



Advent and Christmas is the time we celebrate the coming and birth of Jesus, our Saviour. It is a time when God's love is born in our world. It is a season of hope, joy and peace.

If we are open then advent and Christmas are times when the hope, joy and peace of Christ can also be born in us. By welcoming the hope that is Jesus, Emanuel, Christ with us we can rekindle the light of faith and the blessing of peace in our hearts and in our homes. This gift of hope can keep on giving throughout the year and helps us to recognize the gifts that surround us by inspiring us to welcome friends and strangers and just simply to rejoice in the goodness in the hearts of our fellow men and women. We need only watch the news to see how desperately our world needs these gifts.

During the past year, in our own small ways, the Daughters of Charity and co-workers, volunteers and well-wishers have tried to share these "gifts" of the Holy season with those we serve. Sometimes the gift is there but we fail to recognize it. This year the Daughters of Charity set out to recognize and reward the gifts of long term service and commitment to mission by our employees. Those staff members who have been employed by the Daughters of Charity in Thigio for more than fifteen years were recognized in a special end of the year celebration. Sister Eileen O'Callaghan's gift of a lifetime of caring for the sick and for persons with disabilities was recognized by the Eddah's Hope Cancer Foundation. Sister Eileen was presented with a certificate at their Charity Gala.

Nine volunteers travelled from afar. Four volunteers; Kunga, Lori, Rochelle, and Julie came from Hospice at Home-Caring Circle in the US. They were a part of a partnership and healthcare providers exchange program. They gave and they received. They shared their experience of bringing comfort and care to persons with terminal illness and their families in the US and they listened as our caregivers shared their experiences. Eileen Thomas, and Mona, Majella, Anne and Jana shared themselves, their time and their talents. They gave hands on service in the various projects especially in relation to the hospice, the elderly and to those adults and children with disability. They also raised funds to help sustain those ministries.

Developmental Disabilities Institute in the US is searching for new ways to bring the light of learning to children in Thigio with disabilities using technology. In 2019 volunteers from DDI will travel to Kenya to work with our teachers and parents and to initiate this new method of learning. This new initiative will be a part of the expansion of the disabilities services in Thigio.

During the development of a strategic plan the Daughters of Charity, with the help of co-workers and a facilitator, recognized the need to expand and develop the disabilities services in Thigio. In order to expand their disabilities services, the Daughters of Charity will "make room" by phasing out pre-primary education for children with normal learning ability. Pre-primary education is now offered with lower fees in the public schools. Sister Josephine has also joined the disabilities services staff. Sister Josephine will work with Sister Pat and other co-workers to ensure that the expansion and development of the service goes smoothly.



Mary and Joseph brought Jesus into the world in a stable a truly humble beginning for a King and a reminder to us that many people around the world are homeless or live in dangerously inadequate housing. During the past year with the help of volunteers from near and far the Daughters of Charity helped to provide improved housing for three elderly couples. The happiness of these three couples is a great source of joy as we enter once more the holy season of "gifts" .



Baked goods and special food add an extra something to the Holiday Season around the world. This is also true in Thigio. Our little bakery, which provides training for adults with disabilities and vulnerable women, has new ovens. They are more efficient than the old ones and make it possible to produce bread and cakes which are then sold in the village bringing delight to those who buy them. The new stoves in our kitchens also help us to feed the people we serve though out the year.

So as the year comes to an end we want to give thanks for the many gifts God has given to us during the past year. We also want to wish all of our friends, those who support us and give so generously to our mission, the openness of heart to recognize and receive the many gifts that Jesus will bring into their lives during this Holy Season and throughout the year. May you have a Happy Christmas and a Joyous New Year!

