



— A BLESSING FOR ONE WHO IS EXHAUSTED —

When the rhythm of
the heart becomes
hectic,
Time takes on the
strain until it
breaks;
Then all the
unattended stress
falls in
On the mind like an
endless, increasing
weight,



You have been forced to enter
empty time.
The desire that drove you has
relinquished.
There is nothing else to do now
but rest
And patiently learn to receive
the self
You have forsaken for the race
of days.

Draw alongside the silence of
stone

The light in the mind becomes dim.
Things you could take in your stride before
Now become laborsome events of will.

Until its calmness can claim you.
Be excessively gentle with yourself.

Weariness invades your spirit.
Gravity begins falling inside you,
Dragging down every bone...

Stay clear of those vexed in spirit.
Learn to linger around someone of ease
Who feels they have all the time in the world.

Gradually, you will return to yourself,
Having learned a new respect for your heart
And the joy that dwells far within slow time.

--John O'Donohue, from "To Bless the Space
Between Us: A Book of Blessings"





—— IF YOU WANT TO ENTER THE KINGDOM, BECOME LIKE A
LITTLE CHILD ——

If you want to enter the Kingdom, become like a little child, was one of Jesus' very own catchy bits of advice to the hard-nosed and big noting people in authority of his time. This week as I reflected on what does this invitation to be like a little child really mean: I found myself wondering about a Child's natural wonder for the new, for experimenting, for openness and play and for learning new things.

All Souls Day then had me wondering about my life, the mystery of how all the many twists and turns have brought me to this day. And so this morning I got down from the shelf in my room the framed photo of my father and mother and just sat staring with an all bright and busy tailed wonder at all they were and all I am. I recalled how only the other day when asked, 'Why am I here in this Nairobi slum?'

I naively replied, "***It is the privileged context to live the gospel.***"



Yesterday I left for the Ruben Centre wondering what mysteries the day would hold, and after entering the place, that inquisitive frame of mind soon had me walking to the

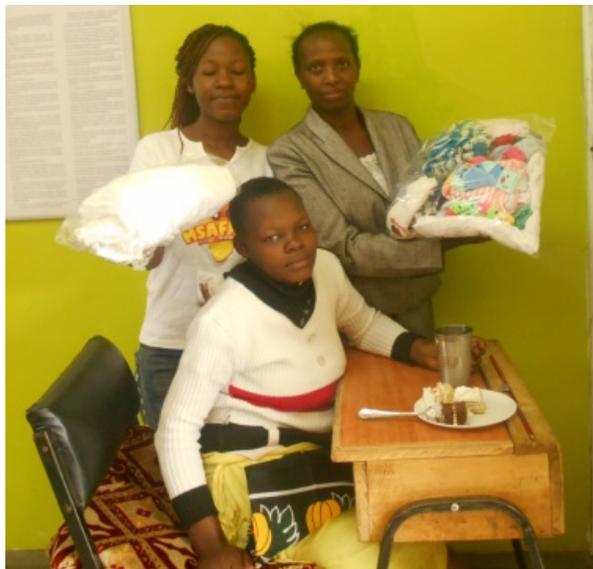
school to see how the Grade Eight students were managing their last National exam of their primary education. On entering the school office I was surprised to see a girl, not in uniform, sitting there alone with an examination paper in front of her. Then as I left the head teacher quickly caught up with me and told me, that Doreen had finished her two exams yesterday and then went home, had a baby and has now staggered here to do her last examination. I listened in amazement as I heard how she is an orphan, living with her brother, and how the school knew of her pregnancy and everyone had nurtured her to this point, including phoning around this morning and getting special permission from the County Ministry of Education.





for her to start the examination ten minutes late and to do it alone in the school office.

I left just wondering about this poor girl, this new mother, her conflicting emotions, but above all her unbelievable determination and courage to keep focused on her objective, which was to finish her primary school education. I got in the car and drove off to the nearest supermarket and brought the best cake I could find and some soda drinks and gathered up a bevy of staff, so that on completion of this examination we would all be there to celebrate her achievements. (note the use of the plural) What joy and life there was there at that moment as a caring staff gathered together around her with good wishes, cake, drinks, photos and heaps of goodies including pampers, food and heaps of baby clothes. Somehow all miraculously found in the previous one hour.



It was with a sense of awe and wonder that I left and headed in the direction of the clinic, where I suddenly was thrown back into reality with a commotion of biblical proportions. One of our Grade seven girls had been electrocuted and was lying there in a state of repose in the treatment room while her mother wailed in inconsolable fashion, despite a couple of our nurses best efforts to help her. Students have started their holidays and she had

begun her normal day in the slum yet now dead, lying dressed in her school tracksuit in our Centre. The Head teacher arrived and on recognizing her straight away, gasped “Scholastica, the only girl with my name, oh my.” The police would be called over and they would verify the body and collect details and then the body would be released to the mortuary. The simplicity and the surreal nature of hastily arranged events teasing us all, but for the grief stricken mother who was dealing with the absolute finality of this moment.

Pushing my way through the crowd I found myself arriving at my office wondering how life could throw such highs and lows at me in such a brief passage of time. As real as these mixed feelings were, the visitor waiting for me soon shook me back to business as usual. My cohort in the battle for land security for our Centre was there with yet another story of how our file for the sought after five acres of land joining Ruben Centre has gone missing again from the land’s office.





but the good news was that surveyors will come tomorrow to survey our current site and if I keep producing money as demanded we will get a title deed. He left and I wondered about how tantalizingly close to a resolution our centre's security might be after a six long years struggle.

Buoyed beyond, I left to visit our project in Kibera and to see their developments. In 2012 I had demolished all the structures there and carted what was moveable to Ruben before the bulldozers were to arrive and prepare the site for a road reserve and yet here I was witnessing this **Mary Rice Special Needs Centre** being put back together. Awe and wonder again exercising all my contemplative muscle as I listened to a summary of the events that had occurred including the original title deed being mysteriously found, the change of plans to put a road through the place and the fact that when they got the land back it was two acres and not just the original one acre. WOW! The little child in me screamed.Meanwhile back at Ruben Centre I finally sat down in the office and employed a new human Resources person, and was writing an email to a donor when I was

called to the clinic yet again.



I was suddenly a little wide-eyed child, without speech as I looked at the emaciated child in front of me. Again I was rendered speechless by the events of the day. I tried to take in this one and half years and five kilos child with its haunting big eyes looking at me, in hope of 'maybe

this mzungu (white man) will be my saviour. A referral to hospital was what was needed but the father was in total denial and refusing to cooperate while all the time the mother sat there in silence holding her new born baby while two other confused and lost older siblings moved around her. Wondering about their pathetic state, my mind returned to my earlier visit that morning to our **Reproductive Health Clinic** and the words on the visiting nurses car door, ' **Babies by choice not by chance.**' The pitiful family of six around me and the fourteen-year-old Grade eight mother were definitely speaking loudly





in favour of their slogan, and I felt reassured by my decision to establish this facility.

Then while the argumentative father carried on yet another mother came in with a very physically distressed new born of six days who seemed to be suffering from Septicaemia probably as result from a home birthing situation and resulting infection from poorly managed umbilical chord. After some time and after the resisting father of the emaciated child was threatened to be locked up by our police, he relented and both babies were taken to the nearby public hospital.

Returning to the office I found the day was over and staff leaving and I wondered where it had sort of magically disappeared. Driving home I was lost in the wonder of the day's events and my claim of living and being in that privileged context, and I clearly knew in a deeper way that a mature living of the gospel requires above all a childlike naivety with its freedom to be attuned to the full depths of mystery permeating in my very own existence where life and death are as close as out very own brothers and sisters.

Every brother's house has an image of Moses on holy ground with the words

' ***Drawn by mystery, destined for life***' and on this day I knew in a raw childlike way the wonder of my very own holy ground.

**Br FRANK O'SHEA
DIRECTOR**

———— **EDMUND RICE ELDORET CAMPS** ————



Despite having a rainy Saturday afternoon, our Camp activities were no much affected. We had a lovely day full of different game activities and puzzle solving sessions. The young children were full of energy to participate actively to the end of our activities. I was touched by many puzzles which were posed by the children most of them being so difficult for us to solve. It was a learning experience towards a reflective thinking to those of us who were present. I am very grateful to God for these joyful experiences we share with the

Langas Children through the support of Edmund Rice Foundation.

Br ELLY SAKWA





BIRTHDAYS

November

2 PAUL MUTUKU (Eldoret)
10 MARTIN KHAEMBA (Otiende)
15 GERARD ELLUL (Shams)

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 9	DLT meeting
NOVEMBER 21-24	PLT meeting (Freetown)
NOVEMBER 26	First Profession (Tamale)
NOVEMBER 30	DLT meeting
DECEMBER 3-7	DLT away for end-of-year review and planning
DECEMBER 12	Jamhuri Day (public holiday Kenya)
DECEMBER 16-18	District Assembly

Many blessings

George

