

# MOP Tears of Joy

**Central Pennsylvania Lay Associates of Missionaries of the Poor**

**A newsletter devoted to sharing the experience of  
working with The Missionaries of the Poor  
Serving the least of God's children as Christ would do.  
[www.moptearsofjoy.org](http://www.moptearsofjoy.org)**



*The Holy Spirit is truly  
among us here  
in Central Pennsylvania!  
Read on...*

Roy Wainwright, Editor

## *Food Drive Sucessfully raised \$11,000 Foods shipped to Kingston on May 9*

Last December, Father Charles asked if we could send a shipment of foods to Jamaica, approximately 10 pallets (\$10,000). We worked with our parishes and others who would support Missionaries of the Poor. Also, since it was Lent, we proposed a "Coins for the Poor" collection in a couple of Catholic Schools, and the school children responded. The total collection was almost exactly \$11,000. This money was forwarded to Brother Augusto, head of the MOP mission in Monroe, NC. They send container shipments to Jamaica several times each year. The food was purchased, and loaded into a container for shipment. A number of local MOP supporters helped load the shipment.



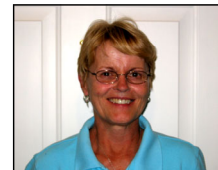
TO ALL Who contributed...  
**THANK YOU!**



*The Spirit is touching hearts,  
calling people to serve  
“the least of God’s children”*

Lynn Ditlow is a Registered Nurse. Lynn went with us in 2011, her first time with Missionaries of the Poor in Kingston. Moved by the experience, Lynn planned to return in 2012, and bring flu and other vaccines with her. During the year she was successful in securing donations, so that she could vaccinate about 500 Brothers and high-risk residents. Lynn, Marie Ditlow and Lynne Donnelly were in Kingston when hurricane Sandy hit the city. (Ask her what happened when they returned to the US!).

Her experiences and example have helped the Holy Spirit turn the hearts of 20! people in her parish to become first-time pilgrims to Kingston this fall!



St. Joseph Church in Hanover is opening up to the Spirit with a MOP breakfast some weeks ago and a meeting on Pentecost Sunday for folks considering making the pilgrimage.

Knights of Columbus, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Abbottstown has ‘adopted’ Missionaries of the Poor as their charity.

And your parish?

*Please note:*

*This year’s pilgrimage for the rest of us  
will be to leave on Thursday, October 31  
and return on Thursday, November 7.*

*We will have the Mt. Tabor retreat first,  
then work at the apostolates.*

The following article was submitted to the [Catholic Witness](#) but not yet published. It shares the reflections of two pilgrims who went with us last fall. -Ed.

### **Mission work – me?**

In the middle of the night – they came from Danville, Coal Township, Schuylkyl Haven, Lancaster, Carlisle, Abbottstown and Hanover to the Baltimore airport. Their common goal the 6:20AM flight to Kingston, Jamaica

These people from across the diocese met through the [Catholic Witness](#) notice under “Retreats and Pilgrimages”. Their goal: to spend a week with the Missionaries of the Poor (MOP) taking care of the outcasts of Kingston’s society.

This started four years ago when Fr. Charles Susai of MOP visited Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Abbottstown. He invited us to come and help them. 16 of us went that first year and some have gone every year since.

Two of the 12 of us who went last October have written their reflections:

### **Jamaican Journal**

Reflections by St. Joseph, Hanover parishioners Dick Arigo and Deacon Tom Aumen on their recent mission trip to Jamaica to work as [Volunteers](#) with the Missionaries of the Poor.

#### **Part 1: “The Poor Among You”**

“There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be open-handed toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.” (Deut. 15:11)

Jason...Kishare...Olivia...Andrew...Kelroy...Betty...and hundreds of others...the humanity behind the faces reads on in the never-ending cycle of Jamaican cast-offs whose common bond is the daily reception of nurturing love and compassionate hearts from the Brothers of the Missionaries of the Poor in Kingston, Jamaica.

Bethlehem Home...Lord’s Place...Faith Center...Good Shepherd...Holy Innocents...Beatitudes Home... Jacob’s Well. Biblical connections? Of course. These are the Apostolates where people are ‘discarded’ to the open arms and perpetual care of the MOP---sent from the police station, hospitals, homes, the streets. The MOP asks for no payments. The Gospel is their mantra: “Whatsoever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me.” (Matt. 25:40) They serve Christ by serving His children with servants’ hearts.

Orphans, physically and mentally crippled, the abandoned, AIDS sufferers, the destitute, the disfigured, the blind and deaf, sufferers of leprosy, cerebral palsy and hydrocephalus. There are so many that the Brothers have a difficult time accepting everyone who is brought in due to the lack of space (beds). Of those under MOP care, few will ever return to Jamaican society---nobody else would want to care for them. Beds do open up for ‘new’ residents - one day, two coffins were given a final coat of paint before taking the bodies of two deceased residents to the burial area. Prayers are offered daily for all the residents under the Brothers’ care. Prayers are offered daily for the souls of those who touched the lives of the Brothers and Volunteers through their pleading eyes, their grateful smiles, their unharnessed joy, their faces that emanated the love of Christ within them.

The commitment from the Brothers is for a lifetime. They are Christ personified. The personal-care work of Volunteers lasts a week, maybe two. Anyone who has been a personal care-giver to a family member or friend can relate to the need for compassion, and understanding, and love, and tears that Volunteers provide to those living under MOP's care. The plane ride home tugs at the conscience of the Volunteer to ponder: "there but for the grace of God . . . . ." Away from the smells, the screams, the unsightly sores, the seeming degradation of God's people - leaves one with memories that stir the heart, and causes one to ask: "Why God? Why do these people need to suffer like this? Why can't something be done for them?" And God's response will always be: "I did do something; I sent you."

#### Part 2: "Washing of the Feet"

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:14-15)

Monday: Dick and Deacon Tom are assigned to work in the 'young boys' ward. "Go around and get acquainted with the boys," says Brother Jay. Then, Miss Carmen, the ward matron, tells us: "prepare the boys (about 20, ages 3-23) for their baths." This would be easier said than done! The boys were not ambulatory, lying in cribs until they were assisted. They initially seemed afraid of these 'strangers'. They were afflicted with a variety of physical conditions: blind, diseased, deformed, and crippled (with arm and leg muscles so taut and disfigured that it pained us to take the clothes off, and put fresh ones on). Some limbs were no bigger than the width of 2 fingers. With comforting words and a smile, with compassionate love and guidance from the Holy Spirit, the clothes were removed, the boys carried to their bath, and then re-dressed, and then they patiently awaited their turn at being fed their lunch.

Through the rest of Monday, and for the week throughout the MOP apostolates, Dick and Deacon Tom would be feeding the people, wiping faces/hands/arms, providing water to quench thirsty mouths, shaving the men, massaging and putting lotion on dry bodies, clipping finger nails, sweeping and mopping floors, cleaning out smelly drains, interacting with the residents, and providing hugs, smiles, and understanding love.

When a person thinks of the most humbling action he or she has ever experienced, a personal care mission such as this one to Jamaica brings the person to a new depth of humility, one rooted in the love of Christ, who demonstrated divine humility through His death upon the cross. Away from the people and the volunteer team, it makes one cry to reflect upon the condition of life that these poor endure. And when one begins to cry, the Holy Spirit sends a little girl to come and sit on your lap, lay her head on your shoulder, and with a hug, quietly hum sounds of re-assurance. Jesus' words are never truer: "you should do as I have done for you." "Now, go back inside, and care for my people!" Amen! to that!

We felt blessed every day for the opportunity to pass along God's love for His people.

### Part 3: "Growing Your Faith"

"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ." (Philemon 1:6)

As the adage goes: "when climbing the mountain to its summit, does one stop a third of the way up, or halfway up, and exclaim: 'I'm satisfied. I can be proud of my accomplishment. And then proceed to sit down until one dies?' The analogy might also be applied to our faith, with one mighty exception: God doesn't expect us to be satisfied with a partial ascent, when the summit (the Kingdom of Heaven) is yet to be reached—for everyone!

People express pride and joy when discussing their active faith lives, and to a degree, rightly so.

However, one might reflect upon this question: "how do we intend to **grow** our faith?" We've heard the phrase: "love isn't love until it's given away" - now, substitute faith for love!!

While working amongst the poor of Jamaican society, it is easy to express understanding and love—until, like a cold, evening Jamaican shower, one is faced with washing a body covered with sores; or cleaning up feces; or, looking into the eyes and attempting to shave the face of a 'possessed' man.

That is when one closes his own eyes, and prays from the heart: "Come Holy Spirit. This isn't what I bargained for. However, you called me to be your faithful servant. Despite my discomfort, be with me now, and strengthen me to do your will."

How do we intend to grow our faith? Do we sit on what we've achieved in faith, or do we ask God for more challenges, for another way to live lives of faith in Him? Working among the Jamaican poor affects one's faith life - in a very real way - to continue its ascent to the summit of God. In the peaceful presence of the Blessed Sacrament in chapel, one remembers the words of Fr. Richard Ho Lung, MOP's founder: "People need to recognize the Kingdom of God in you." May we always let our light shine before all, as we continue the climb on our journey of faith.

How about you joining us next October and experiencing this first-hand?

All of us agreed that this is one of the most rewarding weeks of our lives; each found profound spirituality, and shed some 'tears of joy'!

We decided to create and name our pilgrims' web site '**tears of joy**' because:

There are **tears of joy** that come when we step back and realize that we have become "Christ's hands and feet" in the work we are doing as we help these people.

Sometimes **tears of joy** have come when listening to Fr. Ho Lung break open the Word of God to a deep, rich level, and how we can attain the Kingdom of Heaven. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our "eyes become opened".

And after the days of talks and meditation, when you receive the Body and Blood of Christ, and absolution of your sins, **tears of joy** often come too.

When we go back to our family members, remember and try to share our experiences in Jamaica, the **tears of joy** often well up in your eyes.

"The call to serve the Poor is an invitation to Happiness" (Fr. Richard Ho Lung, MOP, Founder and Superior General)

In March, Fran Monaco, Fran Luellen, and Brenda Freed from IHM parish visited the Brothers in Monroe.

Fran's comments:

It was a good trip and much different than any of the others. We were up until 11-11:30 pm Friday when we got there to prepare the food for the multitudes that come Saturday morning and afternoon. This was the off-weekend for surrounding parishes to do that and the responsibility for the Brothers to do it. A visit with the homeless living in the woods, Friday fish fry dinner at the local parish and Mass there before we left on Sunday....and a visit to the new warehouse area under contract and awaiting zoning approval.....not to mention going thru the police roadblocks looking for illegals....two of which we may or may not have had in the back seat of my car after Saturday's gathering at the Monastery.....other than that....just "routine"....

During the visit Br. Augusto was directing them to show them the new warehouse space. He asked Fran to go behind a church and drive down to the back of the parking lot. They got out and went back into the woods and found:

Among others, the Brothers there are ministering to the homeless living in tents in the woods along the RR tracks -- *winter* and summer. They, in fact, spent part of their time at Christmas "playing golf" in the woods with one of the older men there. When the man related the story, you could tell how joyful he was having someone that cared about him....and would spend part of their holiday just with him. We came to find out that there are at least 3 brothers and a sister living separately in this wooded area.....all from a family that originally came from Monroe.

There is more to this, see the next article, reprinted from the Charlotte Observer



# Monroe is home to rare mission effort

By Jane Duckwall

The website for Missionaries of the Poor lists 11 cities around the world where it feeds, clothes and cares for impoverished people. On the list, sandwiched between Kampala, Uganda, and Ruteng, Indonesia, is Monroe, N.C.

That surprises some people.

And some are even more surprised to learn that cassock-clad monks from India, the Philippines and Kenya run the monastery-based mission that serves Union County's poor.

"The United States is in abundance, but there are really poor people," said Brother Augusto Silot, one of three monks currently serving MOP in Monroe.

The Monroe mission is the only U.S. location for the Catholic-based charity, which was founded in Jamaica in 1981. It might have ended up somewhere else if not for a chance meeting at a New York airport.

Silot said MOP's founder, Father Richard Ho Lung, originally planned to set up MOP's U.S. mission in Brooklyn, N.Y., and flew there to start putting that plan in motion.

"When he wasn't able to meet with the archbishop, he decided to go back," Silot said. "At the airport in New York, he met the bishop from this area. They talked, and the bishop said, 'Why not come to Charlotte?'"

Silot said Father Ho Lung responded, "I go wherever I am welcome."

"He prayed about it," Silot said, and then Ho Lung came back to the U.S. to visit the Charlotte diocese, where Bishop Peter Jugis took him to different parishes.

"When Bishop Jugis brought him to Monroe, this is where he felt the Holy Spirit," Silot said. "The bishop was very happy because Monroe was where he had been a parish priest."

The Monroe MOP originally opened in a house on the grounds at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in 2008. The monastery moved the following year to a house with 2 1/2 acres on Griffith Road, where the mission has flourished with the support of donors and volunteers.

As part of its ministry, MOP delivers food to more than 60 families a week.



Brother Alfred Steven, left, with Brother Augusto Silot during a recent Saturday meal at the monastery on Griffith Road. Brother Alfred is originally from India and Brother Augusto is from the Philippines.



Monks serve meals every Saturday and offer prayers and Bible studies.



On Saturdays and Tuesdays, families come to the monastery for prayer, Bible studies, music and instruction in Catechism, and they receive a meal and a food package to take home. The monks visit four area nursing homes twice a week, and sponsor and serve a meal at the Union Community Shelter once a month.

They grow produce behind the monastery in a community garden they've created. They also have a warehouse for storing donated food, medical supplies, furniture and other goods they give to families in need.

"Our target is to open a shelter for the homeless," Silot said. "That's our main goal, to take care of the homeless and destitute."

He recounted a trip to some woods in Monroe to find some homeless people he'd heard were living there.

Silot said he found a woman who was living in a tent with her boyfriend. After more trips, he met several more people, including one man who'd been living in the woods for 12 years.

"It was very shocking to me, that there are people who live in the woods," said Silot, who is from the Philippines.

He said the poor are more obvious in other places he's served. They may be begging on the streets, for example.

"The poor here are very hidden, in a way," he said. "Here you have to go to them. ... They are not very obvious. It is hard to reach out to them."

Many of the families they serve are Latino, so it helps to have bilingual volunteers who can help spread the word about their services.

Esther Reyes is a bilingual volunteer who first heard about MOP through Our Lady of Lourdes. She and her husband and their eight children have received food and other provisions from the mission, and she said she helps them out in every way she can.

"They will help no matter what color, what religion, what country, what age," she said. "They will help."

The mission recently had a group of college students from West Virginia who were using their spring break to volunteer wherever they were needed and "share in our spirituality," Silot said.

Asked if all the MOP volunteers are Catholic, Silot said, "No. Some are even atheists. The poor are the ones who unite us, from different denominations and different religions.

"Working with the poor is the ministry of Christ Himself."

The monastery provided free school supplies last fall for those in need.



### **Introduce your friends to Fr. Richard Ho Lung? Excellent Video!**

The MOP web site [www.missionariesofthepoor.org](http://www.missionariesofthepoor.org) has a livestream video of Fr. Ho Lung. It's a very good example of his way of teaching important parts of our faith. He discusses how we can achieve sanctification through our actions — service.

### **Good for this YEAR of FAITH!**

**PS: I think that is Joe Griesser in the chapel.**

### **Pass it on....**

Did you know you can pass this on to your family or church members? Just click the "Forward" button on your email. This attachment (this PDF newsletter) will go right along with it.

If anyone wishes to be added to the mailing list, simply send an email to [Roy@moptearsofjoy.org](mailto:Roy@moptearsofjoy.org). We will be happy to mail the newsletter to those who do not have email. Call me at 717-792-3408.

### **Your Turn:**

Please write something and/or submit a picture or two. Surely you have an experience to share... what happened during your visit with the Brothers or after you got home.

Just email to: [Roy@moptearsofjoy.org](mailto:Roy@moptearsofjoy.org)

Thanks