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de Soeur Emmanuelle

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## LETTER TO THE FRIENDS OF SISTER EMMANUELLE

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**Dear Friends,**

Having no news of Haiti and nothing in particular to tell you on this matter, I shall just give you in this letter some cheering news of our programs in Sudan.

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### NEWS FROM SUDAN

When Kamal went back to Khartoum at the end of June, he was somewhat anxious about the problems he would have to face after two months abroad. The very success of our requests for financing to our generous donors entails extra work indeed, as you can judge for yourself...

#### Vocational training

- The new center built in **Gebel Awlia** has been a real blessing. We added there new buildings so that the number of orphans could be increased from 120 to 220, thanks to a special donation from Caritas Austria (some girls will also be accommodated). Thanks to the help of the Swiss Foundation Pro-Victimis, we started to train about 420 displaced adults from the camps (men and women) with various trades; we also give them basic education, notions of hygiene, and information on AIDS prevention. These programs in this center will soon be offered, according to their ages, to the 120 orphans whose financing is completely taken charges by SVDP U.K., and to the additional 100 children whom we can accommodate thanks to Caritas Austria.
- With the help of the French government and its embassy in Khartoum, we are now training more than 420 displaced people in the camps of **Wad El Bashir** and **Gabarona** in Omdurman with the same trades as in Gebel Awlia. These courses last approximately 6 months, and the certificate they obtain, if they succeed in their courses, enables our trainees to find jobs as employees or independent workers. Nearly 90% of the people who could be reached after they received their certificate (75% of the total) were managing to earn a living. A new generator could be bought thanks to your generosity. This piece of equipment, which was lacking in this new center, is essential for the proper functioning of the courses.

## Homes and farms

- Unfortunately only two farms are still remaining: we had to leave quickly the two others for various reasons. In one case, the authorities pressured the Church, who owned the land, to yield it to them with a town-planning justification. In the other case, the owner wanted to sell his land which had risen a good deal in value. We are actively looking for a piece of land to buy for a new farm. It is not going to be easy and is likely to take time, but it is essential. Of the total amount of about USD 60' 000 that the acquisition and the construction of this new farm would cost, we promised to provide USD 50' 000 as a specific donation. The City of Geneva has very generously agreed to finance part of this project with a CHF 25'000 donation (that is around USD 20' 000). The orphans of the two "lost" farms had to be transferred to the two remaining ones. Of course this has pretty much disturbed the usual routine, but things are progressively coming back to normal again.
- Nearly 100 orphans will leave us at the end of 2004 after having finished their compulsory military service. They will receive their farewell gift, a sum that will help them launch out into their new life. The new school year began at the end of June 2004 and all our orphan boys and girls were duly registered and started to attend their courses.

## Food project for small children

- This program has expanded very quickly as several of our donors have immediately decided to support it. Caritas Austria, for instance, has agreed to feed 1000 additional children this year. Thanks to Caritas, the number of distribution centres will rise from 13 to 16, and the number of children we feed from 4 750 (currently) to nearly 6 000 (next year).
- Let me remind you that the annual cost for these meals is only CHF 45 per infant, including transport and infrastructure expenses.

## Medical program

- Thanks to the support of the State of Geneva, we decided to buy more drugs in Sudan so that we can treat our patients better.
- We opened 2 new "Friday dispensaries" in the camps of Omdurman.

## The office of SVDP

- Kamal had to return back to the owner the keys of SVDP's previous office because there again its owner had decided to sell, at a price considered too high by Kamal. However, the removal to a place nearby could be done without too much difficulty. Restoration of this decayed building was carried out by our orphans!

## Miscellaneous

- Kamal intends to initiate a new computer training program in the buildings of the Conference of Saint Vincent de Paul. The purpose of this program is that men and women become familiar with computers, so that they can improve their quality of life. We asked the International Council of SVDP, the offices of which are in Paris, to finance the purchase of 15 computers.
- Moreover, to perfect the formation of 15 of our employees from the professional centres, we paid their registration fees in a recognised government centre. We thus hope to improve their workmanship.

## Darfour

- Missio Austria has been touched by the tragic events currently occurring in Darfour and wishes to bring assistance to these conflict-affected populations. It has asked Kamal to get more information about their needs. Kamal has just told me by e-mail that he was going with two other members of SVDP to El-Obeid in Kordofan, and then to Nyala in Darfour, to make his own estimation of the needs. May the Lord protect them.

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

- Sister Emmanuelle has been invited by the administrative counsellor of the City of Geneva, Mr. Manuel Tornare, to the coming ceremonies of promotion to citizenship which will take place on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2004. She was very happy to thus show her gratitude to the City of Geneva which has so generously supported our efforts during all these years. To make the most of the coming of our Sister, we will try to organize some events in Neuchâtel and in German-speaking Switzerland.
- The festivities celebrating the 25th anniversary of our Association took place on the 18th and 19th of May, in the presence of SISTER EMMANUELLE and were very successful. A large public came to applaud the CANTARES choir and the actor Robert Bouvier interpreting the part of FRANÇOIS of ASSISI at the village hall of Thônex. The mass of Ascension-day conducted with much emotion by our bishop Mgr GENOUD gathered together a huge silent and devoutly attentive congregation in the basilica of Notre Dame. **To close these festivities, Sister Emmanuelle addressed about a thousand youngsters in the “salle du Faubourg”. They listened carefully to her talk about her latest book entitled: “Vivre, à quoi ça sert ?”** Many articles and interviews were published in the press to announce and report these events. Our committee wishes to renew once more its thanks to our principal sponsor the Credit Agricole, and all our members without whom the celebrations would not have been so successful.

**The following videotapes (VHS) are on sale.** To order them, simply send your payment with your name and address to our Association (CCP 12-5593-0). The prices below are inclusive of postage (CHF 7.-) :

*Sister Emmanuelle at the Foyer du Vallon for the elderly blind* – 16mn – CHF 20.-

*Sister Emmanuelle meets the young people of Geneva* – “Vivre à quoi ça sert ?” – 80 mn – CHF 25.-

Before concluding this letter, I would like to add that Kamal's friends in France, Austria, England and Switzerland, are all striving to get new financing to ensure the future of our programs and of several new projects.

Thank you so much to all of you, our donors, and so long!

**MICHEL BITTAR**  
President

