



It is with joy

that we received news of the official opening of the **Joan Simone M'merampoyamba** (nursery school). It is a joy to know that the children are receiving early childhood education and two nutritious meals per day - all food grown and raised on the farm!

Executive Director's Letter



Frankie & the Sisters of Charity (Malawi 2023)

Dear SCM friends,

Helping the poorest of the poor is not just about charity it's about justice and equality. By addressing the fundamental issues that keep people in poverty we can create a world where everyone can thrive together. There are multiple interconnected factors including: lack of access to quality education, unemployment and underemployment, wealth and income disparities, discrimination, poor access to health care, insufficient or zero social safety nets, geographic disadvantage, and intergenerational poverty that make this challenging. However, through a collaborative effort and compassionate action, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of those who need it the most.

One issue that SCM tackles is access to quality education which is one of the most effective strategies in breaking the cycle of poverty as educated individuals are more likely to secure better paying jobs and contribute to their communities. You will find from our updates that assistance with education via school fees, school supplies, and uniforms is one of the most requested strategies from our missionaries. The challenges individuals face in developing countries are unimaginable to those living in more affluent societies. Often people are trapped in a cycle of poverty, and this perpetuates their condition and makes it nearly impossible for them to improve their situation without external intervention.

Although financial support is vital, accompanying our brothers and sisters living in poverty also involves a commitment to being present and providing support in a holistic and empathetic manner. This year we are preparing a group from Boston to join Father Michael and myself on a SCM mission trip this July. Together we are preparing our hearts and minds for this mission as it requires us to approach individuals with a deep sense of empathy and respect for their dignity and personal life experiences. We are learning about the importance of engaging in active listening to understand people's needs and challenges. Through encouragement we can help individuals to leverage their strengths and let them know they have what it takes to make positive change; everyone needs to know someone believes in them. Being culturally humble by being aware of and respecting cultural differences ensures that our support aligns with local customs and practices while still adhering to Catholic social teaching. By doing so, we hope to continue to build trusting, collaborative relationships with our missionary partners.

Not all people can go on a mission trip but through your support for SCM and most importantly your prayers, you also are a voice advocating for the rights and needs of the poorest of the poor. As global citizens we share a moral responsibility to assist those who are less fortunate, and compassion and empathy should drive us to help uplift those in dire need. Addressing profound inequality is not only a moral imperative but also a crucial step towards a more just and stable world.

Please keep us in your prayers as we travel to Guatemala this July.

Peace, Frankie Burg-Feret

Photo and prayer (right):
SCM prayer card for the mission trip July 2024



Accompaniment: Sharing the Gift of Christian Hope

SCM Mission Trip 2024

Dear Lord, our God,
Help us to see Christ in others,
help us to receive Christ from others,
help us to share Christ with others,
help us to be Christ to others,
help us to bring Christ to others.
Help us to see that in Him we live
and move and have our being,
that we live in Him,
and He lives in us. Amen

SCM Board of Directors Annual Meeting



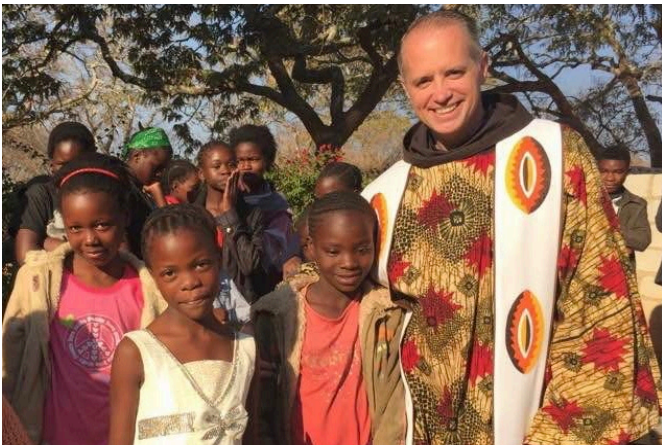
This past May we were able to gather for our SCM Annual Board of Director's meeting. This year we welcome Sharlene Maietta to our volunteer team! She brings much needed expertise and assistance with the financial administration for the charity, and we are grateful for her love and dedication to the poorest of the poor.

Board of Directors:

Back left to right: Gerry Brinston, Dasha Hrkal, and Sharlene Maietta

Front left to right: Mary Filangi, Sarah Gangl, Frankie Burg-Feret, Louise Farrugia, and Fr. Michael Della Penna

Please pray for us!



Another milestone we celebrated at our annual meeting is the 25th anniversary of Fr. Michael's ordination to the priesthood! His commitment to his vocation and his unwavering faith, dedication, and service to God has been a source of inspiration to many. Through his SCM articles and retreats, his spiritual guidance for this charity, and through his acts of kindness and pastoral care on mission trips, he has touched the lives of so many people, bringing them closer to God. Please pray for Fr. Michael; that God may continue to bless him with wisdom, grace, and joy to serve with the same passion and devotion for another 25 years!

The world is hungry for God and when Jesus came into the world He wanted to satisfy that hunger. He made Himself the Bread of Life, so small, so fragile, so helpless, and as if that was not enough, He made Himself the hungry one, the naked one, the homeless one, so that we can satisfy His hunger for love – for our human love, not something extraordinary but our human love.

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Accompaniment: Sharing the Gift of Christian Hope



The SCM theme for this year is ACCOMPANIMENT and it was a blessing that Dasha Hrkal, one of our board members, (photo on left with her grandchild), kindly provided a reflection at our Silent Children's Mission annual meeting this past May. We are delighted to share an excerpt with you.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, who we all know was the foundress of the Missionaries of Charity, knew the intrinsic value of the human person and lived with the awareness that each person she cared for was Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor. She said: "I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, "This is hungry Jesus; I must feed Him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash Him and tend to Him. "I serve because I love Jesus."

She is an example of a beautiful saint who was by any standards, an ordinary person with an extra ordinary trust and openness to God. In seeing Christ in others, she was able to accompany people with encouragement, hope, love, and even joy so that they felt dignity, value and kindness; something the world was not willing to show them.

Our Ministry (SCM) seeks to mirror the values that Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity lived with. We are a ministry of accompaniment in thirteen countries to the voiceless poor that struggle with sickness, malnutrition, lack of education, abuse, neglect, loneliness, and hopelessness. Our missionaries, priests, lay workers, and volunteers are the hands and feet of Christ in giving these children hope and letting them know in tangible ways that they have value, and that they are loved by God and others. Our benefactors share in this ministry with their monetary gifts and prayers so that tangible action can materialize into benefits for hope and healing. Our board of directors is the engine of the organization and all sacrifice to propel love into action. It is giving the gift of hope through love that inspires SCM. A very worthy word of appreciation is due to both Frankie and Father Michael for being the Christian heartbeat of SCM.

Finally, we are all personally called, as Christians, to accompany family, friends and foes in our everyday lives. We can only be truly fruitful if we are joined to the heart of Jesus, the True Vine. As Terese of Lisieux stated: "we can do small things with great love"; by doing so – we can show the fingerprint of God giving hope to our hurting world.

Spiritual Director Reflection



Where are you?

There are times in our spiritual journey when we find ourselves asking God the question, "where are you?" When believers are facing certain difficulties and trials and do not feel God's presence, we can sometimes look around in dismay, trying to figure out where God is in these moments or question why He is acting as He is. In this Sunday's first reading (the tenth Sunday of Ordinary Time), we may be surprised to find who is asking this question to whom. "Where are you?", is the very first question asked in the Bible in the opening chapters of Genesis. What makes it so odd is that God himself asks this question to Adam. Because we know that God is omniscient and therefore knows everything, we are rightly puzzled and so challenged to ponder why God would ask this question. Furthermore, we are led to ask ourselves what this question means; is God really asking a geographical question? How could God not know where Adam was?

This peculiar question takes on greater depth of meaning when we consider Adam represents all humankind. God's omniscience tells us He already knew and always knows exactly where we are. The question then is not about gathering information but rather a call to transformation. It is not a question about where we are physically, but rather a penetrating question about where we are in our relationship with God. God wants each of us to ask ourselves this profound question because it is a deeply personal question, an existential and spiritual question of the heart.

The Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church highlights how this question from God "stirs humankind to repentance through the voice of conscience." How? We know sin alone separates us from God. But this separation is not only from God. The consequences of sin "cause a rupture in the internal unity of the human person, in the relations of communion between man and woman and of the harmonious relations between mankind and other creatures." Sin therefore not only disrupts the fundamental relationship between God and humanity but leads to a state of "original estrangement" that disrupts our relationship with others and even ourselves. Sin is the root of all social evils.

This is crucial in understanding our mission. We live in a world in which sin has disrupted and estranged humanity not only from God but from each other and ourselves. We purposely focus on responding to those who are marginalized and most alienated, those in the fringes of society; the weak and most vulnerable. Our goal is not just to provide material goods to meet their needs but help to restore the dignity of those who have lost it; to help remind them they are made in the image and likeness of God and are His beloved children who are loved unconditionally.

It is not only the economically poor who suffer the consequences of this estrangement but each of us within ourselves. When we feel we are distant from God, we know it is us who have moved away and not God. God was inviting Adam, as he does us, to reflect on where sinning has left us in relationship to Himself. Adam, like us, must ask himself: "What has sin done to me? Why did I leave God, and why am I running away from Him?" Every sinner like Jonah is running from God. What has sin ruptured in you? Do you feel stripped of your dignity, naked before the world?

I remember hearing a beautiful saying that even if we feel we are 1000 miles away from God we need only take one step and God will run the other 999 miles to meet us. It's like the story of the prodigal son who ran away from his loving father. As soon as the father saw the young man approaching, he ran to embrace his son. God is looking for us, and He wants us to come back. St. James (4:8), reminds us "Draw near to God

and God will draw near to you". Although we are all tempted like Adam and Jonah to try to hide and run away from God, God never gives up on us but like a Good Shepherd will untiringly search for his lost sheep until he finds them and carries them home on his shoulder.

Again, God asks questions not because he doesn't know the answer but because we don't. In asking ourselves where we are in relationship with Him, we not only discover where we are but who we are. If we are brave enough to be laid bare before the Lord and answer this question, we will not only have the benefit of gaining a better understanding of who God is but get a better grasp of who we are in relationship to Him. This is a journey of a lifetime as St. Francis continually asked, "Who am I and who are you?" It is perhaps encouraging to keep in mind, the root word of question is 'quest'. A quest is defined as a long arduous search for something. No one said being questioned by God would be easy, but it will lead us to self-discovery and the discovery of God Himself. Are you prepared for the quest?

Peace,

Fr. Michael Della Penna ofm

Updates from our Missionaries



Update from ZAMBIA:

"It has been a disaster in Lusaka. However, for us, we have had some crops by the grace of God with just a few days of the rains. While we saw fields drying up, ours was preserved by the Angels. We can't believe it that we have something for now. We are working hard for the next season because now, in Zambia there is hunger. We are having a meeting next Sunday to see how we shall help one another so that no one should starve to death in our neighborhood and especially the children. I have more than twenty women helping in the garden in order to get something to eat. The government is trying to do things for the people but what we see is that nothing is happening in our area. This is a problem. Whatever it is – God is love and we continue smiling."

Sr. Lubingu, Poor Clare Sister



Walk of faith reciting the rosary for rain

Update from MALAWI

The Sisters of Charity of Ottawa supervise income-generating activities where they not only feed the children but sell surplus farm produce and eggs which in turn provides sustainable livelihoods to families most in need of a job. The teachers are all women who live in the surrounding villages who have been provided with training in early childhood education. The farm also provides essential educational practicums where students from the university learn agricultural skills. Sr. Bernadette continues to diversify farm production by introducing new crops and trees and improving the irrigation system. This project has significantly improved the quality of life for the children and many families in the community. None of this would happen without our SCM support and the generous grants from a few of our benefactors. Sr. Bernadette would like to extend her heartfelt gratitude on behalf of her Sisters and the people they serve. We will continue to update you in future newsletters as the Simone Centre continues to grow and flourish!



We would like to build a fence to provide a safe enclosure for the children at the back of the building. We also need ongoing supplies, uniforms etc. There is always a need – let us know if this project speaks to your heart and you would like to help!



Update from SIERRA LEONE:

“Dear Frankie,

The water well is completed at the Immaculate Heart Home for Girls in Blama, Catholic Diocese of Kenema in Sierra Leone and will be commissioned on Thursday May 23, 2024! With gratitude to God, SCM, and our donors we are grateful for the donation for this much needed project.

I wish to thank you for your support to my pastoral ministry as a priest to assist the needy communities in Liberia and my native neighbouring country Sierra Leone. My new appointment from my Religious Order (Spiritans) Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers, is to the Divine Mercy Catholic Chapel, a community in the Mambo outskirts of the capital city of Freetown. The community hosts more than 5000 people, here too, safe drinking water is difficult even for myself. I'm therefore pleading to you, SCM and our donors to allocate this recent donation to my church community where everyone can benefit.”

Fr. Samuel, Spiritan priest

Note: Fr. Samuel sent beautiful videos of the commissioning of the water well – please check our social media pages to see these video updates.



Update from St. Anne's Parish, MALAWI:

May 16, 2024

"I am currently visiting small communities to assess the poverty and hunger in the neighbouring areas of St. Anne's Parish in Ganya due to the shortage of rain. Sometimes it's a very pathetic situation... I found two children last week as I was on my visits. Their names are Tereza and Mphatso (Gift). Their mother is a sex worker and left the children unattended at home. Because they were hungry, they started wandering around and sleeping wherever they were able to. I found two families to look after them and gave them SCM money to purchase food. They will be looked after by the families, and I will provide basic necessities – I will buy them some clothes this Saturday. They are lovely children, and it is sad to see them in this condition."

June 4, 2024

"One of the two children recently added to the SCM program – Tereza - had serious malaria that has affected her brain. Sorry to say, the nurses told me today that she is HIV positive which she got from her parents. We will do everything that she gets good treatment. I am not shocked about her status – their mother abandoned them and as I said, she is a professional sex worker...SCM has become the mother to them... so sad but grateful to you..."

Fr. Sylvester, Spiritan priest



Update from HONDURAS:

"Dear friend Frankie

A cordial greeting from Honduras. I attach the documents to thank you for the help you have given us and the application for new aid. We are very happy to be able to help and serve so many children and young people who need it with the desire to help and make a world of love and peace. We pray to the Lord for you and those who make the help you send us possible. I hope that one day you will visit us to share what we do. Many blessings from Honduras."

Your friend, Father Patricio Larrosa





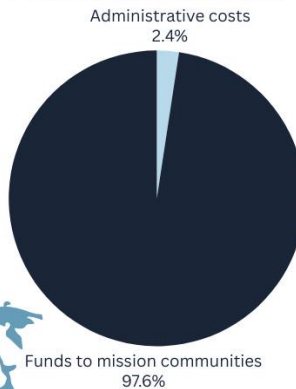
2023 Silent Children's Mission

DEMOGRAPHICS

MISSION LOCATIONS



DONATION DISTRIBUTION



MISSIONARIES



2.5% Bishop



25% Layperson



25% Priest



45% Sister



25% Franciscan

This infographic was created by our social media director, Sarah Gangl, and provides a quick overview of the work of SCM for 2023.

Having two secular Franciscans and a Franciscan priest on our team, we are happy to share that 25% of our missionaries also share the charism of St. Francis of Assisi.

Administrative costs include printing, stamps, paper, ink, accountant fees, and a few miscellaneous items. **The rest (97.6%) goes directly to the missionaries.**

We are so very grateful to all of you who generously donate to SCM. Rest assured that we continue to pray for you on the first Friday of each month and at our annual SCM Mass, we dedicated special prayers and included our benefactors' requested intentions.

If you have any questions about this charity's strategies or finances, feel free to contact us.

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). *Please note: tax receipts are sent quarterly with the newsletters*

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 indicate on your cheque "donation for SCM".

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.silentchildrensmisson.com

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR TAX RECEIPT? Write to us at scmtaxreceipts@gmail.com

PRAY FOR SILENT CHILDREN'S MISSION We pray and fast for the children and families we serve, our missionaries, and our benefactors every First Friday of each month. Contact us if you would like to join in prayer and receive an email reminder.

Please consider sharing this newsletter with your family and friends