

OFS – Conference of National Spiritual Assistants – Australia

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Monthly Spiritual Message October 2017

THE HISTORY OF PROJECT ADOPTION

(Part 2)

What does Project Adoption Do?

Project Adoption assists low-income families who appeal to the Franciscan Family Apostolate run by the Director, Fr Jose Manjaly of the Diocese of Irinjalakuda in the State of Kerala in India.

The FFA is part of the Diocesan Social Action Forum Incorporated (SAFI) of that Diocese. Money from Australia made up the major proportion of this fund in 2015. FFA is a family support program to help the selected families in their needs. This program has been going on since the very inception of SAFI, and pertains to adopting families in extreme poverty, difficulties, severe disabilities and poor health conditions for continuous monetary help as per prefixed schedules (monthly, quarterly, etc.). The financial assistance given is used mainly for medical treatment, education of children, marriage of daughters and maintenance or construction of houses. At present there are 154 families as beneficiaries for this program.¹

The Social Action Forum describes itself as being registered under the Travancore-Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Act XII of 1955. Registration No.166/83. Social Action concerns the upliftment of the less privileged through value based awareness programs, a process by which the marginalized and deprived group live a life of their own with dignity, self-help, self-reliance and prosperity. It helps to inculcate and uphold the basic concepts of love, justice, cooperation and brotherhood within the community. In this humanitarian service Jesus Christ, Our Master is the source of our inspiration and strength.²

Objectives of Social Action Forum:

1. Building up of an eco-friendly society through the optimum management of natural resources.
2. Building up of a self-reliant and value based society through the formation and strengthening of Community Based Organization.
3. Enhancement of the social acceptance of differently abled.
4. Reform the community towards the attainment of holistic health by promoting replicable models for the satisfaction of basic needs of the marginalized and the deprived.
5. Build up a self-reliant and value based society through strong family bondage.
6. Document and disseminate the findings, challenges, concerns and to act as a channel for the free flow of communications between various developmental actors of the society.
7. Reform the addicts to regain their self-esteem.

Project Adoption also assist the Archdiocese of Trichur in the State of Kerala in India in the running of the **Saint Alphonsa Home** for “other abled” girls. It was founded in 1993, and is presently run by the Superior General, Sr Philomena Vadakkedeth SLM (Society of Ladies of Mary Immaculate).

In Australia, Project Adoption is the only charitable apostolate we Seculars have together on a national level. Almost every OFS fraternity in Australia contributes to it and of course many individual seculars sponsor or donate to it as well.

¹ Diocesan Web Page Irinjalakuda: <http://www.irinjalakudadiocese.com/charity.php>

² Ibid., Diocesan Web Page: as above

However, we always need more sponsors or donors to the General Fund, as people drop out through change of circumstances, age or death. Our General Fund is for those who cannot commit to regular sponsorship, but wish to make a simple donation; this fund allows us to help many families who don't have sponsors.

In 2011 it was noted that we sent more than \$30,000AUD to the two dioceses involved, helping more the 200 families and "adopting" 12 of the 25 disabled girls at the Saint Alphonsa Home.

In an article in the Franciscan Herald, January 1971 entitled "Adopt a destitute Lay Franciscan" (can that perhaps be how Project Adoption got its name?) Alan Ouimet said:

"Jesus said: 'when you have a party invites the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. That they cannot pay you back means you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.' (Luke 14:13-14) Through supporting this fund you can have the poor at your table, not physically, but spiritually. You will be with them and they with you."

Acknowledging the receipt of our payment at Christmas 2010, the Director of the Franciscan Family Apostolate in Irinjalakuda, at the time Fr. Antony Makkattukarakaran wrote:³

"Kindly convey our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all sponsors who contributed their bit to assist poor families. We continue to remember all of them in our prayers. While we are doing our best to serve poor families, we hope and pray to have your continued support through your noble generosity (sic)."

Project Adoption is presently under the management of Michael McGuire offs, who lives in Perth and is on the OFS Regional Council of Western Australia. He has given a Financial Report to the Non-Elective Chapter of 2017. Please send donations to him at the following address. We also congratulate Michael on his 60th Year of Profession as a Secular Franciscan.



Michael McGuire offs

PROJECT ADOPTION

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Reflection on Generosity

There is a very beautiful parable of Tagore, the Indian poet, who was a friend of Gandhi. It has much to say concerning the way to give.

"I had gone a-begging from door to door along the village path, when a golden chariot appeared in the distance like a gorgeous dream, and I wondered who was this King of Kings. My hopes rose high and I thought that my sad days were at an end, and I stood waiting for alms to be given unasked, and for wealth to be scattered on all sides, in the dust. The chariot stopped where I stood. Your glance fell on me and you came down with a smile. I felt that the luck of my life had come at last. Then all of a sudden you held out to me your right hand and said, "What will you give me?"

Oh! What a kingly jest it was, to open your palm to a beggar and beg! I was confused and stood undecided, and then from my wallet I slowly took out the least little grain of corn and gave it to you. But how great, was my surprise when at the day's end I emptied my bag on the floor to find a least little grain of gold among the poor heap! I wept bitterly and wished that I had had the heart to give you my all."

John Cooper OFM Cap
National Spiritual Assistant

LOCAL MINISTERS, PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS MONTHLY SPIRITUAL MESSAGE
TO ALL MEMBERS OF YOUR FRATERNITY BOTH ACTIVE AND NON-ACTIVE MEMBERS.

³ Cath Spongberg sfo March 2011. PS: A special thank you to Vince Caruana sfo for reprinted articles from the Franciscan Herald and 'A History of the Third Order of St. Francis in Australia 1879-1979' Jenny Gibson SFO.