

Orphaned by AIDS, Rescued by Love



Orphan – we know that reality: no parents. But in Zimbabwe, they use the phrase *double orphan* to describe a very hard reality. Having one parent is hard; having no parents, almost unbearable.

No one has suffered more than children as Zimbabwe was ravaged by the AIDS epidemic. Many children have lost both parents to AIDS, and their relatives are often too poor or too sick to care for them adequately. As a result, these little ones spend their days trying to survive, and many of them don't. Even if they do manage to stay alive, their day-to-day lives are filled with desperation, fear, violence and abuse.

But Sister Mary Frances Kobets, M.M., (above left) and the staff of the Orphans, Education, and Agricultural Support (OEAS) program in Zimbabwe are working hard each day to ensure that Emmanuel and hundreds of other orphans no longer have to fend for themselves.

“We want to make sure the children know that somebody cares about them, that God loves them, that no matter what has been put into their daily lives, they are not forgotten.”

As with so many other ministries around the world, the greatest challenge for OEAS of course, is funding. In almost every office and region, we have had to drastically cut budgets to make ends meet. As you can imagine, budgets don't get cut without sacrifices. In this case, a sacrifice might mean a child in Africa doesn't get the medical assistance he or she needs to survive, or a community in Latin America will not have access to clean water, or victims of human trafficking in Asia may never escape the violence and indignity that mark their daily lives. That is where you can help.

Can you give our Sisters the resources they need to provide concrete assistance, practical support, spiritual guidance, and unconditional love to the people they serve? For those in need -- an orphaned child, a lonely widow, a frightened woman, a man trying to support his family -- hearing a message of love and hope and possibility is the greatest gift they may ever receive. You can send that message.

“When a donation comes in, it is used right away. It goes to the greatest need. The gifts we receive keep children in school.”



- No one has suffered more than children as east Africa was ravaged by the AIDS epidemic. Together with our partners, Maryknoll Sisters are there for these orphans.