



St Francis Outreach Trust

Patron : the Most Reverend Njongo Ndungane (ret.)



Christmas 2013

Christmas Greetings from the children of the "Home to Grow" in the Far South of the Cape of Africa.

We hope that you experienced a good year and are in good health.

Here is a little bit of this and that - happenings during this year at and around our home and lives.

Since May of this year we have been a family of 6 children and Mama Joyce. We now have a big sister, 8 years old. She attends the local school together with me and our only brother. His own little sister will start to go to the "big" school in January next year. She is much smaller than all of us, although she is already 6 years old. In January this year she had surgery on her hip and stayed in the hospital with Mama Joyce for several days. When she came home, she sat in a wheelchair and for a while was not allowed to walk. It was fun to drive her around in her chair. She recovered fast and was soon climbing the jungle gym again and sliding down the slide with us.

On Good Friday a neighbour's house went up in flames, burning several shacks around it too. Mama Joyce quickly sent us away with a friend because the smoke and heat were coming close to our house. It was very scary. We started coughing badly and were happy to get away from the fire. When we came home, hours later, the house and backyard were full of our neighbours' things, which they had saved from the fire and stored with us. Nothing had happened to our home. The next day, Michelle and Monika came and hid Easter eggs for us, and we had a fun and noisy egg hunt around the house and garden.

The poor neighbours whose shacks and belongings had burnt down to the ground, received building material from the government and quickly erected their shacks again.

Every Wednesday afternoon we now have one of 5 ladies coming to the house to do fun school work with us. Our brother has improved a lot in his performance in class and his teacher is very happy with him. About me they say, that I am smart, but because I finish my assignments quickly and get bored and then check on the other children, I am sometimes reprimanded.

My other five-year-old sister has speech difficulties and receives therapy for it. Mama Joyce works with her too. My youngest sister, who is only 3 years old but very clever, often plays with her and watches her and mom during the exercises. Occasionally she takes mom's place and encourages M. to repeat words. When she eventually pronounces them correctly, she exclaims joyfully, "Good girl, that was right! High 5!" and they clap against each other's outstretched open hand, both smiling happily.

We had many visitors from abroad coming to see us.

Gisela and Franz from Germany brought their grand-daughter, little Isabel, with them this year. She was only 2 years old and liked to play with my little sister. We had a number of outings with them, spent an afternoon at the

beach in Noordhoek, a few hours at the Fairground near-by with carousels and swings, and even a real lion, and on another afternoon fun and games in their house and garden when our house was being painted.

There were other visitors from England, Germany and America and the best time we spent was with Germa and Con from the Netherlands, who cooked pancakes for us and took us out to the V&A Waterfront, where we walked through the Aquarium and watched the big sharks in the gigantic glass enclosure. I initially found all these creatures scary, but then followed everybody else around and soon realized there was no reason to be afraid.

Two youth groups spent some time at our home. The first one came from St Paul's in Cleveland,,Ohio, in America and the second from Westlake Boys High School in Auckland, New Zealand. It was great fun to play with them, and these boys were all very handsome. Their teacher had been with us in 2012 and was astonished at how our English had improved and how much more confident we all are.

I am allowed now to meet my family occasionally and have spent a whole weekend with all of them. It was nice to see my cousins and all the members of the family again. Our brother and his sister also visited their mom for an afternoon. Mama Joyce went with them.

Once a month Mama Joyce attends a workshop courtesy of Home from Home, and this year it was a series of parenting classes, which dealt with a variety of important subjects. She also attended a course on healthy nutrition combined with the use of herbs. We like the way she cooks, especially her tasty Sunday meals.

My special day this year was in January when Michelle and Monika gave a little party for me on the occasion of my first day in the "big" school. I had seen Yazini last year on starting school, receiving his quilt, and I had been very jealous! Now the day finally arrived, when I got my own personal quilt to keep and take care of.

Our lives have changed a lot since we started living with Mama Joyce. We, the children, are very happy here, some of us for the first time in our lives. Although we do not know you all in person, we are very grateful to each and every one of you for thinking of us and assisting the grown-ups who are taking care of us.

Together with my sisters and my brother I am wishing you a blessed Christmas and good Health and Happiness in the New Year.

The smartest of the girls at the
"Homes to Grow"
St Francis Outreach Trust

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