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Deus Meus et Omnia
(My Lord and My All)

Summer 2015



My Dearest Co-Missionaries,

It is my fervent wish that each of you and your families are really enjoying the summer weather especially after that ferocious winter. I want you to know that aside from my getting older, that I am doing very well and I have been so blessed to have a new chapel to pray in and to be given such wonderful care. All of you are remembered

in my prayers and I thank you all for your continued remembrance of my Liberian children and their special needs. Without your caring and sharing, JCADF would never be able to help so many in extreme poverty.

It is a wonderful thought that Our Dear Pope Francis will soon be close here in Philadelphia. Although we will not be able to see him in person, we most certainly will be listening to the excitement on the radio or watching on the television. We pray the rosary daily for his safety during his travels. We are living in turbulent times and only prayer from our hearts will be able to save this world from complete destruction. Pray, Pray, Pray the rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for Peace in our hearts and in our world. It is difficult to imagine that in a short time we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Our Dear Mother's apparitions at Fatima. Time seems to be passing by quicker than ever and we must consecrate ourselves and our loved ones to our Beloved Mother Mary. The evil one knows his time is short so as you pray the rosary, bind yourselves and your children to Mary's Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart. She is sure to watch over each of our dear ones and each of us. Surrender and Trust Completely in the Lord. With Jesus and His Mother we will always be safe!

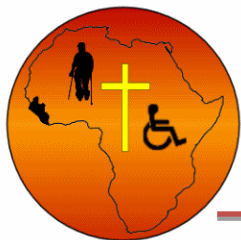
My love and gratitude towards each of you knows no bounds although I only have prayers to offer you and my sincere gratitude for your support for myself and my mission children in Liberia. Keep them in your prayers as they continue to suffer with Ebola once again and with so much starvation and death around them. I can never thank God enough for each of you

and your continued prayers. You have brought so many back to the sacraments without even knowing it. Certainly, your crowns in heaven will be shining like stars in the night. Thank you, thank you, thank you for all your love and support throughout the years.

Yours in Our Triune Lord,

Sister M. Sponsa Beltran, OSF

Sister M. Sponsa Beltran, OSF



Jerry Cebulski
African Disability Foundation Inc.
"Disability does not mean inability"



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JMJ

Summer 2015

Beloved Co-Missionaries,

Without God we are nothing and without your assistance we can accomplish little. God Hears the Cry of the Poor but do we? Since our last letter, there have been wonderful "miracles of love" but also times of great need and it is overwhelming that God has placed so many lives in our hands. We are concerned for each and every disabled individual that has come our way.



In May, Liberia was declared "Ebola Free" and all began to relax and celebrate the announcement. However, we warned everyone not to become complacent. Using the soap and chlorine buckets was now a "way of life" we asked all to continue taking precautions against this horrendous disease ever returning again. And just as life started to return to normal, in July, the announcement was made that Ebola returned to Liberia in the case of a seventeen year old boy. He had contact with at least 148 people and all had to be examined and investigated. Within 24 hours, other victims began to emerge including a group of people in Paynesville, Monrovia where the rehab kids are housed. The emails we received were so sad, "Grannie, I am so scared that this time one of us will die from the disease." "Wow, we

really never thought that this nightmare could ever happen again but here we are. What do we do?" After reassuring all that they now had the knowledge and the tools to prevent this disease and that we were all praying for them, a restless peace began to come over them. We say restless because the fear they possess is almost unimaginable. We boost their spirits by phone and pray asking God to protect them all. They are all so fragile.

Just a few days before the new outbreak, Omo, our eighteen year old who was in desperate need of a leg amputation, was operated on in Nimba County, about seven hours away from home. We never stopped begging his parents to please let us help him by getting him the surgery he so desperately needed. He was in excruciating pain. His mother finally consented and Dolley, our determined staff member found a Doctor to perform the surgery. One initial problem was that he asked for \$15,000 USD to perform the surgery. YIKES! We did not have that kind of money to spare, especially if it was going to be spent on one individual. How could we ever begin to feed and care for so many others? Since this was out of the question, we ultimately found a kind physician in Nimba who was willing to help for a reasonable rate. So Dolley, Omo and his mother travelled to the hospital and the boy was admitted. He came through the surgery very well but he was disappointed that the amputation had to be done above his knee. We received an email from the Doctor telling us that he had never seen anyone recover so rapidly from such radical surgery. He apologized that he had to remove the leg above the knee but explained that the bone was just too infected and had he attempted to leave the knee, Omo would have to undergo another surgery within a few short months. We understood perfectly but young Omo did not.



Although Sr. Sponsa worked for years to dispel the "witching myth," many in Liberia still believe being handicapped is disgraceful. Within 24 hours of the surgery, Omo called us and told us he was "shamed." He knew that his friends would say that he was "witched" and he would be shunned. So far, our efforts to assure him this would not happen have not been successful. Dolley has never stopped encouraging him, but Omo calls frequently to announce that he will live with his Auntie so his friends will not see him. Omo is still hospitalized and is receiving physical therapy but will be released soon. We have a gentleman who is ready to visit with Omo upon his release to teach him about his amputation and prosthetics in order to offer him some extra support. Please pray that he begins to understand that his friends will not shun him if they are really true friends. This will eventually be resolved and all we can do is keep encouraging this young man to begin his new life.

It will take at least six months for Omo's stump to heal enough to be fitted for a prosthesis. At that time we have two other young boys, Abenigo and Mohammed, who are about 10 and 12 years old who also need prostheses. Both were hit with motor scooters a few years ago and would have bled to death if amputations had not taken place. Both are going to school using crutches and they will go with Omo to be fitted for their new legs. Please pray that we have success in this area.



Roosevelt, one of Sister's graduates, will be completing his degree in economics and public administration in December. He is an admirable young man who has had a straight 4.0 Grade Point Average since he began school. He desperately wants a degree in medicine so he can help his fellow countrymen. He was the advocate for the starving during the Ebola crisis and he organized our largest feeding programs in Sinkor, Monrovia. Several months ago, he discovered a single mother living with her newborn son, baby Andy. Roosevelt asked if we might help get food and clothes for the child since the Mother had nothing. He kept telling us about the softness of the baby's head and how Andy was not able to turn over. We sent him, thanks to all of you donors, to Doctors who were in the country due to the Ebola Epidemic. They all agreed that Andy has hydrocephalus (fluid on his brain) and his head measurements kept increasing. There was no medical program here in the United States that was not filled to capacity and all wanted a CAT scan of the child's skull in order to make a true diagnosis. Well, Liberia at that time did not even have the equipment to perform a CAT scan and we could not find a Doctor who ever performed brain surgery in the country. Little Andy kept deteriorating but thanks to Dave Zbikowski, father of one of our board members, he was able to contact a friend with the NGO SIM. They found Dr. Brown, who had previously performed the "shunt procedure" that baby Andy needed and the necessary materials were flown into the country. We are happy to say that little Andy had his surgery and was released from the hospital.

Andy's life will be difficult for we do not know if there has been any brain damage. As he grows he will have repeated surgeries to lengthen the shunt that extends from the ventricles in his brain to his left kidney, constantly draining spinal fluid. This will continue to be a costly

recurrence of surgeries and we once again ask for prayers that he will one day be able to lift his very large head and move about. Life is so difficult in Liberia, and with a disability of this type, it is easy to feel discouraged since there is no one who knows how to care for a child like this. Thanks to each of you, we are providing his nutritional formula as the mother was unable to nurse the baby. Hopefully, this mother will be able to recognize the symptoms of an emergency situation and she will know enough to get Andy back to the hospital. Pray that the Doctor who performed the surgery will always be available to her when and if he is needed.

Roosevelt is observant--he is the one who discovered the woman with the third degree burns on her arm during our first food giveaway. He found her a Doctor who visited every day and debrided her wound and redressed it. Today the lady is healed and she calls Roosevelt her son when she sees him. She knows that she would not have survived had it not been for the kindness of this young man and his sincere



compassion. He also has discovered many senior citizens who cannot even begin to look for food as they are just too old and crippled. He constantly deprives himself of food and necessities just to help his fellow countrymen. And of course, he always cares for his older brother, Monday Prowd, who is completely deaf and who Sister raised from the time he was about three years old. In those days Monday was even taken to the US and stayed with Angie Cebulski when his hearing capacity was being evaluated. He now teaches in Bomi County at the Oscar Romero school for the deaf where we have four other deaf children enrolled. Roosevelt and Monday are special brothers and a pleasure to work with!

In our last letter we included a photo of Jack Benjamin, a deaf boy who Sister raised. Some of our handicapped found him wandering in the marketplace, begging for food. We provided him with a bed and food and believed that all was well. However, Jack lives with nine other young deaf men who all live together in a two room shanty. They have nothing except the clothes and food we provided for Jack. They shared one towel between the ten of them. Yes, you heard right—one towel that was dirty, full of holes and tattered. We were horrified when we heard about them living in complete squalor, receiving one emergency message after another from Christopher Kyne, another of Sister's disabled. This is the rainy season in Liberia and this



year it has been unusually rough. Often it rains for days and the winds are so great and the waters are so heavy that they push mud through the little shanties and cause terrible flooding and illness. Everything thrives in this kind of weather - Ebola is greatest, malaria is out of control and typhoid is rampant. Chris sent us an S.O.S. about Jack and his friends. The winds were so great that the entire tin roof of their little hovel was blown right off. Muddy water rushed through the front door and out the back and there was no place to run. Chris made arrangements to have a new roof put on and all new support beams installed since everything was rotted. When all this was completed, we had Chris buy buckets and cleaning supplies and the inhabitants scrubbed their home with a strong mixture of chlorine and water.

We were just about to buy them beds when we received another S.O.S. from Chris. The little house was broken into and all their new towels, pots and food were stolen. In the middle of the night, none of the deaf boys were able to hear anyone breaking through the doors and without any electricity, no one was able to identify the burglars. All were afraid to turn on a flashlight for fear of being killed. We eventually had to have steel doors made to protect them and keep them safe. They are so grateful to each of you! A BIG THANK YOU from all of the deaf young men. There is just one tragedy after another and nightmare upon nightmare. How they continue to remain alive day after day is beyond our comprehension. It is only through the grace of God Almighty.

We have now managed to group our disabled into the following groups: the rehab off campus residents, the "bush" or village disabled, the blind community, the deaf community, and the elderly disabled. These five groups encompass so many and all need monthly food, medical or surgical care, sometimes educational support and daily necessities. As we always say, our top priorities are definitely food and medical care.

Little Victoria was abandoned by her parents. Roosevelt found this child living with a woman named Theresa, who has a large hut and a large family. Theresa was divorced by her husband who left the family and so she began to sell coal door to door to survive. About six months ago, when she went to collect her pay from a family, she was shocked to see lying on the dirt floor a naked little girl, about two years old. She was dirty and did not look as if she had eaten for a long time. The parents,



who were paying no attention to the child, said she was born deformed. Victoria cannot move her legs and has very little movement in her arms. Her eyes never opened for the first six months of her life. She cannot be placed on her back due to severe pain so she remains on her stomach. She cannot chew food at all but she can swallow. Victoria turns her head when there is a noise and she smiles often. They do not think she can see but we are unsure of all of her medical conditions.

After her birth, the parents took her to numerous doctors and finally to a witchdoctor (herbalist) out of extreme frustration. When the witchdoctor told them that the child would only bring them pain and that she had been "witched," the parents became extremely angry and only wanted this child dead. They decided not to feed Victoria, gave all her clothes away and waited for her to die. When Theresa heard the story she became infuriated and lambasted the parents. They said terrible things about this little child and told Theresa that she could take her since they had no use for her. Theresa took the child with the intention of cleaning her up, feeding her and then bringing her back to the parents. This was six months ago and Theresa is still caring for little Victoria. She no longer goes near the parents as they make it very clear they want nothing to do with the child. There is no place for her and Victoria's own parents make it very clear that they do not want her back. What can we do?

We are currently checking if Mother Teresa's sisters are still working anywhere in Liberia. If they are, we are praying they will assist us in the care of this child. She has no one like so many in Liberia, but with all of her infirmities, the chance of anyone caring for her full time is not promising. She has so many needs and we must begin with getting her a good physical to see if we can find a diagnosis. Pray with us that we will be able to help this little angel in some small way.



It is with great sadness that we must announce to you the death of Arthur (Bobby) Tobey who was a young man who had lived for years with Sister Sponsa. Bobby had fallen from a plum tree and his spine was split open and in all these years it had never healed, regardless of the treatments offered from local and visiting physicians. He was confined to a wheelchair and eventually died from a cancerous tumor of the mouth which was aggressive and it was removed twice

only to grow back within a matter of weeks. Rest In Peace Bobby. May God bless your soul.

Our off campus adults have become very active in church activities at the Immaculate Conception Church. They have started a young adult youth group, joined the lecturing committee, the Catholic women's club, retreat groups, and they have their children attending Baptism and First Communion classes. Those who have not been married in the church are preparing to have their marriages blessed. The pastor of the church has emailed us saying, "these young disabled have brought a new life into my parish and I am so happy to welcome them into our church family." The best part is they are just so happy to be attending church and having their children follow in their footsteps. Sister Sponsa, you have many wonderful reasons to be proud of the children you raised!! May God Bless you and your young adults forever. Indeed they are very special souls, working as leaders in their community in the service of the Lord.

Without each of our donors we would never be able to help all of these people. Our abundant thanks to each of you. Without God we are nothing and without your continued support so many of Sister's growing family would die of malnutrition, malaria, typhoid or other medical issues. Can we help all 4.3 million in Liberia? No, but together we can make a difference in keeping many alive, one individual at a time. Please continue to tell our story to family members and friends. A few dollars a month can help to keep so many alive and we need each of you to help us as we are unable to accomplish anything without your generosity. You are all in our



prayers and we love you for your believing in the Corporal Works of Mercy. May Jesus bless each one of you abundantly!

Today at church we heard the readings about the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. As our Liberian family continues to grow, we too must pray for God's generosity in multiplying our funds to allow us to continue to feed and care for the poor and downtrodden.

In His Name,



Angie Cebulski
Co-President



Eileen Rockensies
Co-President

All contributions should be made out to:

JCADF

and sent to:

***Jerry Cebulski African Disability
Foundation***

***47 Harford Avenue
Shavertown, PA 18708***

Donations are tax deductible

Jerry Cebulski African Disability Foundation (JCADF)

Cell: 570-406-4533

Email: krock@epix.net

Web: www.africandisabilityfoundation.org

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