



MUMS for MUMS stands  
"on the side of mums in need"

# Newsletter

February/2007

## Special Edition



### Visit by His Holiness, Pope Paul, the Patriarch of Ethiopia

On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February the staff of MUMS FOR MUMS were greatly honoured to receive a surprise visit by Pope Paul, the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and President of the World Council of Churches; accompanied by other distinguished Fathers of the Church, as well Dr Tewelde Birhan, distinguished scientist and General Director of the Environmental as Protection and Development Agency. The Patriarch spent a couple of hours visiting the new center and learning about MUMS FOR MUMS work.

The Patriarch's presence with us brought great blessing to Mums for Mums, bringing life-giving advice, teaching and direction for the work of Mums for Mums:

With the guests seated in a specially-prepared area, the visit began with an explanation of Mums for Mums work by Tebereh and Khassu; Khassu, the Program Manager, gave an overview of Mums for Mums work – beginning with the establishment of the organization, its purpose and vision, the particular groups of women Mums for Mums is targeting with its help, and its relations with other government and non-governmental organizations.

***One Woman’s burden: the early days of MUMS FOR MUMS:***

Tebereh, obviously affected by the special occasion, gave a personal account of how the work of Mums for Mums began:

*“It all began with the hidden poverty afflicting many young mothers and women in the towns of Tigray – witnessing this type of poverty, seeing the young mothers who secretly beg for money, so distressed me that I resolved to do my part to eradicate it ...”*

*“Having discussed my concern with different organizations and gained a little money and help, I began the work from a single container, providing training for a few young mothers”*

*“With the dream firmly rooted in my heart, to make a real difference for the many poor young mothers, this is how I began the work of turning the dream into a reality ...”*

*“So, several years on, it gives us great pleasure today for his Holiness and our distinguished guests to see the results our efforts”*

*“Words can’t express my joy at this occasion, but the tears flow from my heart-felt gladness.”*

**A Cactus Feast**

One of the spin-offs of Mums for Mums work with young mothers has been the development of Cactus as an alternative food source; Tebereh’s speech continued with an explanation of the Cactus work:

*“In our situation here in northern Ethiopia, there is Cactus in abundance: everything in the Cactus can be eaten, from the budding of the new leaves, to the arrival of the fruit – and the nutritional content of the whole plant is very high”*

*“To your surprise the Mexicans give great value to the Cactus plant, making all kinds of food from it, so that hunger in Mexico is virtually unknown – cactus to Mexicans is like Injera to Ethiopians!!”*

*“The preparation is very simple – perhaps in our country it is the fear of the thorns stops us from eating it, but actually it easy to remove the thorns in the preparation.”*



### **Taste and See ...**

For our distinguished guests, seeing was believing: Tsega gave them a demonstration of Cactus salad preparation – cleaning and de-thorning the cactus leaves, before slicing them up into edible pieces, handed round to the guests to sample.

The guests also tasted some of the wide variety of Cactus foods prepared by Mums for Mums: Candy, Juice, Jam, Cactus Bread.

### ***Feedback from our Distinguished Guests:***

Having heard about and seen the work of Mums for Mums , our distinguished guests were warm in their appreciation:

*Dr Nigusse, Head of Development for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, spoke of his surprise at the unexploited potential of Cactus as an alternative food-source:*

*“In the south of Ethiopia we are well familiar with what can be done with Inset – we know that many types of food can be prepared from it, enabling people to stay well-fed, even in times of famine.”*

*“Now we have seen that Cactus can be food for us too, as well as medicine – we mustn’t allow Mums for Mums to keep this treasure to themselves, but must send our people here to get trained and spread the knowledge.”*

Finally, the Patriach spoke warmly about his appreciation for the Cactus work and Tebereh’s work for the Tigray region:

*“In the beginning God made the whole of creation. He saw that it was very good. But mankind has not used the creation wisely and properly, and the wrong things around us are evidence of man’s misuse – now a stark divide exists between the good and bad – but it was not like that at the beginning.”*

*“Mankind’s responsibility includes making the most of God’s gifts to us – spurred on by our past laziness, we must strive to take the opportunities we missed before”*

*“We all know of Dr Solomon’s great efforts for the region of Tigray and here we should appreciate the hidden support of a wife like Tebereh – if the wife is good, the whole family will be good by her influence.”*

### ***A contribution to the work:***

Appreciating the work of Mums for Mums, the Patriach finished his speech by pledging a donation of 50,000 Ethiopian Birr towards the work. With this money we can begin the construction of the third wing of the center ...

