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Propagation of the Faith

- Enables missionaries to be more effective
in their works of evangelization. Caring for the carers.

Society of St Peter the Apostle

- Funds the formation of seminarists
and religious in mission territories

Association of Holy Childhood

- Supports the health and religious formation needs of
children in the mission territories.
Enables children helping children.

Missionary Union

- Stimulates ongoing missionary formation and awareness.
Animators inspiring other animators.

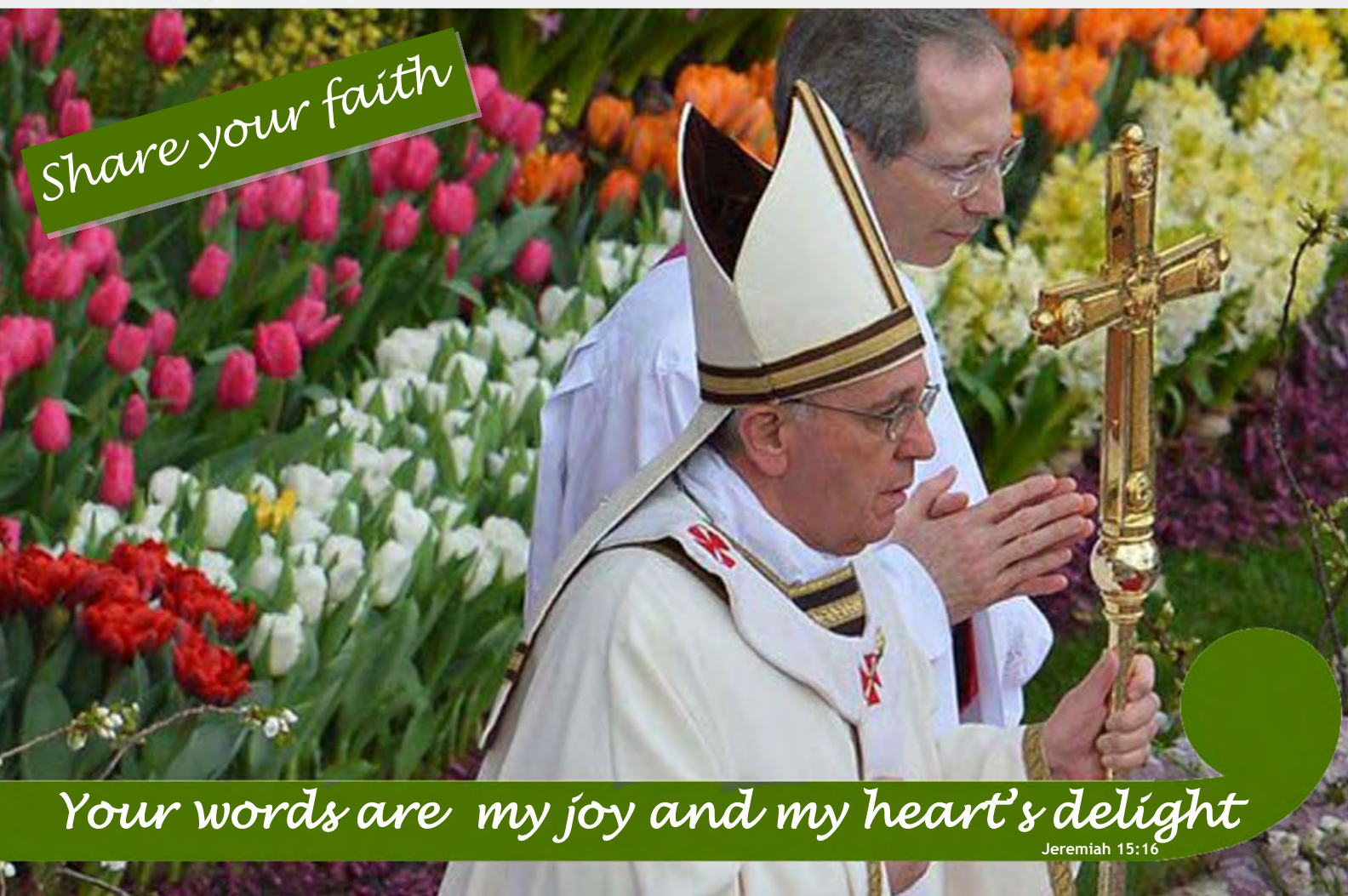


MISSIONZ.

Providing for the Pontifical Mission Societies

N e w s

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Share your faith

Your words are my joy and my heart's delight

Jeremiah 15:16

MISSION IS SERVICE

On the night of Tuesday, the 12th of March 2013, I was with Fr Maurice Carmody on our way to Richmond to participate in a reflection on the Document of Vatican II on Divine Revelation. The seat of St Peter in Rome was still vacant then; and it was almost natural to talk about qualities and mission of the then Pope to be. At one point I suggested to Fr Maurice that it would be a good time for the Catholic Church to have a pope with the name Francis. He glanced at me and asked, "Why?"; I candidly answered: "Was it not Francis of Assisi who was given charge by God to rebuild his Church? That exhortation is again opportune now." Two days later, the new pope was elected. You should have seen how stunned with joy I became when I heard that his name is Pope Francis!

"Was it not Francis of Assisi who was given charge by God to rebuild his Church? That exhortation is again opportune now."

Pope Francis has been stimulating right attitude on living in many people. He ended his first Easter Sunday **Urbi et Orbi** address (to the City and to the World), with the statement: "To express in our lives the sacrament

we have received: behold, dear brothers and sisters, our daily work – and, I would say, our daily joy! The joy of being instruments of the grace of Christ, as branches of the vine which is Christ himself, inspired by the sustaining presence of His Spirit!"



**Fr Bernard Espiritu, SVD
National Director—MISSIONZ**

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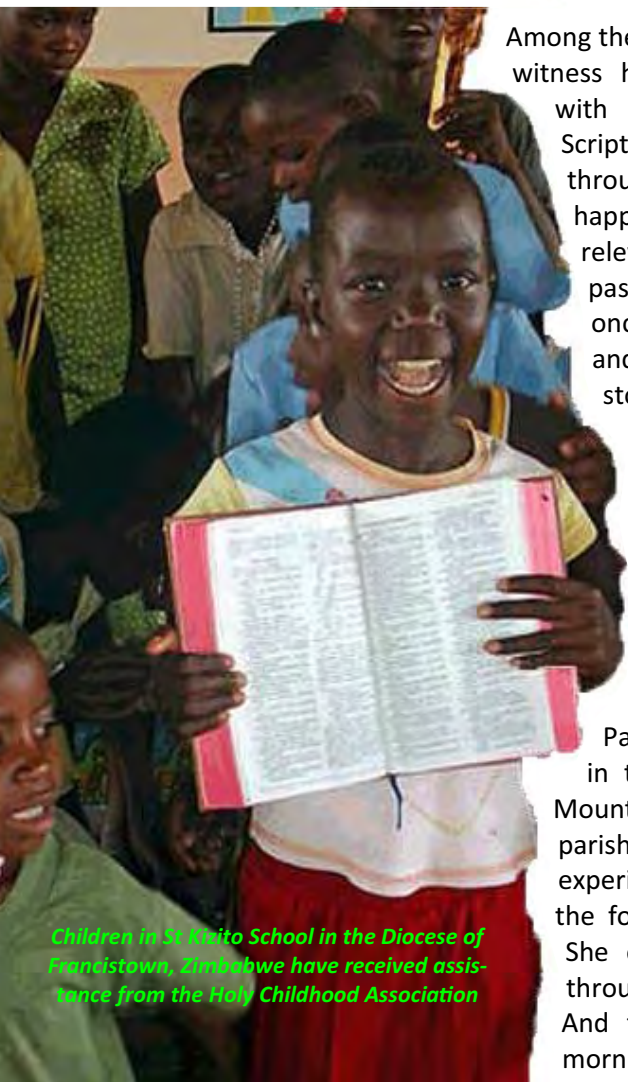
This issue of MISSIONZ NEWS highlights the joy that permeates through the "branches of the vine" in which we all are part. It carries stories about the people one meets along the mission trails in our world today. In his Inauguration Mass, Pope Francis revealed how he understands his calling as Pope. "He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete, and faithful service which marked Saint Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God's people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (Mt 25:31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!" Did you know that as friends and supporters of MISSIONZ (The Pontifical Mission Societies in New Zealand) you help realize this task of Pope Francis – to rebuild God's Church?

Pope Francis washed and kissed the feet of detainees in Casa del Marmo Juvenile Penitentiary Institute in Rome on Holy Thursday 2013.





TSIMBANKUDZU



Children in St Kizito School in the Diocese of Francistown, Zimbabwe have received assistance from the Holy Childhood Association

Among the joys of a missionary is to witness how people get familiar with the stories of the Scriptures and understand it through events that actually happen in their lives and find relevance in it. This way the passages of Scripture can once more become events and not simply just another story in the past. I understood my role to make this happen when I reflect on what happened to me in Melbourne in 1991.

A few days after I arrived in Melbourne, I found myself helping in the Parish at Belgrave, situated in the beautiful Dandenong Mountains. One day, a parishioner shared her experiences walking through the forest of the Dandenongs. She encouraged me to walk through the trails of the forest. And this I did one beautiful morning. I had never been to a

forest myself. After parking the car at the entrance, I started to walk in by myself. Shortly after I started to walk in the forest, I heard strange noises among the bushes. I can guarantee you that the next thing I remember was finding myself back in a hurry inside the car. I got afraid.

But the following week, a friend invited me to go back with him and some other visiting friends. He walked us through the forest and showed us interesting flora and fauna. I remember even seeing peacocks and many other birds. He became our forest guide. We stayed the whole morning in the forest that day.

Missionaries can be like the forest guide when it comes to introducing people to Bible. Missionaries enable people find meaning and joy in the Word of God.

I stayed for another month in Belgrave, and I learned how to walk through the forest by myself and even brought friends at one point.

The document of Vatican II on Divine Revelation has given us the direction:

“Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful. (DV 22)”

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Crossing the threshold of faith means not being ashamed to have the heart of a child who, because he still believes in impossible things, can live in hope—the one thing that is capable of giving meaning and transforming history. To ask for it without ceasing, to pray without fainting and to adore so as be transfigured by what we contemplate.

Pope Francis on the Year of Faith

MISSION IS BRINGING NEW HOPE



Purim, above, and also in the left picture, is seen together with some other orphans who live in MPHC; all have been born with the HIV/AIDS virus.

Mother of Perpetual Help Centre in Nong Bua Lamphu Thailand assists children who have been born as HIV/AIDS patients. They also help other children of HIV/AIDS poor families of neighboring villages with school uniforms and school supplies, and food supplements. Below are pictures of some of the children who benefit from this program.

Purim is now 15 years old and a regular student in Nong Bua Lamphu, an hour's flight north of Bangkok. He was born with the HIV/AIDS virus and became an orphan while still a toddler. He was 3 years old when he became very ill due to his condition. His grandmother left him in a hospital in Khon Khaen. She herself was frail and poor and was left alone to care for her other grandchildren. Purim's health improved but his family was not able to take him back home.

Purim was 6 years old when the hospital brought him to Mother of Perpetual Help Centre (MPHC) to live there. He was still very fragile in those days but MPHC welcomed and cared for him. Meantime his family had lost track

of him and had always believed that Purim had died; but Purim's health improved much under the care of the staff of MPHC.

Last September 2012 Purim's older sister, having dreamt a lot of him for many nights, started to look for him. She had a deep feeling that he was still alive. She went to Khon Khaen hospital who directed her to MPHC. In October 2012, she came to the orphanage where she found him. The reunion was emotion filled.

For the first time in 9 years Purim celebrated Christmas with his family. His health is stable, and he continues to study in a local school with the assistance of the missionaries in the Mother of Perpetual Help Center.



...we can walk as much we want, we can build many things,
but if we do not confess Jesus Christ, nothing will avail.
We will become a pitiful NGO (Non Governmental Organizer),
but not the Church, the Bride of Christ.



*Pope Francis during his first Mass
with the Cardinals who elected him.*



Mother of Perpetual Help Center in Nong Bua Lamphu Thailand celebrated its 12th anniversary in November 2012. Over the years projects have been carried out to help HIV/AIDS patients and poor families with livelihood projects. One of the main projects has been to help them with a kick start in raising cattle. Each family receiving two cattle (mother and calf) were to give back to the project half of the cost after two years - this to help other and new members within the six HIV groups. You can assist them acquire cattle for needy families.



PREACH THE GOSPEL, HEAL THE SICK



There hadn't been a cure for those suffering with Aids when the Divine Word Missionaries started their ministry twelve years ago in the Northeast of Thailand. The dying were brought into our care and all we could do was to accompany them in their terminal phase of life.

The situation has changed tremendously over the years but we're still urged to heal the wounds of our patients. These wounds are mostly invisible. Our people lack acceptance and love as they come from broken families. Teenagers experience domestic and sexual violence.

Nowadays patients seldom have to die, due to their Anti Retroviral Therapy. The social stigma still remains! Counselling and education as well as compassionate friendship are our efforts to bring about a change into their lives!

Bro Bernd Ruffing is a German Divine Word Missionary who works with the HIV/AIDS patients in Nong Bua Lamphu, Thailand. Here he is shown dressing the wound of a patient in Mother of Perpetual Help Centre. He is a trained nurse. MISSIONZ support their work .

SEMINARIAN ON A PEACE MISSION

The joy of Christmas Day has not even dissipated in the air, and suddenly there was the commotion of frantic panic when the village of James in Mt Hagen, Papua New Guinea was suddenly attacked by another tribe who started shooting people from the local tribe and setting fire to countless houses as well as the local school.

James Gising, a 28 year old seminarian at Holy Spirit Seminary in Port Moresby was in his village to celebrate the holy season of Christmas with his family. All was going well, until that day that he had to stand in front of his tribe desperately attempting to stop the violence being imposed by a neighboring tribe. He nearly took a bullet which instead hit and killed his stepbrother.

Tribal feud has gone bad in recent years in many parts of Papua New Guinea. Fights typically break out over claim of land, social problems and religious differences. As in James' village, tribal conflicts often lead to burning of churches, schools, religious residences, and people's homes.

Thankfully, the Catholic Church through its local churches and local priests, plays an important role in reducing tribal conflicts. As respected leaders in the community, the priests act as mediators between the different tribal groups, bringing peace and reconciliation to the people.

However, the country does not have enough local priests to spread themselves throughout the geographically large and diverse country and relate personally with every tribe. With missionaries aging, the need for young local priests to fill their shoes is urgent.

By training local indigenous men who know the culture of their people, their challenges and most importantly the local languages better than anyone, more tribes in conflict across Papua New Guinea will hear and see

how the grace of a loving God can bring peace to their community, and provide a safe and stable future for them and their children.

James knows that the Church is there to preach the Word of God, and also in response cater for the physical and emotional needs of the people. Through pastoral formation, he and the other seminarians learn to put the theological values from their studies into practice, all for the sake of the kingdom of God — a kingdom of peace



Seminarian James Gising prays with the children and their grandmother in his village in Mt Hagen.

And so we ask the risen Jesus, who turns death into life, to change hatred into love, vengeance into forgiveness, war into peace. Yes, Christ is our peace, and through him we implore peace for all the world.

Pope Francis—Blessing Urbi et Orbi—Easter Sunday 2013

BULGING AT THE SEAMS

Not many seminaries can say that of themselves in these days. But we have begun to be aware in the last week or so that we, at Pacific Regional Seminary in Suva, are beginning to bulge at the seams. When the term started on February 11th, we were happy that we could handle the 35 first year students who arrived. It was not the biggest first year ever – that was 38 back in 1999 – but it was second equal largest – so that seemed good news.

We also had 69 diocesan students in residence – almost full – but again the second largest in size. The largest

number was in 2003 when there were 73 diocesan students in residence. But again we were happy that we had a two or three spare rooms and hoped that we could manage next year! The dining

room was also fairly full but again we were managing. We thought we had managed well!



The handy men of the seminary took a short time to remove the walls that divide classrooms to fit in the number of new seminarians.

Each year we expect our numbers will not continue; but each year we find they have not fallen.

It is surely a time of grace for the Pacific.

Fr. Rector Michael O'Connor sm

But after the first two days we realized we had a problem with classrooms. We were one medium sized classroom short. There were three classrooms that could take 35 or more; one classroom could take 24 but the next smaller class of 24 students had to fit into a room that could really only handle 16. The Suva heat in February made it most uncomfortable for this class (and for their lecturers) and something had to be done. A quick review of our facilities suggested that we could do better if we knocked down the wall between two classrooms and made two medium sized classrooms rather than one big one and one small classroom.

A few hours with our handy men and the wall was removed! But knocking down the wall made us realize that we may perhaps be beginning to 'bulge at the seams'. In many parts of the Western world the numbers have fallen, but as we hear now there are signs of this trend turning around. Each year we expect our numbers will not continue; but each year we find they have not fallen. It is surely a time of grace for the Pacific. We are able to send limited numbers of priests to other countries around the Pacific, and even outside the Pacific. Will it last? The question is often asked. No one knows the answer. But....we don't mind bulging at the seams!!

"I was pleasantly surprised when I visited the seminary in Bangkok last November 2012. There are more than 100 young major seminarians in Lux Mundi Seminary. Thailand has only 0.46% Catholic population. In the seminary in Tagaytay City, Philippines where I studied and got ordained there are presently 191 seminarians doing their Theology. Surely the seminaries in the developing countries are bulging to the seams!" *Fr Bernard SVD*

MISSION: BREAK THE POVERTY CYCLE

“Filipino families often visit cemeteries to pray for their deceased relatives. One would expect that. One would not expect, however, to find a cemetery that is basically a small village, with many families living among the tombs. Welcome to my parish.” Fr Max Abalos, SVD

Three cemeteries in Cebu City, Philippines, are teeming with children. Often both parents work at the cemetery as grave diggers, candle and flower vendors, caretakers, and tombstone makers. Vendors might make the equivalent of two dollars a day. Children often help the parents with their enterprise.

The families who make their homes in the cemeteries are squatters who were evicted from other slum colonies. They found refuge in the cemeteries. Some erected makeshift huts on top of tombs using light scrap materials. Others live inside mausoleums of rich families, where they are hired as caretakers. Still some just live in push carts. Some of these families have lived in the cemeteries for over fifty years.



Some of the children who live in the cemetery grounds meet with a youth leader (in black t-shirt) who helps them with their homework after school hours. At the background are ossuaries in the cemetery.

Understandably, the residents lack even basic facilities for proper hygiene. They carry water into the cemetery from nearby stores or houses, and rely on the lights of street lamp post for illumination at night.

Although the parents value education, their meagre resources often do not allow them to send their children to school. This is where Fr Max Abalos, a Divine Word Missionary, enters. He is the executive director of **Action for Nurturing Children and the Environment, Inc (ANCE)**, which was started in 1982 by a group of professionals who wanted to share the blessings they received from God through charitable acts. ANCE focuses on protecting and improving the lives of children and their families, especially the very poor.

Fr Max Abalos SVD (left) meets with some of the children who live in the cemetery grounds.

Although elementary-level education is free, there are mandatory fees that the poor cannot afford. Secondary school and college education are both very expensive. It is estimated that only eighteen per cent of children who enrol in first grade proceed to high school, and four per cent graduate from college. ANCE provides fees for elementary school children and scholarships for high school students. The organization also opened a classroom inside one of the cemeteries to provide day care and nursery school programs for children.

ANCE's ministry in the cemeteries is unusual, but its members do their best to bring some normality to families who live in a rather abnormal situation. Assist Fr. Max wants to improve the lives of his "parishioners."

A photograph of the children who participated in a summer camp organised by Fr Max and the leadership of ANCE. They all dressed up to celebrate the end their Summer camp. The event was happening in one of the mausoleums in the cemetery.



CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN



The Holy Childhood Association is all about awakening and nurturing the missionary spirit among children through their parents and teachers, their educators. The aim is to lead them to offer spiritual and material aid to children in regions and Churches in mission dependent areas of the world. All children are invited to share their resources with other children worldwide. Their motto is "Children helping Children". Children who participate in the Holy Childhood can be enriched by learning about, praying for and offering gifts for children around the world.

Thank you to all Kiwi children and educators of our Catholic Schools in New Zealand who made Mission Month 2012 special for the Missionary work of the Church.

The Pictures on left were sent in by Ms Debbi Plant in behalf of the children of Sacred Heart School in Timaru who organised a Mission Stall in October 2012.

THANK YOU FROM THE MISSIONS



Some of the Children, who have put on their best dress, and the nuns of the **Tribal Girls' Hostel, Batasipur, in the Diocese of Tezpur** send their sincerest gratitude to all friends of MISSIONZ who shared their financial gift to the Holy Childhood Association Fund Raising last April 2012. Through the generosity of our Kiwi donors, **MISSIONZ was able to send \$23,700 for the construction of the female boarding school building** seen in the background. Many children in the villages do not have access to education. The Diocese of Tezpur opened this school in Batasipur. There are children who come from remote villages on foot. This is very difficult, particularly for girls who are now accommodated in boarding school.



The seminarians and faculty members of **Holy Spirit Major Seminary in Dhaka, Bangladesh** pose for a picture after their Baccalaureate Mass to send their gratitude to all you donors of MISSIONZ. Last year **MISSIONZ sent \$22,000 to help in the education, board and lodging of these seminarians.** God's blessings on all friends and donors of MISSIONZ.

LIFE-GIVING GIFTS



To help send a child for **one month** to primary school where one also gets **a healthy meal 3 times a week**, e.g. in Cebu, Philippines

\$ 30



To help provide a child with school uniform, pair of shoes, and school bag **for the school year**, e.g. Nong Bua Lamphu

\$ 25



To help give a Catholic school teacher salary for **one week**, e.g. Cebu, Philippines

\$ 80



To help a catechist receive a **monthly** allowance, e.g. Uganda.

\$ 50



Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed, “which, at the time of its sowing, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. Yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade” Mk 4:31-32.

Even a seemingly small act of generosity can grow into something far beyond what we could ever ask or imagine [Eph 3:20] — the creation of a community of love in this world, and beyond this world, because wherever love grows, it is stronger than death [1 Cor 13:8]. So when we give ourselves to planting and nurturing love here on earth, our efforts will reach out beyond our own chronological existence.

Think of what your contribution can do in many other parts of the world. **Give generously. Give cheerfully.** “God loves a cheerful giver (2Cor 9:7).”



To help in the Board,
Lodging, Education and
Formation of a Diocesan
Seminarian for
one week, e.g.
in Suva, Fiji

\$ 100



To help provide milk
supplement for children for
one year, e.g. in Thailand

\$ 100

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