



We are called in every circumstance to be friends of the poor, following in the footsteps of Jesus who always began by showing solidarity when dealing with the least among us.

Pope Francis

Photo right:  
Grand opening of the  
new well in honour of  
St. Joseph at the  
school in Ganya,  
Malawi – March 2025



## Letter from the Executive Director

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“The poor still have much to teach us because in a culture that has placed wealth at the forefront and often sacrifices the dignity of people on the altar of material goods, they swim against the tide, highlighting that what is essential for life is something else entirely.”

Pope Francis

Dear friends,

I recently returned from Helsinki, Finland where my colleague and I presented our Health for All Partnership project at the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress. For me, the highlight of the Congress was the opening ceremonies where 7000 nurses watched as 130 nursing teams represented their respective countries. As they crossed the stage, my heart swelled as I watched the nurses from Guatemala, Malawi, Zambia, and other SCM countries. I know first-hand how these nurses struggle to care for the vulnerable in their communities and I was so proud to see them there! Nurses, especially in the rural areas, work long hours, without a doctor, and with very little medical supplies and equipment. They demonstrate commitment, autonomy, resilience, creativity, and a deep love for their patients. Over the years, nurses from low-income countries have shared how, at times, their government did not have money to pay them, and yet these nurses continue to show up - to care for the sick, malnourished, and those most in need. I admire their dedication, but I pray for a just world. “A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice.” Catechism of the Catholic Church 2434.

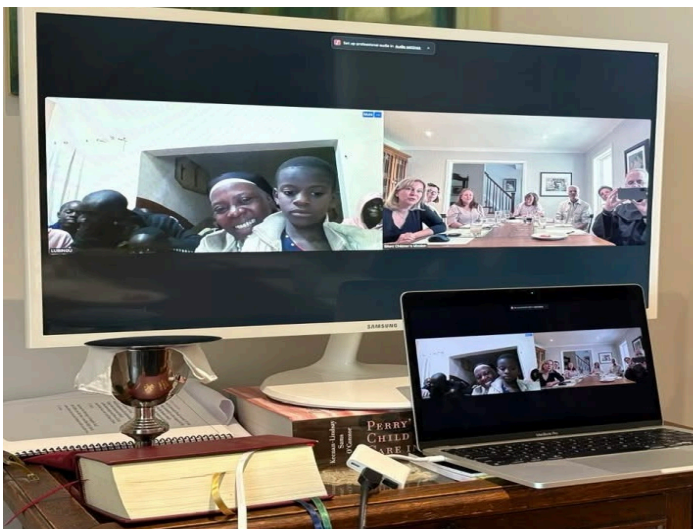




Frankie with Dr. Heidi Siu at the ICN Congress in Helsinki, Finland waiting for the opening ceremonies to begin!



SCM board members at the annual meeting. From left to right: Fr. Michael, Dasha, Sharlene, Frankie, Mary, Louise, and Gerry



At SCM, it is always a great joy to see one of our education sponsored children graduate from nursing school as we know they will be a tremendous asset to their community's health and well-being. It is not a coincidence that both the ICN and the World Health Organization (WHO) released two important documents on nursing this year. In their recent report (WHO, 2025), entitled *State of the World's Nursing*, "around 78% of the world's nurses are found in countries representing only 49% of the world's population; high income countries, which represent only 17% of the population, host 46% of the world's nursing population". In Malawi for example, there are only 3.4 nurses per 10,000 people – well below the WHO recommendation of 10/10,000. For perspective, in Canada we have 103/10,000.

We have a long way to move towards equity but at the heart of SCM's mission is a commitment to accompany young people, offering support and providing an opportunity for them to achieve their dreams. Each young person graduating as a nurse, teacher, carpenter, or farmer is that much closer to our goal. As our beloved Mother Teresa says: "We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop." Please help us to continue this good work with your financial support – we need it more than ever.

On June 3, our board of directors met for our annual general meeting where we were able to reflect on the impact our charity has made in the lives of the children over the past year. A highlight of the meeting was when we zoomed in Sr. Lubingu from Lusaka, Zambia to share her experiences and was surprised with a group of children who enthusiastically shared the difference our benefactors are making in their lives! Together, our board celebrated milestones, reviewed our financial records, and set new goals for 2025 and beyond.

This June 30, 2025, I retire from my full-time job in nursing education and will devote more time to SCM; I eagerly look forward to what God has in store as I embark on this new chapter in my life. Please pray for SCM, our missionaries, benefactors, and most importantly the children and families we serve.

All glory be to God!

Peace and all good,  
Frankie Burg-Feret RN BScN MN

"Where the needs of the world and your talents cross, there lies your vocation."  
Aristotle

## Pope Leo XIV – from our spiritual director Fr. Michael



*Least of  
my  
brothers  
and  
sisters*

In his first address to the Cardinals, Pope Leo XIV has expressed a desire to continue the legacy of the Second Vatican Council and Pope Francis, particularly in caring for the most vulnerable and marginalized. This reflects a core tenet of Catholic Social Teaching known as the "preferential option for the poor and vulnerable," which calls for prioritizing the needs of the most marginalized members of society.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church also highlights the Church's consistent tradition of love for the poor, inspired by the Gospel and Jesus' own poverty and concern for the vulnerable. This emphasis on serving the "least of these" stems from Jesus' teachings, particularly the parable of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46, where Jesus identifies himself with the hungry, thirsty, sick, imprisoned, and naked.

Let's take a deeper look at how his papacy is shaping up to follow in the footsteps of Pope Francis. After a pope is elected, the first order of business is to select a name, which often is a key to the main issues he is hoping to address. It is notable indeed that 69-year-old Robert Francis Prevost, the Chicago-born Augustinian priest who served for many years as the Bishop of Chiclayo in Peru, chose to take the name Pope Leo XIV when he was proclaimed as the 268th leader of the Catholic Church on Thursday. As Dr. Sr. Gemma Simmonds CJ, was quick to point out, the new pope's name can be read as an association of his papacy with that of "the great champion of the poor, the great builder of Catholic social teaching."

Pope Leo XIII, the leader of the Catholic Church from 1878 to 1903, came to be known as "The Pope of the Workers" because of his groundbreaking 1891 encyclical on the *Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor*, which provided the outline for modern Catholic social justice teaching. Taking its name, *Rerum Novarum*, the encyclical recognized that a "remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class." By picking the name Leo XIV, he shows he is committed to the social teaching of the church," said Rev. Thomas Reese, a Jesuit commentator who follows the papacy closely.

There were other echoes of social justice language in the new pope's Thursday announcement to the crowd in St. Peter's Square: "To all you brothers and sisters of Rome, Italy, of all the world, we want to be a synodal church, walking and always seeking peace, charity, closeness, especially to those who are suffering." Leo XIV hailed his predecessor Francis, who made the future pope a bishop in 2014 and then an archbishop and cardinal in 2023. The new pope, who served in the Vatican

as a close ally of Francis, is known to share his predecessor's deep concern for the poor and for immigrants. And Leo XIV echoed the late pope's message in his remarks from the balcony, calling for "a united Church searching all together for peace and justice, working together as women and men, faithful to Jesus Christ." He also said, "We have to look together at how to be a missionary Church, building bridges, dialogue, always open to receiving with open arms for everyone."

Cardinal Prevost, who previously led the Augustinian order, served the poor in the Church in Peru. As an Augustinian, an order formed in the 13th century as a community of "mendicant" friars, he is dedicated to poverty, service, and evangelization. The ethos of the order are traced to the 5th century St. Augustine of Hippo, and focuses on a contemplative spirituality, communal living, and service to others. A core value in their rule is to "live together in harmony, being of one mind and one heart on the way to God."

St. Augustine strongly advocated for helping the poor, viewing it as a moral obligation and a reflection of God's love. He believed that almsgiving was a debt owed to God, and that the poor were not simply recipients of charity but were companions on a shared journey towards heaven. He also viewed the rich and poor as companions on a heavenly journey, with the poor as a reminder of Christ's suffering and a call to service. He emphasized that helping the poor was an act of service to Christ himself, as "whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me". St. Augustine recognized the need for both immediate relief through charity and efforts to address the root causes of poverty through justice.

It's no accident that the new Pope maintains strong ties to Latin America, the largest base of Catholics in the world. His time in Peru, where he lived, ministered, and learned to see the Church through the lens of Indigenous communities and struggling parishes, has clearly left an imprint. Latin America, more than any other region, has shaped the last two papacies. In grounding the new Pope in this world, the Church reaffirms its commitment to the global south, not just as a mission field, but as a theological and spiritual powerhouse.

A Pope who can speak to both the slums of Lima and the boardroom of Washington is uniquely positioned to unify an increasingly fragmented Church. By choosing a Pope who understands that culture, and refuses to replicate it, the Church may be offering a rare and timely intervention. Rome has not chosen a flashy celebrity but a reflective pastor. David Gibson, director of Fordham's Center on Religion and Culture, said Leo "is the first American pope but in a real sense he is also the second Latin American pope. He spent so much of his life in Peru and working as a missionary outside the United States that he is really the first global pope for our global church".

The fact is he joined a missionary order and moved to Peru, not to the city but to a remote village, where children die of treatable diseases, and families walk miles just to get clean water. Fr Robert didn't just live among people; he became one of them. He learned Quechua, the sacred Inca language, hauled food on foot for days, slept on a dirt floor, taught math under broken ceilings, loaded the sick on donkeys, and prayed under the stars. He kept his sandals and walked with the poor. His deeds were not publicized, but they resonated through the Andes. Bishops took notice. The Vatican took notice.

Because to him, leadership is about presence, not position. Father Cecero summed it up by saying "He has a heart for the poor,"

Peace, Fr. Michael Della Penna OFM



## Update from Haiti – from SCM director Gerry Brinston

“Every day we hear stories of child abuse and violence, and we struggle to understand how one human could do such things to another. The Haitian people are trying to escape this circle of terror for themselves and their families. They are packing what little belongings they have and heading to the countryside. We are dealing with a massive influx of families into our community and little school. Some of the programs we have include primary school education, training students in beekeeping, providing hives for a basic income, health care support, and food from the farm and bakery. It is a struggle to provide basic needs for these families. SCM has supported this work, and we are grateful. Please pray for us as we continue to provide for those less fortunate.”



### Left:

Beekeeping provides a source of nutrition but also a small income for struggling families. It requires a small amount of money to purchase the wood to build the hives. Teaching young people to be self-sufficient is the key to moving out of poverty.

### Top left:

Many people are leaving the cities of Haiti to escape gang violence. Small rural communities offer refuge but overload the capacity for the people who live there.

### Top right:

So many more children are arriving at the school on the SCM supported farm in Cerca Carvajal. At times, although heartbreaking, children have to be turned away for lack of food and space.



## From a benefactor

“Dear Frankie,

Thank you so much for speaking at our Toronto Diocesan Catholic Women's League (CWL) Convention last week and for sharing the work SCM does to help so many children in our world. Their lives are truly impacted by the work you and your executive do to give them hope for their futures. I was truly inspired!”

If you would like SCM to speak to your group (Knights of Columbus, CWL, church/community group, school etc) you can contact us to book a date at: [silentchildrenca@yahoo.com](mailto:silentchildrenca@yahoo.com) or call 416-418-0314



## Update from Nairobi, Kenya – Sr. Rita



### From Sr. Rita, Kenya:

“At our Queen of Hope Mission Outreach Centre, we the Compassionate Franciscan Sisters of the Poor (CFSOP), freely, humbly, and wholeheartedly provide our daily works of mercy to the least of our poorest brothers and sisters living in the ghetto communities of Chakaa, East Nairobi, and we live among the poor. We are able to visit and clearly identify the children and families that are the least of our brothers and sisters around us. We are moved by the suffering we see and we are inspired with the kind help of Silent Children's Mission.

One story of hope is that of Mr. Wasonga, also known as Baba David. He is a single parent with three children as his wife left him when the last-born David was only one year old. Without work it is hard for him as he must beg his sick mother to take care of his two children so that he can work. He must bring with him his last-born child to his work in the construction area because his mother cannot cope. The child got sick because of the dust and the heat at the construction area so he had to stop working to take care of him. One of his coworkers advised him to talk to us as we have a daycare centre. Baba David talked to one of our sisters and begged for help and his child was accepted. He was very happy because he can now work without worries. In the morning before his work, he drops his son off at the daycare and then picks him up after work and his children continued to be left at school with his mother in the village. He can now support his children with enough food to eat.

Sometimes life is hard if there is no one to turn to, but God always makes a way to make the impossible, possible. Baba David shared with the sisters that God sent an angel to help in his need. Thank you for all the benefactors especially Silent Children's Mission, who continuously contribute to our ministry of mercy to our poor children and struggling families. May God protect you all and bless your good hearts!”



**Photos above:**  
Feeding program at the Queen of Hope Mission Outreach Centre - providing for the needs of the poorest in the community.

**Photo on left:**  
Baba David working at the construction site with son David fending for himself.

### Photo below:

The Compassionate Franciscan Sisters of the Poor caring for children and providing preschool education.





## Update from Lusaka, Zambia – Sr. Lubingu



### From Sr. Lubingu, Poor Clare Sisters, Zambia:

"Many children have been helped and have benefited from SCM. We have a family whose father drowned in the river near us, one kilometer from the Monastery; the children are SCM sponsored. Our little

Clever has been on a ARV's but now it is difficult to obtain the medication since USAID has been withdrawn. Many people and caretakers of patients have lost jobs, and it is now just survival. We are really edified by Clever's resilience and love for Mama Frankie whom he wants to see again. He never attended school but now through SCM he has been going to school, and his life is not the same since he received love.

Last Sunday, we had many children who had no cardigans, and it is becoming very cold in Zambia now (of course not like Canada). According to our weather it goes down to 12°C. I saw our own sister Yumika giving away her blanket to the child of our neighbour who comes to help in the garden. She feels her bones ache. We are surviving and working hard with what is happening in the world today. At the same time, we are pilgrims of hope and carrying Christ in love and joy. It's God at work in all you do - God bless you!"

## Update from Bo, Sierra Leone – Sr. Veronica



### Photo left

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report (2023) for Sierra Leone, tropical diseases, and communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, HIV/AIDS, and hepatitis continue to take lives with malaria as the single biggest killer.

Adequate hygiene and sanitation is not possible in the slums of Bo, where Sr. Veronica finds the children most in need – many living on the streets and exposed to child trafficking. Assisting these children is the work of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Visitation in Bo, Sierra Leone.

### Photo right

#### From Sr. Veronica:

"Lucy is an orphan as she lost both her parents during the Ebola outbreak. She is a survivor of rape, and she has lived on the streets for five years. Lucy was among the girls rescued from traffickers in Liberia and brought back to Sierra Leone. One day she requested to see a youth leader who later took her to us – the Sisters of Our Lady of the Visitation. Since 2023, SCM had helped her to receive counseling and an education. Today she has graduated from P6 (primary school) and will start junior secondary school in August!"

Please continue to support SCM so we can help more children to have a secure, stable environment free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation and most importantly, to experience the love of God.





## Update from Ganya, Malawi – Fr. Sylvester



There are 2000 children that attend the primary and secondary schools in Ganya parish. About 100-120 children cram into a classroom with one teacher and one assistant. Until March 2025, they have had one well which was dug in 1994 and often breaks down once per month. Thanks to a very generous benefactor, the children now have access to clean water at school!

### From Fr. Sylvester:

“Just checking in on you Frankie hope you are well? I'm fine and the children under SCM care are doing well too. St. Joseph's well has been in use since March 28th. We officially handed it over to the community, including the primary and secondary schools. We had the district education officer, member of parliament, the ward councillor, chiefs, students, and people from the surrounding areas attend (photo on front page). It was a big occasion, and everybody thanks Silent Children's Mission

and the benefactors – it was more than beautiful! Christopher and the other children and I planted pawpaws (papayas) last year in February. We have started harvesting them as well as our bananas which are doing well (papayas are known for rapid growth and can produce within 6-11 months of planting!). From our little farm, we harvested 23 bags of maize 50 kg each and now we have something to help the poor children. We are growing on the church land but there is a piece of land very beautiful along the river. They will require 4 million kwachas (\$4000 CAD) to purchase.”

Note: Since this note was received, we have a benefactor who has donated the money for the purchase of this land. Soon the children will assist with the planting of more food to share with those most in need like Isabel and her new baby (photo below).



## 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.

We value your support for our mission – we will never share your personal information with any person or group. If you have any questions feel free to contact us via email ([silentchildrenca@yahoo.com](mailto:silentchildrenca@yahoo.com)) or phone (416-418-0314).





# Silent Children's Mission



## 2024 Annual Report Mission Locations



## HOW WE USE YOUR DONATIONS



**Food security**  
self-sustaining  
farm projects  
food programs



**Housing**  
safe shelters  
for children at  
risk



**Education**  
school fees and  
school supplies



**Healthcare**  
local nursing  
support  
medications, MSTs



**Mental Health  
Support**  
psychologists for  
addictions and abuse



**Spiritual Care**  
support  
connection  
comfort

### How you can help:

**CHEQUE 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)

**ONLINE DONATIONS:** Send us an email money transfer to [silentchildrenca@yahoo.com](mailto:silentchildrenca@yahoo.com) or donate using a credit card through Canada Helps (SCM Charity# 815949607RR0001) Please remember us in your will.

**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". Or donate online via their website: <https://saintleonardchurchboston.org/donate>

**QUESTIONS/REQUEST FOR SPEAKER?** Write to [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)

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