

## **The General Secretariat of the Franciscan Missions Group 51, Missionary Cooperation Plan 2020**

The General Secretariat of the Franciscan Missions, (GSFM) coordinates the Mission Appeals of our Friars collaborating with us in the Mission Cooperative of the Archdioceses and Dioceses in the United States. The generous donations received are used to prepare missionaries and support the worldwide missionary projects of the Franciscan Order in Developing Countries. In particular, the beneficiaries are the People of God in:

- Africa: Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau, Libya, Mozambique, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania;
- Asia and Oceania: Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Papua New Guinea;
- South America (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru) Caribbean (Haiti);

The Franciscans in those countries offer fraternal support in solidarity with those in need. While responding to the spiritual hunger of the people, corporal necessities are also met through human development projects directed most specifically to the poor and the marginalized as our Holy Father St. Francis of Assisi identified himself with them.

Some of the efforts are:

1. Animating worshipping communities, Christian formation and renewal programs for the participants to be evangelized so that they can also become evangelizers;
2. Reconciliation, healing and rehabilitation programs for the victims of ethnic wars;
3. Providing houses for the indigent;
4. Outpatient clinics, basic health and sanitation program, clean water in the villages;
5. Assistance for victims of Leprosy and AIDS patients, training for their caregivers;
6. Shelters for the abandoned and street children;

### **PROJECT 2020 PRESCHOOL FOR DALIT CHILDREN IN CHENNAI, INDIA**

Father Joseph Raj, OFM, and other missionary friars in Chennai, India, are beginning a new education program focusing on the younger Dalit children and need our help. These children live on the fringe of society in miserable conditions. Their parents work as scavengers, beggars or as day laborers, if they can find work. Often the young children accompany their parents as they scavenge or beg for money. They hope to earn enough to survive another day. Sometimes, these children go without anything to eat for days and are often malnourished and vulnerable to infections and disease. Father Joseph has just opened a preschool for three-to-five-year-old children, staffed with professional teachers for 50 children. They have learning materials to foster early cognitive and social development and are given a nutritious daily meal prepared by a part-time cook. With your support Fr. Joseph's team will continue to offer these young children a chance to break the vicious cycle of poverty and a life of begging on the streets. Please help provide these children with an early learning experience so they develop a passion for school and the skills to be successful!