

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

INTO AFRICA – “Cross” and Support From U.S. Catholics Bring Merciful Relief & New Hope to Needy Orphans

The images on the TV news were horrifying. As a rushing torrent of flood waters swept away everything in their path, hundreds of African men and women frantically climbed the trees to escape. When they reached the top branches, many could be seen lifting their babies and young children up to the rescue teams in helicopters. With danger and death literally lapping at their feet, those mothers and fathers were focused on only one thing – giving their little ones a last chance for survival.

Weeks later, long after the TV news had moved on to other things, those infants and toddlers lucky enough to be rescued were placed in special orphanages. Some were reunited with their loved ones, but many remain there still, waiting for parents who will never arrive.

“I met the nuns serving in one of those orphanages, and I was very moved by their resolve to honor the lost parents by safeguarding and caring for the children they had fought so hard to rescue,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross International Catholic Outreach.

“What I saw reminded me of James 1:27 – ‘Religion that is pure and undefiled before God is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction.’ These nuns are doing more than offering words of compassion or sympathy. They are doing something tangible and inspiring. They are putting their Catholic faith into action.”

As Cavnar continued his travels through Africa, he saw similar outreaches to orphans everywhere he went. Poverty and disease are brutal killers, and Africa has many orphans as a result. Again and again, the Church and its ministries had stepped forward to help, literally saving the lives of these children in desperate need.

“We Catholics honor and defend life as a blessing from God, and we have always had a special place in our hearts for children – particularly children like these – children with nowhere else to turn,” Cavnar said. “What is amazing is seeing those long-held beliefs being manifested in real, tangible and meaningful ways. These outreaches in Africa are a real tribute to the potential of the Church and to the impact Christians can have in the world today. It makes me proud to be a Catholic when I can support a work of mercy like this.”

Cavnar was also clearly impressed by the way entire communities were coming together in Africa to help the orphans. The work wasn’t simply an outreach by priests and nuns. It involved hundreds of families in the towns and villages – most of them



PHOTOS: clockwise from top:

A typical rural village in Africa.

Crosses marking the graves of infants and toddlers have become an all too common sight. They are a tragic reminder of the hard life orphans face when their parents die.

With the death of her parents, Martha Marconi, 13, has become the “mother” to her four brothers and sisters. With help from Cross, a home was built to replace her leaky thatched shack.

Where they find love, orphan children thrive. They are deeply grateful for the help you provide to them.

Little Amelia is one of the orphans lucky enough to be provided with a home and, daily care. She tends a garden as a daily chore and she has new hope for the future!



struggling under the burden of poverty themselves.

“I met family after family who had opened their door to accept one or more needy orphans. And these were poor families who were struggling themselves. They were acting in faith and out of compassion for the children who were suffering,” he explained. “In addition to being a healthier environment for the children, this method of home-based care is also extremely cost-effective. A child’s food and basic needs can be sponsored for

less than \$65 for a full year! That’s a tremendous impact to have with your donation. In fact, I can’t think of a better way of using your donated dollars to help the poor.”

Cavnar hopes the amazing effectiveness of this outreach in Africa will attract support from American Catholics who have a heart for the poor worldwide. The cost of the outreach is low enough that virtually everyone can participate on some level – ultimately, having a major impact through the combined contributions.

“We’ve already had people step forward with a willingness to support two or three orphans

because they have been blessed by God with two or three children or grandchildren. If we can continue to get that kind of response from Catholics in the U.S., we could have a huge impact in Africa over the next several months. We could rescue thousands of children! What a blessing that would be – particularly during Lent as we consider the love of our Lord and seek ways to honor His great sacrifice for us.”

Gifts made during Lent will also have a dramatic impact when they are received in Africa in time for Easter celebrations.

“Imagine that moment.

Imagine when the priest or nun receives word that Catholics in the U.S. have sponsored the orphans in the area he serves. Imagine the joy and hope those children will feel on that Easter morning,” Cavnar said. “And of course, we can all share in their excitement. That’s what makes this kind of outreach so special. It gives Catholics all over the world an opportunity to share in something powerful and inspiring. We can feel unified in our faith and in our mission – and that can make our experience of Lent and Easter all the more meaningful.”

How to Help Africa

Your help is needed for Cross International Catholic Outreach to bring Christ's mercy to the poor overseas. Use the enclosed postage-paid brochure to mail your gift or send it to Cross International Catholic Outreach, Dept. AD00203, 490 White Pond Drive, PO Box 63, Akron, OH 44309-0063.

