

Dear Friends of the Mission,

A short letter to give you news of what I have been doing since I left the mission to go for a checkup in the UK.

I left the mission on 15th of May in the capable hands of the prefect of Bale Robe, Fr Angelo, Bethlehem, who takes care of the women and children, and Abdela and Tesema, who are responsible for the agriculture and water.

On arrival in the UK, I had a few medical checkups, (one of which was in another city), renewed some vaccinations and did shopping for the mission. I then proceeded to my mother's house in Essex. My mother is now in her 88th year and was recovering from a lengthy winter illness which left her quite fragile. So, I was very glad to have some time to be with her.

From there I went to Poland where I spoke during Holy Mass, inviting people to consider the Mission of 'First Evangelization'. I spoke at seven Holy Masses in all, and I am happy to say that we have four possible volunteers to come to us in Gode (two for a year of more!) Please keep these young people in your prayers that they may discern the call to work with people who are for the most part forgotten and left alone.

Apart from the Masses and groups that I met and spoke to, I visited some NGOs who help missionaries abroad and contacted some who are particularly interested in helping African women create businesses and become independent and self-sustaining.

The people I met were very interested in helping the mission, I was absolutely impressed by their generosity and kindness. All in all, it was a very productive week, and I hope that this cooperation will continue.



I am very interested and focused on developing the shawl weaving workshop into a small commercial enterprise, having its own cooperative. This would mean that gradually women could 'graduate' from being helped/assisted by the mission to being part of a standalone self-sustaining business and separate from the first help given by the mission. This is the aim, we are 'on the way' but very slowly I see that there are some women who approach the level of

skill where they could be independent and sell the work of their hands.

I met people in Poland and in the UK who would be willing to receive our products, if we can work out a way to export them from Gode. I ask your prayers for this, as it will be a big step for The Mission of Hope; a wonderful experience of our mission being able to give hope to the hopeless and seeing those we have served walk on, autonomous, in new found freedom to be the women and mothers that they can be, without constant fear and anxiety as to their economic stability.

Of course, there is more to life than having economic stability, but stepping beyond the level of survival, to having the possibility to grow in their humanity, will radiate on the lives of their children, and further into their communities.

Speaking of the communities, we have started a small 'Football Club' for the boys of the town who are poor, and whom I often find roaming around, prey to many of the bad influences which inhabit the streets of Gode.

We have begun by inviting them each Sunday afternoon to train and play football under the watchful eyes of Tesema and Abdela. They enjoy an ice-cream, and or cake before they return to their homes.

We are going to try to begin a tournament with three teams (under 13s or 15s) this year. And I bring to the mission a lovely cup and medals to be won in the first season. We have had kit printed through the kind donations of our benefactors and will have three teams: Gode City, Gode Football Club and Gode Town. The three teams have mascots: one is the camel, another a crocodile and the third is the Wabi Shebelle (our local river). So, prayers are also needed for this endeavour too.



We shall welcome a group of Ethiopian volunteers this August, we are thankful that there will be at least five men among them to take on the Football Camp. There is just so much to be done, every which way you turn there are needs.



Good news from Deko and Raayo: the lady and baby who were terribly burnt at the end of January. With the kind and generous help of Dr Kjell and his team in the Nordic Medical Centre, both mother and child have made an incredible recovery. We will try to follow them as baby Raayo will need a prosthesis for his amputated lower right leg which will require continuous renewal, and Dekko will need a form of employment to raise her children.

I return to Gode on Saturday, on the first of July, after looking for some new teachers in Addis for the weaving so that we can receive more women, and meeting the company who helped us with the recent export of shawls to Austria.

Please keep us in your prayers in this difficult time,

God bless you and thank you for your constant support,

In Jesus,

Sr Mary Joachim