

St. NICHOLAS Uganda CHILDREN'S FUND

Newsletter

December 2012

Email: info@ugandachildrensfund.org

"Christmas, my child, is love
in action. Every time we love,
every time we give, it's
Christmas." —Dale Evans



Dear Friends,

The giving of gifts has become part of Christmas tradition throughout the world. Some say that this custom originated with the Magi who presented gifts to the newborn Christ child. Yet the Father Himself gave us the greatest gift of all: His only-begotten Son—born as a baby, in our very own human flesh. This baby would grow as we do, and become a man; and this man would willingly give His life on our behalf. There is no greater love than this.

In our day, popular carols and cards represent Christ's birth in a sentimental, sanitized style. We can't comprehend the stark reality of a young mother giving birth in a dark, dank cave where large domesticated animals are stabled. There is an ancient hymn of the Church "O *Magnum Mysterium*" that begins like this:

"O great mystery and wonderful sacrament
that animals should see the newborn Lord
lying in a feeding-trough."

Meditate on this, and consider that our nostalgic manger scenes are odorless!

Animals are ever-present in the neighborhoods where our families live and work, yet even the poorest women prefer to deliver in the overcrowded government hospital or in a local maternity clinic—not at home with the goats and the chickens! Our mothers understand Mary's predicament very well, and it touches their hearts.

Among our children's families, the giving of material gifts at Christmastime is rare. They are happy if they can afford a little meat and some side dishes to celebrate a meal together. Christmas becomes even more special if they've saved a few coins to buy "new" second-hand clothes to wear to church on Christmas Day. The gifts they give and receive are themselves. Christmas is a day to pray, to eat, and to enjoy each other's company.



There's no place like home for the holidays!

Our work here in Uganda is totally dependent on giving. Good-hearted people donate and we distribute the gifts in the form of school fees, lunches, health care, etc. Thanks to some special contributions, we've also been able to provide our most destitute families with Christmas meals, and our younger children with new church clothes.

By any standard, the social, economic, health, and living conditions of the families we serve place them among the poorest of the poor. There is a belief in India that when a person is given a gift by a beggar, that person is blessed of God. From time to time throughout the year, one or another of our families may present a gift to us: a few fresh eggs, a pumpkin, two ears of roasted maize, a handful of homegrown peanuts, or a small container of fried grasshoppers (in season, of course). We are indeed blessed and humbled by these sacrificial acts of gratitude. We wish we could share the treats with you, but clearly that is

impossible. So let us express our appreciation to you, our partners, by sharing the smiles and thanks of those who benefit from your generosity. This is our Christmas gift to you.

"The reason why I have written for you this letter is to thank you for all things you have done for me and my sisters and brothers. I don't know what can I do for you but I will pray for you so that God help you in all things." —*Lydia*



Derrick



Lydia

"I will never, never, and never forget you in all my mind, and even I don't have anything which can make you happy but I will pray for you so that you can live your life." —*Friedause*

"I would like to thank you for all the support that you have given to me as well as my sister in school. People like us rarely get that chance." —*Peace*



Joanita



Henry

"I have written this to thank you for everything you have done to me and other people in Uganda and the entire world." —*Moses*

"I really appreciate whatever you do for me, my brothers, and other children in Uganda. Thank you for coming into our lives." —*Charles*



Paraskevi



Stephen

"We have written this letter to thank you for what you have done for us since we lost our parents. We never knew how we would continue with our studies. We didn't know that we would get other parents but now you're our parents. You have given us support and everything we needed and we still need. May God bless you." —*Rebecca, Hilda, & Gladys*

Be blessed in these gifts! Wishing you a joyous Christmas, with love,

Peter & Sharon

We welcome your donations.
Checks may be sent to:

St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund
P.O. Box 285
Chardon, OH 44024-0285

Or you can donate online at
www.ugandachildrensfund.org

The St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions.