FRAGMENTS FROM THE FRONTIER

Nr 16



Betty teaches about the filter system

April 2025

Dear Friends of the Mission,

It seems an age since I have written, but time flies in the Mission! A Holy Year with so many blessings for each of us, and I am sure specially for those we are privileged to serve.

These “Fragments” are a patchwork of events as they come to mind. I would like to start with a heartfelt “Thank you” to all our “Friends of the Mission” who are at the heart of all we do. Your prayers and financial contributions allow us to reach those we would not be able to without you.

This Christmas, we decided to give each family a filter system for water. “LifeStraw,” the company that makes filtration systems now has a salesman in Addis and so it is easy to get hold of the filters, which function without electricity or chemicals, and are very simple to use as well as being reasonable in price. Each filtration system has a lifetime of 20,000 litres of filtered water, and so it will have a lasting effect on the family, and in a special way, the children.

We have a constant battle with the children regarding worms and bacteria; diarrhoea is an ongoing struggle and when the children are very small it can be life threatening. Since each system costs about $80 US, we realised that we had to be careful with regard to training families to use the system properly, and to educate them in storage and maintenance. It was decided that although the aim was to give the filter to the family freely, we thought that the temptation to sell for ready cash, might be a problem for a few of the families. So we construed a way to ‘lend’ the filters to the family who would pay half the price of the filter as a deposit for the first year, giving us the opportunity to monitor its use and maintenance. If there were no issues, we would hand the filter over completely and return the deposit.



Small groups to learn about the filter



In this way we felt that we would help them to appreciate the value of the filter and use it properly. Before we even ‘lent’ the filter to them we had “training” sessions, where one of the team showed either the mother or the father, (sometimes both) how to set up, store water, clean and maintain the filter. Some families needed a few sessions to really understand the process and then they had an exam, where one of the team asked them pertinent

questions, and on the basis of their answers they would be given a filter or asked to have another session of training

I have learnt over the years that with the best will in the world people who have never owned anything of their own have little appreciation for property. All the childhood years of being told to “pick up” “put things back in their place”, etc lessons that we normally inculcate in our childrens earliest years are foreign to the poorest who have no real possessions. These lessons need to be taught with patience and respect.

Thankfully the team are generous with their time and ready to repeat lessons over and over again, with the children and with their parents.



Literacy Classes: Our cook, Nuria being instructed by Ggareth the teacher

The literacy classes for the ladies continue steadily with a lot being achieved through the peaceful and calm way Gareth our “resident” Somali teacher approaches the ladies. Some are better than others, some race ahead clocking up new words every day, others need more time. How ever long it takes, it is wonderful to see the joy of achievement in these women’s eyes…the laughter when they make funny mistakes….the pride with which each takes up her half an hour a day of class with her companion…it is a joy to witness and I hope that you share with us the joy of having helped these women to begin a journey to a certain emancipation.

We are hoping to have a general overhaul of our electrical system, (which keeps letting us down all the time and becomes more expensive by the month) to establish whether we could use solar power as we have so much sunlight. In the four years I have been back we have ‘cleaned’ up the compound of all the scrap wood that was lying around we have used it to cook for the 10+ plus in our compound Monday to Friday. We now seek ways in which we could use solar power to cook the big dishes of food we need for ourselves and the people we serve.

As I write temperatures are at 37C in the shade and so we all feel that we are burning up!!!!

Thank you for your prayers and for the financial contributions you make to the Mission of Hope, be sure of our prayer for you and for your families.

God Bless You,

Sr Mary Joachim