

## MILESTONES 2024

a brief overview of the workings of the Holy Spirit at SSB

### OPENING OF THE SSB RESIDENTIAL CENTER

- We have completed Phase IV of our Project Development.
- This SSB Center accommodates various needs, serving as a residential facility for those in need and for the nuns serving the people.
- Included in the building are resident rooms, gathering space, a chapel and clinic/health unit space.



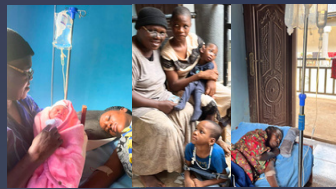
### SSB CENTER CERTIFIED BY THE STATE OF HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

- SSB earned certification from the state to operate to serve those in need allowing SSB to care for those who would otherwise not have access to nutrition, medical services & housing.



### NEW LIFE IN NIGERIA

- Medical Services have been life-saving including wound care, births and prenatal care, treatment of viruses and diseases and family medicine.
- Health & Wellness has improved for this at risk population because of the work at the SSB Center.
- The Sisters teach & lead prayer and spiritual development.



### "ACQUAVIVA" TRANSLATES TO "LIVING WATER"



### THE SACHET WATER FACTORY:

- Business venture to provide self sustainability for Bartimitees. This business is in high demand and very profitable in Nigeria.
- The factory will be producing pure water packaged in clear plastic bags and bottles. One of our generous benefactors, Edna Acquaviva, donated specifically for this sachet water project.



### ADDITIONAL WATER WELL COMPLETED & CHICKENS FOR SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

- 2nd functional water well to meet the ever-increasing demand for safe water.
- In need of financing for continued electricity costs to run generator for wells. Solar panels are secondary source of power but unreliable to be the single source. Chickens also are being raised and provide eggs daily,

### PLANS TO BUILD SSB EDUCATION CENTER

- Plans are underway for a SSB school facility for the underserved
- Nuns will provide quality education in math, reading, science & religion educating the whole person.



## Joy Comes in the morning

BY FR. MARTIN



I remember a story that my uncle told me some years ago. He worked the night shift as a security guard in the village. His workplace was very dark, lonely, and scary at night, since there was no electricity there. He would stay up all night anxiously waiting for the roosters to crow to announce the daybreak so that he would go home and rest.

Bartimaeus the blind beggar also lived in darkness and cried out to Jesus that he might see and what he saw was the light that is Christ. Bartimaeus, a marginalized outcast, represents so many that the Society serves: the sick, the orphan, the elderly, the disabled, the thirsty, the hungry, and the children left to an uncertain future without access to education. The SSB center in Nigeria brings the light of Christ to illuminate the dark night of their lives.

The lonely-they find compassion, the anxious-they find comfort, the helpless-they find hope in the loving arms of Christ present in the staff and volunteers of the now fully operational SSB Residential Center. A year has passed and under the leadership of Sr. John Vianney Nwonye and Sr. Mary Emmanuel Ugwu of the *Missionary Sisters of Mary* a wide variety of needs are being met to provide housing for the destitute, the elderly, the single mother, the orphan and those most marginalized in the community. Basic medical care is provided for many of the poor villagers who would otherwise not have access to medical services.



Sr. Vianney has delivered five babies in our SSB center since its inception a year ago. The Lord has been so gracious to us that there has never been any complications during treatment, labor & delivery. We have received several testimonies of healing. Our nuns visit patients at home, especially the elderly who need help with chores, cleaning their room, bathing and meeting their bodily needs. Presently, we have 13 residents, including persons with different disabilities. We are expanding our services and have made a significant impact in the village and neighboring towns. The Lord has made everything beautiful in His time. Father Martin continues to lift each of you in prayer as we serve together.

### Building for Our Future

Our Spiritual director, Father Ibeh didn't learn to read until high school as he was "used" by the primary school head to work the local agricultural fields. SSB is committed to promoting opportunities to form village children through value-based Catholic education. Yes, there are government schools that are far away making it difficult if not impossible for the children of poverty to attend school. The SSB Board has approved the plan to build a school on the SSB property which will provide a Christ-centered quality education for the students. The nuns are ready to teach, to form the hearts and minds of our little ones. The groundbreaking ceremony of the proposed school was held in November. We respond to the needs of the community as the Holy Spirit inspires and leads us.



(above) Students learning at SSB outside

(below) Nigerian school needed like this







## Father Martin and Sister Grace Omamalin serve in Nigeria

Father Martin Ibeh and Sister Grace Omamalin had a very fruitful trip to Nigeria to the SSB Center in November serving the needy and meeting with our partners working tirelessly helping the people and building for our future. Many gathered for the dedication of *Acquaviva*, the newly built water sachet company, which profits will benefit our SSB center and campus. Father Martin blessed the factory that will increase our sustainability and the SSB community celebrated God's providence with thanksgiving. Sister Grace, serving here in Jacksonville, traveled to the SSB center and was amazed by the work at the SSB center, called Ala-Nso (Holy Ground) by the Nigerians. "It was on this holy ground that I felt God's presence through the people and experienced a place of hope and freedom where one is free of worries and fears because of their great trust in the faithfulness of the Lord."



## Acquaviva - Sachet Water Factory

Nigeria has a tropical climate. People need safe water which is not readily available as it is in the United States. "Sachet water" is bought daily by ordinary citizens. Self-sufficiency is a core mission of SSB and the opening of the "sachet water" factory in November generates jobs and income for the Bartimites. The factory packages pure water in clear plastic bags and bottles. The product is named "Acquaviva," which translates, "Living water" in honor of one of our benefactors. How so fitting the name is – Jesus is offering living water to all who are thirsty. He invites, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink (John 7:37b). Christ provides us with life giving water which gives eternal life. We are servants of the Lord, giving living water to those whose throats are parched with thirst.

## Needed Additional Well Drilled on the SSB campus



Safe drinking water is vital to the health of the villagers. Every year many die, especially infant and children from contaminated water. A grant to SSB was made via Fidelity Charitable to cover the cost of drilling an additional water well in the village to meet the demand unable to be met by the water source at the center. This second functional water well helps with the ever-increasing demand for safe water in the village. Great thanks to Frank P. Henchy for his gift. Every day, especially during dry season, hundreds of people come to the SSB center for water. It is exciting to watch them carrying their buckets & plastic water containers on their heads or on their wheelbarrows. We are very grateful for this remarkable gift that has made an impact of a lifetime for the village.

## In Humble Gratitude to Our Generous Donors

The Board of Society of St. Bartimaeus is grateful to you, our benefactor, for your role in this success. You heard the cry of the poor and responded with compassion. You have radiated the light of charity in the face of their adversity. Your care and support is gratifying, and we deeply appreciate everything you have done and continue to do for us. The Lord has poured out His grace on us; we'll not tire doing what the Lord has called us to do, to help those in the world of gloom move from darkness to light; from sorrow to joy, from despair to hope, from isolation to community, from night shift to day shift. We have discovered the truth of the saying, "Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning" (Psalm 30:5b).



*People of Joy! We are people of joy.  
As you give and serve with joy,  
the Lord will reward you  
with joy beyond measure.  
With your support, "We build,  
we shelter, we feed, we clothe,  
we educate, we accompany, and...  
We transform lives!"*



## The Joy of the Christ Child shared during Christmas in the Village

As Christmas draws near, we are preparing to buy and distribute food for Christmas meal to the impoverished villagers in Nigeria. Last Christmas, we were able to buy 40 bags of rice (each bag is 110 pounds, \$55 dollars per bag), bag of dried fish (\$130), and bottles of peanut oil (total \$55). They were shared by over 100 widows and women living in poverty. Join us in giving.

## YOUR GIFT IS A *Living* MEMORIAL

PLEASE HELP US SERVE BY SUPPORTING OUR MONTHLY NEEDS & SPECIAL PROJECTS



**Fuel:** While the current wells have **solar panels** to provide electricity to operate the wells, there is no bank of batteries to store the sun-generated power when the sun is not shining. A backup generator was purchased and installed last year. Despite being oil-rich, fuel is very expensive in Nigeria. Help us provide clean water.  
**Monthly Fuel Cost for Generator: \$ 150**



**Housing Costs for Residents:** The population of the center is growing each month. The need to support each resident with associated care and food allowance . Please consider pledging.  
**Monthly Cost: \$ 250**



**Education Costs for Students:** As noted on first page, a school is under construction by SSB to provide Catholic value-based education to the poor students. The SSB school will provide high quality education to the villagers deprived of this opportunity.  
**Annual Cost: \$ 350 to fund one student's tuition, books & daily school meal per year**



If you can, please consider donating to support the Society of St. Bartimaeus as it continues to serve the spiritual, medical, academic and physical needs of those in need. Donations can be made in honor of the memory of a loved one which will be placed in the SSB Honor Society.



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