

Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions

Newsletter

August 2023



Encountering God's Love on Mission

By Carla Heinsch

Missions can be overwhelming. There is so much work to be done, sometimes it feels like I am spinning my wheels and as soon as one need is met another twenty arise. After 22 years, I honestly think there is more work to be done than when I first arrived. Yet I feel more peace and hope than ever before.

When I first went to help at the orphanages that take in children with disabilities in 2001, I was ready to serve. I felt I had so much I could do for the kids during my week with them. Projects are easy, with finite steps: a beginning, middle and an end. There is something to be shown for all my hard work, something to be checked off the list. I jumped in feet first to the chaos and joy of mission. The week of that first mission trip, I had never been so exhausted, felt so out of my element, sweat so much, and felt God's tangible love so profoundly in the children at this orphanage, many of whom couldn't speak or move their bodies well.



Within one day of being on mission, I realized it was less about the projects I had come to accomplish and so much more about God wanting to form and transform my heart. God had brought me to Jamaica to understand His love. God wanted to whisper truths to me about love, sacrifice, happiness, patience and peace through crooked little smiles, grunts and gurgles of joy, belly laughs, blinks of eyes, and small souls. Now don't get me wrong, I love a good project, but it is through serving at the orphanage that I realized true mission is always about encounter. It was in the small way the kid's breath changed, or their eyes followed me as I moved from crib to crib to sing and interact or how just coming to say hi there crooked little smiles and face would light up. My heart forever changed because of that week.

Mother Teresa said, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." I thought I had been called on mission to 'do all these great things' when really God was calling me to 'do small things with great love'. I was supposed to be with these souls, encountering them, loving them, allowing them to love me. From that place of love came serving them as best I could, allowing God's



love to flow from me to them in the projects we built, giving the cuddles they needed, the games we played, in comforting them.

That first trip changed my heart forever. Those encounters taught me about love, brokenness, and restoration. I felt God's tangible love through the children of the orphanage. It also raised my awareness, fully understanding Social Justice in the church and the needs that arise from the impact poverty, less advanced healthcare system, lack of resources and stigma around disability that impact people. That week was a gift and gave me a passion to try to be a voice for those in need that has carried over into all of my adult life.

When I talk to people about missions, I always ask them 'What part of the mission are you called to?' Everyone has a role: Prayer partner, financial supporter, physical labor, supply collector, provider of contacts and resources...there is a role for everyone on mission. John Paul II made St. Therese patroness of missions and she

never left her convent. Spiritual support is key to any mission's success. Pray about it. Ask God how you can encounter God's love. Get ready to be transformed.

We are given the opportunity to love the souls put in front of us with the love of God. It is both simple and profound. Fast forward 22 years of striving to live a missionary life in my day to day professional life and personal life in the United States as well as helping create and run Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions. I continue to strive to live into the calling to love. My mission is to love, and it is in the small things that love is amplified in big ways. Life isn't really about what we accomplish, but rests more in how we chose to love. It is constantly learning to love better, forgive more, be happy in simple things, not to dwell in the mistakes, but to live in grace. Mission is for everyone. How is God asking you to love? Will you support us in our call?



Meet our newest board member

Name: Deacon Bob Klein

Location: Portland, Oregon

Favorite Mission Memories: Missionaries of the Poor - Went there in deacon formation. Life changing experience visiting each of the homes.

21 years in teen ministry. As the teens became adults, I am blessed to perform their weddings and baptize their children.

Project Updates

Wheelchairs: as you may remember, we evaluated 75 residents in need of new wheelchairs last October. We were hoping to collect and refurbish used chairs and deliver them by early this year. Unfortunately, the collection process has proven much more difficult than we expected. However, we are expanding our search radius and are hopeful to supply the chairs by the middle of next year. One blessing in this area has been that Grant, one of co-founders and board members, has taken a job specializing in wheelchairs. His expertise will be invaluable to our mission team!

Bed positioning: because of their level of deformity and lack of functioning wheelchairs, many of the residents at Missionaries of the Poor spend the majority of their time in their beds. One of our goals is to offer them the ability to change position while in bed. This will help prevent the development of contractures (fixed joints) and decrease the risk of developing bed sores. Using wedges to prop residents up in bed also improves their ability to breath and swallow. We recently ordered almost \$4000 worth of supplies for this project and will be training staff in how to utilize these materials on our next mission trip.

Therapy programming: over our last 9 years of working with the Missionaries of the Poor, we have worked to train various religious brothers associated with the organization to serve in the role of therapy provider for the residents at their apostolates. Although the brothers were quick to learn, they were also very busy with their schooling and other works. They are also quite transitory, changing jobs and locations every couple years. Over time, it became apparent that this approach was not working. We decided our best chance at training in a long-term therapy provider would be to hire a local worker. The brothers agreed, and last month, they hired on a part-time worker to fill this role. In addition to training this worker, we are also sponsoring her position.

Team building: We will be taking 10-12 missionaries with us to Jamaica this October which is our biggest team to date! Our team is a mix of teens and young adults as well as skilled therapists. We hired an old, Jamaican friend as our driver for the week and are excited to treat our team to a great mix of mission work, spiritual growth opportunities, and some of the best of Jamaican culture!



JOIN THE MISSION

Foremost, we invite you to join us in prayer. Some specific prayer requests include:

- For Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions: that we may always have ears to hear and understand God’s calling for our organization. That God would equip us with the therapy professionals and support staff needed to service as many people in need as possible.
- For wheelchairs: that we could find appropriate and affordable wheelchairs for children with highly specialized needs.
- For our October 2023 mission team: that God would prepare us to complete the works and experience the spiritual growth He desires for us while on mission
- For the Missionaries of the Poor: that God would provide more holy men and women to grow their mission. For strong and holy leadership within the organization.
- For the staff of Missionaries of the Poor that assist in caring for the poor: that they may be attentive to the residents they serve, eager to learn, and devoted to the mission.

Next, we humbly ask for your financial assistance. We continue to keep our operating expenses to a minimum but are incurring more and more significant expenses as our therapy programming in Jamaica grows. We do not currently have the capacity to take online payments but welcome one-time or recurring payments by check. All donations are tax deductible. Please return the form below with your donation.

Finally, we invite you to share your time and talents with our organization. We have open board positions and are also seeking members for several committees. No therapy skills necessary. We are in specific need of people with knowledge in law and non-profit management as well as social media skills. You are also welcome to join us on a mission trip sometime! Let us know if you are interested.

Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions Donation Form

Elevating the dignity and quality of life of those living with disabilities across the world.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Prayer requests: _____

Make checks payable to Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions and mail to 507 5th Ave SE, Saint Cloud, MN 56304

Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions is a registered 501©3 organization. Donations are tax-deductible

A Reflection from a First Time Missionary

By Sophia Lieser



I attended my first mission trip to Jamaica with Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions in the fall of 2022. I have always had the desire to go on a mission trip and everything fell into place perfectly. On this trip, I was the youngest and least experienced with helping people with such severe disabilities.

The most touching part about this trip for me was the joy that these people had. Most of them were stuck in bed a lot and didn't get to see much of the outside world, yet they still had such a beautiful joy that was so moving. It really showed me that the circumstances that you are in, good or bad, should have no impact on your joy. True joy comes from knowing, loving, and serving the Lord.

Serving others is a critical part of our faith journey, whether it's a mission trip or simply holding the door for someone. We are called to love others just as Jesus loves us. Regardless of if they are our enemies or not. That's not an easy task! Yet it is so

rewarding to see the fruit that can come from loving those who may have hurt us in some way.

Finding yourself is only possible in communion with God and others. Following God's will in serving others doesn't take away from our own joy or personal discovery, in fact, it only strengthens us. Fr. James Keller said: "A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle." The entire point of a candle (and us as children of God) is to receive, be, and then spread light, and by spreading that light, we can only further God's kingdom and plan for our lives. To serve others is to serve God and vice versa.

Looking back, I truly feel like every single person I had the privilege of meeting in Jamaica helped me far more than I was able to help them. Their joy was contagious and helped me to see just how flawed my own perspective on joy was prior to meeting them.

"If we wish to serve God and love our neighbor well, we must manifest our joy in the service we render to Him and them. Let us open wide our hearts. It is joy which invites us. Press forward and fear nothing."



– St. Katharine Drexel

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Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions



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Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions

Vision Statement

To serve the Lord by creating sustainable therapy programming that promotes participation in healthy occupation to elevate the dignity and quality of life of those living with disabilities across the world. With St. Therese the Little Flower as our intercessor and guide, sustained by the Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, Little Flower Catholic Therapy Missions seeks to demonstrate the tangible love and mercy of Christ to those entrusted to our care.

