



War and Peace

The photo of Pope Francis immunizing a child with three drops of polio vaccine during the Pontiff's recent trip to Mexico flashed around the world late last month.

Rotary, a non-sectarian organization, does not support any religion. But to have a world leader publicly administer the vaccine provides critical awareness that children the world over must be vaccinated and the world community needs to remain vigilant until the day comes when we can declare the entire globe polio-free.



Polio Virus Update

The books are closing on 2015, and show remarkable success in reducing the number of cases of wild polio virus transmission. Latest figures suggest 56 cases in Pakistan in 2015 and 20 cases in Afghanistan. This compares with 306 in Pakistan in 2014, and 28 cases in Afghanistan in that year.

—Floyd Lancia,
Zone 30 Regional Foundation Coordinator

Polio Plus

The Human Toll of Polio Eradication

By Pat Killoran, Zone 24 West End Polio Now Coordinator

The iconic polio story, a story told often and told well, makes a deserving headline. Rotary and its partners have achieved success beyond measure ... success that should be shared far and wide, in every language and throughout the world. We can be proud of the results: only 76 wild polio cases in the world last year. We can be proud of the mobilization as the WHO leads an eradication effort that blankets the globe. We can be proud of the fundraising as all the partners including Rotary and Rotarians, WHO, governments, Bill Gates and others consistently meet the financial needs of the Polio Campaign.

BUT, as the world celebrates, we must not forget that the price for polio eradication is more than money. The headlines on January 13, 2016, read "Suicide attack ... in south-west Pakistan kills 15, mostly policemen". This hints at the rest of the story. So let us remind ourselves of the human cost to Polio eradication.

The January 13 murders, like so many terrorist attacks and tragedies in our world, were on the front page of the newspapers one day and gone the next in favor of another story. It's easy to tell ourselves that the attacks happened somewhere else, somewhere over there, allowing us to gloss over this tragic cost ... allowing us to numb ourselves to the result.

We must remind ourselves: No matter how noble the cause, the loss of even one life matters. Because this was not a unique event: There were similar headlines on December 29, 2015, one life in Afghanistan; March 11, 2014, 11 lives in Pakistan; March 17, 2014, two more; February 2014, four lives in Pakistan; February 2013, nine lives in Nigeria; and there have been many more. In Pakistan alone there have been almost 100 murders associated with the polio campaign.

In addition to the killings, polio workers and their families are targeted with death threats, harassment and blackmail causing disruption to families. See link <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/03/150303-polio-pakistan-islamic-state-refugees-vaccination-health/>

It's critical to remember the commitment and sacrifice made by the people of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria to help the world finish the eradication effort. I am not sure how we value their contribution. What's a human life

worth? What are 100 human lives worth? Clearly, the costs have not only been money but also human life and suffering.

So, if I debate with myself about a donation to PolioPlus ... if I wonder if my donation should be \$10 or \$100 or \$10,000 ... then I should also wonder about the deaths of over 100 Afghans, Nigerians and Pakistanis. I should also wonder how their commitment to polio has affected their lives, their families and their communities. I should wonder how my financial gift will honor their sacrifice.

There is no doubt that we must stay focused on the goal of a polio free world, Rotary's number one priority. We must stay committed to the children of the world. At the same time, we need to remember and be thankful for those, past, present and future, who have sacrificed their lives, rights and freedom for a polio-free world.

They truly are a gift to the world ... and we must never forget!