



## *Merry Christmas!*

Merry Christmas from the children, staff, and board of Franciscan Works + Liberia Mission! By God's grace and with your help, we have continued to provide a loving home, Catholic education, and life skills to over 400 poor and orphaned children this year. Our mission statement is "God, Education, Work." In this special Christmas newsletter, you will find stories of hope, updates about our mission, and so much more under these pillars of Liberia Mission. Thank you for your prayers and support!

### *New Missionary at Liberia Mission*

*Joey Neuhauser joined Liberia Mission's team as a missionary this October.*

"Imagine landing from one of the longest days traveling of your life. Your eyes are barely open, and you've taken a bumpy ride through a rubber plantation for the past hour to get to a highway. Suddenly, you see a gate, behind which stands over a dozen delighted and raucous children ready to greet you. The kids are all dressed in blue and green suits, but the smiles they wear are even more noticeable. Each child is anxious to greet you in their own way, such was my reception at Liberia Mission.

Besides my fabulous reception, I have seen much of the mission thus far and, by all of it, I have been extremely impressed. Everyone has been welcoming and eager to help me acclimate to the new culture. My Kolokwa comprehension could use work, but otherwise, I have found my transition to being a full-time missionary and employee here incredibly smooth. John and his team are capable and God-fearing, and I am honored to be a small part of what they have built here." - **Joey Neuhauser**



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children of Liberia  
this Christmas!



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### Seminarian Update

Karbee and Nede, our two students who have been attending St. Paul's Major Seminary for the past two years, recently finished a major step in their spiritual and vocational journey: six weeks of pastoral service at an assigned parish in the Archdiocese. They both assisted their respective pastors and parishes in preparing for the liturgy, serving the local parishioners, and doing any task, great or small, that was asked of them.

Our Mission Director, John Young, had the pleasure of visiting each of them and was pleased to see them freely serving in environments they had not yet encountered up to that point in their lives. Both young men seem stronger than ever in their vocational journey as they walk in faith on a path laid out before them by God. After their pastoral service, they spent a few weeks on the mission. In October they returned to the seminary and began their second year of Philosophy. The only thing they ask of you is your support through prayer because they want you all to know that they are constantly praying for you!

October is an extra-special time of year on Liberia Mission. There are several Catholic celebrations: we pray the Transitus at 12:00 AM in order to properly give tribute to the life and death of our patron saint, St. Francis of Assisi; it is Missionary Month, culminating in World Mission Sunday; and, of course, it is the Month of the Rosary. It is so endearing to see the students cut their hair in the style of the tonsure to pay homage to St. Francis. As for World Mission Sunday, every year we participate in a special "Soldiers of Christ" outreach in the surrounding neighborhood. We identify the poorest and most handicapped individuals in our community of Blacktom Town and bring them small offerings of food, love, and prayer. It is so beautiful to witness the students, who God has blessed with the opportunity to be at Liberia Mission, engaging with the poor.



During the Month of the Rosary, three decades are recited with corresponding reflections each morning at the devotion before school. The residential students pray an entire rosary every night in the place of night prayer in order to celebrate Mary's love for us all. The climax is a rosary procession that takes place on the last day of the month, October 31. Truly, October is a very spiritual month for the students and staff of Liberia Mission and St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School, and it supercharges our prayer lives as school and mission life come into full swing.

### In Remembrance

We remember our beloved **Archbishop Emeritus Lewis Jerome Zeigler** who passed away in Liberia on August 12, 2022. The children and staff made a visit before his passing, and we will always be grateful for the opportunity God gave us to spend time with this beloved shepherd in his last days.



We also remember **Joannie Fabiano** who passed away on the Feast of St. Francis. Joannie was the former Executive Director of Franciscan Works and Liberia Mission from 2003–2010. Joannie's commitment to service and faith has left a lasting legacy as she embodied the teachings of St. Francis.

### St. Maximilian Kolbe Award

We want to take a moment to highlight one of our longest-serving and dearest employees on the mission: Augustine Nufea—more commonly known as "Uncle Nufea." He is a house father and also willingly procures most of the food and hygiene products, a responsibility that requires hours of bartering in crowded local markets. Anything that is asked of him, he humbly accepts and executes to the best of his ability. He is a treasure of the mission, and that is why this year he was awarded the annual St. Maximilian Kolbe Award "for his leadership, passion, sacrifice, and faithful support of the children of Liberia Mission."



### *100% WAEC Pass Rate*



Every year, students from St. Anthony's take the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) test. For the previous three years, our ninth-grade class has made the fantastic achievement of a 100% pass-rate—a high honor for any school in Liberia. However, this year we have even more joy to share. Not only did our ninth-graders achieve 100% pass-rate for the fourth year in a row, but our sixth-graders and third-graders, taking the test for the first time in school history, attained a 100% pass-rate as well. The WAEC, a standardized exam taken by the fifteen countries of the Economic Community of West African States, tests students' knowledge, teacher effectiveness, and school quality. At the elementary and junior-high level, it has recently expanded its scope to third- and sixth-graders, in addition to the regular testing of ninth-graders.

This achievement is just another testament to the quality of education we are providing for the youth of Liberia at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School. We would not be able to do so without the generosity of donors and benefactors like you. As one of our younger students recently said, "Thank you for making St. Anthony's the best school in the whole world!"

### *St. Anthony Graduations*



This past July, for the first time since 2019, St. Anthony of Padua was able to hold graduation ceremonies for our K-2 students and our ninth-graders. Our K-2 graduation is always a joyful one because the journey is just beginning for the young graduates. The ceremony for our ninth-graders is just as joyful, although there is a bit of sadness added because they will be leaving St. Anthony's to complete their secondary education. Please pray that God might grant us the wisdom, strength, and means to have a high school on Liberia Mission in the future!



On August 1 of this year, St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School experienced a major shift in leadership as its long-time principal, Mr. Joseph Kulah, was promoted to Assistant Director of Liberia Mission. He still continues to oversee the affairs of the school, but his skills and leadership will now be implemented mission-wide. Mr. Andy Tuopleyee, the Vice Principal for Instruction, has taken his place as Principal; and Mr. Theophilus Cooper, who has served St. Anthony's as a teacher for over twelve years, has become the new Vice Principal for Instruction. Mr. Mark Karley remains our bold but empathetic Vice Principal for Student Affairs.

We have no doubt that this newly formed team will continue to lead the students toward a bright educational future. Liberia Mission has had the unique fortune of recruiting quality, Liberian leaders to aid its efforts to serve the youth. Such "fortune" could only come from the Holy Spirit Himself, and we thank Him for inspiring this new direction that will undoubtedly lead Liberia Mission and St. Anthony of Padua to a more successful future!

### *Mission Director Earns MBA*

"In January 2021, I began an online MBA program offered by Louisiana State University at Shreveport. I am happy to share that I completed this program in mid-October and a Master of Business Administration—General Business, was conferred upon me on October 25. I am so thankful to God, my family, and Liberia Mission. All of the congratulations I have received and will receive, I want to give back to the Lord and to the children of Liberia. I went to a Jesuit high school in New Orleans, and I try to still live by its primary motto today: Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam—For the Greater Glory of God."



**- John Young**

### *Sponsor a Child This Christmas!*



## *New Girls' Home*

Seeking to give our residential students more personalized care, we started construction on four new homes for our boys and girls in the fall of 2019. We are overjoyed to say we are halfway there! On September 19, 2022, we moved all of our girls to their two new homes. With no more than two students in a room, this drastically contrasts the "dormitory" model we had previously.



Students at the junior-high level occupy one of the homes, and our youngest ones live in the other. We hired more house mothers so that each smaller group of girls would receive the necessary care and attention required to raise them in a more family-style setting. So far, the girls love their brand-new homes, complete with tile floors, individual bathrooms, and plenty of space to do their homework. One room has been designated in each house as the chapel, so there's always a space in which to quietly pray. However, we still need to construct two more homes for our boys! It will take a lot of prayer and the necessary funding to complete this special project for our students, but we have faith in God as He works through our generous donors and benefactors.

## *Stateside Updates*

"We are grateful for everyone who made this year's virtual Fall Fundraiser a big success! We have raised nearly \$24,000. We are still accepting donations until year-end to qualify for the remaining match money of \$22,000. Use the QR code above to watch the recording of *An Evening at Liberia Mission* and make a matching donation." - **Dr. Kurt Heyrman, Board Member**



In September, Franciscan Works + Liberia Mission welcomed a new staff member! Emily Putzke is thrilled to join the team as Stateside Coordinator. She is grateful to be working alongside a mission-driven team that radiates Christ through their passionate dedication to love and serve the children of Liberia.



## *Malaria Prevention*



Thanks to generous donations from folks in the Archdiocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin, we recently undertook a project to both replace our window screens in the boys' dorm, as well as purchase new mosquito nets for all our students and live-in staff. It has been years since the last screens were made, and most of them contained holes that would allow malaria-carrying mosquitoes, lizards, and other unwanted critters into the rooms. Malaria is a serious threat to our students' health. A two-layer hard screen/soft screen "framed" in wood that is then drilled to the wall around windows and other openings is the most common defense against insect and animal intrusion into rooms. Mosquito nets draped over beds provide an added layer of protection against these parasite-carrying insects.

Please note that our girls' houses are brand-new and are equipped with their own window screens! Fighting disease and maintaining the health of our students and staff is a top priority at Liberia Mission. Thanks again to the wonderful people of Wisconsin who helped us in preventing the spread of malaria!

## *A "Sweet" New Business*

Over the past year, our residential students have perfected the recipes for their extremely popular "ice milk" and "ice juice" products. Whether you crave a creamy treat or a refreshingly juicy experience, they have what you want. Ice milk is like frozen yogurt, both sweet and sour, but ALL delicious! Ice juice is comparable to a popsicle and comes in several flavors. In addition to our meat deliveries and agricultural work, these products teach our students a new skill that can be used in the future when they might need a little pocket change while attending university. Or, who knows, someone just might make a large-scale business out of it someday. Regardless, our ice milk and ice juice business is a fun way for students to learn new skills while working as a team. If you ask them what their favorite part about the process is...well, you already know the answer - trying the finished product!

