

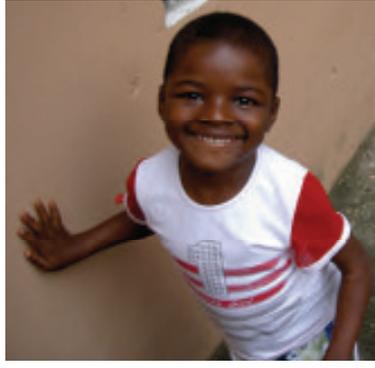
**Our Children
in
Angel Guardian Home
in Mgbele/Nigeria**



Nigeria-Mission of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (PHJC)
sponsored by Kloster Maria Hilf, Katharina-Kasper-Str. 10, 56428 Dernbach/Germany



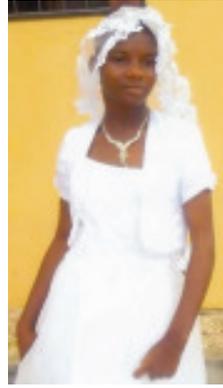
Ngozi May 2006
in the Remand Home



August 2006



Ngozi August 2013



First Communion 2014

Ngozi Chidera has been with us since May of 2006. When we started in Nigeria, we had to approach the Ministry of Women Affairs so that we could start with street interviews of children hawking there. The Ministry directed us to a Remand Home in Logara, Imo State, where youths were kept while waiting for their court cases after criminal activity. In this home we found nine big boys accused of murder or robbery. With those boys there was a little girl, two mentally handicapped little boys and two boys in primary school age. Those children were not criminals. They had been arrested by the police because they were found without contact to families. Ngozi looked like a three-year old. She fearfully crouched on the floor, did not speak, had no clothing and no bed and her body was covered with wounds and scars. When we took her to a laboratory, we found out she had sexually transmitted diseases, she had been raped. After only a few weeks with us and with medical help, she recovered very fast. Her left side is paralyzed, that is why there is a language deficiency. We tried to send her to school, several times, but she has no ability of

abstract thinking and so cannot learn to read or write. On the other hand, her emotional maturity is astonishing. She is wonderful in caring for the younger children or other handicapped girls. Since May 2013, she helps in the home, is a young lady and the younger ones address her as "Aunty Ngozi". In 2012 we took her to Germany for medical assessment. It was found out that both her left shoulder and hip show bone malformation, and that she also is brain damaged. Surgery can only be done once her growth is finished. We will have to keep Ngozi for life.

Not only for her, but also for some other badly handicapped children, we decided in 2014 to build a bungalow behind the home in which at least six adult challenged persons can stay and be cared for, without disturbing the work with the younger children in the home. This house is now finished.



The oldest of the boys we took out of the Remand Home, **Ifeanyi**, came from Lagos and had been loitering. He had stayed in the Remand Home for only about six months. From June of 2006 to the end of 2009, he was in our home. Then he was accepted in the family of Sr. Nkechi, and for all we know, he is still there.



Rafael 2006



2013

Rafael Bassey had stayed for about four years in the Remand Home. He told us that Kelechi and Ngozi had been there before he came. There was no documentation about the children in the Remand Home. Rafael was about 12 years old, but he looked like 8 years because he was so malnourished. He had never been to school, but that was his big wish. When we took him in June of 2006, we tried to prepare him for school, together with Ifeanyi, and they were enrolled in a Government primary school in September of 2006. Rafael graduated from primary school in 2010 with good grades, and we tried to send him to Secondary School. We tried twice, but he could not manage first grade although we were sure he was intelligent. He started to learn tiling with a master - that was what he wanted.

We still cared for him. He had a room in the Home and came back on weekends while during the week he stayed with his master in the next town. The sisters suggested to buy a little piece of land so that after finishing his training, he would have a chance to marry.

We are sorry to say that there was a radical deterioration in 2014. Rafael started stealing, he kept bringing back stolen hand sets. Then we found out that he took whole sacks of rice or other food stuff giving them to friends in the village. We had many talks with him. Then his master also started complaining. He did not want to keep Rafael in his house as he was stealing there too and getting very nasty to the wife. We found out that Rafael brought in other big boys who broke into the home and stole a lot of things, also taking the wages from the employees.

In more talks Rafael did not admit anything although we showed him the hand sets he had in his room. We had to bring him back to the Ministry. He received the money we had put aside to buy land for him, and all his things. So Rafael left us for good in August of 2014. It was very difficult for all of us to decide that, but there did not seem to be any other way.



Kelechi 2006



and 2013

Kelechi is the bigger one of the handicapped boys we took from the Remand Home in 2006. He must have gone through terrible ordeals, his scars show how he was tortured by the big boys. Rafael told us that the boys stuck his knee into boiling oil. There was no medical care. We are sure that one time, Kelechi must have been able to speak, but that ability seems lost. He understands a lot, both Igbo and English, but is hyperactive, does not sleep at night, cannot keep still, and still after 8 years, he is unable to touch his own body. He cannot wash or dress without help, needing constant care. We have no idea how old he really is, but it must be at least 18 years. His growth stopped, he looks like a 12 year old, and he does not grow or add weight in spite of the good food. We took Kelechi to several psychiatric doctors, but the only thing they

suggested were heavy drugs, and they made him confused and aggressive. We tried to find out how to care for handicapped men. In a government home we found that hyperactive people are chained and are given food only once a day. Their lives do not count. So it is clear that we will have to keep Kelechi for life, just like Ngozi.

Since the last months, in 2014, Kelechi is able to do little duties in the house like laying the table or fetching things. But his speech has not returned.



Chidi, the smallest of the little boys we took from Logara, did not stay long with us. His home was quite close to the Remand Home, and a young man visiting us, recognized him. We took him to his family and found out that his mother went to church and the little child followed her, but lost his way. As he could not speak, the police took him to the Remand Home. The parents kept asking about him, but the police did not tell them where the child was. In the Remand Home there are no employees except for farm workers. They make the inmates work in the fields, and the crops are shared by the Ministry employees. There is no care or education, only one woman comes to cook one meal per day, and that is only yam or kassava, roots, without any vitamins or proteins. The big boys steal what they need, the little ones go hungry. This Remand Home is still run by the Government. We kept asking that smaller children should not be sent there, but whenever we go there, we still see them.

In August 2006, a beggar woman asked us whether we could accept her son, **Chinedum**, as she could not feed him. The boy was about 10, and had never been to school. We tried to prepare him together with Ifeanyi and Rafael, but after a few weeks we found out that the boy had been very badly affected by his time on the streets. He had taken drugs, and he stole whenever he could lay his hands on anything. When his mother visited, she kept giving him money although we asked her not to do that. After receiving a bigger sum, he ran away from us. At least he had experienced for a while that there was regular food and care, and that there is a life beyond staying on the streets and taking drugs.



Ben



Charley

In 2007 we accepted three young people who were homeless and careless in the delta area of Bayelsa, the oil area of Nigeria. A young man of the Youth Corps drew our attention to them. There were two boys, **Ben and Charley**, and they stayed with us for about one year. Then they started stealing and running wild. Both disappeared after stealing the house money. Obviously it was too late for them to learn anything better..



The girl who came with them, **Joann**, is still with us and now is 20 years old. She knew her parents who died in the revolts in the Delta. As the father had come there to work for the oil companies, not belonging to the local tribes, no relatives could care for the girl. She had to stay with a Voodoo priestess who involved the girl in her magic practices. When Joann came to us, she was very disturbed. But she recovered. She could finish primary and secondary school with good results. While waiting for her school leaving certificate, she worked in the home for one year, and now she is a student in Alvan-University in Owerri. She shares a room with one of our sisters who is also a student in the same institute, and on weekends she comes home to Mgbele. Joann is a gifted and responsible girl. At the university, a teacher asked her how she hoped to marry as she had no family, and Joann told him that the sisters were her family and would care for her, also arranging her marriage. Joann is a good student, bringing back good results. The picture shows her in the immatriculation ceremony. Both sisters and the other children were there to celebrate with her.



Chidinma 2011

In August 2007, **Chidinma** came to us. While driving through Umuahia, the sisters saw a child in a roundabout, bleeding. It looked like a road accident, but there were also signs of rape. The child was about 8 or 9 years old and did not speak. The police were not interested. So the sisters took her to the home. She is still with us. In the beginning, it was very difficult as Chidinma was not used to toilet, clothing, regular meals or bed. In the meantime she has learnt a lot. She still cannot speak and is very fearful as soon as men come into view. She cannot go to school and will be with us for life.



Just before Christmas of 2007, a very small boy came to us, brought in by his father. He told us that the child, **Oluebube**, was ten years old, but he looked like 6. The father cannot walk well, he works as a plasterer and painter. He told us that the mother died of AIDS, leaving three girls, the smallest only 3 years, besides the boy who also had AIDS. He brought him to us hoping for help, as the boy was in such pains, and in the village no one could help him. We took the whole group to the laboratory, and the results were clear. Father and girls were not infected, but the boy was. So we took him and tried to find medication. In Nigeria, it is said that poor people are treated free. Yet in the government hospitals in and around Owerri, we were told their lists were full and they had no medication for children. After a long search we found a hospital in the neighbouring state capital, Umuahia, where Oluebube was enrolled as a patient and could be given the necessary medication. In the meantime we had also tried to find jobs for the father so that the family could be better cared for. After just over a year, Oluebube told us he wanted to go back home. He did not feel such pains any more, and he was missing his family. We feel that in the background, the father had also

influenced the boy. So he went back home. We kept in contact and found out that the boy got his medication regularly and that the whole family is in a better condition.



In March 2008, another beggar woman came to us. She had two daughters. The oldest was pregnant after being raped as the ruined building in which they stayed, had no doors. The mother felt that the younger girl should be spared such fate. So **Ogadinma** came to us, aged 10. She was happy going to school, although it was not so easy to sit between children who were so much younger. She was with us for just over two years, and we hoped she could stay and learn to live a responsible life. Then she wanted to visit her mother and sister, and when she returned she told us that she would not stay and longer. She kept visiting us, but together with mother, sister and her baby, she now lives on the roads again.



2008



2013

In June of 2008, people living at a cross roads near Mgbele, told us that there was a little boy who had been thrown out of a Jeep which passed by, and that he was stealing in the market and staying in the bush. We searched for **Chukwudi** and took him in. He was small like a child of 4 but was surely older. His proportions were all wrong, the head much too big, and he had a terrible infection in the lower abdomen. That has been healed, he has grown, most likely he is now over 18 years old. Chukwudi does not seem to have brains, he does not understand anything, in spite of regular meals, he eats everything he can put his hands on, even rubbish and dog turds. He needs a lot of supervision and patience and will never be able to live alone.



Juliet was with us from 2008 to 2012. She was an orphan, living with her grandmother behind the barracks in Owerri, not going to school although she was about 10 when she came to us. At first she enjoyed going to school. When she grew up, she tried to keep contact with the other young women behind the barracks, and then she asked to go back to her grandmother as life was more interesting there. We tried to show her a better way of life, but she insisted, left school and is now in the streets.



Also from 2008 to 2010, **Chinenye** was with us. We found out about her through the chief in Kalabari Beach, a village where sisters went for mobile clinic. Her mother is a mentally handicapped person, unable to care for a child. She herself is cared for by her own mother. At the beginning, the two women were happy to get rid of the child who was then about 5 years old, totally malnourished and wild. When they later visited her and saw how good Chinenye grew up and how healthy she looked, they changed, became aggressive and insulting. They wanted to have the child back in the village. We tried to convince them, but there was no way. So we had to give in.

Chinenye is again neglected, wild and malnourished. It is very sad that there is no way in Nigeria to protect a child against its own family.



Elizabeth 2008



2009



2014

In August 2008, the parish priest of a village not far from Minna, our diocesan town, came to us in Garam. He said there was a girl in his village whose mother had died, and the father was an alcoholic. The child had had polio when 9 months old, and was badly crippled. Since the death of the mother, the child was not cared for, could not come to church or school as the ways in the village were not even and she could only walk with the help of her hands. So we accepted

Elizabeth. We took her to orthopaedic doctors

and were told that surgery was not possible in Nigeria. We got callipers (braces) for her and she learned to walk with crutches. She did not want to sit in a wheel chair. She started school at the end of 2008, she is now in 5th grade and a good and able student. We hope that after secondary school, we can find a training place for her so that she can live independently.

In January of 2014, we found out that the callipers had gone very bad. Elizabeth had grown, and the screws pressed into her thighs, they had not been made well. We finally found a place where imported braces were sold, but although we paid for them at the beginning of the year, we only got them in August of 2014. But Elizabeth now can walk again.



Chisom 2009



2012

From 2009 to 2012, two siblings were with us, **Chisom and Chidera**. The father, a politician, had lost his wife and he said that there was no one in his family who would care for the girls. Chisom was 10, Chidera 6 years old. Chidera suffered from sickle cell anaemia, a sickness that is both very painful and cannot be cured. The father promised to pay for the care of his girls in the home, but after one year, he never sent any money again and seemed to be unavaiable.



Chidera 2009 and



just before her death
2012

Chidera's sickness got worse. There was one bad attack and the nurses among the sisters knew that the only help was a blood transfusion. For that we needed the consent of the father, but when we finally got him, he did not consent. So the child died. The father did not even come to or pay for the funeral. But suddenly after a few days, he had someone to care for Chisom and took her out of the home. We could not do anything against his decision, and he never paid his debts.

In August of 2014, suddenly Chisom came back to the home, alone. She complained how the friends of her father kept molesting her, and she wanted to stay in the home. We have no chance to keep her against the wish of the father.



Chikamma 2009



and 2014

In July 2008, the sisters in the mobile clinic cared for a young pregnant woman in a village not far from Mgbele. The woman died soon after delivery. The father who was much older than the mother and an alcoholic besides, also was jobless. For a little while neighbour women cared for the baby, then the father came in January 2009, asking us to take the baby. That was a difficult decision at the time as so far, we had had only older children. But it was obvious that **Chikamma** needed help, and so she came to us. She developed well and grew up a normal child. She went to nursery and graduated in July of 2014 for primary school, an intelligent and healthy child.



Dec. 2009



May 2014

In November/December 2009, Mexican sisters in a village near Orlu drew our attention to a child that obviously was not wanted by the family. The girl was malnourished and neglected, was not allowed to enter the house and had to sleep under a tree in the yard, even during the rainy season. The sisters went there and saw **Orlobube**, also talked to the family. The father had left the village, the mother had died. The aunt believed that the mother had died of AIDS and therefore she did not want to accept the child which was about 3 years old. Today Orlobube is a normally developed child, she loves school and is happy in the home. Only when she is in the car and the way goes towards Orlu, she gets fearful and starts crying.

Like Chikamma, Orlobube graduated from nursery school in 2014 and will start primary school in Mgbele.



In 2010, a handicapped young woman, **Ikieru**, kept coming to the home. She lives in the village of Mgbele, has older and well-off siblings, but the family does not accept her and she is not allowed to enter the rooms but has a bed in the corridor. Whenever she came, she was dirty and hungry, and her clothes were in a bad state. After a while of caring for her, the sisters felt she would be better off in the home. She stayed with us for just over one year. Because of her mental deficiency, she could not go to school, and she was about 30 years old .

And soon, with better food and better clothing, she started getting interested in young men, who obviously used her. But there was no help, at first she stayed out for a day or two, then in August of 2012, she left the home. Often she still comes when she feels she needs a bath or new clothing, or when she is hungry, but she is not ready to stay and be helped.

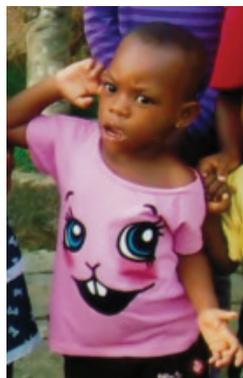


In May 2011 a girl of about 14 years came to our house in Garam, **Titilayo**. She was still in her school uniform and told us she had walked the 30 kilometres from Dutse, on the way to Abuja, after seeing our car with the inscription "Health and Child Care". She told us that her step father kept sexually molesting her, and that her mother did not help her. So she asked whether she could work for us. We tried to contact the mother, and the conditions at home seemed quite unstable. We then tried to find other relatives, but they were relatives of the step father and said that it was Titilayo who was the offender. After a while we took Titilayo to our home in Mgbele. For two years, all went well. She was an able and eager student. Then suddenly the girl started coming home at irregular times, she started stealing

money, got a mobile phone and even stayed out at night. Then we found out that she kept mistreating the handicapped children, even hurting Chukwudi's face badly. We talked very seriously with her, and the result was that she ran off. We later heard from some friends of hers that she went to Lagos.



2011



2013



2014

In June of 2011, the sisters found a totally neglected baby in the mobile clinic near Mgbele. This was **Chidera**, and she was barely alive. The mother is mentally disturbed, no one knows who the father is. The mother's sister gave birth at the same time to a boy, and the family decided that the girl was to die while the boy was accepted. When the sisters found her, she was 6 months old and did not even weigh

6 pounds. She was too weak to cry and hardly moved at all. The sisters took the child, fed her every two hours day and night, and slowly the baby recovered. Today Chidera is a happy child, going to nursery school and very proud to be a student. She is very assertive as she had to fight for her life from the beginning. When she is seen and praised, she is very happy and involves herself in everything with gusto.

In August of 2011, the Ministry called the sisters again. In Owerri, one of these baby factories was discovered and closed by the police. In these places, either girls are made to bear children, or children are stolen, to be sold for adoption or for the sex trade. The police had found 7 babies there, four boys and three girls. For the boys, places had been found with the Red Cross, but it is always harder to place girls anywhere. The Ministry again promised to pay for the costs of the care, but just like before, these promises were never kept.



2011



2013



2014

Chinoso was about three years old, not toilet trained, but friendly and relatively well fed. Obviously she had been stolen somewhere not long before. She now goes to nursery school and is happy and friendly, talking all day.

After about one year in school, it was found out that Chinoso can be very fearful. At home she is much more open and happy as in school among the other children. With the sisters, there is no fear.



2011



2013



2014

Chinaza was about two years old, malnourished and very fearful, but relatively healthy. She also goes to nursery school and has grown up well. She only is still fearful when she sees young men. She likes to play and has a beautiful little voice when singing. Chinoso and Chinaza are the best of friends. In school, Chinaza is now better than Chinoso.



July 2012



July 2014

Chisimdiri was barely alive when the sisters found the children. At first they hesitated because they doubted they would get her home alive. She hardly moved, and she was so thin and malnourished that no one saw how old she was. In the meantime we found out that she surely was older than Chinaza. The bad thing is that her leg muscles were not developed. So she could not learn to walk. In 2013, we took her to Germany to be tested. She has damaged feet, but the orthopaedists said that with physical therapy, she could learn to walk, and there was no bone damage. Possibly there is a slight brain

damage.

Back home and with the massage, the sisters were shown, Chisimdiri soon walked. She is a very happy child, loving contact, the only one of the smaller children who loves the telephone and obviously recognizes who is at the other end. She dances and runs happily with the others, and she shows how happy she is.

In the meantime it shows that Chisimdiri is the leader in the group of the babies. She can always get her way, tries everything, is not afraid of anything. And she knows she is loved and accepted, so she can live without fear.

In 2013, again two girls came to us.



Chioma is a twin, she is 12 years old, the mother is a widow. She started a new relationship, but the man did not accept the girl, only the boy. So the mother asked us to take the girl. We took Chioma and found out she is a healthy and well developed girl.

But in 2014, the mother demanded the child back. She has parted from the man again and now claims that she gave us a lot of money - which is not true - and wants the money back. She told many people how we cheated her. We had to send Chioma back to her.



Chiomaka was sent by the Ministry again. They told us she had been found somewhere and could not speak. The child is malnourished and also shows many traces of torture. Perhaps the family tried to burn out and beat off the demons - as people still believe mental deficiency is caused by demons. Chiomaka may be seven years old and she will need a lot of care and patience. She still destroys what she can reach, she makes some sounds but cannot understand or talk.

We took Chiomaka to several doctors. But they only tell us that there is one medication that might help but it cannot be bought in Nigeria. We tried to import it from Germany but even that is not possible as it can only be carried if one has a prescription for own use, it is considered a drug.



In February of 2014, there was again a little **Chioma**. This is a girl of nine years as the mother says, although she does not look it. Chioma was born with a brain damage. The mother says that because of the child, she lost her chances for marriage more than once, and she told us if we did not take the child, she would kill her.

Chioma does not even weigh 9 kg. She cannot walk without stretching out her arms for balance, and saliva is running out of her mouth constantly. She cannot eat without help, and cannot drink if she does not bend her head far backward as her lips do not close.

But the child responds to the love and care given her. When the German sisters visited in March, Chioma came and wanted to be held and carried. There is a bad swelling at the ears, but we cannot find any doctor who will try to treat that. The sisters are being told that the swelling would go away of its own. Instead they said the sisters should tie her arms to her side so that she could not stretch them when walking - which makes her more insecure, so we stopped that.

There is a special friendship between Ngozi and Chioma, like between Ngozi and Chidinma. And we see a slow and good development, the saliva is slowly disappearing and she also tries to talk.



In August of 2014, **Lucy** came to us. She is related to our former Sr. Dorcas who left the congregation in 2012 but still keeps close contact. The parents of the child both died of AIDS, and the grandparents tried to care for the child. She belongs to the tribe of the Tiv people, near Jos. Lucy is 6 years old but did not go to nursery because the grandparents could not pay the school fees. When Dorcas visited the village, she saw the Lucy was badly neglected. She asked us to help the child, and the sisters went to the village and talked to the grandparents and to the chief. A contract was drawn up that the child can keep contact to her own tribe, but that she can grow up with us.

From September of 2014, Lucy goes to school. She is an intelligent child and very much at home in Angel Guardian Home.



Finally I want to report about a child who does not belong to Angel Guardian Home. In the early months of 2014, the sisters in the mobile clinic in Ifetedo found a girl in the bush being carried along by the mother, the girl **Yetunde** was about 9 years old. She could not walk. The mother told the sisters that when Yetunde was a baby of 3 months, she fell into the open fire and was badly burnt. There was no health care available, so the wounds healed by themselves. But as the baby was curled up with the pain, the legs stuck together, contracted and became quite stiff. So the child never learnt to walk as one leg was attached to the other from thigh to calf, and the other foot was stuck to the shin. The mother has three other children and tries to feed the family after the death of the father by working on the fields of others for a meagre payment.

At first the sisters took the child to a hospital in Lagos. The surgeon said he could heal the child with two surgeries, demanding about 3000 Euro. We also sent some fotos to hospitals in Germany, and were told that there was no chance to free the legs with two surgeries only.



Sr. Christiana and Yetunde

We got the go-ahead from our hospital in Wesseling that the doctors would treat the child without cost. They have been helping children from Afghanistan and other war areas for years and are used to children and their sufferings. So we took Yetunde to Germany in August of 2014. The mother could not come. She never went to school, does not know English, and has to care for the other children too. As Yetunde also knew no English, we took Sr. Christiana along who is Yoruba like Yetunde and knows her tribal language. In the meantime, Yetunde learnt a lot of both English and German.

The first leg has been operated on several times, and there were skin transplants too. Yetunde cannot really use the knee joint yet, but she can walk with the help of crutches and is very happy.

Over Christmas 2014, Yetunde did not have to stay in the ward but could join the sisters in Wesseling convent. As she now was among all sisters, she demanded to also get a veil and to be addressed as Sr. Yetunde.

We hope that until about May of 2015, the surgeries for the second leg and foot will be finished so that Yetunde can return home. In the meantime the Ifetedo sisters also care for the mother and the other children who now go to our school.



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