



## REPAIR MY CHURCH!

In 1206, a young man named Francisco Bernardone heard those words of Jesus from the crucifix at St. Damian church in Assisi at the time he was searching for light. The words moved him to repair that church, which was falling apart.

Whit hearts rooted in the word of Jesus, Francesco (a.k.a. Francis of Assisi) and his followers reached out to the world, from Assisi to neighboring Europe, to North Africa, to Asia and the Americas, considering men and women, and all creatures as brothers and sisters. Listening to the word of God is also listening to the needs of poor while serving the hungry, the sick, victims of war and calamities and those marginalized by society. Francis and his companions had nothing to offer to the people except their faith in God and trust in His divine providence.

The General Secretariat of the Franciscan Missions (GSFM) under the direction of the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans-OFM) in Rome, Italy, coordinates the Mission Appeals of our Friars collaborating with us in the Mission Cooperative of the Archdioceses and Dioceses in the United States. The generous donations received from the Missionary Cooperation Plan are used to prepare missionaries and support the worldwide missionary projects of the Franciscan Order in Developing Countries. In particular, the beneficiaries are the People of God in Africa: Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau, Libya, Mozambique, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania; in Asia and Oceania: Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Papua New Guinea; in South America: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru; in Caribbean: Haiti, Puerto Rico.

The Franciscans in those countries offer fraternal support in solidarity with those in needs. While responding to the spiritual hunger of the people, corporal necessities are also met thru human development projects directed most specifically to the poor and the marginalized as our Holy Father St. Francis of Assisi identified himself with them. Some of the efforts are:

- ✚ Animating worshipping communities, Christian formation and renewal program for the participants to be evangelized so that they can also become evangelizers;
- ✚ Promoting Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue;
- ✚ Reconciliation, healing and rehabilitation programs for the victims of ethnic wars;
- ✚ Building and maintaining Chapels and Schools in remote villages;
- ✚ Providing houses for the indigent;
- ✚ Ministry among the young people; those in or out of school;
- ✚ Soup kitchens;
- ✚ Outpatient clinics, basic health and sanitation program, clean water in the villages;
- ✚ Assistance for victims of Leprosy and AIDS patients, training for their caregivers;
- ✚ Shelters for the abandoned and street children;

- ✚ Ministry to Ethnic minorities;
- ✚ Livelihood and food production programs.

## PRESCHOOL FOR DALIT CHILDREN IN CHENNAI, INDIA

My name is Father Bernardo Moya, I am the Franciscan friar in charge of Mission appeals for the Franciscan Missions in Waterford, Wisconsin. I want to tell you about an educational program that can change a child's life.

Recently, Father Joseph Raj, OFM and other missionary friars in Chennai, India, are beginning a new education program focusing on the younger Dalit children and need our help. These children live on the fringe of society in miserable conditions. Their parents work as scavengers, beggars or as day laborers, if they can find work. Often the young children accompany their parents as they scavenge or beg for money. They hope to earn enough to survive another day. Sometimes, these children go without anything to eat for days and are often malnourished and vulnerable to infections and disease. Father Joseph has just opened a preschool for three-to-five-year-old children. Staffed with professional teachers for 50 children. They have learning materials to foster early cognitive and social development and are given a nutritious daily meal prepared by a part-time cook. With your support Fr. Joseph's team will continue to offer these young children a chance to break the vicious cycle of poverty and a life of begging on the streets. Please help provide these children with an early learning experience so they develop a passion for school and the skills to be successful!

The complete cost to educate and feed these 50 children for one year is \$12,000; every \$20 contribution will educate and feed one child for a month. Please consider helping Fr. Joseph give these children hope for the future by preparing them to continue their education and succeed in school.

St. Francis of Assisi was very grateful for the brothers that God gave him as companions to fulfill his mission. In the same way we, in the Franciscan Missions, thank God for you, our friends and fellow workers in the Kingdom of God that He gives us. Thank you for being with us in the mission to continue the work that He entrusted to the Church throughout the world where we Franciscans are called to serve.

The Lord give you Peace!

Fr. Bernardo Moya, OFM