

For a child whose whole  
world is in darkness...  
**...you are the light**

Mrs. Joan Sample,  
1 Sample Street,  
Sample Grove,  
Sampletown,  
Co. Sample.



October 2011

**<Salutation>, can you please send an urgent gift today so our  
cataract surgeons in Africa will be able to give a child like  
Vincent his sight back . . . before Christmas?**

Dear <Salutation>,

You hear the bicycle before anyone else does.

It sounds like your uncle John's — the squeaky front wheel giving it away. He's in a hurry, which is odd. You hear the bell ringing too . . . ringing over and over . . .

"What could have happened to get my uncle so worked up?" you wonder.

The ringing stops, you hear the bike fall to the ground, and all in a rush Uncle John comes bursting into the hut, sounding very out of breath. "What is wrong?" Aunt Milly sounds as alarmed as you feel. "What has happened?"

"Good news!" says John. And you can hear the smile in his voice and sense his face turning in your direction . . . "Wonderful news, Vincent!"

<Salutation>, this was the day seven-year-old Vincent's life changed forever.

His uncle had rushed home after hearing a radio announcement that had amazed him. CBM nurses from Kampala were travelling to their small corner of Uganda to assess people with eye problems for free eye surgery! And the nurses would be coming to the nearby town of Mpigi in just three days!

Three days later Vincent and John made the hour-long journey to Mpiji — with Vincent balancing on the handlebars all the way. At the eye clinic CBM nurses examined his eyes. “Bilateral Cataracts,” they told them.

“And we can help him. With surgery . . . Vincent will see again!”

Can you imagine, <Salutation>?

This must have seemed like a miracle to John and Vincent.

But you know, though it might have seemed miraculous, the truth is that it was all thanks to the compassion and generosity of people just like you.

People who gave to CBM so that a child could have a cataract operation . . . and see again. That’s the powerful gift you hold in your hand today.

And through your kindness, <Salutation>, another child who is blind could see again before Christmas —if you can send a generous gift of €<Ask1> <towards/to cover > the cost of their cataract surgery.

The world was a dark and colourless place for Vincent for so long. He was born with bilateral cataracts — cataracts in both eyes. He would have been able to see at first, but as he grew, his vision worsened . . . and the world began to disappear.

When he first came to our eye clinic in Mpiji, he had only the bare minimum of sight left in just one eye. So poor that if he pressed it up close to a photograph, he could only see blurry shapes and shadows, and that was all.

He’s also known far too much sadness for one so young.

Tragically, he lost both his parents to HIV/ AIDS. First his mam. Then his dad. He now lives in the poor and remote village of Kikogo with his uncle John, his aunt Milly and Milly’s two children — Peter, who is 6, and Letitia who is 2.

John and Milly do their best to look after Vincent, but they are very, very poor.

They earn a living working on the small farms of other people in their village and together make just €49 a year. Can you imagine a family of five trying to survive on that?

As you can probably imagine — they had never heard of cataracts and didn’t know why Vincent had gone blind.

And even if they had known, I’m sure you can see that they would never have been able to afford to take Vincent to see an eye doctor.

<Salutation> . . . the truth is we see so many children like Vincent in the regions where we work. Children trapped in a terrible cycle of poverty and blindness. The only way to release them from this trap, the only way to give them hope . . . is through cataract surgery.

It's a simple 20-minute procedure to replace the damaged lenses of a child like Vincent with special artificial 'Intraocular lenses'. But it's not cheap, <Salutation>.

In fact, the total cost for a child who needs bilateral cataract surgery is €120.

But the important thing is this . . . the more money we can raise, the more children we can help.

Not just with the surgery itself, but also with essential follow up care, and the provision of specially produced glasses, which many children like Vincent need after their surgery for long- or short-sightedness.

And that's why your support today is so, so important <Salutation>.

<Because, with a generous gift of €<Ask1> today, you can make a life-changing contribution to the cost of cataract surgery for a child just like Vincent.>

When we met Vincent, he had stopped going to school, and he couldn't read or write. He was a very sad, reserved and lonely boy.

None of the other children in the village would play with him. And many of them teased him.

Can you imagine how miserable this must have been for a child who had lost both his parents, and his eyesight?

A child who could hear the beautiful singing of the birds in the trees — but had no idea what a bird looked like. Who loved to hear his aunt Milly laugh, but had never seen her smile.

But then came the miracle . . .

After seeing the CBM nurses in Mpiji, Vincent was scheduled for surgery at Mengo Hospital in Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

Within days they made the journey to Kampala — a big adventure for a small boy. And this time it was in style. Not on the handlebars of his uncle's bike, but by public bus, all paid for by kind CBM supporters like you.

The operation went perfectly — and the very next day Vincent's bandages came off. It's hard for you and I to picture what that first bright and colourful glimpse of the world must have been like for Vincent.

But I'm sure it was magnificent.

This is a little of what his uncle remembers . . .

"When the doctors removed the bandages, it seemed he was in pain. But he could see! For us, it



was a miracle. Vincent was looking at everyone around him, turning constantly. He was amazed by the people around him”.

One of the first things Vincent remembers after leaving the hospital — is seeing an airplane for the first time.

An ordinary sight to most people — but a wondrous one to a small boy who had only ever heard the noise planes make, without ever knowing where the sound was coming from, or why!

From this point, a whole new world opened up for Vincent.

Not just a world full of colour and wonder, but one where this sound or that noise . . . like the chirping of crickets or the tinkling of a goat’s bell . . . suddenly began to make sense.

There is so much richness in Vincent’s life now . . . he plays football with the other children in the village. He has friends. He can draw. And most importantly of all — thanks to his surgery and to a fine new pair of glasses provided by CBM — he’s going to school once more and is learning to read and write.

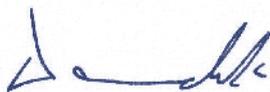
<Salutation>, this is the extraordinary gift you can pass on to a child like Vincent — if you can donate €<Ask1>, or maybe more if you feel you can give more just now.

It’s not just about giving a child who is blind the wonderful gift of sight. If you send us your gift today . . . you’ll also be restoring an essential part of childhood itself. Plus the chance to go to school . . . to make the most of life . . . and maybe one day lift themselves out of poverty altogether.

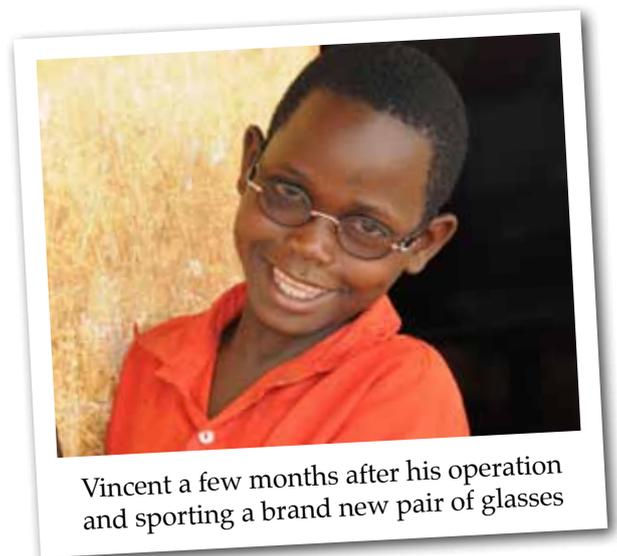
And all of this is possible <Salutation> . . . if you can send us a life changing gift today.

Please say you will.

Yours, with my heartfelt thanks,



**David McAllister**  
National Director, CBM Ireland



Vincent a few months after his operation and sporting a brand new pair of glasses

*P.S. You and I can only imagine how hard it must be for a child to grow up in a world of darkness. However . . . if you can complete the enclosed donation form and send a gift of €<Ask1> . . . a child who is now blind, could be looking at the world in wonder in time for Christmas. Please do whatever you can to help.*