

Reflections

Volume 114

International

Catholic Family Newsletter

March 2025

Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

Jesus Christ is Our Hope

Fr. Campbell Bringing Ghana Hope

I Was Sex Trafficked But Found Hope

*****THOUGHT FOR TODAY*****

I plead with you —
never, ever give up on hope,
never doubt, never tire,
and never become discouraged.

Be not afraid.

— *Pope John Paul II*



By: Richard Pickard
Blessings to All:

Jesus Christ is the foundation of hope for all of us. The great love the Father has for us is the reason why Jesus became man. We all need this quality of the soul, which we call hope, to live our lives with purpose. Unlike all other creatures that God created, we are the only ones who hope for things in the future. We often say, "I hope things will be better tomorrow," or "I hope I get that job."

Hope is our desire for a positive future outcome. For Christians, it is the realization that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and gave us the opportunity to share in eternal happiness in Heaven. Jesus opened the gates of Heaven for us.



Each prayer you say, for yourself, or family or friend is a sign that **hope** lives in you.

There are people in the world **without hope**. They live their lives one day at a time and see death as an end of all life. Please add a prayer each day for those who do not have hope... Who do not believe in Jesus... Who are living a life of addiction to vice, lust or drugs. There are also those living on the streets without a bed to sleep on and no one to love them. Homeless people all over the world need our prayers. When you see a homeless person when you are walking or driving, please have them in your daily prayers. Too often we pass by them and don't even give them a thought. But you can make a difference. If you are walking passed a homeless person, give them some money, to help them buy food. It also tells them that there is good in people, especially for those who are abused or have suffered with the loss of a loved one. And Jesus loves them just as He loves all people. Your prayers for them are an extension of the love that Jesus has for all people.

There are people all over the world who have lost hope. Their spiritual center has been broken. one.



We can all pray for others. Make it your mission, each day, before you start your day, to say an "Our Father and Hail Mary" for the people you see on the street or that the Holy Spirit places in your thoughts. The girl in the photo has a sign that reads "Anything Helps. Even a Smile." The symbols on her sign are "Peace" and "Love". I don't know what happened in her life to bring her to this point, but "even a smile" would be appreciated.



We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.

(Mother Teresa)

Mother Teresa although she worked among “the poorest of the poor,” she rightly noted that it was not material destitution that brought the most suffering, but the pain of loneliness and being unloved. While she spent much of her life ministering to the poor in very tangible ways — feeding them, clothing them and bathing them — it was the manner in which she did this that ignited her work with Christ’s love. She treated each individual with dignity and love, and her every encounter began with a **smile**.

You can do your part each day to bring more love into the world by giving others a gesture of respect...a **smile**...or say God bless you...or Thank you. Small things have big impacts on the souls of those who are suffering in silence.

All of us are missionaries in the work of salvation. How we act or react to others is important. Each time you help another person; you are helping Christ. Remember what Christ said, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Say prayers for those less fortunate and those who have lost all Hope. Christ will use your prayers for the benefit of their souls. Be the Hope for others. Christ will reward you, for He lived and Died for All of Us.

Pray for others each day that have no one to pray for them and have broken spirits. Amen.



Their Smile is a Sign of Hope in the Future.

Ghana: Fr Andrew Campbell's healing mission of hope

Paul Samasumo – Vatican City.

Inspired by Saint Theresa of Kolkata, (Calcutta) India, Fr Andrew Campbell has dedicated his life to working with the poor and marginalized of Ghana. He has had great impact, especially working with street children, those suffering from disabilities such as Leprosy, and those generally disadvantaged by society.



Legacy and Impact

In 1978, Fr. Campbell opened the Sacred Heart Paris Middle School in Accra and two years later, founded and opened the Sacred Heart Vocational Institute for poor and needy students in Accra Central.

He founded the Lepers Aid Committee (LAC) in 1993, consisting mainly of young people who devote themselves to the care of cured lepers in Ghana. LAC caters for the well-being, food, clothing, medical and domestic bills and even arranges for the burial of some deceased lepers.

HOW LEPERS AID HAS TOUCHED LIVES OF CURED LEPERS THE PAST 30 YEARS. FR. CAMPBELL IS CALLED A LIVING SAINT.



The Lepers Aid Committee (LAC), chaired by Rev. Fr. Andrew Campbell, S.V.D, has for about 30 years championed the plight of cured lepers in Ghana. It has led to the creation of many leprosy units in the country including one at Weija in the Greater Accra Region, Ho in the Volta Region and Nkanchina near Kpandai in the Northern Region.

The committee in 2016 constructed a Leprosy Unit at Kokofu. In the same year, it constructed a 40-bedroom apartment for cured lepers in Nkanchina in the Kpandai District in the Volta Region.

The committee, which is a self-sacrificing, voluntary and humanitarian group of young and altruistic individuals, who solicit funds to support cured and less privileged lepers in Ghana. The committee also caters for the wellbeing, food, clothing, medical, and domestic bills of cured lepers in Ghana.



The organization resorts to several ways of raising funds to supplement their activities and projects. Among such mechanisms include the annual Christmas Choral

Concert, soliciting funds from shoppers at the Accra mall, Donations from individuals and corporate institutions and occasional donations from the public at some selected leprosaria.

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Fr Campbell remembers his early years.

"I was working at the age of 13 as a Laborer. So, I know what it is like to go without education. I don't want anybody to go through what I went through.



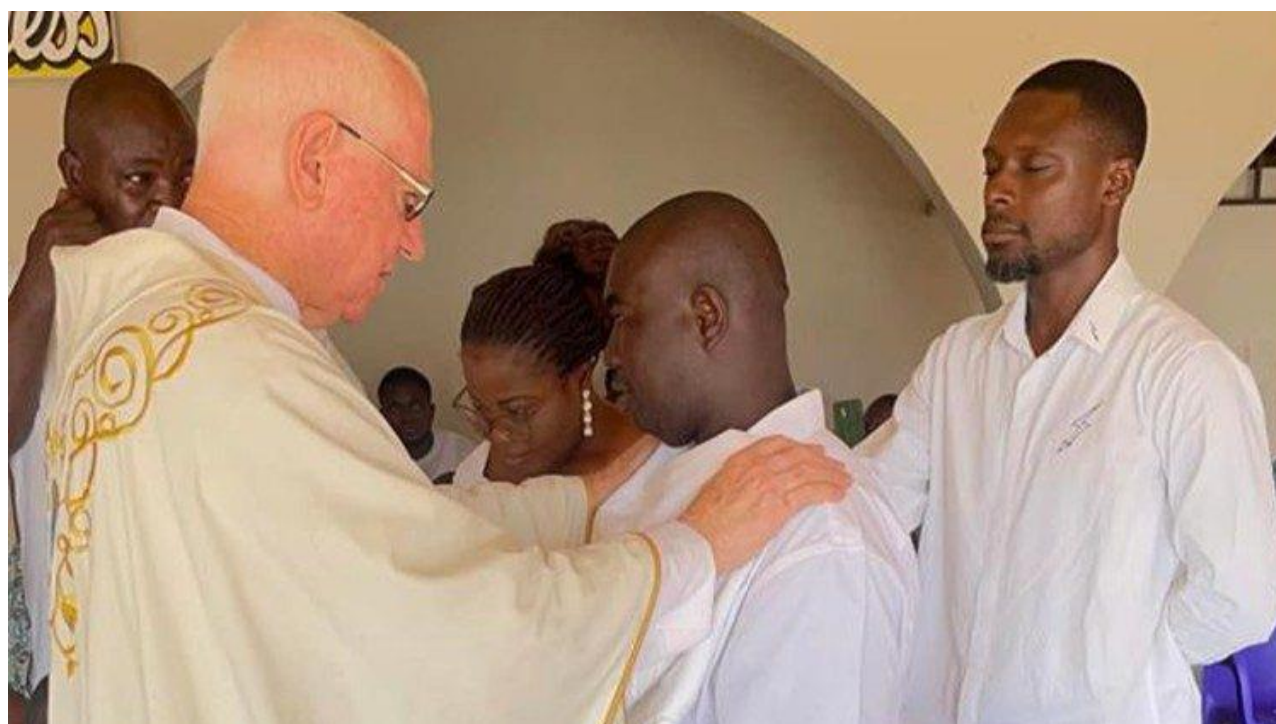
There are a hundred thousand street children in the City of Accra living on the streets. They range from little kids onwards. But with the Lepers, I am actually living with them. I help them, ensuring everything is okay:

their health and food. I care for these needs while living with them," Fr Campbell said.

Meeting Pope Francis

Speaking to **Vatican News** after meeting with Pope Francis, Fr. Campbell expressed his great joy at the encounter.

"I can't put words to it. It was so wonderful meeting him (Pope Francis). This man has always attracted me with his love for the poor," Fr Campbell said. Fr. Campbell was accompanied to the Vatican meeting with the Pope, by the Ghanaian couple, Mr Gabriel Asempe Antwi and his wife, Priscilla. Also, present were Her Excellency, Mrs. Merene Botsio Benyah, Ghana's Ambassador to Italy, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. She was with her dear husband, Mr Henry Benyah.



Fr Campbell tells a young man: You too can make it in life. Don't give up!

From Mangoes to a new calling



It all started when someone suffering from Leprosy gave Fr. Campbell a bag of Mangoes. He failed to eat them, fearing he could contract the disease himself. Then, his conscience got the better of him. He went to see where those suffering from Leprosy were staying. He was appalled by the conditions and, from there,

started an apostolate to Ghana's marginalized.

Fr. Campbell's philanthropic endeavors have included founding the Leper's Aid Committee, aimed at assisting cured lepers through fundraising and initiatives to rehabilitate and economically empower them. His projects have ranged from setting up mills and poultry farms to soap and mat-making ventures, all aimed at providing sustainable livelihoods for the marginalized.



Fr. Andrew Campbell may humbly disavow the title of "saint," but to the countless lives he has impacted, he is nothing short of a beacon of hope and compassion.

We can only thank God for the gift of Fr. Andrew Campbell and his ministry in Ghana. God Bless You Father.

Footnote: Leprosy is a chronic, progressive bacterial infection caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*. It primarily affects the nerves of the extremities, the skin, the lining of the nose, and the upper respiratory tract. Leprosy is also known as Hansen's disease. **Antibiotics can cure leprosy.**

'I finally feel safe' – woman forced into sex trade now free.

Finding Hope Again

A woman who has faced horrendous abuse and mistreatment in her lifetime is finding hope and freedom after seeking help from Hope for Justice. Hope for Justice is a global non-profit organization which aims to end human trafficking and modern slavery. It is active in the United Kingdom, United States, Cambodia, Norway, Australia, Ethiopia and Uganda and has its headquarters in Manchester, England.

Maya, who is in her mid-30s, has been subjected to death threats, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution and other trauma over a prolonged period, which left her fearful for her life and security.

She contacted us at the end of 2019 and has been supported by our team in Norway ever since. She was recently granted permission to stay in Norway.

Maya said: "I finally feel safe. I am ever thankful. I could not have done this on my own."

Russian-born Maya had a difficult upbringing, with her mother involved in a sect and her father abusive towards her. At one point, Maya received threats for refusing to enter into a forced marriage. She felt she had no choice but to leave her family.

Maya travelled to Turkey where she found a job as an estate agent. Her employer provided her with accommodation but paid her no money and soon began sexually harassing her. Maya left immediately but had nowhere to live or work. She eventually found work at a hotel through a friend but again experienced sexual harassment together with threats and no pay.

Following a period of homelessness, Maya was offered a job as a nanny in Norway – an opportunity to start afresh. But when she arrived at the property, there were no children to look after. Instead, the house was occupied by a number of women. Maya said: "When I arrived there, I was in shock because there was no family with children like I had been told. There were lots of women. I had the choice to sleep on the floor or share a bed. I was very scared and begged [the man in charge] to let me go but he became angry and threatened me."

Maya was held in captivity, physically and verbally abused, and forced into prostitution – forced to provide sexual services for countless numbers of men.

She said: "I thought only of dying. [They] promised me they would let me go when they received all the payment, but I knew it would never happen. I

waited for an opportunity to run away. When I got the chance, I ran as far and as fast as I could.”

Maya managed to escape from the property and found someone she thought she could trust, who offered her accommodation. But the stranger soon began verbally and sexually harassing Maya and requiring her to carry out domestic work to ‘pay’ for her stay. Maya contacted Hope For Justice asking for help.

One of our Community Engagement Specialists said: “Maya has spent most of her life being extremely vulnerable – abused, homeless, alone, jobless, lacking a support network – and these vulnerabilities have been wrongly exploited again and again. She tried to trust people but then found herself in another awful situation. From the time Maya first contacted us, we have been doing everything in our power to improve her situation and fight for her rights.”

Maya has been formally identified as a victim of human trafficking, which entitles her access to safe accommodation, food and other basic needs.

We assisted Maya with an application to the UDI – the body responsible for processing applications from foreign nationals wanting to visit or live in Norway – and she recently received a positive response, being granted a Norway Residence Permit.

A member of our team said: “The road to obtain a permit for Maya to stay in Norway has been long and hard, but she has finally received a positive answer from the UDI. This means she will be able to continue a program of restoring her mental and physical health. We are over the moon for Maya and will continue to support her in her recovery.

Footnote: Average age a victim enters trafficking is 11 to 14 years old.



UNICEF estimates that there are around *21 million trafficked people* around the world, including about *5.5 million children*, and the primary victims are women and girls. Human trafficking is the world’s fastest growing crime. No number can calculate the torture, suffering, and trauma these victims undergo. Enormous efforts are needed to fight the diabolical power of this massive industry.

Worldwide, you can get help at this website. Don’t Give Up Hope
<https://hopeforjustice.org/contact/>

Email In USA info.us@hopeforjustice.org

Email In UK info.uk@hopeforjustice.org

Email In Australia info.au@hopeforjustice.org

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Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.



The Rosary is the 'weapon' for these times. – St. Padre Pio

St. Paul Ministry

<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>