

Savior of the World

family

Sierra Leone, West Africa

Easter 2012

With Love and Prayer

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"To celebrate the Eucharist "to eat his flesh and drink his blood", means to accept the wisdom of the Cross and the path of service. It means that we signal our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for others, as Christ has done. Our society desperately needs this sign, and young people need it even more so, tempted as they often are by the illusion of an easy and comfortable life, by drugs and pleasure-seeking, only to find themselves in a spiral of despair, meaninglessness and violence. It is urgent to change direction and to turn to Christ. This is the way of justice, solidarity and commitment to building a society and a future worthy of the human person."

Blessed Pope John Paul II

Dearest Family,

I am very delighted to write you another newsletter. We are in Lent and we started our lent season by conduction an Ash Wednesday mass at the home where we pray for all sponsors, their families, friends and relatives. Every Friday I and the children will attend the Stations of the Cross at the local parish.

This lent you are always in our prayers and in our thought and throughout this season we have decided to cut down on our actual feeding to reserve the rest for yesterday were we will feed the poor and the needy.

A Difficult Mercy

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ!

"Father John, Lazarus was living in hell before he came here to us. We wanted him to experience heaven. We wanted him to feel

The children participated in their annual school sport and they came out with certificate of acknowledgement for those that took part and those who didn't took part join hands to celebrate the victory of their brothers and sisters. In the sport Green came 1st position, red came 4th, yellow came 3rd and blue second position and our children are in all four houses. We are very much grateful for your grate support towards us and may God continue to Guide and protect you all.

All the children are doing well except one who falls

down on the stony compound and break his head but he is recovering from the wound now and he is fine.

On behalf of the children, workers, and my family, its give me the greatest Pleasure to write you this note of thanks. What you have done for saviour of the world family cannot be underestimated but all we have to say now is Thank you very much.

*With love and prayer
Louisa & children*

God's kiss, just like it says in the Bible in the very first verses of the Song of Songs. We knew that Lazarus had never tasted the best wine of Jesus' tender, faithful love. When each one of us went

into his room, we prayed in the silence of our hearts: 'Jesus, son of the living God, living in my heart, I believe firmly in your tender, faithful love. We all know that there are many who scoff at

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those who believe, heart and soul, in Jesus Christ. Some even float the word “fanatic” into their conversation circles when the topic for the day happens to cross hairs with living Christians.

There are many who believe it is impractical and hence foolish to devote time and energy to Jesus as if friendship with him matters in the comings and goings of a daily routine. In their personal calendars, how many have listed among their daily agenda, such items as “today’s humble works of charity”, “today’s prayer program” and “today’s penance exercise” ?

And yet this is the theme song that Jesus gives to the Catholic Church every year on Ash Wednesday when he says to you and to me: “Be a real, beloved child of your heavenly Father. Do the humble works of love, do the prayer, and do the penance – but do all of this in the sacred secrecy of your heart, in the secrecy of your personal life” (see Matthew 6:1-21).

It is Jesus who says to you: “Even if your actions and words are quite public, rest silently and peacefully within your Father’s eternal

embrace... your wholehearted trust in your Father, in me, your Brother Jesus, in your Mother Mary – your wholehearted trust and confidence in us will bring you courage and interior freedom, strength and peace



The poor waiting for food after Mass

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when you travel by your own way of the Cross. Your personal pain, united to the pain of my Cross, will bring everlasting peace and joy to all of your suffering brothers and sisters.”

It is Jesus who says to each one of us in the privacy of our souls:

“This is the Good Friday grace that I offer you when I die for you, wholeheartedly for you! I give you everything necessary so that you can freely and courageously offer yourself for the salvation and everlasting happiness of your family, your suffering brothers and sisters. You will arrive at the joy of the resurrection and those you love will be right there with you in the joy of the resurrection: this I promise you! I repeat, this is my divine promise that I will in fact keep! I am the Faithful Witness – and I give my heavenly Father this precious testimony: when I was dying on the cross, it was of you that I was thinking. It was for love of you that I was thirsting. I promise you eternal joy: my blood confirms the power of the promise. Do you accept my word of promise? It’s my Easter gift for you.”

Somebody who was feeling all the bitterness and loneliness of a heavy interior cross without any hope or belief in the Resurrection was Lazarus. Mother Teresa’s Sisters did not hesitate to make him welcome by giving him everything necessary to become human again.

It was with a bubbling joy that one Sister en-

tered his room with a plate of delicious food in her hands; indeed it was probably the most elegant meal that Lazarus had ever seen in his life. But what did Lazarus do?

Sister was the first one to speak: “Lazarus, I have come to give you a nice meal. I know you must be really hungry. Would you like to eat something?” Lazarus remained silent. The Sister came closer to his bed. Lazarus refused to say a word. When the Sister bent down to place the tray on his bed table, he suddenly grabbed the food from the Sister, and threw it in the Sister’s face. Covered with mashed potatoes and gravy, Sister continued to smile; recognizing that Lazarus did not want her to stay, she quietly left the room.

A second Sister entered the room. She too felt a surging of joy in her heart: she knew that Jesus at that very moment was loving her, and that he was loving Lazarus. So with a transparent smile that put on open display her deep inner peace, she said: “Lazarus, I have brought you fresh clothing. This clothing smells lovely. I am sure you are going to feel like a new person if

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you put on this clothing.”

Lazarus said nothing. The Sister approached his bed. When she held out the clothes to him, he grabbed the clothes in his hands and threw them across the room. “Sister,” he said, “I do not want your clothes, I do not want your food. Why are you pestering me and bothering me? Please leave me alone. Please go.”

Knowing that her presence was irritating Lazarus – she could not understand why – she chose to honor Lazarus’ feelings and she left the room but still with the same beautiful smile on her face.

A third Sister entered the room. She was no less joyful than the others; indeed she was a bit more on the thoughtful side. She was witnessing what had happened to her two friends when they offered tenderness and love to Lazarus.

It had been her task to prepare medicines, warm water and soap to clean the infections that were making life very painful for Lazarus. This Sister had the thought that Lazarus at least would welcome some relief from his physical pain and would really want to recover from all of his maladies.

“Father, I’ve been thinking... wouldn’t it be lovely for me to go to confession and receive forgiveness for my sins?”

When she told Lazarus of her intention to wash his wounds and give him the proper medications, his only response was a frigid silence. When she arrived at his bedside, he took the basin full of warm water and splashed the Sister’s face with the water. “Sister, leave me alone!” he shouted.

Then the three Sisters, always smiling, said to me, “Father John, it’s your turn!” I walked into the room with the apprehensive feeling that Lazarus was going to punch me in the nose or do something even worse because of my uninvited intrusion. I had not even greeted him yet, when he looked at me with a beautiful smile, and said to me: “Oh, Father, you’re the priest here, is that not so? I’m so happy to see you, Father.” And then extending his hand to me, he said, “Father, put ‘er there.”

After shaking my hand vigorously, he continued to speak, “Father, I’ve been thinking... wouldn’t it be lovely for me to go to confession and receive forgiveness

for my sins? And then I could go to Holy Communion and be a real friend to Jesus, is that not so, Father?”

Of course, the Sisters and I were completely amazed at Lazarus’ new sense of warmth, joy, friendship... he was an unbelievable contrast to the Lazarus who had given the Sisters such a difficult time. The Sisters had been standing at the door, exuberantly curious about the way Lazarus was reacting to my presence.

One of the Sisters gave a kind of summary of everything that was happening in Lazarus’ life at that very moment. She said to me:

“Lazarus did not know how to respond to our desire to make his life more joyful. But he did watch us very closely. He was staring at each one of us, riveting his eyes and his heart on each one of us, even if he was angry, confused, and insolent. Then when we saw his manner with you – how he smiled, laughed, invited you to be with him, and to hear his confession – we were very sure that he had learned very well everything that our attitude of love was teaching him. He gave you what we gave him; and we are very thankful now that Lazarus is



Amputees and the lame in Waterloo, waiting for rice

peaceful and gentle with all of us.”

Indeed the Sister was not exaggerating. Lazarus’ closest lifetime friends were the Sisters who were also for him, mothers. Lazarus knew what it was to be loved; and he knew this love, the feminine love of a sister, of a mother, the love that Mary reserves for you and for me, until the day of his death.

When I celebrated his last Mass – the Mass on the day before he died – he was smiling. And when I celebrated his funeral, I was sure that he continues to smile, transparently, beautifully, wholeheartedly, in the joy of the Resurrection. May all of you look forward with your whole heart and soul to this same joy, during your lives here on earth – and may they be long, if God so wills – but also for all eternity in heaven!

From the Central African Republic,
Father John Gibson, ocd

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The beds you provided arrived!



George and the older children putting the beds together



The girls try out their new beds. They kept asking, "This really mine?"

Mission Trip 2012



The children's old mattresses



Louisa and her babies



Louisa, Ahmed, and Princess



Neighborhood home



Spicy rice for breakfast



Elaine, Louisa, and children



Shopping Mall



African "Walmart"