



Thanksgiving Christmas 2016



Orphans' Education & Agriculture Support

Children Orphaned by HIV & AIDS

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OEAS
Keeping God's love visible



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This has been a year of firsts. In Zimbabwe we have had a devastating drought in the last part of 2015 thru early 2016. Then in May we had snow....a first and located in an area called Lower Gweru. People had not seen such cold and resulting sleet that turned to snow. This was tough on animals and people, and grass or old roofs collapsed. Where you live there are a number of "firsts" as well. Most are disturbing and hard to accept.

This Advent and Christmas time we have events to ponder, and realize that we are not in control all the time, and subject to changes that are challenging and beyond understanding.

For our Orphans Education and Agriculture Support (OEAS) program, we set up two emergency strategies to handle drought and freaky snow. We called both and named them CHOP CHOP BASKET. chop chop being slang for "hurry up"....and "basket" meaning items to help orphans and their guardians get thru the tough times. It is not our purpose to handle "relief" but when none is forthcoming from other places, we step in if necessary. So supplying corn (from Zambia) to grind and sugar beans for food and old clothing that could be layered and warming, became necessities.

A school and some individuals in Zimbabwe supplied used clothing. Archbishop Romero was a bishop in Central America who came to the aid of those in need the most. We made him our intercessor.



Beneficiaries of the Chop-chop (guidance and parents of the OEAS beneficiaries)

On 26 May Gweru in the Midlands had cold winter weather, turning to rain. Lightning lit up the sky, and during the night rain turned to sleet, and sleet turned to snow. By morning homesteads were covered in this rural area, thatched roofs were destroyed, chickens and goats and calves were weakened, or dead. Cattle are weak and a few died. People of course are not prepared for such low temps, sleet and snow are unheard of. It was the first time.



The photo shows snow as it was melting, one homestead in Maboleni village in lower Gweru and the snow around the farm, on the fence line, and dirt road. Donkey cart parked on the far left under the tree .Boys and girls who are part of Orphans Education and Agriculture Support who live in this area have suffered first hand. They have learned to cope with the 2015 and early 2016 intense heat & drought, and now this.

It has been an experience that few of our Maryknoll sisters in Africa have seen, if any. Have any of our readers with African experience seen snow, excluding Mt. Kilimanjaro (where the snow is quickly melting)?.

Drought in Zaka,Zimbabwe



Since October 2015, a month when the rain starts, the region experienced unprecedented heat wave, temperature soaring as high as 42 degrees Celsius. The heat wave persisted into November and December and early January 2016, months which traditionally are peak rainfall. Only a few drops were received.

We now get ready for the rainy season (we hope) and are purchasing seed for field and garden. The orphans will plant and harvest, and set aside what is needed for the year. We ask that they set aside some of it to give to OEAS to help those kids who face greater hunger.

Deepening wells is a priority and not easy to do, but efforts are made to help the grandparents and guardians who are raising their orphans in the family.

There have been many times when I am asked questions about why so many problems exist in Zimbabwe...lack of water, short supplies of electricity, and corruption from the top on down in handling natural resources as well.. Do we have a washing machine? No. If we did there wouldn't be enough water or electricity to run it. In all areas of using water for example, we have to conserve. Also, local people with no jobs can do hand work, get paid, in a 90 % unemployment environment.





We have supplied candles to the kids in order to do their homework and study. This year we purchased solar lanterns that are easy to maintain and last longer.

OEAS has 85 orphans in education, 175 in agriculture, and 260 in health/hygiene/nutrition with 18 to 20 being tutored in english, maths, and science. To keep this all going in a charity is still a desperate need and I wan to thank you for your prayers and support. If anyone wants to help, donations can be sent c/o Sr. Carolyn moritz, M.M., Maryknoll Sisters, Box 311, Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545 0311 designated as mission gift for Sr. Mary Frances Kobets, project no. 4438.

“At this time of Advent and Christmas, I am sharing the following, not my words, but Mother Teresa's:

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway....

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; Give the world the best you've got anyway

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; It was never between you and them anyway.”

From me.....Thank you for doing the right thing, for have heart (compassion and mercy), for thinking of others as you would like others to remember you...you and yours are remembered.

Sharing the coming of Jesus in our hearts once again

Sr. Mary Frances