



DIVINE FACE ORGANIZATION (Concern for the needy)

Newsletter – July 14, 2004

Dear Friend of the Divine Face,

Honor to the Divine Face! I send you warmest greetings from the lowly but grateful hearts whom you have succeeded in touching in a radical way by your generosity in far away Nigeria. I can assure you that, supported by divine grace, you are making a difference in the lives and families of many.

THANKSGIVING

Lately, I have been made able to see a lot of reasons to be grateful to God. This year I am thirty years a priest. This year, after twelve years, the three Divine Face Stewards we have, made final their decision to spend their entire lives in making reparation to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart and in caring for the needy. This year also the Divine Face Organization is ten years old in the U.S. And still this year for the first time some members of the Divine Face Organization visited Nigeria. That was like the high point of this year of anniversaries for all the members of the Organization, both in Nigeria and in the U.S., and especially for me.

We definitely have every cause to thank God that their visit was not only safe, but also quite exciting. As it were that visit gave a human face to the whole enterprise that has been undertaken by the Divine Face, thus completing the picture of both the divine and the human working together to bring about the salvation of the needy. Praise God!

I hope the past year has been good for you as well. But if there has been any sad event do accept my consolation. May our Blessed Mother, comforter of the afflicted, sooth your pain and bring you healing from her divine Son.

PROGRESS

We were able to get the ground floor of the teacher's quarters decked and plastered for the teachers to move in by October last year. So, thanks to your help, God worked the miracle we prayed for. Also, by now the block work on the top floor of the storied building must have come a long way. Work on that started after I left to come to the U.S. on June 1, this year. Consequently, I do not have any picture of that stage of development. Hopefully, the dorm for the boys will be available for the beginning of the new academic year in September. We also have a 25kva generator donated to us by our State Government to supply electricity to the school. That was our savior when our members from the U.S. came. It made it possible to have some fans blowing in an attempt to cool them off some, since air conditioners are out of the question.

I am happy to inform you that on the school bus, a generous parishioner from the parish where I am serving now gave us a very encouraging donation to help repair it rather than abandon it entirely and yet have nothing to transport the kids. The motor is now in good shape, but the axle needs a replacement. It moves, but can't do much until the axle is fixed. It may seem that not much happened this past year. Yet I can tell you that it is not easy to assess the immense value of the successful visit of our members to Nigeria this year. They did it out of their own pockets, aided by a few donations just for the trip.

REGRETS

Our major regret is the unnecessary delay in the realization of our water project. I was hoping to bring you pictures of the students and their parents jubilating at a grand ceremony marking the completion of that all-important project. But, alas, here I am battling with an unfulfilled dream! I don't know what to call it – dishonesty on the part of the contractor or not God's time yet? Well, in the spirit of Christian optimism, I tend to prefer the latter. The first well drilled by this contractor had insufficient water. Just before I came out this time, he started another well. I am on the phone practically everyday monitoring the progress. Hopefully before the next academic year starts we will have water for the students. We still have the overhead tank to build and the supply pipes to install for the distribution of water to the facilities. I would like to acknowledge here quite a handsome donation made by one of you generous sponsors for the realization of this project.

Sorry, again this year it was not possible to bring you any letter from your adopted family. Work at the school is far too much for our small number of three Stewards of the Divine Face. I myself, have more than two hands can carry at times, plus preparations for the visitors we had from here, but be assured of their prayerful thoughts of you.

Some of the teachers we hired last year were not doing well. Consequently, we had to readjust. We have been able to get replacements, but still lack two - for mathematics and physics.

CHALLENGES

Staffing

With the new students coming in next year, we shall need to increase the number of our teachers. Maybe some of you could volunteer or know some one who would like to do so even for a year. Please help us also in praying for an increase in the number of the Stewards who form the hub for all our work and services.

Science Laboratories

Right now, staring us in the face is the immediate need of science laboratories. It is immediate because we have to get the government to give us accreditation for the Senior Secondary school, so that our students can graduate from our high school next year. Equipped science laboratories for physics, chemistry and biology are indispensable for this accreditation. We don't yet have the facility, much less the equipment.

Playground

The government also says that we should have at least a field where the students can play games and do sports. That needs to be purchased because it has become very difficult to get any more donations of land around the school.

Hostel Accommodation

The hope we are entertaining for the boys' hostel requires funds to be realized. The walls will at least have to be plastered and the floor smoothed out. The hostel we have for the girls is full right now. We are supposed to get new students for the next academic year. I don't know if we are



Well - drilling
about to start



Sandra with some students down at
the spring

going to be discriminatory in our admission this year, since there is at least some hope of room for the boys but none yet for the girls. I can't think of it!

Dining hall

The provision of a dining hall for the students is yet only a thought. Again we are going to have a problem of space when the new students come.

Transportation

The problem of transportation for the school remains to be solved. I mentioned the condition of the school bus above. The estimated cost for fixing the axle is \$800.00. There is also the need for a carriage van for buying food supplies for the students. SOS!

Continued support for the poorest of the poor in a system of corruption

That the economy of Nigeria is rotten is no news. You need to know that the cost of living for the ordinary citizen has tripled, and yet there are no new jobs. People are losing their jobs. The 'no payment of salaries syndrome' still persists. And what that spells is more hardship especially for the poor and the needy that are our major concern.

The group that went to Nigeria this year saw how much need there is for help. So they are already making plans for another visit next year, this time with a team of volunteers especially in the areas of teaching, medical assistance, carpentry, etc. If you feel challenged by their courage, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Paul Denning at 817-548-7688. Also, if you have access or contact to school supplies and laboratory equipment, we are gathering stuff to be shipped to Nigeria early next year. Please contact Mr. Denning.

CONCLUSION

May God our loving and caring Father, whose image you are reflecting to those disadvantaged and deprived because they are weak, continue to bless you and your willingness to share your gifts, and make those gifts increase. I am here till August 1, 2004. As usual, please feel free to call me, if you wish, at 817-467-7440. Have you changed yet to the Catholic Phone Company we suggested to you last year? That is another easy way of supporting our mission and the company itself (Sienna Communications # 1- 877- 474- 3662).

Sincerely yours as always in His Image,

Rev. Fr. Akannamdi Gerard Mary Anyanwu (Chief Steward)



A visit to the family of one of the Divine Face Stewards



Paul Denning handing out peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to the kids



Paul and Sandra with some of the students



The U.S. members paid a visit with Fr. Gerard Mary to the bishop of the diocese, Most Rev. Dr. V.A. Chilewe



Paul and Sandra with the nursery/primary school children and their teachers