

STILL TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY

UPDATES FROM ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, ADAMA/NAZARETH, ETHIOPIA



STATUS

St. Joseph Catholic School is located in the Oromia region, which allowed schools to reopen in December 2020, three months later than usual. The government provided guidelines on opening procedures, class size requirements, and subjects to be administered, so the school is only teaching certain subjects. The guidelines allow for a class size of 25-30 students, which is much smaller than the school's typical size of 55-60 or more. So, the grade levels, kindergarten through high school, are alternating days of attendance, Monday through Saturday. This has presented challenges in that the school isn't able to teach all of the subjects in the class time allotted, and the teachers are overwhelmed. Additionally, parents are financially struggling, which has impacted the school since approximately 45% of parents did not pay the school fee, and the school has received an increase in scholarship requests.



PRECAUTIONS



Brother Amanuel, back row at left, and campus ministry students on Ethiopian Christmas after volunteering at a disadvantaged school in Nazareth.

Temperature checks and masks are required on campus. Washing stations with soap and water are accessible in various places on campus, and sanitizers are available in the office area. The school modified seating arrangements in the classrooms in order to keep the students apart. Posters are placed throughout campus to display recommended health precautions to keep from contracting and spreading COVID-19. St. Joseph's has not had a case of COVID-19 despite the reluctance of some local community members to wear masks and follow precautions.



IMPACT

St. Joseph's has experienced negative and positive impacts of COVID-19. The negative impact includes instructional time lost due to the closure and new schedule, financial struggles, irregularity of school programs, and the need to hire additional teachers to cover the two-shift system. The positive impact is that the school is seeing a benefit of the smaller class size and the ability to provide quality education. This has led the school to think about the future and consider increasing the number of classrooms to allow for smaller class sizes.



RECENT DONATIONS

Twinning donations have been used to improve the library, transition a small storage room into a classroom, update tiled floors and provide necessary items to protect students and staff from COVID-19.

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TWINNING
LASALLIANS OF NORTH AMERICA & AFRICA
Walking Together in Solidarity



MEET BROTHER AMANUEL SEIFU, FSC

Brother Amanuel Seifu, FSC, became principal of St. Joseph Catholic School in Adama/ Nazareth in December 2020. He previously served for four years at St. Joseph School in Addis Ababa, another twinned ministry in Ethiopia, as a teacher, activity coordinator and vice principal. He joined the juniorate program of the Brothers in Nazareth at the age of 16, a journey he continued for several years before leaving to attend a public university. After five years away from the Brothers, he returned and began teaching information technology at Bistrate Gabriel School, another twinned ministry in Ethiopia. He renewed his vocation with the Brothers in 2011. While Brother Amanuel is familiar with twinning, this is his first experience leading the program. He looks forward to connecting with his twinned ministries in RELAN and building relationships.



Brother Amanuel and his students are available to connect over Zoom. Contact him at amanulesifu6@gmail.com to schedule a date and time.



MESSAGE FROM BROTHER AMANUEL

I would like to acknowledge and show my appreciation for what you have been doing to support our schools in Ethiopia, especially St. Joseph Catholic School. With my understanding about what COVID has brought the whole world, you gave us what you have when you are struggling, not from what you have left over.

We are always in prayer with you, in a special way during Thursday evening prayer time. I would like you to pray for us, as well, not only with the situation of COVID for us, but also because of the uncertainty that also frustrating with the political situation and poverty.

Education brings light to the blind. The mission we commit to can change the whole human person. Let us continue to cooperate to change the lives of others. I am delighted to share the service of education with you through educating the young, especially the poor. God bless your ministry and all the staff and students.

— Brother Amanuel Seifu, FSC, Principal

