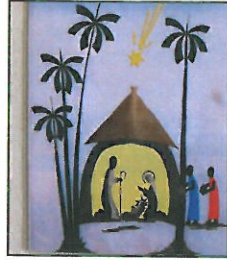


# Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul Thigio - Kenya

CHRISTMAS 2010



Dear Friends,

**"All across the land dawns a brand new morn, this comes to pass when a child is born."** So sang Johnny Mathis in this now classic Christmas song "When a Child is Born".

Of course, we know that it was not just any child he was singing about but the Christ child whose birth does indeed herald a **new morn** and a promise of hope.

During the past twelve months here in Thigio, we have been privileged to witness this **new dawn** in the many lives we have been able to touch because of your generosity. We'll share just a few of those stories with you.

**Peter, Simon and Mary: the Thigio Three**, ages 7, 5 and 3, wandered the shops of Thigio village. Children of a single homeless mother with TB, they wore dirty, ragged clothes and suffered from malnutrition. Stressed and depressed, the two boys caught the attention of the nursery teacher. Upon inquiry, she learned their story and since mid-June, they are happy, not hungry, and at home in the nursery.

**Monicah, the Straight Girl**: For 13 years, Monicah walked like a puppet pulled with strings. She walked from side to side, using her arm to balance herself. Going to the physiotherapist helped to strengthen her limbs, but only surgery could correct her walk. Plans were made to schedule surgery. Monicah told all her friends, "Now I will be a straight girl."

**Mother Mary in the Hospice**: At 31, paralyzed and with cancer, Mary came to the hospice. She was cheerful and hopeful. It was a happy day when her daughter celebrated her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday with her mother; Mary's husband and 18 month-old baby boy joined in the joy of the day.

**Life at a Stand Still**: That's how Joseph Waweru summarised his life. Old age, no job, and no wife (she had left him). He came to the luncheon for the elderly each week. Here, he came to realize how empty his life really was. Joseph took a step in his spiritual journey; he enrolled in catechism. He was baptized. Then his wife returned; they had their marriage blessed. His life is no longer at a standstill. Now he is a happy man and his life has hope.

**Walk on in Hope**: This is how Winnie Wambui sees her life now. The young mother of four joined the Women's Project. Three days a week she came. The activities really encouraged her. She was able to sit and share with the other women her experiences and ideas and find solutions to her difficulties. Now Winnie is able to face life and its many challenges with greater confidence and sense of hope.

**Little Joe**: Almost 15, Joseph is in Kisima (Mentally Challenged Group). Little Joe is like Tiny Tim in the Dickens novel. He is joyful and brings joy when ever you see him. Like Tiny Tim, Little Joe has had a hard time walking. It was Christmas 2009; with his hip pity-hop walk Little Joe leaped toward Sr. Liz who had a package for him – a surprise: two pairs of socks. Little Joe had never been given a gift before and he was so excited and happy. He believes no one notices his hip pity hop walk now because the only thing people notice are his socks, his gift! Little does he realise that he, like Tiny Tim, is our special gift day in and day out.

**The Winner**: In 2005 Paul finished secondary school; he did not pass. He got lost in alcohol and drugs. With the formation of the Cardinal football team and then the league, the coach remembered Paul as a great footballer and actively recruited him. Because of the coach's persistence and pep talks, Paul signed on. After five months, Paul has defeated alcohol and is winning his battle with drugs. In addition, Paul is the top Cardinal, the team's best player.

Beautiful stories and all true. So during the Christmas season as you travel in your car, shop in the supermarkets and walk the shopping malls, you may well hear Johnny Mathis singing "When a Child Is Born". When you do, you may just recall the stories of Thigio: the stories of Peter, Simon and Mary, Monicah, Mary, Joseph, Winnie, Little Joe and Paul, **"rays of hope"** that are now flickering more brightly because of your kindness and love. **THANK YOU!**

Wishing you a blessed and peace- filled Christmas.

Catherine, Eileen, Ellis, Liz and Rosemary - Daughters of Charity, **THIGIO**