



More than a million children are fed each day in thirteen countries on four continents thanks to Mary's Meals. This foundation, which finds in the Virgin Mary his greatest inspiration, we opens its doors to show us how "in his name, give to eat to these children".

EMMA, the mother of six children, ill with AIDS and from Malawi, had only one concern: who would care for their small when she was missing? Pray that God begs of them and it was then when Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, creator of Mary's Meals, crossed his path. Recently, we have known the wonderful solidarity project that was born of the experience of faith that had MacFarlane-Barrow in Medjugorje and which found its reason for being in Emma and their children: Mary's Meals. Elisalex Lowenstein, member of the Council of the Foundation in Spain, it tells the story of MacFarlane-Barrow, a Scotsman who, at the beginning of the years 80, made a pilgrimage to Medjugorje together with his family, an experience that marked him deeply.

At the beginning of the nineties, the outbreak of the war in Bosnia, and MacFarlane-Barrow, that he felt a special union with this land after that experience, decided to organize, together with his brother Fergus, a local campaign to send clothes, food and medicine to Medjugorje. The success of the initiative pushed to MacFarlane-Barrow to create the Scottish International Relief (SIR). During the 1990s, the Foundation was expanded and began to build homes for abandoned children in Romania, helped many refugees could return to Liberia, and continued carrying humanitarian aid to Croatia and Bosnia, in addition to finance other projects. In the year 2002 MacFarlane-Barrow met Emma in Malawi. The mother of six children, ill with AIDS, told him that he had only pray for someone to look after their children when she died. And so one of them, Edward, spoke the words that inspired MacFarlane-Barrow to create the foundation Mary's Meals: "I want to have enough food and a day go to school". At that time, MacFarlane-Barrow realized that the main problem of the poorest children in the world and one of the causes that prevented from leaving their extreme misery is the lack of food. Thus emerged the idea of providing a daily meal to each child in the school environment. Thanks to this, many children have left the streets and begging and had been able to go to school, where, in addition to education, now receive, also, a plate of food.

## **Much more than food**

Mary's Meals give to eat on a daily basis, over a million children in thousands of schools of countries as poor as Liberia, Malawi and Haiti. The foundation purchase the food to indigenous farmers to foster, in addition, the local economy and the mothers of the children themselves who come to the schools are who cook, daily, the food that Mary's Meals are provided.

In each region, we choose the products that abound in the area (cereals, vegetables and vegetables, mainly) and, with them, draws up a dish that will be for the majority of these children, the only food that ingest in the day. All this gear favors that are beneficiaries of the project (mothers and farmers) who carry it out. Lowenstein, that has travelled to several of the schools where Mary's Meals collaborates, tells us that children "give you thank you to you", and affirms that "parents you appreciate that you give them a future for their children. It is then when you realize that what Mary's Meals provides for these children is much more than food". All this by the insignificant amount of 14.50 € per child per year, a money that Mary's Meals collects through its subsidiaries in different countries and which are mostly private contributions of people committed to this cause.

Since they began their journey, Mary's Meals has managed that millions of children have a plate of food per day. Many of them are now adults who collaborate with the foundation and whose stories collects the documentary Generation Hope (in Spain, the generation of hope), which will soon be available in the official channel of Mary's Meals on YouTube.

However, the day to day of this foundation is not free of difficulties. Mary's Meals have to deal with conflict, extreme droughts and epidemics, such as that caused the crisis of Ebola, for which countries such as Liberia were virtually paralyzed. The high incidence of this disease caused the mass eviction of the streets and the closure of schools, work centers and hospitals. Faced with this situation, the responsible of Mary's Meals in that country decided to leave to distribute, door-to-door, the food that the children were leaving to receive. Gestures such as this reflect the spirit of Mary's Meals and the commitment of those who are driving this cause.

With all the people who collaborate in one way or another with Mary's Meals radiate happiness, tenderness and absolute dedication. "How can this be?", asked Lowenstein. "Simple," says smiling: Mary's Meals is a great family".

1.102.206 children are fed each day in 13 countries on 4 continents by 14.50 € per year

The shed that EDF a million children, account the exciting history, full of miracles and shocking events, Mary's Meals. The book, written by Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, creator of the foundation, makes a journey through its history from its origins. An incredible testimony that shows how the hard work, the illusion and the faith of a person can make the world a little bit better place. The book is available in English and is expected to arrive in Spain at the beginning of 2017.



Translated by catholic.net