



DIVINE FACE ORGANIZATION
(Concern for the needy)

Newsletter -July 2002

Dear Friend of the Divine Face,

HONOR TO THE DIVINE FACE! I can hardly believe that it is already one year since I wrote to you last. How time flies when! Here! SiiiiCfi TO be done. Uncea-ga In TMIngyou hearty greetings from our peopre;(yours Wid mine) in Nigeria. I wonder when I am ever going to be able to "send" rather than "bring" you these greetings from my country. Hopefully that will happen one day when things settle down and we succeed in setting things up in our institution to run by their own in-built dynamism. Please help pray that we may see that day.

In the parish where I serve, the bishop paid us a pastoral visit in December last year, and in January this year I got a new associate. That is the third one in less than two years. The parish is relatively new, so it needs attention in order to get a good orientation put in place, as well as structures like the Church building and parish office block to complete.

In our Divine Face Family, we thank God for his favors. We did not have any deaths, except the grandfather of one of our Stewards who died in April. Our adopted families are doing well within the context of life back home. The protracted non-payment of salaries to workers and teachers by the government and the frequent scarcity of gasoline within the past year have worsened the strangling hold of corruption on the population of our country .Please pray for that country .

This situation has affected practically every aspect of our services to the people. Much more is required to support them; many more people need help. Even some parents have had to withdraw their children from our school because they can no longer afford even the very little school fees that we ask for. This past year, the vehicles we use, one of 1982 for the Stewards, the other of 1983 for myself, and the school bus of 1975 have spent more time in the repair shops than in our service. Understandably that has not been friendly to our finances. Because of the very irregular services of the bus, we also have lost some of our pre-school and primary school children who used to come from very far away. The parents are quite sad because they know what they are missing. As a matter of fact, we nearly had a disaster with the bus in late May this year. The students were on board coming back from an excursion. Something went wrong with the oil supply system. All of a sudden smoke filled the inside of the bus. The students thought it had caught fire. In their fright, some jumped out in different directions on a relatively busy road. In spite of all that, divine providence spared them any serious injuries. But the motor of the bus went stiff completely and even the engine block got shattered. I called home some time ago, and was told that the mechanic had found out that it would need about \$3,000.00 to replace the motor.



The school bus being towed away from where it broke down in the middle of nowhere



The secondary school students holding the morning assembly in front of the story building

GOOD NEWS

All that notwithstanding, I have some good news for you. This may seem ironic but while some parents find it difficult to pay the equivalent of \$30.00 a year for their children in primary school, more and more are willing to make the sacrifice to pay the equivalent of \$40.00 monthly to have theirs in our high school. Consequently, instead of the number of 30 new students we expected last year, we had 35. And for next year, it is likely that we will not be able to admit all those who have applied. Word has gotten around about the school. A couple of days before I came out this year, precisely on June 10, government officials came to inspect our secondary school for approval. In the end they assured us that we would get the approval.



The 2nd floor of the three-story building now at decking stage

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Some of you good people heeded our appeal for aid to enable us to hire some more teachers. With your help we were able to hire four new teachers. The parents have attested to the effectiveness of the diligent work being done by the teachers and the Stewards. It gives a good feeling to hear them express their joy in seeing that they are making a wiser decision to send their children to our school, instead of sending them to the 'strike-crippled state schools that claim to offer free education only to frustrate both parents and students, most of them endlessly.

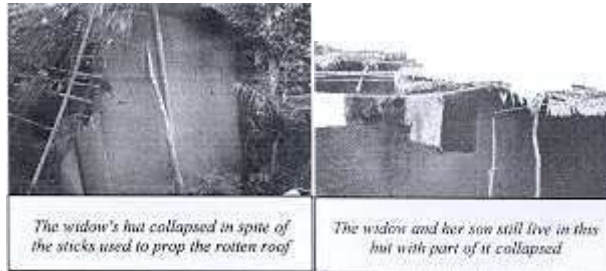
Thanks to your generous support we have been able to deck the first floor of the three-story building I wrote to you about last year. You will remember that at the time I wrote last year, the ground floor was yet without lintel. But now we have brought the ground floor to a stage where it is usable. One of the six rooms is serving as a library, another is shared by the principal and the teachers as office and staff room respectively. The rest are classrooms. The second floor is at the decking level. It is our hope that this floor will be ready for the beginning of the school year starting in September, so that the in-coming students will have somewhere to stay. There, too, will the science laboratory be set up.

COMMITMENT APPRAISED

I must tell you that I am overwhelmed to see that you great souls have so much love for God, as you manifest in your dedication to the cause of the poor. "Whoever gives (even) only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because of me -amen, I say to you, *he will surely not lose his reward*"(Mt. 10:42). That is a promise on oath that the Lord who made it will certainly fulfill for every one of you. We have all committed ourselves to make real our Lord's concern for the poor. We depend on him to see us through, because, as he said, we shall always have the poor with us. The good news is that our approach is aimed at not having the same poor to cater to all the time.

Many of you made very impressive contributions last year. You must really have been inspired by the Holy Spirit because there was and still is need for them. Apart from hiring more teachers this past year, we have improved on the school building; set up the school library (we need some textbooks and novels) and bought two computers for the school. We have had to spend \$3,000.00 to subsidize the general maintenance of the high school students, as well as grant scholarship to 5 children of very poor, families for the high school this past year. These are extras to the basic care of the needy and our 10/,,~' adopted families. We are in the process of building a habitat for a poor widow and her son.

Oh, talking about adopted families! I do sincerely regret that it was just not possible again this time to bring letters from them. The reason is that the Stewards have more than triple the amount of work to do: preschool, elementary, secondary school (boarding) supervision and management, plus the outreach program. Moreover, the preparation for the government inspection of our school took a great deal from all of us -Stewards, teachers and students. To worsen matters, as I mentioned above, the cars we are using are too old and spend more time with the mechanics than with us. Let us hope for a better future.



The widow's hut collapsed. and her son still live here. The widow

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude by highlighting some of the special needs that our mission has, in the order of priority and urgency, as we know them now. Here is our checking list:

1. The repair of the school bus estimated to cost about \$3,000.00
2. The completion of the three-story classroom/hostel block
3. Completion of the habitat for the widow
4. A dining hall for the students, presently they eat in their auditorium
5. Textbooks and novels, especially for the secondary school
6. The replacement of the car for the Stewards estimated at about \$2,500.00

May you always have the joy of the Lord in your hearts and homes. I am in the U.S. until the end of August. Should you like to contact me, you can reach me at (817) 467-7440. My mailing address is 5808 Coldsworth Ct., Arlington, TX 76018.

As we continue to work together to comfort the needy, we empathize with all those who lost their loved ones in the September 11 and other terrorist attacks, praying that our loving Father may lift them out of their sorrow and grant eternal rest to those who died. Let us also pray for an end to all forms of terrorism and violence -physical and spiritual. May the brightness of the Divine Face drive away the gloom of wickedness. Amen.

Sincerely yours as always in His Image,

Rev. Fr. Akannamdi Gerard Mary Anyanwu (Chief Steward)

