

Jesus in the face of the poor

“Divinity is always where one least expects to find it,” wrote Fulton Sheen. And so it is for missionary Rich Tarro in his ministry work in Kenya, where he discovers Christ again and again in the children, women, and men that HOPE project serves.

by Rich Tarro | Nov 24, 2024 | 0 comments



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MISSIONER NEWSLETTER – Advent 2024

RICH TARRO, KENYA



We recently brought 25 new students into the HOPE Project. Most of these children were out of school due to an inability to pay school fees. Included in this group of new students are four children being raised by a single mother.

I read Fulton Sheen's powerful book *Life of Christ* many years ago. That book, along with Pope Benedict's monumental *Jesus of Nazareth* series, has been instrumental in my faith journey and my relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. These books are stored away with the rest of my “worldly possessions” back in the U.S. I hope to read them again someday in light of my subsequent life experiences since the first time I read them.

In *Life of Christ*, Fulton Sheen wrote “The world might have expected the Son of God to be born in an inn. A stable would be the last place in the world where one would have looked for Him. Divinity is always where one least expects to find it.”

So, it is with my ministry work. I find Jesus in the mother who can't feed her family, the baby whose bed is a flattened cardboard box laid on the ground, the family whose house is collapsing, the father whose children are years behind academically because he couldn't afford to send them to school, and the child who has a medical condition that government programs never seem sufficient to address.

We recently brought 25 new students into the HOPE Project. Most of these children were out of school due to an inability to pay school fees. Included in this group of new students are four children being raised by a single mother.

Saumu is a young mother of five children. She dropped out of school when she was in grade 7 and got married at the age of 16. Saumu and her husband had two children together—Khadija and Salama. However, her marriage didn't last as her husband left her for another woman. Sauma got married again and had two more children—Harrington and Jamila—but this husband did not stick around either.



Your continued support enables us to make sure children like Khadija, Salama, Hannington, and Jamila (and in a few years Yusuf, pictured here) are in school and that Naomi and her family have a place to sleep and food to eat.

Saumu was struggling to raise her four children alone. She met a man who professed to love her and who promised to help take care of the children. This man took off when Saumu was 8 months pregnant with Yusuf, who is now four months old.

Saumu used to wash clothes and sell fried potatoes to support her family. After becoming pregnant with Yusuf, she was forced to stop working as she experienced several complications during pregnancy. With no means to earn money for her family, life became still more difficult. Even getting food to feed her children was challenging.

Because of her situation and associated financial struggles, Saumu's children fell behind in school. They are now two to three years delayed from where they should be. Now that we are supporting the children in school, we will make sure that they don't fall any further behind.

We are also supporting the family with food as well as working to improve their living situation. We gave the family a bed as the whole family was sleeping on a small, torn mattress on the ground. (Unfortunately, only one bed will fit in the house.) We gave the family a water tank as the house they are living in has no running water and they need a clean and safe place to store water for drinking and cooking. We also gave all the children backpacks to carry school books and supplies.

Now that we are helping Saumu and her children, her mother, who owns the house where Saumu and the children are living, is threatening to force the family out of the house. This is the type of thing that we unfortunately need to deal with all the time.

If Saumu and her children are forced out of their house, we will help them with a place to live as we won't allow them to live on the street. We are hopeful that we will be able to build Saumu and her children a house of their own, but we first need land on which to do that.

I trust that the Lord will show us the way. Divinity is always where one least expects to find it.

Merry Christmas to all my family and friends who so generously support my ministry work. Your continued support enables us to make sure children like Khadija, Salama, Hannington, and Jamila (and in a few years Yusuf) are in school and that Naomi and her family have a place to sleep and food to eat.

Please help by contributing to our GivingTuesday campaign.

Rich

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RICH TARRO

Rich Tarro is the director of HOPE (Helping Orphans Pursue Education) Project in Mombasa, Kenya.

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