



Silent Children's Mission

ISSUE

48

WINTER
2025

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

Mother Teresa

Your donations brought enormous JOY to these children who had the opportunity to visit the Children's Museum in Guatemala City. Many have never left their home in one of the poorest communities in the city's dump.



Letter from Frankie

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"When you put on a luncheon or a banquet, don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbours. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you." Luke 14:12-14.

In the Gospels, Jesus prioritizes the poor and calls each one of us to make them a priority as well. Systemic injustices and disparities disproportionately affect the poor and as Christians we are called to align with the poor, oppressed, and vulnerable as part of our Christian actions. Through parables, Jesus identifies these actions as directly serving Him who becomes poor for our sake.

By recognizing the interconnectedness of our human family, we are encouraged to join in solidarity to address global poverty and inequality, such as food and housing insecurity, poor access to healthcare, and limited opportunity for an education. We are called to assist all people – especially vulnerable and abused children who have no one to advocate for them.

Many of us are not aware or rarely think about the lived experience of children and families living in extreme poverty in developing countries. Xiomara, a single mother of several children including Jose, lives in zone three in Guatemala City – a community who finds their home in the city dump (basurero). This family experienced housing insecurity and were happy when two years ago SCM helped to purchase the cement blocks for their small home just inside the border of the basurero. Unfortunately, due to increasing insecurity and violence, drug dealers and gang members recently took possession of their home. Fleeing quickly, Xiomara and her children were left homeless with no belongings. Xiomara and her sister (2 adults and 8 children) found a small place to rent where they all live in a room with no furniture sleeping on the concrete floor. Xiomara was

having difficulty finding work; she had been working at a job where she had to peel bananas, but the owners of the business wanted the workers to peel 40 bananas in one minute and she couldn't keep up with the demand of the job. Shortly after they moved into the new apartment, Jose fell and broke his arm. They went to the public hospital (for the poor), and they were told there were too many patients, and they could see him in 2-4 weeks; they didn't have medication to relieve his pain. Desperate, she reached out to Juan Carlos (SCM missionary) who encouraged her to take Jose to a clinic where he received pain medication and an x-ray which determined that the break required anesthesia and surgery. With the help of SCM and other supporters, he was able to have the surgery, and Jose is presently on the mend. Unfortunately, this is a true story and an example of the reality these people experience daily.

Our partners in zone three state that the average income for someone who lives in zone three is Q50 (\$9.08 CAD) on a bad day, and Q100 (\$18.17 CAD) for a very good day – that's approximately \$360 CAD for a month's salary. To feed a family living in zone three for one month, costs Q1350 (\$250 CAD). That leaves \$110 CAD for housing, school costs, transportation, clothing, health care etc. I share this because with rising costs of food and housing in North American cities, we often lament over how life is more difficult now. These are challenges that many people face all over the world but is magnified in the developing countries where we serve. For these families, each day is a battle against hunger, illness, fear, and despair.

It is not easy to help the poor. Computer glitches, bureaucracies, uncaring people, and postal strikes can all get in the way of doing the work of helping people. As a small charity, we rely on donations during this season to sustain us. Over the next year, our board of directors will be discussing alternative delivery methods for tax receipts. To change the way we do things can sometimes add costs and increased work to volunteers so our ultimate decision will be a balance between efficiency and cost effectiveness as we are committed to ensuring that most of your donation (presently 97%) will go directly to the poorest of the poor. Please continue to keep this mission in your prayers and if you can spare even a small amount, we promise that in collaboration with our wonderful priests, nuns, and laypeople, your donation will go to help those most in need.

On behalf of our SCM board of directors, thank you for your love and support for this mission and the children and families we serve. We wish you a blessed and holy Christmas season!

Peace and all good,

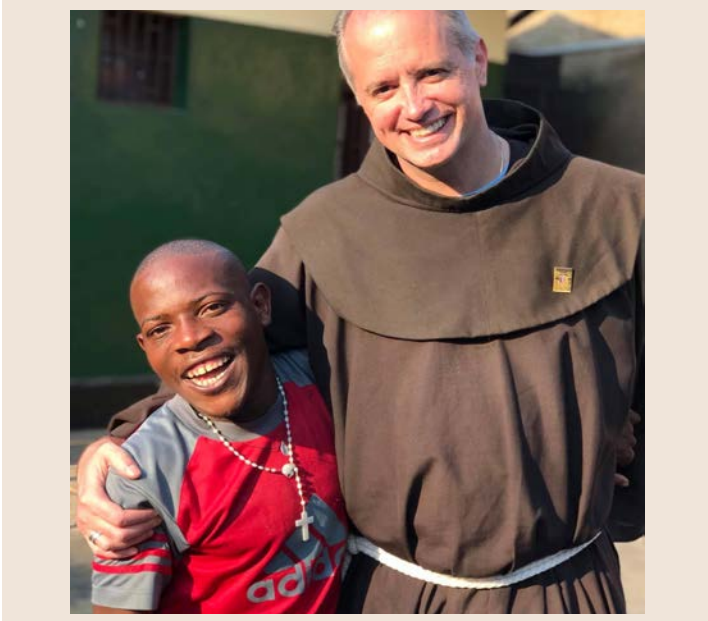
Frankie

Would you be interested in sponsoring a priest, religious brother or sister, to join a SCM mission trip? Please let us know if this is something you can do.



Jose is unable to receive basic health care because he is Indigenous, he lives in the poorest of communities, and his family has had very few opportunities. It is hard to believe that so many children suffer in this world today.

"What kind of world do we want, and what will we do to live in it?" Mother Cabrini



You could be part of any charity - why do you feel called to support and be a part of SCM?

As a Franciscan, I always felt an affinity with the poor and our charism has always been geared towards the marginalized and those on the fringes of society. The genesis of Silent Children Mission owes its inspiration to Mother Teresa who really incarnates the Franciscan spirit so well. I had researched, spoken, and written about poverty, but I had never lived in a poor country. When I was sent to Guatemala, I felt a stronger call to help those who were in need. When I discovered this new charity, Silent Children Mission was focused on helping the poorest of the poor; it really fit and aligned perfectly with what I wanted to be about.

What does "preferential option for the poor" mean to you?

The Franciscan charism, although it is an evangelical order, has always gravitated toward helping those who are most in need. Jesus himself revealed how God always hears the cry of the poor and always sought out the last sheep and those who were less fortunate. St. Francis himself chose to leave the Maggiore to minister to the Minore. This was a conscious effort to work with and administer to the lepers, both figuratively and literally. The order came to be known as the Order of Friars Minor - because Francis always wanted to be seen as a little brother, having identified himself as lesser.

What Gospel passage referring to the poor most speaks to you?

The story that has been pivotal in my vocation was the story about the young boy who had five loaves and two fish. He offered these contributions at a moment when there was a crisis in which the apostles were trying to feed 5000 people. Although it was a very small amount, the child gave all that he had to Andrew. Andrew gave the five loaves and the two

fish to Jesus who blessed it and multiplied it to feed all who were gathered. I've always taken this as a paradigm of giving out of our poverty and allowing Jesus to bless whatever we give and allowing it to feed everybody.

Which person/saint has inspired you in your work with those in need?

St Francis for sure has been a model of ministering to those who are most in need. Mother Teresa and her courageous and bold way of entering into the experience of the poor, has always been a challenging and inspiring example. Most recently, Mother Cabrini's beautiful work with the Italian immigrants has moved me to minister here at Sacred Heart Church in Boston's little Italy where she had visited.

What was your most memorable SCM mission trip and why?

I've been to so many SCM mission trips and so much has happened with so many different people and children. Here are a few of these memories:

- I remember how inspired I was by a remarkably joyful boy who did not have feet but was able to play soccer with the shoes we gave him.
- An extraordinary reconciliation we were able to witness in Rwanda stands out as being so historically and spiritually powerful.
- The empty camps in Liberia after the UN declared the country safe after the ebola crisis have left such a lasting memory in my heart.
- Ministering with such beautiful sisters, including Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity sisters who dedicate their lives to helping the poor really touch my soul.
- The joy on the faces of so many children who have nothing, but despite this are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Was there a particular event/encounter on a SCM mission trip that had an impact on you?

Cleaning wounds in Cite Soleil, one of the worst slums of Port-au-Prince, Haiti with the Missionaries of Charity sisters was a very moving and impactful experience for me. The sheer quantity of people and their desperation was so heavy on my heart. Working in Haiti however, really put before me a bleak reality of a collapsed society. There was such hopelessness.

What words of wisdom (message of hope) do you have for those who support the mission of SCM?

When I first was preparing to go to Guatemala, Dr. Andrew Simone taught me the importance of how much good we could do with so little in those countries. He imparted a desire to help those who were struggling and neglected and to do so in a concrete way. I remember him explaining how even a bar of soap can bring dignity to people. We should always do something instead of nothing. Every small thing we do does make a difference because if it is done with great love then our mission is accomplished. All of the material and economic benefits that we provide are a means to an end of allowing the poor to awaken to recognizing their own goodness and feeling loved by God.

Updates from Guatemala

In October, we received a message from Jandira and Juan Carlos; Jandira had received 60 free passes to the Children's Museum in Guatemala City, but they needed assistance to make it all happen. The children who were chosen were all from the basurero in Guatemala City where most of the children had never left their communities before. SCM paid for the bus (**photos below**), a nutritious breakfast, and a meal at Pollo Campero. The children were all engaged and enthralled with the experience! (photo on front of this newsletter) What an unforgettable day for all who participated! Thank you to our benefactors who made this special day possible – the joy will have lasting effects on the children.



Photo (left): From Juan Carlos: "Today we had a special day with the family of Diego. What Diego's mother earns at her new job is still not sufficient for basic things. Since they are very shy to ask for help, they passed two weeks without propane gas to cook their food. I told them this it is not my money and that we are only messengers to help them. They bought gas but didn't have enough for food, so I took them to the supermarket today! They were all really grateful and happy to go buy food – thank God! Wendolyn and Fernanda love a flavored milk called Shaka-Laka! They got three each and were fascinated with their Shaka-Lakas! Thanks for this blessing and as always, I remind them that this is to let them know that God loves them."

If you recall in our Spring 2024 issue, we shared how Julia and her family who live in the basurero were being helped by SCM - mostly with school expenses, uniform, and transportation costs to get her safely to and from school. Julia and her sisters are being cared for by their sickly abuela after their mother died by suicide a year ago. With assistance from SCM, Julia received the means to continue her education, but she also received the hope and encouragement she needed at a very low time in her life. We have good news! Julia has graduated from high school, and we are very proud of her! Thank you for your generous donations that made this tremendous milestone in Julia's life possible.

Photo (right): Julia at her graduation with her sisters and abuela holding a photo of her beloved mother.



"My good Jesus give me the Grace to love you with all my heart and to serve you with great fidelity in this life, so that I can be a grain of sand to build up your glory for all eternity"
Mother Cabrini

Updates from Zambia



Sr. Maureen, Sisters of Divine Providence, in Chipela

"Among the children who received support is Mapalo an 11-year-old girl who had club feet. Mapalo was accepted for enrollment in the 1st grade of Chileshe Chipela special school run by the Franciscan sisters of Assisi. All the requirements were bought and school fees for the whole year paid, and this excited the parents and the child who had lost hope that she would ever be enrolled in any school. However, it turned out that the girl was rejected and dismissed within a day on grounds that the school felt they could not support the child to use the bathroom. Although this hurt the parents and the child who kept crying over her rejection, the action opened a way for treatment in consultation with the sisters. Mapalo was booked for surgery at John Paul Hospital run by the Franciscans. Unfortunately, she was again rejected as the attending doctor felt that the surgery could be risky. As a last resort, Mapalo was taken to Beitcure Hospital that specializes in children's conditions. The surgery was successful as you can see in the pictures. She is still undergoing reviews however, Mapalo is making steady progress with the hope that she can be enrolled back in school near her parent's home next year. We are very grateful for the support received by Silent Children. I can testify that there is a lot of transformation for the beneficiaries much to the delight of their guardians."

Benefactor message:

Thank you for your last newsletter and your work to bring hope to God's beautiful children who suffer so much. And yet amidst all that sorrow you met so many heroic families. . . so many lessons for us who us who have so much. Blessings.



Sr. Anastazia, Daughters of the Redeemer, in Chibombo

"Poverty has gripped this family such that the parents and children are desperate. The father is always sickly and in the hospital; he is suffering from malnutrition. The family situation is dire, and I wish to build the family a small decent house. The plot belongs to them which is good. Right now, we pray for them.

At the hospital where our congregation serves, some mothers come to deliver without baby clothes thus we buy for such babies this is all due to the poverty in the family. We also have a lot of pregnant mothers with malnutrition because of the drought that hit our country sometimes I give such mothers and children money to buy the food they need.

I thank you Frankie and the team for your support of this work. I imagine that without your support I don't know what could be the situation. I do not have other sources of funding like it is with you. May the almighty God bless you and supply you with plenty in your ministry."

Update from Malawi – Fr. Sylvester



“This lady lives near the parish, and she often comes to me asking for any little job to get some food - her name is Napofu. She surprised me one day when she came selling green maize; I had given her some money and each time she invested in a garden, and she was able to grow the green maize. Her children are in standard one, three, and four. Their names are Francina, Fortune, and Chilinda. Her husband abandoned her years ago. She also cares for her elderly father who receives food supplements from SCM as well.”

“These two little boys are being cared for by their 16-year-old sister her name is Magdalena. She stopped going to school because she couldn't afford the school fees, and she is now pregnant but has no intention to marry. The two boys go to school at Ganya primary where you entered one or two classes during your visit here. Magdalena is the main breadwinner as their mother died this year in July, she was 46 years old. Her husband had moved out of the house when the two boys were between three and five years old, the woman battled with high blood pressure for a long time, but she lost the battle. I help them with food mainly maize, nsima, beans, and soybeans. In addition, I have taken full responsibility for their school needs these children are very vulnerable. Greetings from Ganya Parish and thank you for your help.”

Fr. Sylvester, Spiritan priest in Ganya Parish, Malawi

Photo: Fr Sylvester with the Napofu and her children.

Update from Sr. Bernadette at the Simone Farm in Malawi



It is our great pleasure to report to you the progress that has been made at the Simone Farm because of your generosity!

Where there was no land, the land was purchased,
where there were no buildings - buildings were erected,
where there was no light, lights were installed,
where there was no food, now there's an abundance of bananas, avocados, tomatoes, maize, mangoes, beans, eggs, meat...



Photo (above left):

Joan Simone's M'merampoyamba (nursery school) is full – with children receiving early childhood education and two nutritious meals per day.

Photo (left):

Tomatoes grown *by* the people and *for* the people and new skills for the youth to learn.

The Simone Farm is a dream come true in Malawi!



Our donors believe in our farm projects as much as we do and for this, we are grateful. Thanks to a generous benefactor who after hearing about the great need for solar power on the Simone Farm, provided all the funds required. The project is completed and now there is power for the chicken house, the building where food production occurs, and the building where the nursery school is and on the opposite side, rooms for the agricultural students from the University of Malawi and for the Sisters to stay.



Several times a year, the Simone Farm hosts a career day where graduating students who have received school fee assistance from SCM, lead presentations on the opportunities an education provides for the future of these young children. The day ends with a healthy meal produced on the farm. What an amazing way to pay it forward!



Thanks to another generous benefactor, the twenty-two acres adjacent to the original seventy acres was recently purchased. Some of the land on the original site was rocky and not usable. This newly acquired property is very fertile and will provide the additional room to grow more fruit and vegetables. The expansion will help the farm to prosper and become more self-sufficient. Purchasing this new acreage was a dream come true for Sr. Bernadette!



The avocados and other fruit trees continue to flourish as seen in the photo above with Sr. Elizabeth who works with Sr. Bernadette in Mkanda (the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa). Strict measures are in place to ensure that the two thousand chickens are healthy and well cared for. As a result, they produce dozens of eggs daily which are sold at the market in the city as well as provide much needed protein for the children at the nursery school and the families most at risk of malnutrition.

SCM – OUR MISSION!



Mission Statement:

- *Silent Children's Mission is to relieve the suffering and neglect of those who do not have a voice – especially women, children, and their families.*
- *The goal is to let the poorest of the poor know someone cares – that God has not forgotten them but loves them.*
- *Through various means we provide basic needs, education, healthcare, spiritual care, and counseling so they can live a life of dignity and have the opportunity to develop their soul.*

SCM has had charitable status in Canada since 2011 and over the past 13 years, we have sent almost 4 million dollars to the children and families most in need in the poorest countries in the world.

We do not spend your dollars on fund-raising costs and our mission trips are self-paid. Administration costs are an average of 3% per year. We rely on Divine Providence for our funds, and we work in the charism of Mother Teresa – she is our inspiration for the work we do.

Please join us in our mission to demonstrate the love of Christ in the world.

"Prayer is powerful! It fills the earth with mercy, it makes the Divine clemency pass from generation to generation; right along the course of the centuries wonderful works have been achieved through prayer."

Mother Cabrini

How you can help

CANADIAN DONATIONS: Send a cheque payable to: *Silent Children's Mission* and mail 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 (for a tax receipt): Send a cheque written to: St. Leonard's Parish and mail 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 Charity# 815949607RR0001) Please remember us in your will.

QUESTIONS/REQUEST FOR SPEAKER? Write to silentchildrenca@yahoo.com or call us at 416-418-0314

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: www.silentchildrensmission.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