



# Via CARITAS

*Through God's Love*

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## A Widow with 6 Children Will Have a Home!



*Veronica and her six children  
(Yoronimu, Patrick, James, Veronica,  
Noeline, Philomena, and Pauline)*

We are overjoyed to share the incredible news—thanks to your generosity, Veronica and her six children will soon have a safe, permanent home!

Through our recent campaign, we set out to raise \$29,529 for Veronica and her family's house building project, and the response was overwhelming.

With your support, we exceeded our goal, raising an incredible

\$34,689! This means not only can we build a secure home for Veronica's family, but we can also now add an outdoor kitchen, while having additional funds for any unexpected costs.

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### A Testament to Faith in Action

As we enter the Easter season—a time of renewal, hope, and resurrection—your generosity has been a beautiful reflection of Christ's love. This project brought together people from all walks of life, united by our Catholic faith and the call to serve those in need.

Just as Christ teaches us to care for the least among us, your compassion has provided Veronica's family with more than a house—you have given them stability, dignity, and a future filled with hope.

## Why This Matters

Veronica, a 40-year-old widow in Uganda, has faced unimaginable challenges since losing her husband in a tragic motorcycle accident. Left without a home, she and her six children have lived in temporary, overcrowded shelters, constantly facing the fear of displacement.

Through CARITAS, we've seen this family's resilience. With your support, all six of Veronica's children have found sponsors, allowing them to receive an education and a brighter future. Now, because of this campaign, Veronica and her children will also have the security of a permanent home.

## You Made This Possible

To each and every one of you who donated, shared, and prayed for this project—thank you. Your kindness and generosity are living proof of the power of faith in action.

As we celebrate Easter, let us rejoice in the new beginning you have made possible for Veronica and her children. Construction has begun and we look forward to sharing the progress with you! Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see the progress firsthand.

From all of us at CARITAS and from Veronica and her children—thank you.

You have truly changed their story forever.



*The walls of their new home is currently being built*

[Read More!](#)



## CARITAS Board Member Visits the DR



*The missionaries, children, and Carmelite sisters at the orphanage*

We are excited to share that Pam Mateo, one of our CARITAS For Children board members, recently visited the Dominican Republic, where she had the opportunity to witness firsthand the incredible work being done by the Carmelite Sisters at the Orphanage.

Pam and a group of approximately 14 missionaries from her parish in the United States spent time at Parroquia Sagrada Familia in Azua from October 22-28.



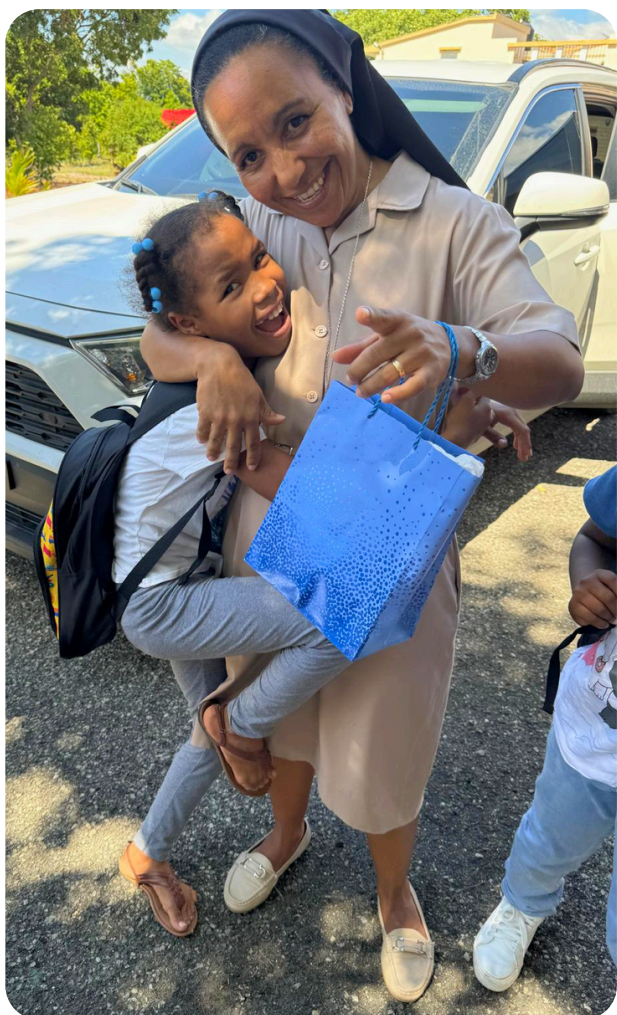
*The girls' dormitories*



*Pam with two of the girls, Yenifer and Jenny*



During their stay, they organized a medical clinic from October 23-25 and explored ways to support the children and the sisters. They were deeply moved by the care, love, and dedication the sisters provide to the girls in their care.



*Sr. Carmen Luisa and one of the girls*



*Pam at the orphanage with Sr. Carmen Luisa and the girls*

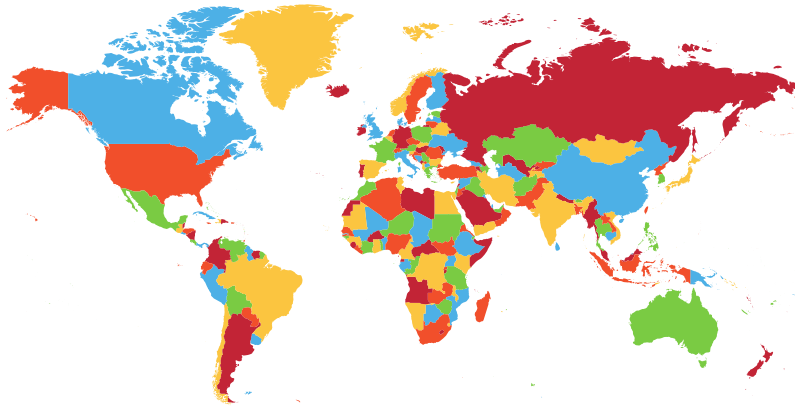


*The chapel at the orphanage*

Her visit was a beautiful reminder of the impact that faith and generosity can have on these young lives. We are grateful for her dedication and look forward to deepening our partnership with the sisters to continue serving the children with love and care.



## Lent in Places We Serve



Here in the United States we have many fun Easter traditions. Some are related to our Catholic faith, while others are not! We may be so accustomed to these traditions that we assume that they are universally practiced. We decided to ask our liaisons in some of the countries we serve about their Easter traditions so that we can compare them to our own. Here is what they said:

### Haiti

Easter in Haïti is much more than a religious celebration. It is built on tradition, history, and culture. In Haïti, you will see great excitement in the churches as Easter approaches; some even organizing marches through their parishes so for the faithful. It is a time of the year that never goes without celebration.



You will also see that another form of celebration is taking place, and it is not a Catholic celebration. Throughout Lent, people come together to celebrate musical traditions. This is done through parades and marches, and it is called RARA. RARA is a separate thing that goes on during Lent that Catholics usually don't participate in because it is the merging of music with Vodou. Catholics find their own ways to celebrate through music and dance, and while RARA is not part of the Catholic Lent experience in Haiti, it is a big part of the culture there.

## Nigeria

On Easter Sunday here in Nigeria, specifically in Igbo Land, we prepare different native meals in celebration of Easter. We make Alibo with Ogbono soup. This is our native food, and Alibo is made of cassava. We have Achicha, and we also enjoy our local wine called Palm Wine, which is extracted from a Palm tree. We will also eat rice and stew, as one wishes. During Lent we organize what is called Cathedraticum. This is a day marked out for every parish in our Diocese to come out and support our Bishop's work. You will see different societies in the Catholic Church with their different attire parading to music to support our Bishop's work in the diocese.



*Thousands gather for The Way of the Cross*

## Uganda

In Uganda, preparations for Easter are started weeks in advance with the start of lent! Churches are cleaned, and festivities are planned. Families travel to be together to celebrate with special meals and traditions.

There are also many religious traditions such as picking or purchasing palm branches to bring to mass on Palm Sunday and participating in the “Way of the Cross” walk on Good Friday. This two mile walk is attended by thousands of people who want to reenact Jesus’ experience leading up to his crucifixion. The group walks through the streets carrying a large cross to symbolize Christ’s journey to Golgotha.



## Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic, Holy Week is known as Semana Santa. A person there can experience religious processions, church services, and enjoy traditional foods like fish and sweet bean pudding, while observing the period of reflection and abstaining from meat.



## Belize

Here in Belize, our school sees Lent as a time of deep spiritual reflection for students, parents, and parishioners of diverse backgrounds. The season is marked by religious ceremonies, processions, and cultural traditions. Here's some unique things we do to observe Easter in the Belizean Catholic tradition:

- **Palm Sunday** – Churches distribute palms, believed to protect homes from lightning when placed above doors.
- **Holy Thursday** – A reenactment of the Last Supper includes the Washing of the Feet ceremony, symbolizing humility and service.
- **Good Friday** – The most solemn day, observed with fasting, prayer, and the Way of the Cross processions through towns and villages. The town of Benque Viejo del Carmen is known for its elaborate processions. Alcohol sales are restricted until 6 PM. In Garifuna culture, traditional foods such as cassava bread, cassava juice, and stewed pumpkin are shared. Fish and hot cross buns are staple meals. Children are warned not to swim, or they might turn into mermaids.
- **Holy Saturday** – Many collect holy water, believed to have healing properties.
- **Easter Sunday** – A joyous day celebrating Christ's resurrection with early morning Mass, family gatherings, and beach outings.

The high demand for fish on Fridays during Lent often leads to price spikes.

## Poland

In a unique Polish tradition, "Gorzkie Żale" are a set of hymns focusing on the Passion of Christ, sung every Sunday during Lent, serving as a constant reminder of Christ's suffering. "Fat Thursday" is also known as Tłusty Czwartek. This is the Thursday before Lent, and it is a day of feasting and indulgence, particularly with "pączki" (Polish doughnuts) filled with various sweet fillings. During Lent, Poles often engage in more prayer and religious activities, attending Mass more frequently and participating in Lenten devotions.



## We are One Church

All around the world, Catholics are celebrating Easter in their own unique ways. How wonderful it is to be part of such a diverse and vibrant church, united by our faith and devotion.





# End of Year Appeal Results



## \$6464

The amount from the general fund that was given to the Hope for Most in Need!

## We gained 12 new sponsorships for Children in Most Need



## We gained one full seminarian sponsorship.

## THANK YOU

Thank you to Elizabeth Scherz, Adolfo Agramonte & Cindy Douglas for your generous donations, and THANK YOU to all of our sponsors and donors!

Stay up to date with CARITAS by subscribing to our newsletter here:



## A Call for Prayer: Tragedy in Haiti

We are heartbroken to share the devastating news of recent violence in Haiti, and we ask for your prayers during this dark and difficult time.

On Monday, March 31st, gang violence erupted in the town of Mirebalais, northeast of Port-au-Prince. Much of the media has reported on the 500 prisoners released from a nearby prison, but little has been said about the toll this has taken on the innocent.



*One of the Little Sisters of St. Thérèse with a student*

Our hearts are especially with the Little Sisters of St. Thérèse, who have long served the Haitian people with love, courage, and unwavering faith.



*Our students in Mirebalais*

The Little Sisters of St. Thérèse are the dedicated ministry service providers for CARITAS For Children's programs in Haiti, caring for and educating the children we serve. Their mission in Mirebalais included a school and convent that were vital to the local community. As gang members stormed the town, many residents fled in fear. The gang pillaged and burned much of Mirebalais, including the school and convent.

In the chaos, two beloved Sisters—Sr. Evonette ("Vava") and Sr. Jeanne—were tragically killed. Sr. Vava was no stranger to suffering. She had been the principal at the school in Riviere Froide that collapsed during the 2010 earthquake, a tragedy in which 100 students and staff lost their lives.



Yet she continued her mission, bringing comfort and hope wherever she could. We believe she is now reunited with those she once mourned. Sr. Jeanne, known for her joyful spirit and dedication as a teacher, will also be deeply missed.



*Some of The Little Sisters of St. Thérèse with students*

The hospital in Mirebalais, run by Partners in Health, still stands—but all medical staff have since fled the area, leaving many without care.

The Little Sisters are now grappling not only with profound grief, but also with the difficult and sacred task of recovering the remains of their Sisters—an act of deep cultural and spiritual significance in Haiti.



*One of the Little Sisters of St. Thérèse with a student*

**Please remember Sr. Vava, Sr. Jeanne, and all of the Little Sisters in your prayers. Their courage, sacrifice, and compassion have touched countless lives, and they need our support more than ever. May God bring peace to Haiti, and may He welcome these faithful servants into His eternal embrace.**

## Spotlight on Children in Need

### MARIA FORTUNATE NANTEZA

Maria Fortunate is urgently in need of a new sponsor after her long-time sponsor stepped down due to financial challenges. She is at a critical point in her education, and without support, her dreams could be cut short.

Maria lives with her mother, a local teacher who earns just \$45 a month—barely enough to cover rent, food, medical needs, and other essentials. Her father abandoned the family when she was just a year old, and despite efforts to seek help from extended family, her mother has shouldered the burden alone. They have since moved into a single room to survive.

Thanks to CARITAS, Maria was once able to begin her education, but losing her sponsor has put her future at risk. Maria is a bright, friendly, and determined girl who dreams of becoming a pilot. With your support, she can stay in school and continue pursuing her goals, helping lift her family out of poverty and into a brighter future.



**Maria Fortunate, 12**

To help Maria attend boarding school, she will need:

- \$120 per month from one sponsor

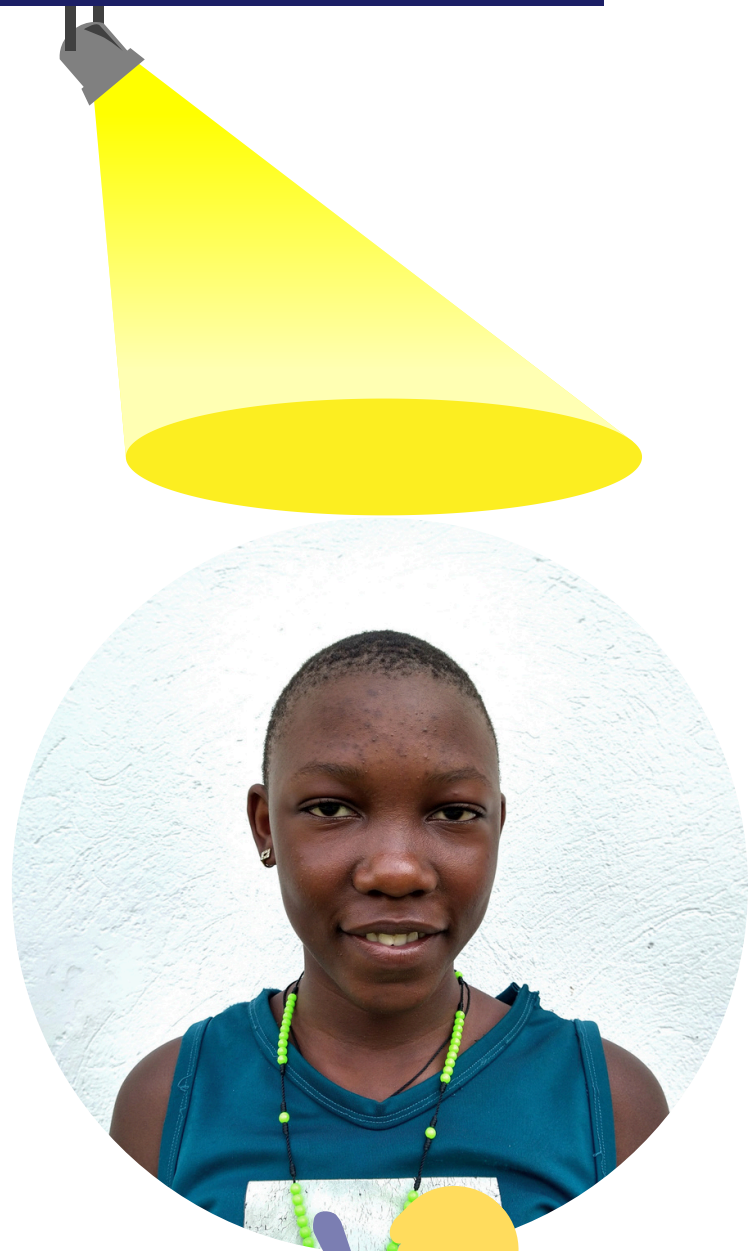


## KEVIN NAKITENDE

Kevin's parents were peasant farmers, but her father abandoned their family and remarried. Her mother was forced to find unskilled work to support them, since she is untrained in any higher-paying job. She is able to make a living taking jobs like washing other peoples' clothes.

Since she is only making enough to provide for their most basic needs, Kevin's mother cannot afford to send her children to school. To make sure she is safe and well cared for, she must attend boarding school.

Kevin hopes one day to become a nurse. Her favorite subject is English, and she is a very talented dancer, especially Uganda's local traditional dances.



Kevin Nakitende, 15

To help Kevin attend boarding school, she will need:

- \$120 per month from one sponsor