



Franciscan Aid: Newsletter

Summer 2020

Welcome to the latest Franciscan Aid newsletter, keeping you informed about our work with the world's poorest communities.

The shadow of the pandemic

This July we had a new experience – our first Zoom Board meeting. A great advantage of this was that our Minister General, John Heberton, was able to join us from New Zealand. We were also delighted to be able to convene a well-attended meeting without adding anything to atmospheric pollution levels, or incurring any travel expenses. It worked very well, and we aim to hold at least one meeting a year in this way in the future.

While living with the coronavirus may have caused us to make some positive changes, it has also brought great suffering worldwide. Many of the applications we received in time for this meeting bore testament to the poverty and hardship that accompany this illness. Even in our own wealthy country we are facing a huge rise in unemployment. A newsletter from Hope School in Bethlehem, however, threw light on the much greater problems being experienced there due to the disruption of an already fragile economy.

Fortunately, we had rather more money than usual to give away at this meeting, thanks to a couple of generous legacies. But we fear that needs will escalate over the next few months in the wake of the pandemic. While the situation in Europe is more stable now, numbers of people infected in Africa, South America and the Indian Sub-continent continue to rise steeply. And everywhere, it is the poorest who suffer the most.

The Trustees of Franciscan Aid feel privileged to be able to help the poorest at a time like this, but there will undoubtedly be many more people we cannot reach.

We pray for relief for them and for their families.

Bringing a smile



It is always good to see how our donations are spent. These children at the hostel in Murshidabad, India, run by Father Sanjay, were excited to receive fruit.



The First Order Sisters at Gumi in Korea work with children from deprived or difficult backgrounds, some of whom need additional support. The gift of a flute is life-enhancing, as are art therapy sessions.



Franciscan Aid Weekend

The idea of a weekend specifically to promote Franciscan Aid more widely, and to raise funds from our local congregations, had been gathering pace until lockdown put paid to any plans for this year. However, this does give more time for developing ideas for 2021.

We have fixed on the weekend after Ascension as an appropriate time for this – in 2021 this will be 14–16th May. Angela Alexander will hold a pioneering event in her church in Norfolk and will report back in the Winter 2021/2 Newsletter.

If you would like to try hosting a fundraising event in your church at the same time, please do get in touch with Angela (on secretaryfaf@gmail.com) to discuss ideas.

Practical solutions

Many of the requests we receive are for items of equipment that provide practical answers to the problems of providing a safe, disease free environment. The water boreholes we have helped to finance are an obvious example, but an air conditioning unit, like this one in the prayer room at the Holy Child Programme in Bethlehem, also makes a huge difference. Children can now gather for worship in this place without becoming dangerously warm in the hot summer weather.



What next for the Board?

At our next meeting in November, both Roger Marks, and Richenda Milton-Daws complete their terms of office as Trustees. Although we have been delighted to welcome Angela Alexander back to the Board, along with new Trustee Brenda Hewitt, we still need more volunteers. At the moment we are in urgent need of a new Chair. Please pray for the right person to come forward.

If you would like to find out more about how the Board works, with a view to possibly joining us, our next meeting will be held by Zoom on Monday 16th November. Do let Angela know if you wish to join the meeting as an observer.

Where is the money going?

At the Trustees' meeting in July 2020, we were able to award grants to a number of projects including:

- The creation of a new road to a school in Ghana for children with disabilities, connecting them with the wider community.
- A grant for essential equipment for St Patrick's Bible College in Madagascar.
- Health supplies for Uganda including sanitary towels, mosquito nets and immunisation kits.
- Emergency support for families and children affected by Covid-19 in Bethlehem.

Please pray

- For all the projects and initiatives mentioned in this newsletter;
 - For the trustees who must decide how to respond to all requests;
 - For more volunteers to come forward as potential trustees.
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