

Going the Extra Mile

For Kids in Need of Jesus



ISSUE ALERT!

What is AIDS?

The disease AIDS is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which damages the body's defense system by disabling certain types of white blood cells that fight infection.

The Global Story

- An estimated 38.6 million people worldwide live with HIV.
- Of the estimated 2.3 million children under 15 living with HIV, 2 million live in sub-Saharan Africa.
- In 2005, 540,000 children under the age of 15 were newly infected with HIV.
- 15.2 million children under the age of 18 have lost one or both parents to AIDS; 12 million of these are in sub-Saharan Africa.
- By 2010, the number of orphans due to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to rise to more than 16 million.

Source: *The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*

The Church's Response

On June 2, 2006, Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán, president of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health

Care Workers, addressed the United Nations General Assembly about the Church's work on behalf of those suffering from HIV/AIDS. Cardinal Barragán reported that some 30 percent of the centers throughout the world that treat people infected with HIV and affected by AIDS are Church-based. In fact, the Catholic Church has launched initiatives against the pandemic in 62 countries throughout the world – 28 in Africa, 9 in America, 6 in Asia, 16 in Europe and 3 in Oceania.

In the Developing World, the Church and her missionaries offer wide-ranging services for those affected by HIV/AIDS including awareness and education programs, counseling and spiritual support, nutrition centers, orphanages, hospital treatment, and home and prison care.

Most importantly, through the witness of missionaries and local priests, Religious, and lay catechists, people in the Missions who suffer from HIV/AIDS learn about Jesus' great love for them.



ACTIVITY

HCA Prayer Quilt

Background:

Founded in 1987, the AIDS Memorial Quilt is a tribute to people who have died of AIDS. It is the largest ongoing community arts project in the world.

Virtually every "block" (or section) of the more than 40,000 panels that make up the AIDS Memorial Quilt represents the life of a person lost to AIDS.

Through this activity, children make an HCA Prayer Quilt for people in the Missions affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic to remind them that – through their prayers and sacrifices – they are united in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the Developing World.

Materials Needed:

- + pieces of construction paper or felt measuring 8.5" x 11"
- + colored yarn
- + thick, dark, felt-tip permanent markers
- + hole punchers
- + paints, glitter glue, appliqués, etc.
- + volunteers to help assemble the quilt
- + access to a laminating machine

Directions:

Give each student a piece of either construction paper or felt. Ask them to compose poems, prayers, or songs for children in the Missions who suffer because of HIV / AIDS, and write these on their quilt squares with dark felt tip marker. Encourage them to decorate the squares.

Once the students have created their individual patches for the HCA Prayer Quilt, punch holes around the perimeter of each square and "sew" the squares together using yarn. (If using paper, laminate first, punch holes then sew with yarn).

To enhance your Extra Mile event, consider displaying the quilt in your school or parish – or carrying during your walk-a-thon. To earn extra funds in support of the Extra Mile program, ask parishioners to "purchase" or sponsor each quilt square.

Making A Difference through HCA!

St. Mary's Rural Health Care Center located in the Diocese of Ndola in Zambia is just one of the many projects that offers help to young people with HIV/AIDS. The Center is supported by the prayers and offerings of children in the United States through the Holy Childhood Association (HCA).

With this help, the staff of St. Mary's has implemented home-based care programs for sick and malnourished children, and stock medicines to help provide relief for children suffering from HIV/AIDS.

"The funds and prayerful support we receive from members of HCA make all the difference in the lives of our children," said Sister Agnes Lungu, director at St. Mary's. "Thank you and may God bless you!"