

[Brackets indicate parts of this appeal that can be omitted in order to shorten it.]

Missionary Works of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart from the Province of the United States

The Institute of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, a lay religious congregation, was established in 1821 in Lyons, France. In 1847 the congregation went on to found establishments in the United States and eventually in over thirty other countries. The primary mission of the Institute is the Christian education of youth. To that end in 1931 the American Brothers of the Sacred Heart opened their first African mission school in Uganda and from there they opened schools and other programs that serve youth in the African countries of Lesotho, Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Today Brothers direct and/or staff nine high schools and other related youth programs. Right from the beginning the goal of the Brothers has been to insure African students receive a quality Catholic education comparable to what they offer American students. *[In Africa this has meant not only to provide them with a formal education in the traditional subjects but also to give them the opportunity to develop proficiency in accounting, the trades and agriculture.]*

A quality education demands that the teachers themselves be prepared for their ministry as Catholic educators. In the five African countries where the Brothers minister, the national governments require that high school teachers obtain a college degree as well as a teaching certificate. Most of our African Brothers have obtained these qualifications at Tangaza College in Nairobi, Kenya, where the congregation has an international house of studies. The cost of educating one African Brother is about \$8,000 annually. *[For Americans this may seem like a real bargain but in eastern and southern Africa, where the average family earns \$400 to \$800 annually, this is a fortune.]*

A vital part of the religious formation program for young Africans entering the congregation is the international novitiate located in Lusaka, Zambia. The cost of this formation program is borne by the Brothers, however, there are other needs that are not covered by the annual budget such as the cost of updating their computers and \$21,000 to purchase a rebuilt tractor, which will be used to help this program be more self-sufficient and also assist the novices to develop agricultural skills which they in turn can pass on to their future students.

In a recent report compiled by the Brothers ministering in eastern and southern Africa it is clear that all of their educational institutions are in need of some kind of assistance. Labs need to be updated, new school blocks need to be constructed, computers need to be purchased, resource centers need to be modernized and since most high schools in Africa are boarding schools, there is a need for dormitories. For example, Christ the King High School in Roma, Lesotho, needs \$17,500 to renovate the school's dormitories which were built in the 1960's.

The parents of many African students are required to pay school fees which range from \$100 to \$500 annually depending on the area where the school is located. Because many families find it difficult to cover this expense, funding is needed to help supplement these fees and to offer scholarships so that qualified and worthy students can complete their high school education.

[Of the nine Brothers' schools in eastern and southern Africa, two are recent foundations. In January of this year the Brothers opened Sacred Heart College in Gweru, Zimbabwe. Two years ago the Brothers took over the management of a high school in Nyapea, Uganda, at the request of the diocesan bishop. For various reasons, including warfare, this school had been neglected and over \$18,000 is needed just for basic repairs.]

[A concern of the American Brothers in late December, 2019, was the severe food shortage faced by 7.5 million Zimbabweans, half of this country's total population. In January, 2020, \$6.000 was forwarded to the Brothers there to be used for emergency food relief.]

American Brothers also help sponsor mission establishments in Mozambique and in the Philippines. Their school in Amatongas, Mozambique was badly damaged in March of 2019 by Cyclone Idai. Recently in the Philippines, Cor Jesu College in Digos City, on the island of Mindanao, was severely damaged by an earthquake. Several buildings have been deemed beyond repair and all the others are in need of repair.

As in this country the coronavirus has had a negative impact on all the Brothers' mission establishments. Most of the schools are now closed and the Brothers are living under some form of quarantine. Because of conditions in Africa such as overcrowded living conditions, lack of access to clean water, an inadequate transportation and supply system, the number of fatalities may be higher than in any other part of the world.

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart are grateful for your generosity in these most challenging times. Please remember in your prayers the missionary Brothers and the young people in their care. Be assured you are daily remembered in their prayers. Thank you and God bless.