



Share The Blessings, Inc.

Ordinary Time 2010



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ORDINARY



Welcome to Ordinary Time. This liturgical season basically invites us to reflect on our own *ordinariness*. The story of Zacchaeus, the wealthy chief tax-collector of Jericho (Lk. 19:1-10) nicely illustrates the spirit of this season.

Although ordinarily Zacchaeus is a small man (short in stature), everything around him sounds *extraordinary*! First, he is from *Jericho*! Jericho — *the lowest* permanently inhabited city on earth, comfortably sitting 258 metres (846 ft) below sea level in an oasis in the Jordan Valley! And Jericho boasts of being one of *the oldest* continuously-inhabited cities in the world, with settlements dating as far back as 9000 BC. Jericho, Zacchaeus' home city, is an *extraordinarily unique city*.

But Zacchaeus is not simply from Jericho: he is a big and influential figure there as well. He is not merely a tax-collector, he is a *chief* tax-collector. His was an *extraordinarily big job*. Indeed because of this, Zacchaeus was actually a *wealthy* man!

Still, while everyone is joining this *extraordinarily mammoth* following around Jesus as he passes through Jericho, Zacchaeus outsmarts them all! He conceives this *extraordinarily brilliant idea*! He runs ahead of everyone, and climbs a sycamore tree! The "short Zacchaeus" becomes instantly taller than everyone else! From up the tree he gets an "*extraordinary front row view*" (clear vision) not only of this *extraordinary figure* (Jesus), but also of the whole situation. From his

extraordinarily lofty position in a tree, Zacchaeus is apparently in full control of the situation— he sees clearer and wider than everyone else!

When Jesus comes to the spot, he senses something odd, *something extraordinary*, even as the crowd around him looked all too ordinary. He thus looks up, sees the "tall Zacchaeus" and is confused! *Ordinarily* Zacchaeus is a short man! Whence is this tall Zacchaeus?! So Jesus immediately calls him down - to his ordinary stature, and thus to his true self. "Zacchaeus, come down immediately". And to buttress the call back to the ordinary, Jesus instantaneously invites himself as guest to Zacchaeus' very home: home, the place where Zacchaeus could never be more ordinary. "I must stay at your house today" he tells the dislodging Zacchaeus.

Recalled thus into the domain of the ordinary, Zacchaeus is helped to confront the messiness of his own ordinary true self. While the "extraordinary Zacchaeus" is associated with *positions of authority and influence, uniqueness, smartness, astuteness, wealth and clear vision*, the real "ordinary Zacchaeus" is indeed a "short man": short-sighted, and short of the qualities of true discipleship. He does not only fail to share his blessings with those in need, he extorts! In fact, as chief tax-collector, Zacchaeus is indeed chief-extortionist as well. It was not from the blue that the self-righteous Pharisee had dared to offer this arrogant prayer, "I thank you, God, that I am not like other men.....and particularly that I am not like

this *tax-collector* here." (Lk. 18:11-12). Tax-collecting and extorting were mutually inclusive! No wonder, as Jesus enters this chief extortionist's house, people grumble, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."!

It was here, however, in this very ordinary setting and in this very ordinary location – the home—instead of from up a sycamore tree of greatness, shrewdness, command, and apparent sense of clear vision — that Zacchaeus' long-time desire of seeing Jesus "clearly" was realized. For here, in the context of his own ordinary humble and weak self, Zacchaeus discovered the call to discipleship, particularly the value of sharing his blessings with those in need. "Behold, Lord," he said, "half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." What a bold declaration for a *chief extortionist*! So courageous was it that Jesus himself was moved to declare an imminent salvation to an otherwise public sinner's whole household, "Today salvation has come to this house,..."

Share The Blessings' *ordinary programs* of Clean Water and Education in *ordinary locations* (villages), and among *ordinary people* (villagers) is one opportunity for us to connect with the Ordinary. In so doing, we not only see Jesus clearly, but we truly come face to face with our own *ordinariness*. And in the process we discover the true meaning of our Christian discipleship. Through Share The Blessings, Salvation comes to our house.

To find out how your congregation can share the gift of clean water, please contact info@share-the-blessings.org

“GROWING” STB

One of our goals this year was to grow Share The Blessings. While there is indeed a financial aspect to such growth, there is more still. We are looking to grow the organization in numerical terms; that is, widening the volunteer base, and thus increasing the number of those volunteering to help STB accomplish the 2 major goals of *Providing Clean Water* and *Children's Education*. In a word, we are looking to grow the number of STB members.

The financial aspect entails growing the base of supporters that fund our two major goals. On the clean water front we are seeking additional institutions to help us. In the past we have had individuals, schools, churches and businesses support our Clean Water effort. Given that our Clean Water program helps entire villages, it is not amazing that our supporters have fit a wide spectrum as well. And it was not out of the norm that we approached Baptist as well as Catholic churches to help us with this. What was out of the norm was that our Chair of the Board and Chair of Communications actually traveled out of State to visit churches. We have had out

of State churches from Illinois and Georgia support us in the past but in both cases, our Chair never traveled to make that happen. This year, however, we thought it wise to travel out of State to appeal to more churches to respond to STB's mission. Part of this story is what you will read in this very Newsletter. And if your church would like to support us by

so that we can make that happen. Those are the two major financial aspects of our growth that we are seeking.

From the organizational perspective, however, STB has been moving from a Board-run Organization to more of a Volunteer-run Organization. This basically means that as opposed to having the Board do all the work, we have been growing our volunteer base to have more folks help us with this effort. We have had very successful monthly leadership meetings where both Board and non-Board volunteers discuss their areas of leadership. We have seen this base grow with new leaders join our leadership team. But we need more volunteers!

Our yearning for growth is thus two-fold: financial but also personnel, monetary support as well as membership. In fact these two, volunteer-growth

and fiscal growth, are directly correlated and indeed mutually supportive. If you are willing and able to support this growth, I am certain that STB has something for you!

Kevin



funding a well, you are most welcome! Please just let us know. On the education front, we have recently learned that the St Francis program that we support now has over 100 new children that need assistance. If you would like to sponsor a child's education please contact our Education Chair (jamesjaycarney@gmail.com)

PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Let us pray for STB's expansion program: that God may bless all those dedicated to this noble cause.
2. Let us pray for the pilgrims from Sacred Heart Parish, Joliet—Illinois, who are traveling to Uganda this summer: that their physical presence there may deepen the bonds already created by their shared blessing of clean water.
3. Let us pray for all STB volunteers: that God may reward their abundant generosity.
4. Let us Pray for Uganda: That she may have peaceful and fair presidential elections early next year.

THE JERRY CAN IN BALTIMORE

When Share The Blessing first set foot in the land of Maryland, on the last Sunday of the Month of the Rosary, (30 May 2010), it was in response to an invitation—actually to invitations. For the itinerary of that Maryland trip was clear enough: “Three Pastors, three locations, three congregations”, it read. The Josephite Fr. James McLinden of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, the Franciscan Fr. Peter A. Lyons of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Parish, and the Baptist Rev. Calvin Keene of the Memorial Baptist Church in Baltimore—the three of them—all at once, were our hosts that Sunday.

In fact, rather than being visitors merely to these three trinities, the President and the Communications Chair of STB found themselves being received, on that single day, by seven different Parish Communities! For, Rev. Keene, a skilled community mobilizer as well as experienced church organizer, had, on that same single day, nicely arranged a Missionary Prayer Service to which a total of five Baptist Churches had actually been invited. Thus, when the two STB leaders eventually stood to speak, they addressed a five-in-one Baptist audience.

Rather than a fundraiser, this visit to Maryland had been designed as a

sensitization trip. And throughout the presentation the Ugandan water-pot, the Jerry Can stood out very prominently. Fr. Peter Claver Mawanda, himself a well-seasoned victim of the water problem throughout his childhood in his remote home-village in central Uganda, gave short



speeches at all the three locations. *His* water container in hand, Fr. Mawanda described the Jerry Can as the summary of his childhood activities in Uganda. “When I think about my childhood at home, I think about the *Jerry Can*: the empty *Jerry Can* I used to play as a drum while tracking several miles down the narrow bushy path that led to the only single muddy water pond that the whole village used as a well; the empty *Jerry Cans* we (boys from all over the village) often used as floating/life-

swimming skills in this very same water pond; the lousy staggering steps as I ascended back home under the weight of the pond-water-filled *Jerry Can*; and finally the punishment I was most certain of receiving for not bringing the *Jerry Can* back home in time. Often that punishment took the form of being ordered to go back to the well and fetch yet another *Jerry Can* full of water, irrespective of whether I had accomplished my *Four-Jerry-Cans-A-Day* routine or not.”

A member from the congregation spontaneously suggested, “Bring your Jerry Can, then, and you will again stagger...never forgetting to brace yourself for the inevitable punishment of yet another *Jerry Can* - full of dollars!

Whether she spoke for the rest remains to be seen. But outside the church, not an insignificant number

kept asking where the checks could be mailed, even as all this information lay well detailed in the STB brochure that the President was intent on handing out to each member exiting the church.

Today, for the Seven Churches in Baltimore, Maryland, the *Yellow Jerry Can* is what the *Blue Borehole well* is for Sacred Heart Church, Joliet, Illinois—namely, a sign and symbol of STB’s Water Program in Uganda.

"THE JERRY CAN"



EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

KYASIRA

This summer, Fr. Emmanuel and a pilgrimage group from Illinois will be on hand to cut the ribbon at the latest well installed by Share the Blessings. This is the 5th well donated by the members of Sacred Heart Church, Joliet, Illinois. The recipient is the Kyasira Home of Hope in Entebbe, Uganda.

Kyasira is an orphanage home founded in 1995 and managed by the Good Samaritan Sisters of Nalukolongo, Uganda. But it is also a school. The mission of this home/school is to restore hope to orphans and vulnerable children so that they are enabled to lead fulfilling lives. Currently it serves 52 children, providing them with basic needs and a good education. At Kyasira, with the digging of a well, Share

The Blessings' goals of *Clean Water and Education*, have neatly interwoven. At Kyasira, the two have met and embraced.

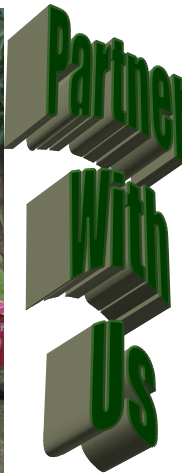
Kyasira is located on picturesque Lake Victoria. Prior to receiving the well, the home obtained the majority of the water from the lake. As pretty as it is, the lake water was very polluted. Now the children will have access to clean, safe drinking water. Children like Sharon, who is doing very well in school since coming to the orphanage, will now be able to stay free from the water-borne diseases that come from the untreated lake water.

Thank you, Sacred Heart, for your continuing support and the way that you have provided for so many of our friends in Uganda. *Carol*

JAY CARNEY RETURNS: OUR INTERIM EDUCATION CHAIR

Jay Carney, who served as STB's first Chair of Education, has again agreed to come back as Interim Chair. What a blessing!

Jay's passion to help is still as strong as ever. In the photo below from his trip to Uganda in 2010 he is with the St. Francis program children. Also in the photo are the leaders of the St Francis program, Josephine and Fr Joseph. Thank you, the 3 Js! We look forward to Jay's leadership to move our Education program forward and help us to seek a new chair for Education. **Jay is also seeking out another run this year to help support the children.** There are over 100 kids on the waiting list for the St Francis program. Please help Jay to support more of these kids!



<i>I'll Help</i>	<i>One Student</i>	<i>One Term</i>	<i>One Year</i>
	<i>Primary Day</i>	\$60	\$180
	<i>Primary Boarder</i>	\$100	\$300
	<i>Secondary Day</i>	\$80	\$240
	<i>Secondary Boarder</i>	\$150	\$450
	<i>Seminarian</i>	\$160	\$480

- I would like to share the gift of education.*
- I would like to share the gift of clean water.*
- I would like to help with other projects (classrooms, computers, Center for Adult Education in Bolivia)*

Amount -----

Name:.....

Address:

Email: *Phone:*.....

Please make checks payable to Share The Blessings, or donate online using PayPal at www.share-the-blessings.org

COMINGS AND GOINGS

In Share the Blessings, as with any Non-profit Organization, it is healthy to have folks coming and going. Here are a few updates to keep you informed of our board and key leadership transitions!

We have two new individuals to welcome to the Board: Gary and Carol Lenox have joined our Board.

Second, I want to personally Thank Martina Young for years of dedicated service as our bookkeeper since our inception in 2003! We are financially sound because of the great work of Martina in keeping track of our finances! Martina your financial services will be missed!

I want to thank Jay for returning to our leadership team - see more information above about Jay's return.

We welcome two new leaders: Brenda and Arthur Powers. Their extensive work with organizations such as Share the Blessings will be a big help to us. I want to also welcome Martha and Dave who have agreed to join our leadership team. Martha recently wrote informing of her plans to join our leadership team and hopefully Dave will join her! Although it is not a formal leadership position, we also welcome Margaret

Cross who will be leading our 2010 Dinner planning!

Finally it is time to formally welcomed Fr Peter Mawanda who took over our Newsletters from Jen Stallings and leads our Communication area. Please thank these leaders for volunteering their time and keep us all in your prayers as we continue God's work in the areas of Education and Clean Water! *Kevin*



Carol and Gary Lennox

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Below is a list of tasks that need to be performed so that our annual Share the Blessings Dinner will be a success. We therefore kindly ask for your help with any of these tasks: you may select any task you would like to help with, either as leader or as part of the team that will handle that given task.

Tasks

1. Menu/Caterer
2. Speaker
3. Location
4. Advertising
5. Program (Develop and Printing)
6. Tickets (Develop and Printing)
7. Ticket Sales (Coordinator)
8. Budget and Accounting
9. Balloons (Coordinator)
10. Silent Auction
11. Solicitations (Coordinator)
12. Program Ads and Balloon Gifts
13. 50/50 Raffle
14. Arrival/Ticket Processing
15. Receiving, Will Call, Selling at Door
16. Layout of Room
17. Set Up/Decorations
18. Recruit Helpers (Set up, Serve)
19. Photographer
20. Clean Up
21. Coordinator
22. Publish Results

Please contact me at amargaretcross@bellsouth.net or 919-465-2242 to let me know your selection. Sharing our blessings is sharing our talents. *Margaret*

Tuli Kimu Mu Kristu
"We Are One In Christ"



THE “MOTHER” IN SHARE THE BLESSINGS

That mothers, across generations, have been the engine behind momentous accomplishments is a well established fact of human history. And that it took a mother's plea for Christ to perform his very first miracle at a wedding in Cana (Jh.2:1-11), even as his *hour had not yet come*, is another well documented scriptural fact. Share The Blessings too, therefore, is not immune to this bit of reality.

Half of the very first group of STB pilgrims to Uganda in 2002 were women (five out of the ten). And of these five, one, Donna Fitzgerald, has been 'pilgrimageing' to Uganda ever since: in and out of season! Last year, Donna traveled to Uganda for her eighth pilgrimage. This year, still, Donna is in Uganda, for a ninth time, having flown there in July, laden with over eight laptop computers for STB's Education program. John Fitzgerald, an extremely busy man indeed, has never failed to squeeze time to refurbish the donated computers before they are taken over to Uganda.

While in Uganda this year, Donna is working on the details for yet another STB pilgrimage to Uganda next year, which she most surely will lead in the summer! And that will be her tenth pilgrimage to Uganda since the founding of STB. Donna, so enthusiastic and courageous, has not only been responsible for organizing STB's experiential trips, but has indeed been the president of STB until recently!

HAPPY TO HELP.

But Donna is just one among many. Lauren Green, one of the original *five* of 2002, as well as the first woman-president of STB, is now offering her dedicated service as Recording Secretary to the Organization. Martina Young, though she has never been to Uganda, has served as STB's faithful Bookkeeper for years. And Carol Lenox, a regular contributor to this Newsletter, whom, together with Gary Lenox, we have welcomed on Share The Blessings Board in this issue (see above) has been the Organization's Education Chair until early this year. Terri Budde worked so hard to introduce STB to Sacred Heart Parish, Joliet, Illinois. Without her, there would never have been an "STB– Sacred Heart" connection, and none of the five wells Sacred Heart has funded in Uganda. And Jeniffer Stallings was STB's Publications Chair until last year when the current Communications Chair took over! These, and many other STB non-Board volunteers, mothers and mothers-to-be, have made STB what it is. While one can't resist the temptation to think of what STB would look like without these selfless mothers, one feels even more enthusiastic about the STB of tomorrow: with many more such volunteers, intensifying, consolidating, and promoting her activities! What a blessing!

And the "father"? Next Newsletter!

"Providing basic human needs and dignity for all through prayer and acts of love."

Share The Blessings, Inc. is a recognized non-profit organization under section 501 (c) 3 of the International Revenue Code, FEIN 14-1882445.

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**"I will canonize her
because she did
ordinary things with
extraordinary love."**

(Pope Pius XI, at the canonization of St. Therese of Lisieux on May 17, 1925)