

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

In September 2018 we launched a new parish outreach initiative INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH.

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH is now an ongoing work of St Mary's Parish, entirely voluntary, but open to anyone in the parish who wants to contribute. There are regular opportunities to donate, and we'll remind you of the options for donating. The funds we raise under INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH currently go to Zimbabwe, to families in a small town called Macheke, nearby to our Benedictine community there. This is specifically to help them pay for their children's school fees at Macheke Primary School. We're enabling children to go to school who otherwise wouldn't be able to go to school.

We have personal contact with Macheke Primary School. Our monastery in Zimbabwe is a 45 minute bike ride from the school, a bike ride your parish priest has done along the dust roads to Macheke. Our monastery there has been supporting many of the children with their school fees for several years and we're in regular contact with Fr Robert and Fr Barnabas over this. All the admin for relaying these funds is taken care of by Fr Robert and Fr Barnabas and the monks of our monastery in Zimbabwe completely free. So there are no overheads. 100% of what you give goes on these children's school fees.

Fr William has visited our monastery in Zimbabwe three times: 2010, 2012 and 2016. In 2016 he came back from Macheke with photographs of the school and photographs of some of the staff and students that he met on his last visit. Since then we set up an ongoing penpal correspondence between our own Year 6 at St Mary's and children their age in Macheke Primary school. It began with our children writing to them. Then we got back our first batch of reply letters from the Macheke children. Fr William took them into school. They were delighted to receive them and gave us permission to display them in the atrium.

At the last count St Mary's International Outreach has relayed over six thousand pounds to help families in Macheke pay their children's school fees. That's how much you've donated so far since we launched International Outreach in 2018. At a rate of \$US 30.00 per term this will enable more Macheke children to go to school and get an education.

The funds are managed by Fr Robert and our monastery of Christ the Word near Macheke. In his correspondence with Fr Robert he asked him how the funds are allocated to families. This is his answer: Dear William, the procedure is simple. We ask the Headmaster, with whom we have established a very good working relationship, to identify the pupils most in need of assistance. This is true for all our pupils whom we support. He knows them and the parents who are struggling so we trust his judgement. We check each child's report card each term and one of the wives of a teacher here at Monte Cassino teaches in the Primary school so she too is very good at making sure no favouritism occurs.

Our INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH Administrator is Jules Finn. She was elected to the Parish Council by you as the Parish as your MISSION representative on the council.

If anybody else would like to become part of our parish International Outreach and contribute to these children's school fees please click on the DONATE button on the parish website homepage, and it will tell you how you can set up a standing order or make a one-off donation, in both cases using the reference IO (for International Outreach) for your online Standing Order or one off donation.