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Heal the World

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The refrain from Michael Jackson's song "Heal the world" expresses my feelings when I think about the service project my friends and I carried out recently at the Pediatrics Department of University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Enugu

around the time Covid-19 began to spread in the country.

A group of university students, some of whom attend the means of formation at Uzommiri, decided to pay a visit to children in the pediatric wards of the Teaching Hospital in Ituku-Ozalla shortly before the lock down. Seven girls went with toys, books and balloons bought with money each had donated personally, to make this visit in order to put smiles on the faces of those children and empathize with them.

Cynthia, a 400 Level student of Medical Radiography, shared her experience: "Today I visited UNTH, not as a student on medical posting, but as a visitor in the pediatric ward. Writing this feels like it would not do my emotions any justice. We visited four wards in all with a total of about 20 children in different stages of pain and discomfort. Some of the children

smiled at us, the older ones looked away shyly, but we could see the ghost of a smile on their lips even as they watched us hand out toys. The parents prayed for us. I felt a thousand times more blessed. The noise of the balloon popping startled us. All the more reason to blow more balloons! We enjoyed the warm welcome and we brought smiles to people's faces as we distributed balloons, gifts, books, as we prayed. I found it an amazing experience in spite of the tears I shed. I hope to do it again!"

Even as they are lying on the hospital beds and taking their medications and receiving injections, the gifts of toys and books will go a long way in relieving the children of boredom in these times and aid learning.

I know that we are making God happy serving these vulnerable children. The break in our studies

happened upon us serendipitously, but it has served as an opportunity for us to make the most of ourselves and give ourselves in the service of others; this visit was time well spent.

Chechi Emereuwaonu

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