



Great news!

Joan's Mera mpoyamba is opening this January 2024! We are moving closer to completing many of the projects we described in our previous newsletter, but we still need help!

From Sr. Bernadette Densani:

"Wow! What a great love these precious people have shown. I feel so humbled and at the same time feel God's providential hand on his poor people. God bless our SCM benefactors abundantly as they are truly God's instruments."

Photo above: Children from the surrounding villages who will attend the nursery school and receive two meals a day.

Executive Director's Letter

Dear SCM benefactors,

In 1964, Dorothy Day wrote the following in the Catholic Worker newspaper: **"The mystery of the poor is this: That they are Jesus, and what you do for them you do for Him. It is the only way we have of knowing and believing in our love. The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love."**

Not everyone is called to live like the poor as Mother Teresa and our founders Joan and Andrew Simone have; but we are all called to share the gifts we've been given in this life, whether that be monetary or otherwise.

It is rare and special when we encounter a person who in their humility and Christ-like actions, inspire us and affirm our knowledge and belief in the love that Dorothy Day describes. It is difficult to let others know about these acts of love but if done in the right spirit, more good will come by allowing your light to shine for others.

"And they do not light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, so that it may shine to all who are in the house. So then, let your light shine in the sight of men, so that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father, who is in heaven." Matthew 5: 15-16.



Prince of Peace

We have one such benefactor who has supported SCM with money and prayers for many years and who recently donated more money than usual. I learned that over the spring/summer season, she took on a part-time job so that she could donate all her earnings to the poor through Silent Children's Mission.

Not only did this inspire me, but I was humbled by her dedication and love for the poor. It is a testament to the belief she has in this mission and the trust she has given our SCM board of directors and volunteers as well as the priests, nuns, and laypeople we partner with in developing countries (Malawi, Zambia, Ghana, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Philippines, Ecuador, Sierra Leone, and Liberia).

Look around you. Do you see Christ's light shining through others? Are you willing to allow Christ to shine His light through you? Mother Teresa of Calcutta said: **"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you...yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer them your hand."**

To our SCM community of love – thank you for your generous support this past year; we could not do any of this work without you. This Christmas season may you and your families grow in your knowledge and belief in God's abundant love.

Peace and all good, Frankie



Update from Juan Carlos in Guatemala:

"Three days ago, I met a mother in front of el basurero (Guatemala City dump) named Esmeralda. She is diagnosed with cancer and is only 34 years old. This mother and her family rent a very small room and they cannot pay the rent, nor the electricity because she can't work due to her condition. Her husband barely makes enough money to buy food. Her condition is so bad that every time she goes to the bathroom, she loses large amounts of blood, the colour of her skin is white, and she can barely walk. She says the pain is something unimaginable. They have one bed for a family of six and Esmeralda has been sleeping on some sponges on the floor.

The children are very sad and scared to lose her. The younger ones (10, 7, and 3 in photo left) stay behind in the room while the father and older brother are at the hospital with Esmeralda. They have nothing to eat – so thank God and the benefactors of SCM, we were able to pay their rent (\$69.00 CA dollars) and the children enjoyed empanadas for lunch and dinner. You can't imagine how much these children have touched my heart my dear Frankie. I continue to visit the family and bring them food – they are grateful for the support. I told them that the objective of the donation is to let them know that even though they may be passing through very difficult times...God loves them. He is the one who provides this support. I am so grateful to God and SCM for this blessed opportunity to help this beautiful family!"

Update from Fr. Mwape in Zambia:

"Specific attention has been given to a girl, aged 12 years who we have journeyed with after the ordeal of abuse. Her name is Gift. She is now very stable and has integrated in her foster home. Silent Children has been instrumental in this care and for this we commend your works of charity. She has finally completed her primary education and will be doing junior secondary education next year. Her life is a testimony of your commitment to seeing that children have a meaningful childhood where they feel loved and cherished."



"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." (Colossians 3:15)

Spiritual Director Reflection



Last week, Our Holy Father Pope Francis, published a new book called "Christmas at the Nativity" in honor of the 800th anniversary of Greccio which speaks of the "beauty of our faith" revealed in the creche scene which St Francis began in 1223. It was there in Greccio, Italy, a town about 45 miles south of Assisi, which St Francis considered to be "rich by reason of its poverty" that he wished to enact the memory of that Babe who was born in Bethlehem: to see as much as is possible with his own "bodily eyes" the poverty of our Lord and recreate "the discomfort of his infant needs, how He lay in a manger, and how with an ox and an ass standing by, He rested on hay." It grieved St Francis that people had lost their sense of wonder at the awesomeness of the Christmas mystery. Fifteen days before the Holy Feast of Christmas, St Francis therefore, having obtained permission from the Pope so as not to be considered an innovator, asked a close friend, a converted knight called John of Greccio to prepare a setting that would forever change the way Christendom celebrated the feast.

By preparing an actual manger and having hay brought in, as well as having an ox and ass led in, allowed people to be "filled with new joy over the new mystery". The manger served as the altar for the Mass, and Francis, as Deacon, sang the Gospel and preached. St. Bonaventure describes the scene in the following way: "The saint stood before the crib and his heart overflowed with tender compassion; bathed in tears, Francis was overcome with joy". In a word, Francis had turned Greccio into a "new Bethlehem"!

The Word "Bethlehem" means "House of Bread" and for Francis, Christmas is above all else the coming of Him Who is the "Bread of Life" and the "living bread come down from heaven". Francis marveled at the poverty of the Babe, and he never ceased to be amazed at the "humility of God" in the Eucharist. The key therefore to the originality and innovation introduced by Francis at Greccio was the close bond between the manger and altar. He is credited with "inventing" the Eucharistic manger. At Greccio, it was not the image of the Infant but rather the Eucharistic species themselves which were placed over the manger which brought the scene alive. The two great mysteries, the incarnation and Eucharist, were shown visibly to be intimately connected. St. Francis himself wrote:

"See, daily He humbles Himself as when He came from the royal throne into the womb of the Virgin; daily He comes to us in humble form; daily He comes down from the bosom of the Father upon the altar in the hands of the priest." (1st Admon.)

Pope Francis believes this is the key message; that the mystery of Christmas "loves to hide within what is infinitely small". He writes, "The incarnation of Jesus Christ remains the heart of God's revelation, although it is easily forgotten that it's unfolding is so unobtrusive, to the point of going unnoticed". He concluded by saying: "Littleness, in fact, is the way to encounter God". These words remind us of the very heart of Silent Children's Mission to not only allow the voices of those on the marginalized to be heard, but to learn from them and be evangelized by them. Jesus becomes poor, and it is precisely "the shepherds in the manger, who welcome God's surprise, and live in Wonder at their encounter with Him, adoring Him; in littleness they recognize the face of God." Our children have an innate ability to receive in their poverty and see God so easily. The Pope stated, "Humanly, we are all inclined to seek greatness, but it is a gift to know how to really find it: to know how to find greatness in that smallness that God so loves "The baby, born in a manger "is not a sign of power, self-sufficiency, or pride. No. The eternal God is reduced to a helpless, meek, humble, human being. God lowered himself, so that we could walk with Him and so that He could stand beside us, not above and far from us.

This is why God became human, to raise up our flesh and to re-create humankind, so that all of us might become one in Christ who perfectly became in us everything that He is in Himself. The very Son of God, the perfect likeness of the Father; He it is who comes to His own image and takes our nature for the good of our nature to purify like by like, He takes on the poverty of my flesh, that I may gain the riches of His divinity. He who is full is made empty. How then are we to respond to God's kenotic love poured out for our sake? We are invited to imitate Him and give ourselves generously to Him and our neighbor. St Francis writes: "Hold back nothing for yourselves, so that He Who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally". In a burst of joy St Francis wrote:

"Let the whole of humankind tremble, the whole world shake when Christ the Son of the Living God is present on the altar. O sublime Humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under the little form of Bread! Look, Brothers, at the humility of God and pour out your hearts before Him. Humble yourselves as well that you may be exalted by Him."

This Christmas is an opportunity for us to be reminded of the overwhelming, never ending generosity of God which compels us to give of ourselves.

Merry Christmas!

Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm



Update from our Poor Clare Sisters in Zambia:

“Dear Mama Frankie, look at how the water has helped us cultivate the tomatoes and cabbages! Remember you gave us money when you came – to plant fruit trees and vegetables. And we also have the water from Gerry’s Well for drinking and irrigation. The children are always there to help us – you know we are one with them. Thank you for your love’s labour for us.” Sr. Lubingu

The Poor Clare Sisters recently wrote a song sharing it with me on Whatsapp. Although you can’t hear it you can imagine angels singing - our Sisters are exceptionally talented women!

Pangeni bulalo bwachitemwiko oo tangateni umwana uli onse mulupwa lwachitemwiko

The meaning of the lyrics: All children are equal and deserve a loving family.

How you can help:

CANADIAN DONATION: Send a cheque written to: **Silent Children’s Mission** and mail it to: 16060 Concession 8, Schomberg, Ontario, L0G 1T0, Canada (Make sure to include your mailing address for a tax receipt)

US DONATIONS: Send a cheque written to: **St. Leonard’s Parish** and mail it to: St. Leonard’s Church 320 Hanover St., Boston, MA 02113 – Please include “Donation for SCM” on the cheque.

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 OR INVITE FRANKIE TO SPEAK? Write to silentchildrenca@yahoo.com or call us at 416-418-0314

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: www.silentchildrenmission.com

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