



Quilts top up parish's help for 16 orphans in Lesotho

By Art Babych

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Sixteen orphan girls who live in a hostel in the mountains of Leribe, Lesotho, will be a little warmer from now on, thanks to parishioners of St. Bartholomew's Church across from Rideau Hall.

The parish's quilting group is topping up the congregation's five-year support commitment of \$16,000 a year by also giving each of them a quilt. As well, the group of orphans will get a total of almost \$4,000 raised through the quilting project.

"We're designating the money we raised from the quilts to buy little extras for the girls," Joan Ramsay Burn, coordinator of the quilting group's project, said in a Crosstalk interview June 12.

"Sister Celina, who looks after them, has asked that they have prayer books for Church," she said. "Two of the girls require glasses and have to travel to another town to be examined," Joan added. "So all these things that the \$16,000 wasn't budgeted for, this fund will help supply."

The money being sent through the five-year plan is to help the orphans complete their high school education and be housed and clothed at St. Mary's hostel.

The 16 girls have lost either both parents or are left with only one parent who is dying from AIDS, Joan said. "So there really is no home life to speak of anymore. The hostel is their new home and we're trying to give them the sense that there is an extended family here supporting them."

The quilting project is only one part of a multi-faceted charitable undertaking by St. George's, Ottawa,

parishioner Dr. Peg Herbert to provide aid to dozens of orphans in Lesotho. As reported in the May issue of Crosstalk, Peg, who was a professor at the University of Ottawa, was inspired to launch Project Help Lesotho after meeting Sister Alice Mputsoe, a Catholic nun from Lesotho, who was studying at the university for her master's degree.

Peg traveled to Lesotho and returned overwhelmed by the needs of people in the impoverished country. She decided to devote all her time speaking and enlisting help for the orphans.

"This (quilting project at St. Bartholomew's) was initiated by Joan Ramsay Burns and her quilting circle," Peg said. "What I've done is to parcel things up into very distinct projects, groups, individuals and schools. They take on a project."

The quilting circle's project was making quilts for the orphans because "it's so cold there and they have so little in the way of warmth that the girls have been getting into bed at sundown because they've never had any other way to warm themselves," said Peg. "Some of our orphans are sleeping two to a bed in boarding schools up in the mountains because they can share their blankets that way, it so cold."