

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

We hope that by participating in the Giving Tree last Christmas, you and your family learned about a few hard working Catholics living overseas, dedicated to improving the lives of so many living in poor communities. Thanks to you, St. John's has been able to make a personal connection to several priests, nuns, physicians, and lay parishioners who teach, provide health care, feed, clothe, educate, train, shelter and minister to those in our world who don't have the opportunities that we do here in Hopkinton.

Thank you so much not only for your financial support of these projects, but also for the lovely, supportive cards and letters that you took the time to write to these individuals. This means so much to them—as acknowledged in the letters we get back! Even in these difficult economic times, St. John's donated a total of \$8,933 this year!

The Third World Apostolate also thanks all the women of WINGS who cut out the ornaments for the tree, and the 7th Grade religious-ed students, and their coordinator Elaine Mitsock, who decorated the ornaments so artistically!

Here's a summary of what you did with your Giving Tree donations this year:

- **Fr. Ed Veasey** of the **Society of James the Apostle** in **Ecuador** will receive \$2,100 in monetary donations for the maternity unit at Madre Berenice Hospital, which serves poor patients in the community of Guayaquil. Because people with HIV/AIDS, especially women, face such discrimination there, 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.” An ordinary birth costs approximately \$200 and a Caesarian approximately \$300. Your donation will also help with two other programs run by the Society which will 1) provide children with HIV/AIDS vitamins and a medical check up once a month costing around \$23; and 2) help to start a program for people with HIV/AIDS to make clothes to sell. You may recall that Fr. Veasey said Mass here in August, 07 and we learned of these needs through our ongoing email correspondence with him.
- **Fr. John Henault, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate**, on Ile a Vache Island in **Haiti** will receive \$3,020 to assist his parish community in recovering from four tropical storms in quick succession this past fall. Haiti had already been struggling with severe food shortages due to extreme poverty, further aggravated by the global food crisis and the rise in food prices. In working with Fr. Henault for many years now, we have come to know just how resourceful a priest he is. In his letter of 10/23/08, he wrote to us:

*“Total rain accumulation for these 4 storms was 20 ½ inches... I'm receiving requests for help that go beyond my present means. I'm working with the local authorities as to what action to take. Famine is more than just a possibility. Gardens have to be replanted as soon as possible. Since the farmers lost crops, they also lost the seeds for the next planting which has to be **NOW**.*

Also I'll have to keep an eye on the water sources for contamination. I should finish my big water project. That would help. The 3,000 feet of pipe I've installed was not disturbed by the flooding. Pipes were buried 18 inches deep. But a section of 2 inch PVC pipe is now \$216.80 and it was \$157 ... I still need close to 3,000 feet of pipe. I'm still searching for the best way to use my talents and limited funds, and sorting out what are the most urgent needs of my people out here on the Island...”

Whether it's for PVC pipe for drinking water, or another more urgent need, we know Fr. Henault will make the best of your donation for his community.

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- **Fr. Francisco Gomez** of the **Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate** in Rojo Gomez Alto (slums of Tijuana), **Mexico** will receive \$1500 in monetary donations to construct a small chapel for Mass and religious education. Fr. Nicholas Harding (originally from Massachusetts) and brother-in-law of a parishioner told us of the dire need for a small building to shelter the parishioners in a desperately poor community in the slums of Tijuana, Mexico. In an email 11/6/08 Fr. Nick wrote:

“Our parish area of St. Eugene de Mazenod is quite large and has an estimated 200,000 people. We are considered part of Tijuana. We are four priests, a brother and several religious serving about 14 communities or colonias where we evangelize, celebrate mass and offer catechism. One very needy area in the hills is Rojo Gomez Alto....shacks, dirt roads, no sewage, many children who do not attend school...We have a piece of land but no building. Thus, mass is celebrated outdoors. Now begins the cold and rainy season. With modest funds from your parish we could construct a building which could double as a chapel for mass and a place to teach catechism.

We have quite a clinic with a nice place for a doctor to stay if you [or a colleague] want to volunteer some time. With gratitude and prayers for you and your parish, Fr. Nick”
- **Nuestra Senora de Reconciliacion**, a parish in Lima, **Peru**, in South America, will receive much needed vitamins and minerals for poorly nourished children (totaling 5,830 doses), acetaminophen and ibuprofen (totaling 15,353 doses!), and miscellaneous medical supplies. We also sent school supplies: pencils (14 packs), pens (95), calculators (14), crayons (35 packs), markers (17 packs), and binders (several boxes). These will be distributed to a **small school and clinic supported by the parish**. The vitamins and medicines are very much needed and appreciated, but equally important are the school supplies, because often children cannot attend the public “free” school unless they purchase their own supplies.
- The **Mustard Seed** Catholic Worker House in **Worcester, MA** received several large bags of clothing items (hats, gloves, scarves, sweatshirts, sweatpants, etc) as well as gift certificates for Payless Shoes and local supermarkets totaling \$820, plus a \$100 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. The Catholic Worker Movement, founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, opened the first “house of hospitality” where “the homeless, the hungry, and the forsaken would always be welcome.” The Mustard Seed is run completely by volunteers in Worcester.
- **Sr. Paula Healy** of the **Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa** will receive \$1200 in monetary donations for Kevina House, a nursery school for malnourished pre-schoolers in **Zambia**. 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 uniforms, shoes and books for the orphans as well cover the school fees. Our gifts also help provide food for the elderly grandmothers who are now the sole caregivers for some of these children in the Chipata township of Lusaka.

So thank you to everyone who participated in this Advent tradition!!!

“Do not neglect good deeds and generosity; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.”
--Hebrews 13, 16