

St. John's Child Sponsorship Program--

Please Help Educate Poor Children Around the World

April 5-6, April 12-13, and April 19-20

Beginning this weekend, St. John's will be conducting our annual child sponsorship program. This is our major parish effort to help poor children around the globe, and is organized by our Third World Apostolate. We have chosen this year's projects in particular not only based on their needs, but also because we have reliable, first-hand communication with the sites, and have received feedback in the past that our donations have made a significant difference in the lives of the children involved. This is another way for St. John's to live the Gospel call to serve the poor and work to make our world a better place for all of God's children.

In poor communities, public school education is rudimentary at best, and often isn't available at all. Even when available, many families cannot afford the modest fees for supplies and a uniform, and none, or perhaps only one, of the children is able to go to school.

Public health research has clearly demonstrated that even just completing primary school (especially for girls) markedly improves a child's chances for a healthier adult life. Therefore, one of the most worthwhile and effective services missionaries can provide is education.

We are delighted that this Sunday at the morning Masses, Sr. Nellie Carvalho of the *Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa* will speak to us about their mission work in Africa and the needs of the children there. Please see the descriptions below for details of their work, and of the 3 other education-related projects, and consider supporting one (or more!) if you can.

Today and for the next two weekends, information about the programs will be available after Mass on tables in the vestibule.

Project Descriptions and Sponsorship Options

1. Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa (FMSA) – Lusaka, **Zambia**

You may recall from last year the photos and email from Sr. Paula Healy, who runs *Kevina House*, in Lusaka, Zambia. Sr. Paula is a nurse-midwife who has delivered babies and provided maternal and child health care in the most difficult of circumstances in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and now Zambia. *Kevina House* provides pre-school education, meals and psychological support for malnourished children, many of whose parents have died from AIDS. In the past, we have funded school uniforms, supplies, tables, and chairs.

Sr. Paula recently wrote:

"This year we have 79 orphan children, boys 41, girls 38. The children experience a sense of belonging, which reduces that sense of isolation. Their behaviour improves immensely after getting loving care and attention from the Staff, they also experience living in a clean and safe environment and their health improves with diet and medical care...The Centre has become for them a stepping-stone from despair to hope. It provides refuge for the children and respite for the guardians. Eleven children are on antiretroviral drugs [treatment for AIDS/HIV] and have improved with medical care, nutrition and monitoring.

We wish to say these little children would not have reached where they are today, but for your support and concern which has helped them to be a child again and fully alive. You are all remembered in prayer and in our Mass for Benefactors. May God bless and reward you a hundredfold." –Sr. Paula

- Cost: \$75 per child (suggested). Cash or check (please make out to St. John's Third World Apostolate)

2. Christian Foundation for Children and Aging (CFCA) "Adopt-a-Child" type program – **Multiple Countries**

CFCA is a lay Catholic organization committed to creating relationships of mutual respect between sponsors in the United States and children and aging persons in 26 developing nations. It is the largest Catholic sponsorship organization in the country. Through a sponsorship commitment you can choose to sponsor a young girl or boy, a teenager, an elderly person or a person with special needs. Although sponsorship benefits vary by location, some of the benefits your sponsored friend may receive include:

- * nutritious food provisions and meals
- *school supplies and tuition assistance
- *medical and dental care
- *clothing, shoes and school uniforms
- *skills training and livelihood programs
- *housing repairs, beds and blankets
- *health and parenting workshops
- *literacy programs and tutoring

(over)

You will receive a photo of your sponsored friend, information on their background, and you will be able to correspond with your sponsored friend by mail. On tables at the back of the church today are sponsorship folders that provide demographic information on specific individuals who are waiting for assistance. Please also visit CFCA at www.cfcausa.org. This is a terrific opportunity for children to correspond with and get to know another child overseas!

- Cost: \$360 annually; please make checks out to CFCA.

3. Maryknoll Lay Missioners – **Bolivia**

Joe and Becky Sherman are Maryknoll Lay Missioners living (with their two children) and working in the rural community of Chilimarca, Bolivia. Maryknoll Lay Missioners are individuals or families who make a three-year commitment to live and work with poor communities overseas. Joe, a pediatrician, is a colleague of one of our parishioners. His wife Becky is a clinical child psychologist. You may recall that our Giving Tree donations allowed Joe to purchase a centrifuge for the rural health clinic there.

Joe recently wrote:

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! The clinic staff is very excited to have access to this simple test to follow our prenatal patients as well as all the children we see.

Please find attached photos [on display in vestibule] of a large unfinished room, built with the idea of expanding the space available to train health promoters from the rural areas who come for courses. At the same time, we have an urgent need for more space for our school. The number of grades is increasing each year and we find ourselves short of space. The children of Bolivia have been used to very traditional forms of education which many times suppress any creativity or experiential learning. Having an "atrium" for Montessori education will enable the children to expand their capacities in this area. We would like to modify and improve the room you see here to become a multipurpose room to be used for Montessori education by the school as well as education for the health promoters. By adding a movable divider in the space, we can have the option of using the entire room or divide it in two for these purposes. Again, thank you so much for your support! Peace, Joe Sherman

- Donations made today will go toward renovation of a large room to be used as a much needed classroom. Cost: \$50 (any amount accepted). Cash or check (please make out to St. John’s Third World Apostolate)

4. Oblate Missionary, Fr. Henault – **Ile a Vache, Haiti**

As you know, Fr. John Henault is an American Oblate Missionary priest originally from Sutton, MA who has been working in Haiti for 43 years. He is currently pastor of *Notre Dame de la Mer* parish on Ile a Vache (“Cow Island”) off Haiti’s southern coast. Over the years, we have helped him with many projects, and we learned how grateful his parishioners were when he said Mass here last summer. We hope he will visit again this summer.

One of his most important tasks is the overseeing of four primary schools on the island, and there is an urgent need for funding for teacher salaries, at \$100 per month, or \$1200 per year. We would like to help support the parish there by funding the salaries of 2 teachers for the upcoming school year.

- Cost \$100 (any amount accepted). Cash or check (please make out to St. John’s Third World Apostolate)

If you have questions regarding any of these programs, please contact Marie Buckley, Pastoral Associate at St. John’s at 508-435-3313, x 206 or email her at mbuckleystjn@verizon.net.

“We should not serve the poor like *they were* Jesus. We should serve the poor because *they are* Jesus.”

--Mother Teresa



I would like to support the following project(s):

- Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa, Zambia** (AIDS orphans, \$75 per child suggested).
- Maryknoll Lay Missioners, Bolivia** (Much needed classroom renovation, \$50 suggested).
- Oblate Missionary, Fr. Henault, Haiti** (Teacher salaries, \$100 suggested).

Checks supporting any of the above projects should be made payable to St. John’s Third World Apostolate.

- Christian Foundation for Children and Aging, multiple countries** (get to know a specific child with whom you can correspond, \$360 payable to CFCA, or contact CFCA directly at 800-875-6564)

Please see a Third World Apostolate member after Mass, or return this slip with your donation to:

St. John’s Third World Apostolate, 20 Church Street, Hopkinton, MA 01748