their lives have changed for the better and they're doing very well at school. May God bless you all and may He bless your families, benefactors, and all the people of goodwill. The girls are sending their greetings and their love as well. Sister Anastasia Manda, Sister of Charity of Ottawa, Chipata, Zambia

Photo left: Sara today in 2023  
Photo below: Sara with Frankie and Sr. Anastasia in 2014



## SCM HAITI UPDATE

Several of our benefactors have reached out and asked about our missions in Haiti, therefore, here is an update on the situation and the choices Gerry and the Compassionate Franciscan Sisters of the Poor have had to make.

Haiti has one of the highest levels of food insecurity in the world and presently, half the population (4.9 million people) do not have enough to eat. This situation escalated when their president, Jovenel Moise, was assassinated in July 2021. Twenty-two percent of Haitian children are chronically malnourished but today they are seeing many children with severe acute malnutrition. The United Nations (UN) estimates 115,000 Haitian children younger than five will experience severe acute malnutrition in 2023. The UN World Food Program (WFP) says that it is the worst hunger crisis the country has ever witnessed and has announced an IPC-4 Emergency which is the second worst hunger classification and one step shy of famine and starvation. For the first time, this area is experiencing a catastrophic food crisis which is further exacerbated by earthquakes, flooding, and uncontrolled armed gang violence.

It is difficult to transport food because the gangs are in control of the roads and therefore, very few people will drive, which include transport trucks that bring food from the farms to the more populated areas. Farmers cannot go to the city markets to sell their produce as they fear kidnapping, beatings, and rape. The justice system in Haiti is dysfunctional, and so criminals are not punished.

Unfortunately, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Poor (whom we support in Haiti and Kenya) have left Haiti for now because of the extremely high level of insecurity in the area where they serve.

Presently, our board member Gerry Brinston, who normally spends half the year in Haiti remains in the Dominican Republic at the border. He meets with leaders from Cerca Carvajal to transfer supplies and to discuss how we can continue to help. Gerry has been updating us on the situation in Haiti on a regular basis and the SCM board of directors have been praying for him and the people of Haiti fervently.



Father Michael's recent response to the shocking violence in Haiti:

"I don't have words. The depth of depravity and barbarism that is happening there is shocking and beyond comprehension. The problem is too big and evil to tackle and all we have is our prayer to lean on in this chaos. This is so tragic and sad and forces us to turn to the only one who can help. Nothing short of the power of God's grace can turn this around and convert hearts. Let us pray with fervor that God's love will put out the fire of hatred in Haiti. Collectively let us discern a way to help spiritually by uniting in prayer for an end to this violence."

Global Affairs Canada states the best way to support the people of Haiti is through sustainable farm projects that keep the population production and sale of food local. This affirms the decision of our board to continue to support farm projects such as the one in Cerca Carvajal, Haiti and Mkanda, Malawi that enable people to be self-sufficient.



Photo above: Gerry Brinston in Haiti with one of the villagers

Photos below: at present, baking supplies are still arriving through an illegal border and the bakery continues to provide food for the poor



# SCM Mission Trip 2023 – You are making a difference!



Photo far left: visiting Thokozani in 2010 when she was at grade school. SCM benefactors commit to helping her as her parents have died and she was left with only her siblings to care for her.

Photo left: meeting with Thokozani this year to congratulate her on graduating from a four-year nursing degree program. We are so proud of her!

Photo far right: What a joy to see Charles again! He has grown so tall since I first met him!

Photo right: 13 years ago, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Ludzi after he was badly burned. SCM assisted with health care and will continue to assist him with education!



Photo far left: Alinafe with his now deceased grandfather and Sr. Bernadette in 2010 when SCM benefactors started to pay for his school fees.

Photo left: visiting Alinafe in July this year. We are so proud of him as he learns a trade to be self-sufficient!



Photo far left: Clemencia in 2010 while in grade school. SCM benefactors commit to help this girl from a very poor family with school fees.

Photo left: Meeting with Clemencia 2023 to congratulate her on graduating from a four-year nursing degree program. We are so proud of her!

### Fr. Kansimbi at Ganya Parish

After a five hour journey, we were warmly welcomed with Ng'oma dancers and the chief presented us with Mthini hats – the gesture meaning *we are all one people*. Seeing Fr. Kansimbi again after many years was a joy and he introduced us to Christopher who you may recall from our spring newsletter. Christopher has decided to become a Catholic and with joy we welcome him to the Church.

Photo right: Imagine 140 students in grade one, no desks, limited space, two teachers and 70 per classroom. That is what we encountered when we visited the school in Ganya with 2000 children attending.

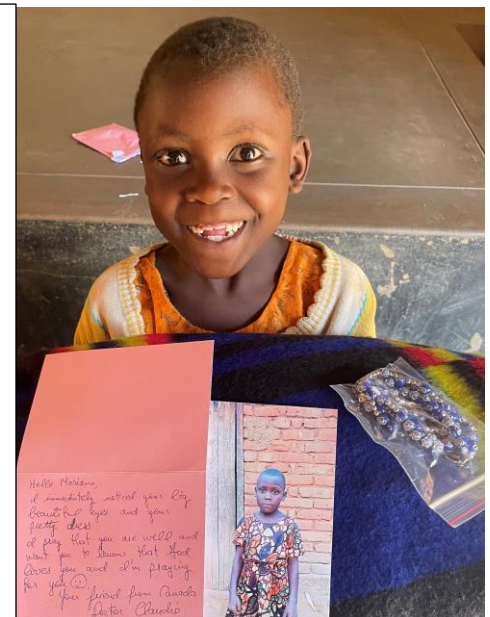
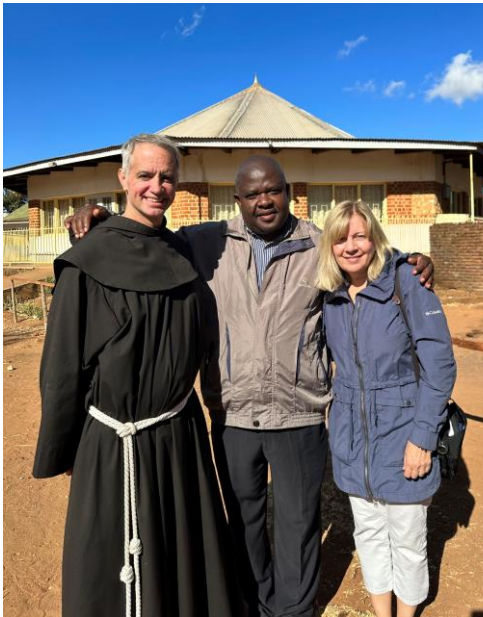
Photo below: Fr. Kansimbi with Fr. Michael and Frankie



### Photo right: **Call to Holiness SCM Retreat**

For our benefactors who attended the SCM retreat back in June, you will recall that each attendee received a photo and card to write to a child in need in Malawi. True to our promise, we visited with all of the 64 children and presented them with your card, a rosary, and a blanket to keep them warm during the chilly Malawi winter nights. I was delighted to be there as Mariana opened her card from a dear friend and you can see by the smile on her face, she was delighted to know that someone in Canada loves her so much that they would write her and tell her so!

Thank you to all our benefactors who participated in this opportunity to connect directly with the children.





**The child is  
the beauty  
of God  
present in  
the world.**

*Mother Teresa*

## Mission trip 2023 - the beautiful faces of Malawi

### How you can help:

**CANADIAN DONATION:** Send 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\*

**US DONATIONS:** Send a cheque written to: St. Lenard's Parish and mail it to: St. Lenard's Church 320 Hanover St., Boston, Ma 02113 – Please write somewhere on your note or cheque donation for SCM.

**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 OR INVITE FRANKIE TO SPEAK?** Write to [silentchildrenca@yahoo.com](mailto:silentchildrenca@yahoo.com) or call us at 416-418-0314

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:** [www.silentchildrensmmission.com](http://www.silentchildrensmmission.com) ,

**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*