

## ***GIVING TREE A GREAT SUCCESS—THANKS TO YOU !!!***

Thank you all for your participation and generous gift giving in St. John's Advent *Giving Tree*. We are delighted to report that the gifts received exceeded last year's and the success of *The Giving Tree* came about through the help of everyone involved! The total of monetary gifts and gift certificates was \$10,232, which is approximately a 12% increase over last year!!!

Your generosity, time and effort will enable the following:

- **Sr. Paula Healy** of the **Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Africa** will receive \$2,000 in monetary donations for Kevina House, a nursery school for malnourished pre-schoolers in **Zambia, Africa**. Many of the children who attend the school were orphaned by HIV/AIDS and are cared for by older siblings or grandparents. The Sisters provide food, medicines, pastoral care and education for these children and orphans. With these donations, Sr. Paula will be able to purchase **insecticide treated mosquito nets** to reduce the transmission of malaria, as well as medical equipment for **HIV testing**. Our gift also helps provide **food** for the grandmothers caring for the children and **play equipment** for the school.
- **Joe and Becky Sherman, Maryknoll Lay Missioners** in **Bolivia** will receive \$2,000 in monetary donations for the rural community of Cochabamba. Through emails we learned they need a **centrifuge** for the local clinic (a simple machine used in analyzing blood and urine samples). The least expensive one available in the area costs \$650. Also the monetary donations will go to **Health Promoter Training Scholarships**. A scholarship pays the cost of training someone from a rural community in basic health care. These Health Promoters treat infections, check for malnutrition, teach proper hygiene, ensure that medication is taken properly and alert the nearest clinic if someone is seriously ill. The Health Promoters in turn teach and train others in their community—a gift that keeps on giving. It costs approximately **\$30 to train a man or woman as a local Health Promoter in a 4-week training course**. Joe and Becky live and work in Cochabamba with their two children. Maryknoll Lay Missioners are individuals or families who make a three-year commitment to live and work with poor communities overseas (similar to the Peace Corps). Joe, a doctor with a degree in bioengineering, is a colleague of one of our parishioners. His wife Becky is a clinical child psychologist.
- Our sister parish, **San Antonio de Padua**, in Higüey, **Dominican Republic**, will also receive \$1,100 in monetary donations to support vocational training and purchase needed supplies in their Cultural Center (St. John's helped build this center 10 years ago).
- The **Mustard Seed Catholic Worker House** in **Worcester** received several large bags filled with clothing items (hats, gloves, socks, sweatshirts and other miscellaneous clothing items) as well as gift certificates for Payless Shoes and local supermarkets totaling \$755 and another \$300 monetary donation. The warm clothing items are particularly important for families struggling to pay home heating costs and for the homeless who spend countless hours outdoors.

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- The **Missionary Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul**, who work with the poorest of the poor in a slum area of **Port-au-Prince, Haiti**, will receive \$1500 in monetary donations. These nuns run an outpatient nutrition center and a small 20-bed inpatient hospital where severely **malnourished children** are rehabilitated and treated for infections.
- **Fr. Ed Veasey** of the **Society of James the Apostle** in **Ecuador** will receive \$2,500 in monetary donations towards a maternity unit in Madre Berenice Hospital, which serves poor patients in the community of Guayaquil. The need for this unit was great due to discrimination that people with HIV/AIDS, especially women, are subject to in Guayaquil. Fr. Veasey has told us that the sisters who work in the unit want “to give the poor here an opportunity to give birth to their babies with dignity, privacy and support.” He told us that an ordinary birth costs approximately \$170 and a Caesarian costs \$270 to \$300. Your donation will also help give children with AIDS vitamins and a medical check up once a month costing around \$23.  
You may recall that Fr. Veasey said Mass here last August, and we learned of these needs in his parish through our subsequent email correspondence with him.
- Much needed vitamins and minerals for poorly nourished children (totaling 3,020 doses), acetaminophen and ibuprofen (totaling 6,025 doses), along with school supplies (boxes/pkg of pencils (40), pens (10), crayons (31), markers (32), sharpeners and erasers) have been sent to **Montevideo, Uruguay**, in South America. The vitamins and medicines are very much needed and appreciated, but equally important are the school supplies. In many developing countries, children cannot attend school unless they purchase their own school supplies.
- You may have noticed that **Fr. Henault** of Ile a Vache Island in **Haiti** was conspicuously missing from this Giving Tree. We waited as long as we could to hear back from him with a project(s) before Advent began, but alas his letter was received too late, partly due to the effects of Hurricane Dean. In fact, every house in his town was flooded, gardens were lost, and three families lost everything when their huts were carried out to sea. The Third World Apostolate decided to send \$500 from our account to Fr. Henault, and we plan to include his parish in the Child Sponsorship Program this spring. To read Fr. Henault’s letter, go to St. John’s website at [www.stjohnshopkinton.com](http://www.stjohnshopkinton.com) .

Members of the Third World Apostolate sincerely thank all the **parishioners** who helped prepare *The Giving Tree* and those who contributed. First of all, we want to thank the women of **WINGS** who cut and traced the ornaments early in November. Our very special thanks to the **7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade religious students (and their teachers)** for decorating and preparing the ornaments and for writing heartwarming notes of thanks and encouragement to the missionaries. Also, we want to thank the **ninth graders** who sorted and packaged the gifts for distribution! We thank everyone who was kind enough to help!!!

Lastly, thank you to the parishioners who took the time to write such thoughtful notes of thanks and encouragement to these hardworking and resourceful Catholic missionaries.

***“Whatever you did for the least of my brothers, you did for me...”***

-- Matthew 25:34-40.